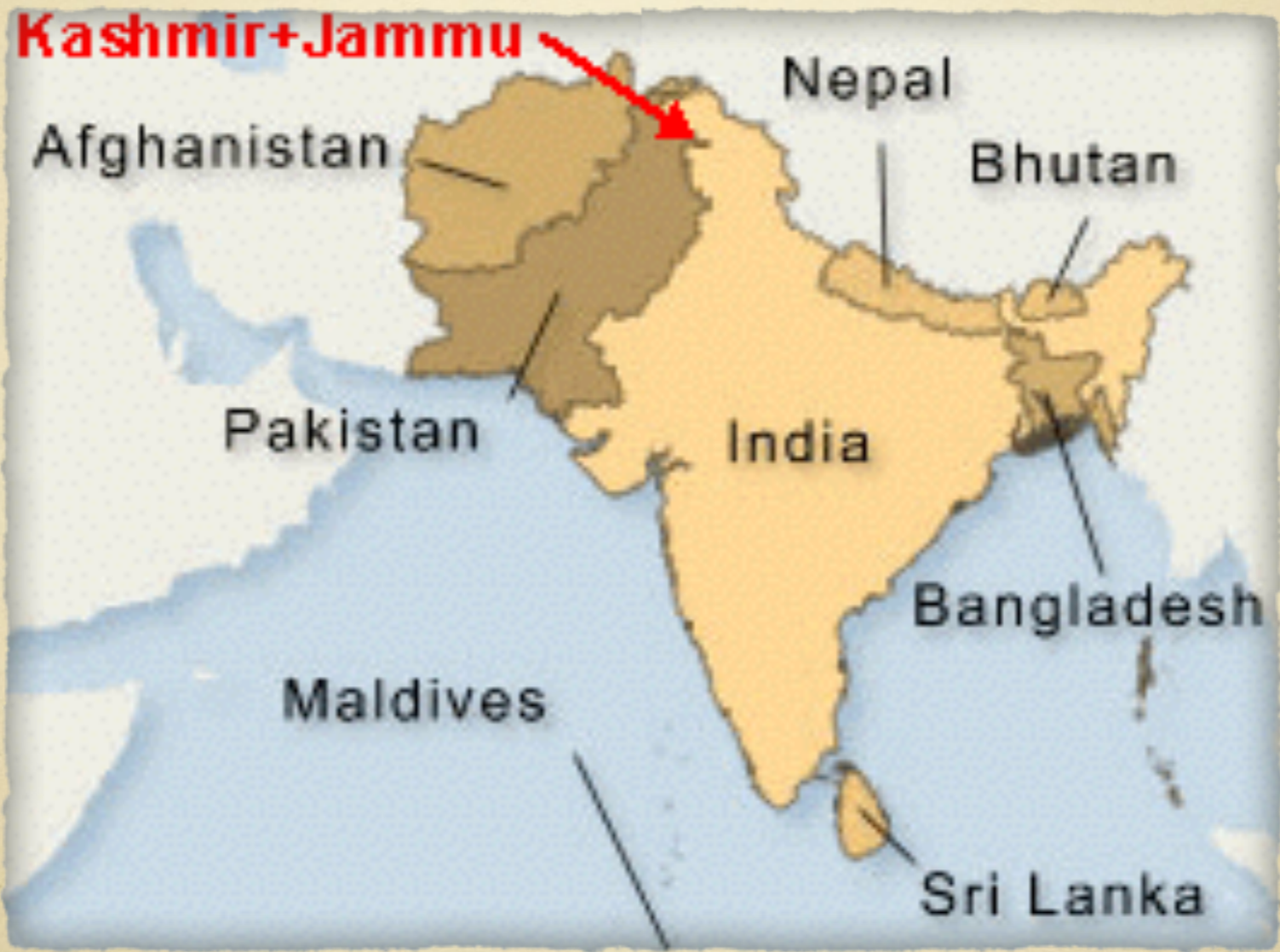


I. Introduction to Hinduism

Unit 3 SG 5

A. The Indian Subcontinent

- 1. The vast majority of Hindus live in India and Nepal
- 2. Hinduism is an ethnic religion.



