

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

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Lesson 5



What Is Hinduism?

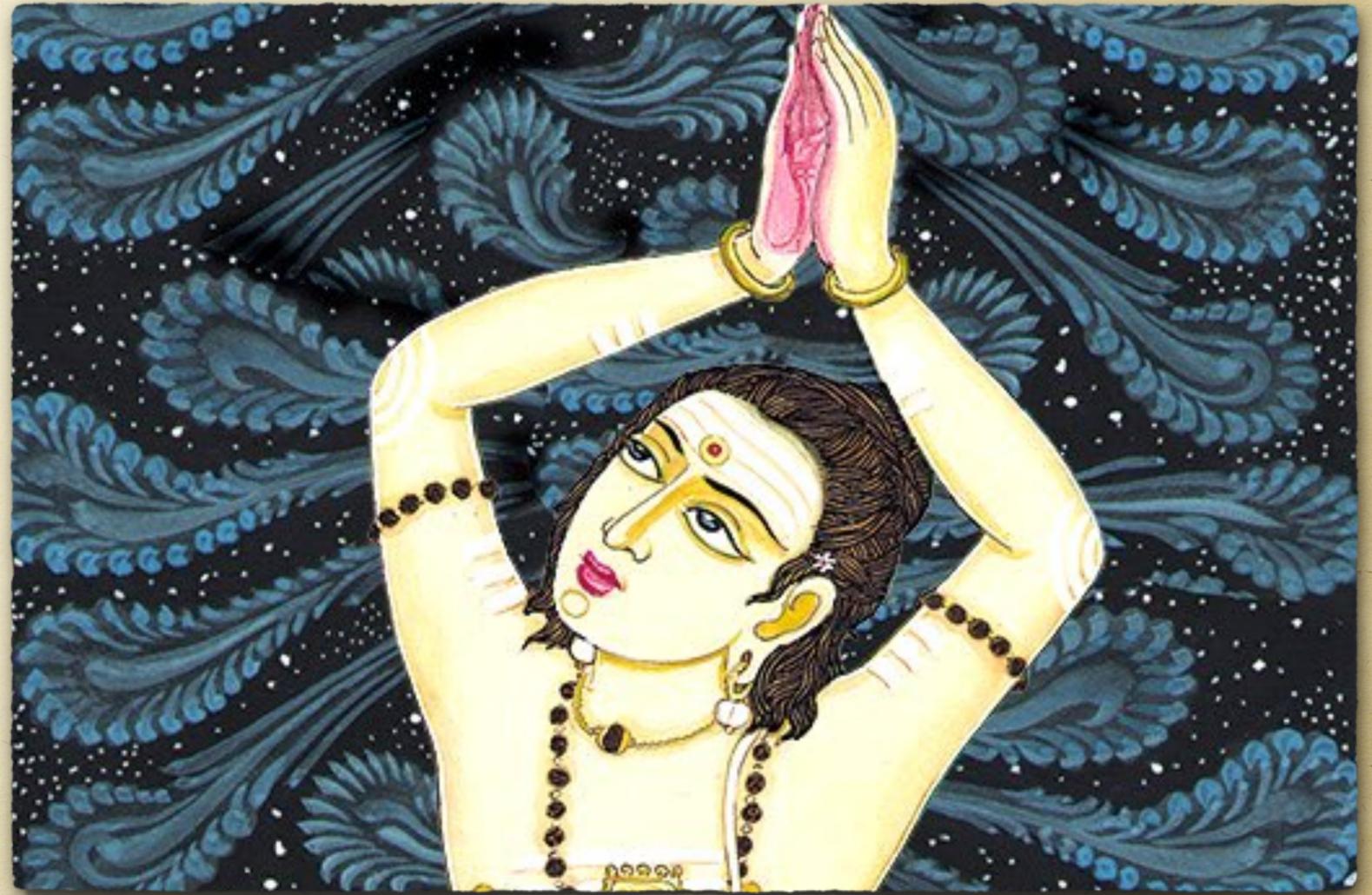
What is Hinduism?



Hinduism is the ancient religion of India, practiced today by one billion people all over the world.

