

International Educational Corporation Handouts

- **Topic №3 The role of Religious Studies in human culture (Hinduism)**
- **Religious Studies** **2016-2017 years**
- **2 credits** **1/2 Semester**
- **assoc. professor** **Yerkin Massanov**

The brief content:

- **1. The definition of national religion;**
- **2. Hinduism as a national religion;**
- **3. The four Caste System.**

The basic two types of Religion:

Three World:

- **1. Buddhism;**
- **2. Christianity;**
- **3. Islam.**

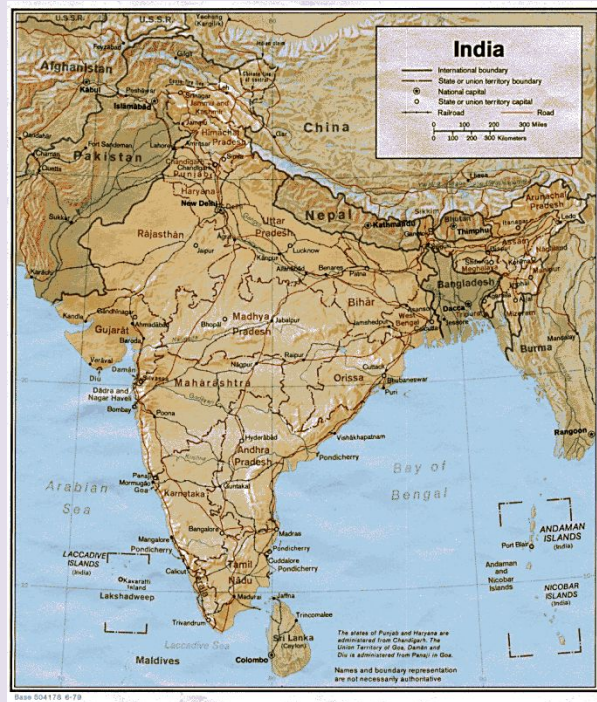
National Religions:

- **1. Hinduism;**
- **2. Judaism;**
- **3. Shintoism.**

The national religion -

- a religion that spread and addressed to a certain nation, nationality, ethnic group. These religions often accompany the process of formation and development of ethnic communities and has therefore act as components of its history.**

- **The vast majority of Hindus live in India and Nepal**



Goal of Hinduism:

- **Moksha:** “release or liberation
- United forever with the divine
- Infinite bliss and awareness.



The two most popular fetish:

SHIVA



VISHNU



Reincarnation:

- Samsara is the wheel of **rebirth** which means the soul is reborn
- from one life form to another.
- People may be reincarnated at **a higher or lower level** of existence depending on their karma from their present life.
- People may be reborn as **plants or animals** or they may be elevated to a higher caste as a human.
- Death is not final for Hindus as they expect to be reborn **many times**.

Origins of the Hindu Faith:

- The earliest records of Hinduism are Aryan
- - The **Aryans** brought their spoken language of Sanskrit to India with them
- - This language evolved into written form
- - Aryans also brought a rich collection of myths (tales of their many gods they believed controlled the forces of nature)
- - Aryan priests memorized long poems and hymns suited to different religious rituals

Vedas:

- ❖ - These hymns, poems, and rituals were gathered into four collections called Vedas;
- ❖ - The Vedas record Indian history from about 1500 to 500 BC---a time period called the Vedic Age.



Sacred Texts - Veda:

- The oldest and most important Veda is the

Rig-Veda;

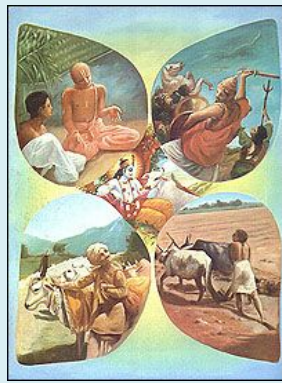
- Rig Veda: Hinduism's oldest text- nearly 4000 years;

- It includes 1,028 hymns of praise;

The Term Moksha:

- **All wise Hindus must seek to reach a state of perfect understanding called moksha. At this point the self will disappear and merge with Brahman.**

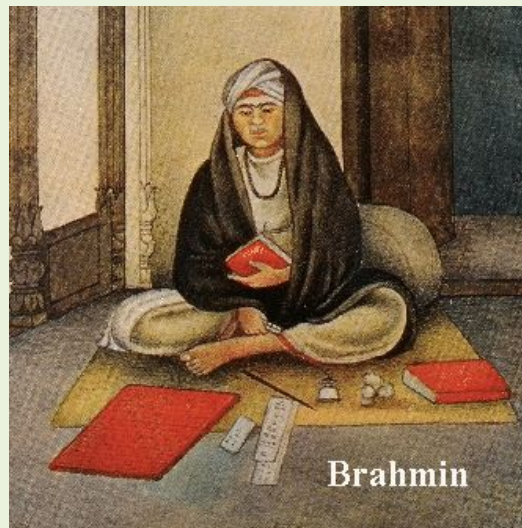
Caste System:



- **complicated set of divisions between groups of people known as the caste system**
- **- Consists of many varnas, or classes**
- **- According to the Rig-Veda, four different groups of people were created from the body of a Hindu god**