B. Beliefs Common to Religions in India

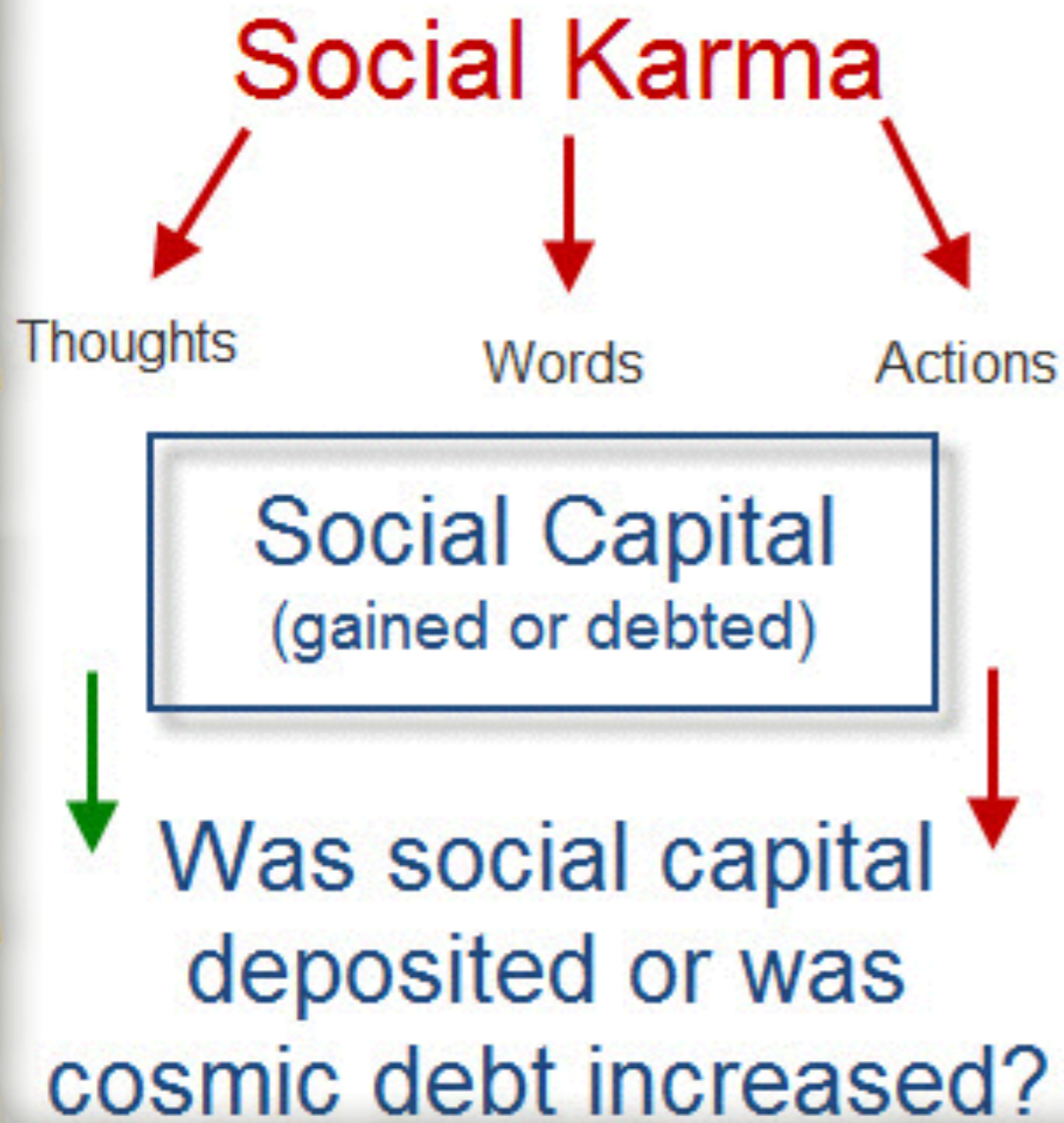
- 1. Samsara: Reincarnation - “The Wheel of Rebirth”
 - a. The soul is reborn from one life form to another.
 - b. People may be reincarnated at a higher or lower level of existence depending on their karma from their present life.
 - c. People may be reborn as plants or animals or they may be elevated to a higher caste as a human.
 - d. Death is not final for Hindus as they expect to be reborn many times.



➤ 2. Karma: “action” or “deeds”

➤ a. Every action produces a justified effect based on its moral worthiness.

➤ b. Karma determines all the particular circumstances and situations of one’s life.



karma

(noun)

when you use the last of the toilet paper without replacing it and are the next person to use the bathroom.