The Sanatana Dharma

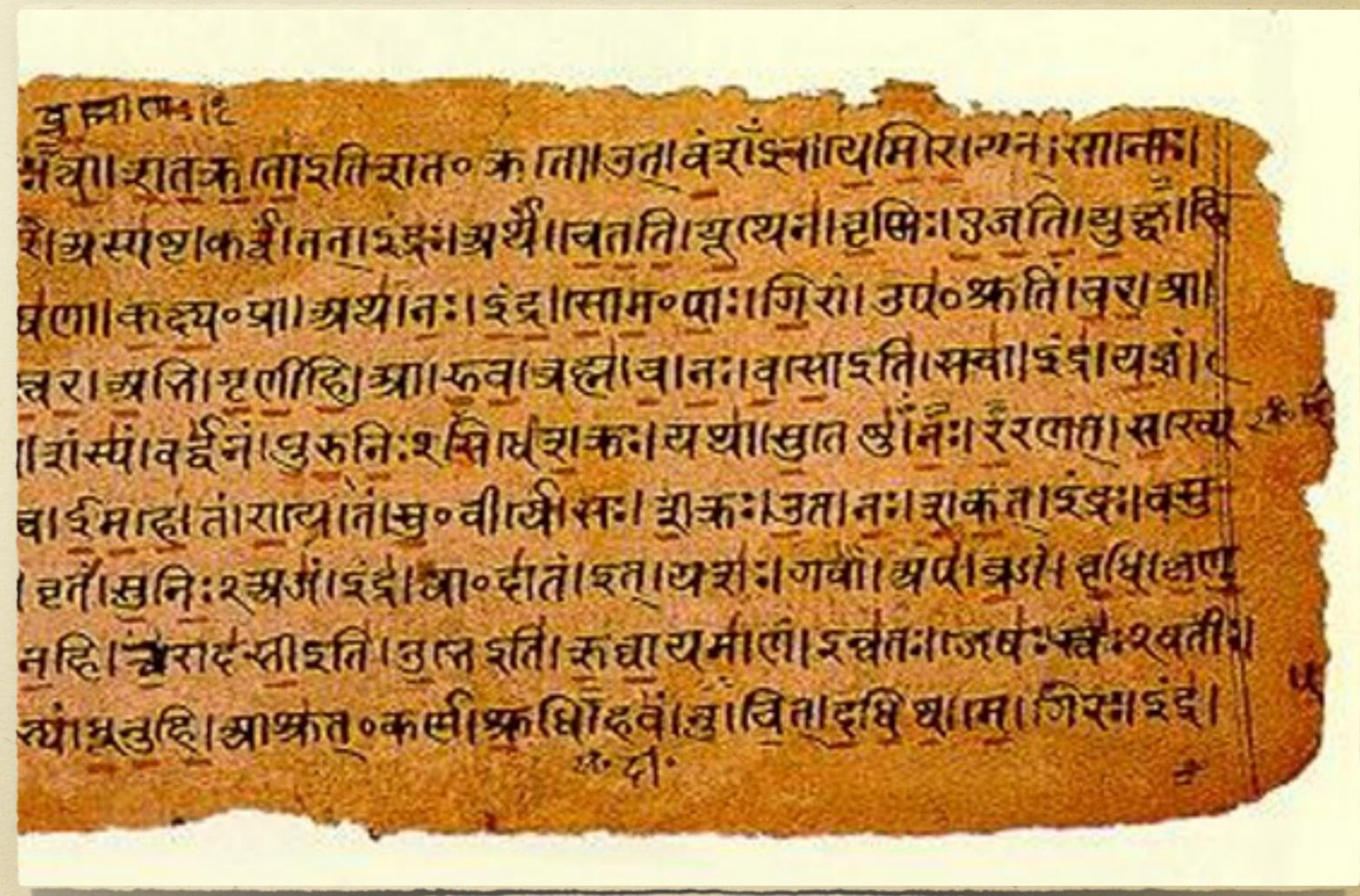
With no founder and stretching back unknown thousands of years in India's earliest known civilizations, Hinduism is called Sanatana Dharma, the "eternal faith."



Four basic beliefs ...

It is based on the Vedas and other scriptures.

Four beliefs are most central.



Belief in one Supreme God

First is belief in one Supreme God who created the universe, and who abides everywhere within it.

He/ She is all and in all.



Belief in Karma

Second is belief in the law of karma, the principle of cause and effect, action and reaction.



