

Video Notes 4.4 - Hinduism

From "The History of Hindu India, From Ancient Times" on Youtube

Hinduism is the oldest major religion in the world. It has over a billion followers mostly in India.

Origins - Began over 6000 years ago in the Indus and Saraswati river valleys. This is known as the Vedic civilization. This area was connected to the Silk Road trade routes.

Archaeological artifacts show that many religious practices are identical to practices in Hinduism today.

Hinduism migrated to the Ganges river and beyond as climate change dried up the Saraswati river.

Sacred Texts - The four Vedas were written Sanskrit over 6000 years ago, and tell of the spiritual experiences of the Hindu people.

The words "Hindu" and "India" both come from the Sanskrit word "Sindhu", which means "river". Other sacred texts also tell the story.

Hindu Society - In 1100 BCE, the Aryan invasion brought the caste system to Hindu society and practice:

Brahmins - priests

Ksatriyas - warriors

Vaishyas - merchants

Shudras - laborers

These did not include those who were "untouchable"

Beliefs and Practices - Has a supreme god and many other gods. It is polytheistic.

Brahmin - creator

Vishnu - destroyer

Shiva - sustainer

Strong belief in Atman that god exist in each person.

Realizing this in one's self is ultimate goal.

Each chooses divinities to worship and what path to take.

Dharma - an important concept that means "that which upholds". Comes from righteousness, sacred law, truth, ethics, duty religion and the laws of nature. Gandhi and Martin Luther King took idea of nonviolence from this.

Karma - the "law of cause and effect". Good or bad you do returns in this or a future life.

Reincarnation - belief that Atman, the soul is reborn in new body again and again.