- 3. Moksha - “release or liberation” from reincarnation
 - a. To be united forever with the divine.
 - b. Infinite bliss & awareness; to attain nirvana
- 4. Nirvana - “blown out: as in a candle”
 - a. To achieve moksha



C. Basic Terms & Concepts

- 1. Atman: “the inner self” - the soul
- 2. Brahman: “The essence of reality”
 - a. He is not ultimate reality because he can be visualized.
 - b. Brahma’s life span = each day is 1000 times the whole of human history.
 - c. The world will end with the appearance of Vishnu is about 4000 years from now.

Brahmaa - the creator



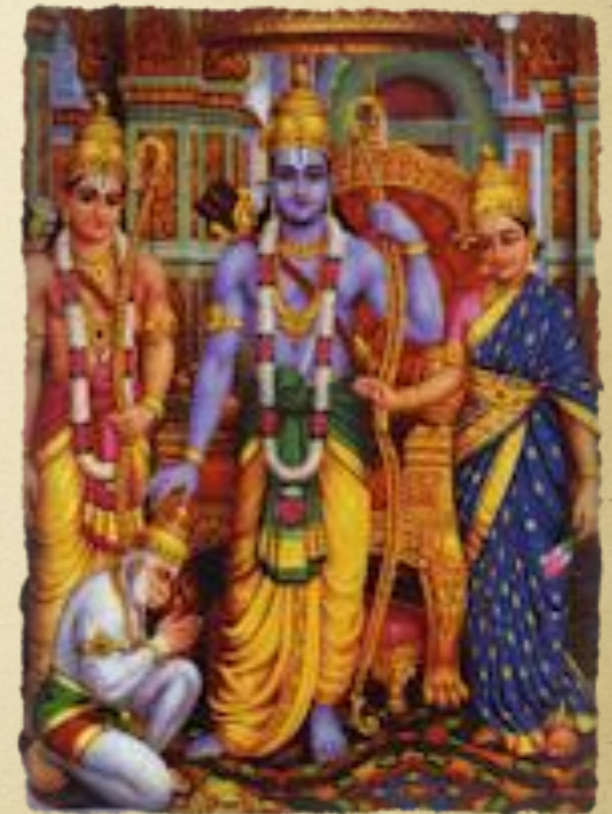
➤ 3. The Tri-Murti: Brahma, Vishnu, & Shiva



Krishna



Vishnu -
the maintainer



Rama

Kali - Wife of Shiva



Shiva - the
destroyer



Black in color
& wears a
necklace of
skulls;
bloodthirsty;
violent
destroyer of
her enemies;
affectionate &
caring for her
devotees

Goddesses



Lakshmi - goddess
of wealth & prosperity



Saraswati - goddess
of music, art, & nature

- 4. Caste - social classes attached to Hinduism; reincarnated into higher or lower caste based on deeds (karma); you stay within your caste (work, marriage...etc...)
- a. Brahmin - priests
- b. Kshatriya - warriors & administrators
- c. Vaistrya - farmers, merchants, teachers, artisans
- d. Sudras - servants, laborers
- e. Dalits or Harijan - “untouchables”

➤ 5. Dharma: “religion”

➤ a. Ethical duty based on the divine order of reality.