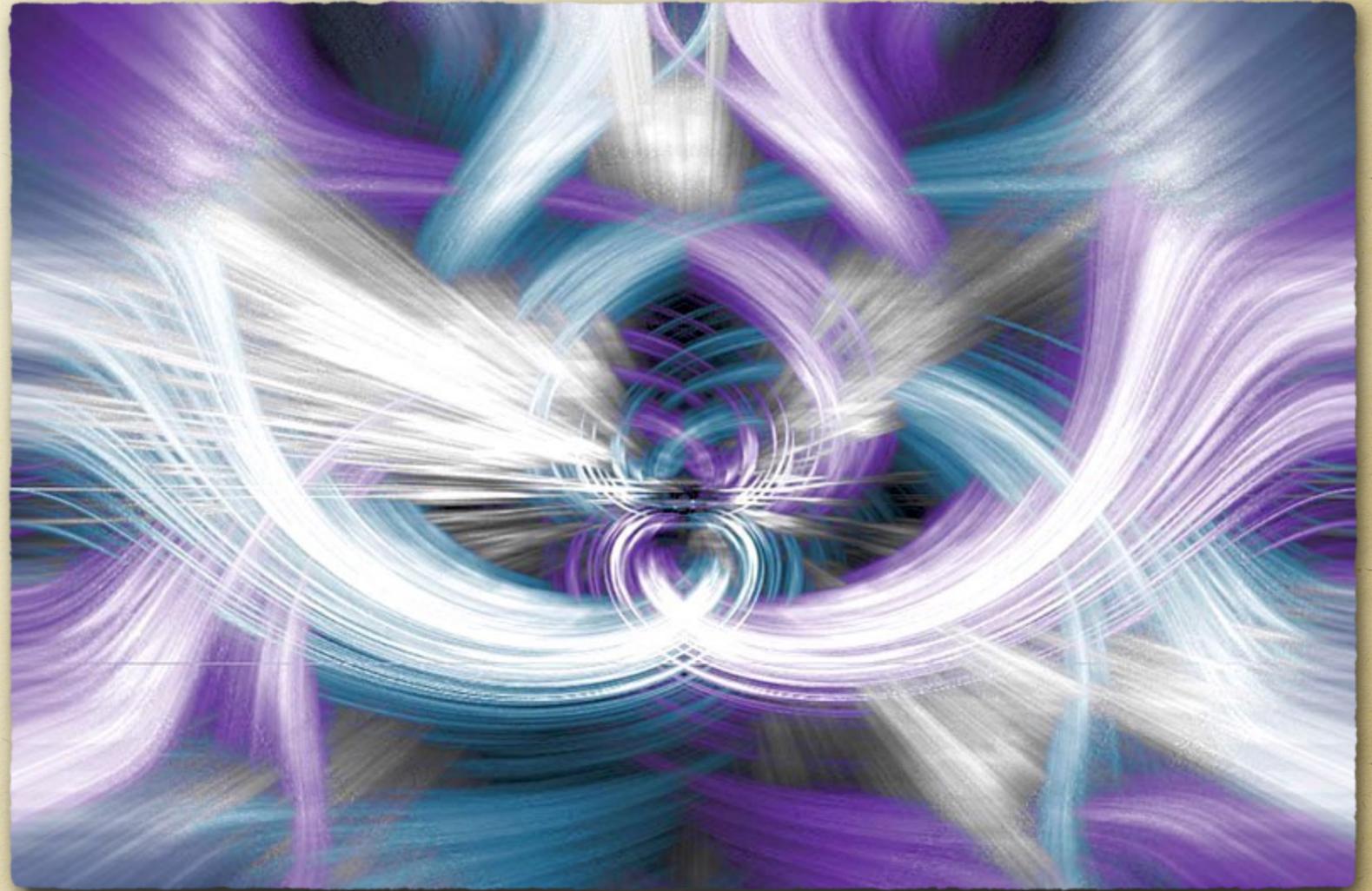
Belief in dharma.

Third is belief that the cosmos is governed by the principle of dharma, which is divine order, righteousness and duty.



Belief in Reincarnation

Fourth, Hindus believe in reincarnation, the natural process of birth, death and rebirth.



Beliefs alone are not enough.

While these four convictions are essential, in Hinduism belief alone is not enough to propel us forward on the path.

It is our actions and behavior that are the keys to spiritual progress.



Religious practice is essential.

Hindus seek to experience God and their inner self through temple worship, meditation, yoga, pilgrimage and devotional singing.



Culture and worship

They enjoy a rich family life and ageless traditions of culture.

They honour gurus, saints and sages.

They worship many Gods, who are grand helpers to the Supreme Being



Hinduism is like a banyan tree.

The three pillars of Sanatana Dharma are its scriptures, temples and gurus.

Today Hinduism is like a great banyan tree, whose limbs represent the many variations of this ancient faith.

The four main branches, or denominations, are Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Smartism.



Like four independent religions

Each has a multitude of guru lineages, religious leaders, priesthoods, sacred literature, monastic communities, schools, pilgrimage centers and tens of thousands of temples.

Since Hinduism has no one central authority, these are like four independent religions sharing a vast common heritage of history, culture and belief.



Gurudeva explains...

Hinduism is a mystical religion, leading devotees to personally experience its eternal truths within themselves, finally reaching the pinnacle of consciousness where man and God are forever one.



QUESTIONS

Lesson 5



5.1 Check the items below that are true about Hinduism

- A. Is the ancient religion of India
- B. Though popular in ancient times, it only has 5 Million followers today
- C. Has no founder
- D. Stretches back unknown thousands of years in India
- E. Is based on the Bible
- F. Is called Sanatana Dharma which means "eternal faith."

5.2 Enter the letter from list below of A - C for the correct meaning of the term.

- ___ Karma
- ___ Dharma
- ___ Reincarnation

- (A) The natural process of birth, death and rebirth
- (B) The principle of cause and effect, action and reaction
- (C) Divine order, righteousness and duty

5.3 Check the four central beliefs of Hinduism:

- A. Karma
- B. The practice of meditation
- C. One Supreme God who created the world and abides everywhere within it
- D. Dharma
- E. Temple worship
- Reincarnation

5.4 In Hinduism belief alone is enough to propel us forward on the path.

- True
- False

5.5 The meaning of denomination in this lesson is:

(Check the correct answer)

- A. The face value of a banknote, coin or postage stamp
- B. The various groups within a religion which hold varying beliefs
- C. The exercise of control or influence over someone
- D. The territory of a government