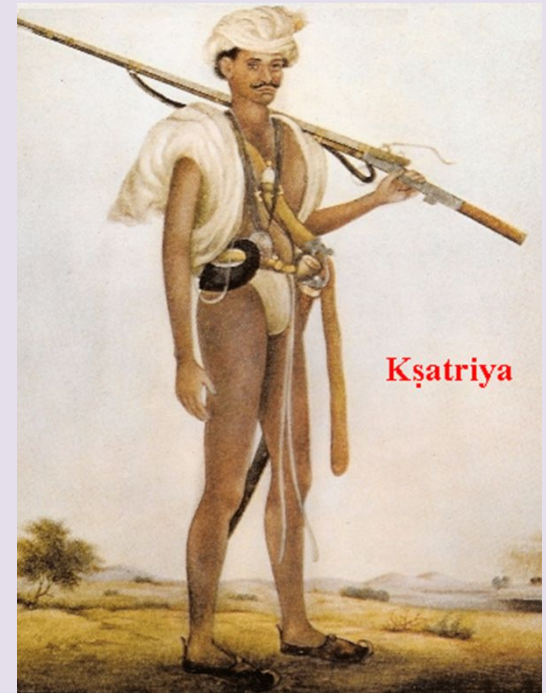
1. Brahmin:

- **Created from the god's mouth**
-they became the priestly class and
the highest group in Indian society.



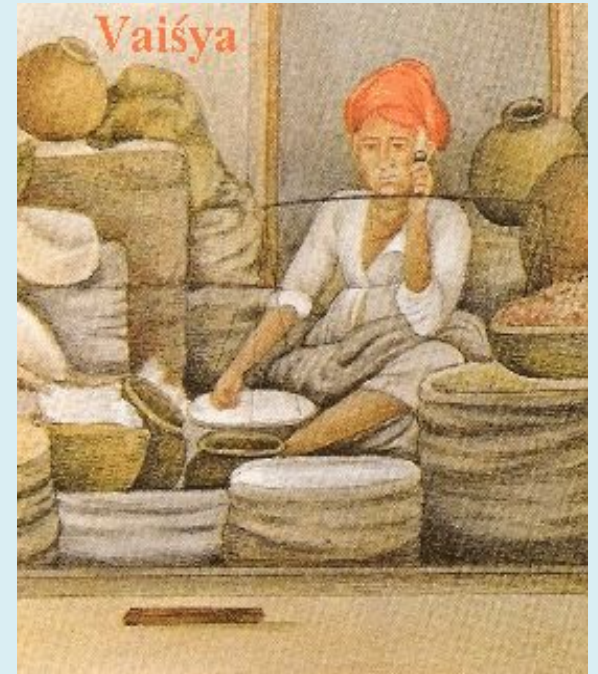
2. Kshatriyas:

- ✓ Created from the god's arms - they became the rulers and the warriors.



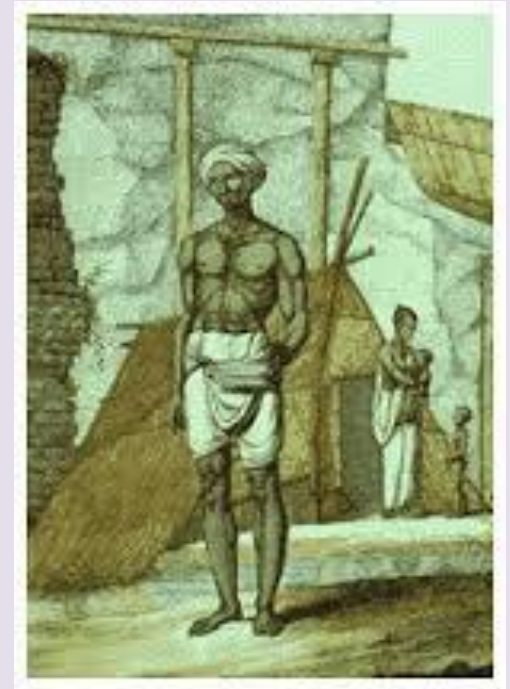
3. Vaishyas:

Created from the
god's legs - they became
the landowners,
merchants, artisans, and
herders.



4. Shudras:

- **Created from the god's feet---they became the laborers, farm workers, and servants.**



Four Stages of Life:

- **1. Stage One: Student stage**
- **2. Stage Two: Householder**
- **3. Stage Three: Forest-dweller
-after the birth of
first grandchild**
- **4. Stage Four: Sannyasin -
wondering ascetic**

The Upanishads teach that:

- A universal spirit is present within all living things - Brahman. This is thought to be the mighty spirit that creates and destroys life**
- The Brahman is One but expresses itself as Many**
- Everything in nature is tied together by Brahman**
- Because all living things are considered a part of Brahman, Hindus forbade the killing of animals**

Upanishads:

- Around 400 BC, the wisest Hindu teachers tried to interpret and explain the hidden meanings of the Vedic hymns and rituals**
- Their answers were recorded in a collection of essays called the Upanishads.**

Karma & Dharma:

- **Karma: “action” or “deeds”**
- **Every action produces a Justified effect based on its moral worthiness.**
- **Karma determines all the particular circumstances and Situations of one’s life.**
- **Dharma: ethical duty based on the divine order of reality. The word is the closest equivalent to “religion.”**

Dharma:

- **To earn good rebirth a person had to be a good member of his or her caste**
- **- Each caste had its particular duty or set of obligations called dharma**
- **- The individual's wishes did not matter**
- **- It was better to do your duty badly than to do someone else's duty well.**

Karma:

- **Hindus believed in an ethical law of cause and effect called karma**
- **- Moral behavior in one life guaranteed rebirth in a higher caste**
- **-Immoral behavior automatically dropped a reborn soul to a lower caste**

The Ganges River:

- **Falling from Its source of Vishnu's feet onto Shiva's head and out from his hair, the water of the Ganges is sacred enough to purify all sins.**



The control questions:

- **1. The main differences of National religion?**
- **2. Basic Idea of Hindu Religion?**
- **3. Give description of concepts: Karma, Dharma, Reincarnation and Moksha etc.**