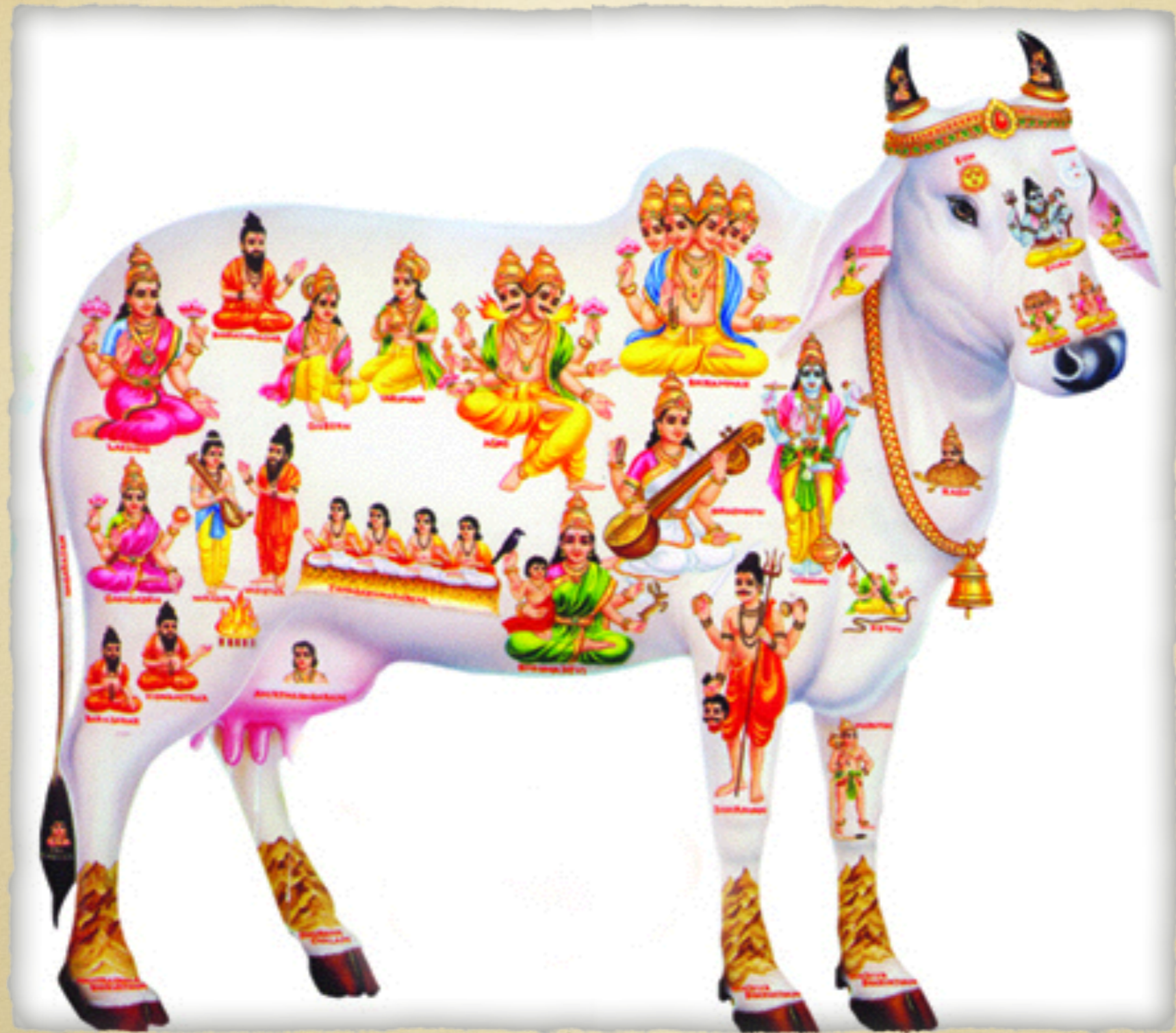
➤ 6. Ahisma: “to not injure”

➤ a. Non-violence: Ghandi

➤ (1) social concern was deeply rooted in his conviction of the Sacredness of life.

➤ (2) believed that human beings should strive to live as simply as possible since overindulgence often meant that others may have to do without their basic needs.

➤ b. The sacred cow: symbol of ahisma



➤ 7. Guru: “teacher” in Sanskrit

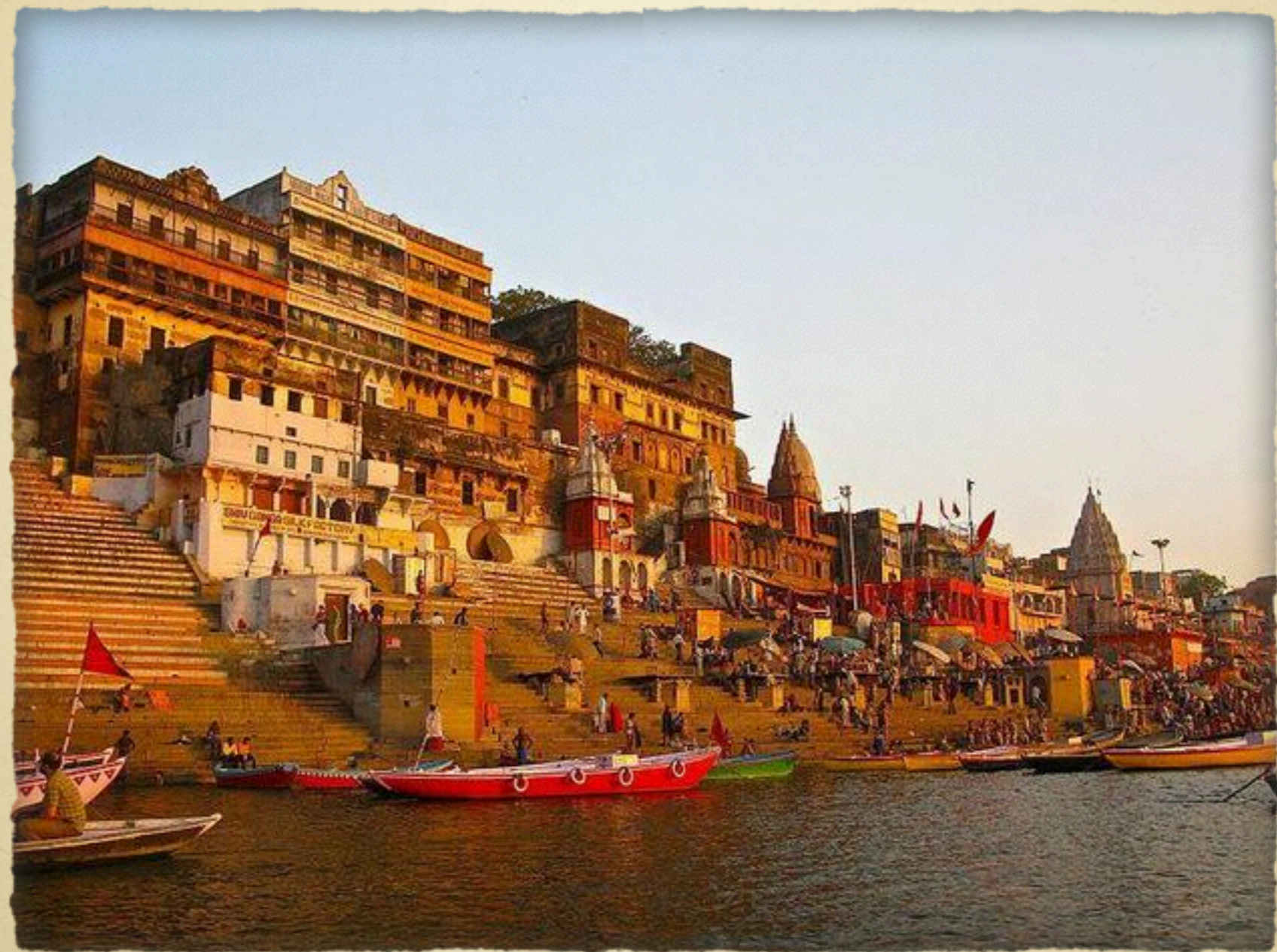
➤ a. A teacher or elder who can transit “transcendental” knowledge to others

➤ 8. Ganges River

➤ a. 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.



- 9. Varanasi or Banaras - Hindu's Holy City
- a. Pilgrims come from all over to bathe in the Ganges.
- b. Countless Hindus come to Banaras to die.
- c. It has 1500 temples, most of them devoted to Shiva.
- d. It is a gathering place for the religiously learned and their disciples.



D. Hindu Values & Beliefs

- 1. Respect for all living things
- 2. Lives of non-attachment

E. The Four Stages of Life

- 1. Student
- 2. Married Person (householder)

- 3. Hermit (gradual detachment)
- 4. Homeless wanderer (total detachment)

F. Religious Literature

- 1. The Vedas: “to know” - oldest scriptures in Hinduism (the word “veda” is protoIndo-European)
- 2. The Upanishads - central religious concepts of Hinduism

➤ 3. The Hindu Epics: The Ramayana & The Bhagavad-Gita

➤ a. Ramayana - Hindu epic poem

➤ b. Bhagavad-Gita - part of Hindu epic; describes different styles of yoga to help attain moksha

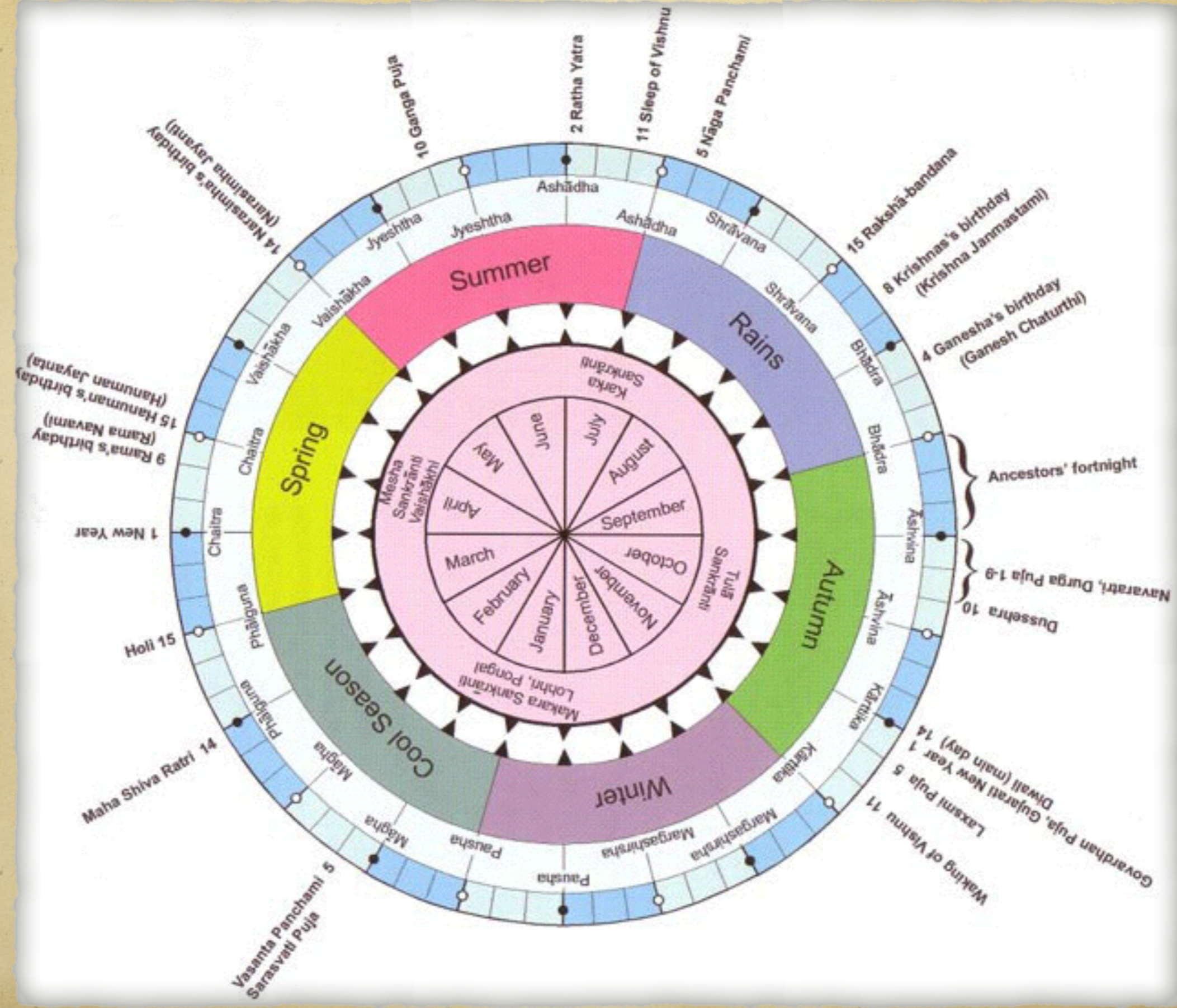
G. Three Paths to Nirvana

- 1. Karma yoga (path of works)
- 2. Jnana yoga (path of knowledge)
- 3. Bhakti yoga (path of devotion)



H. Worship & Festivals

- 1. No set day of the week is holy-each days has its possibilities
- 2. Religious festivals may be solar or lunar; lunar is preferred
- 3. Some numbered days of the month are more important than others. There are 125 special days in the Hindu year.



Spring

Summer

Rains

Autumn

Winter

Cool Season

Ancestors' fortnight

Dussehra 10

Waking of Vishnu 11
Laxmi puja 5
Diwali (main day) 14
Govardhan puja, Gujarat New Year 1

Maha Shiva Ratri 14

Vasanta Panchami 5
Sarasvati Puja

9 Rama's birthday (Rama Navami)
15 Hanuman's birthday (Hanuman Jayanti)

1 New Year

Holi 15

10 Ganga Puja

2 Ratha Yatra

11 Sleep of Vishnu

5 Naga Panchami

15 Raksha-bandana

8 Krishnas's birthday (Krishna Janmastami)

4 Ganesha's birthday (Ganesh Chaturthi)

➤ 4. Diwali: “Row of Lights”

➤ a. Takes place in Oct. or Nov.

➤ b. Lights are floated on small rafts

➤ (1) If the candle remains lit, good luck will follow.

