

Hindiusm Midterm Study Guide

- **tirtha**: ford or crossing; places for connection between humans and the divine
- **Yuga**
 - **Krita/Satya**: 4 legs
 - **Treta**: 3 legs
 - **Dvapara**: 2 legs
 - **Kali**: 1 leg
- **Manu and the Fish**: fish (first Vishnu avatara) is in danger, Manu saves it, fish helps him survive flood
- **The Aryans**: nomadic people who migrated from the caucases; linguistic group
- **The Veda (Rig Veda)**: oldest Hindu texts
- **Indra**: king of gods; killed demon and allowed creation of world; realizes insignificance by seeing parade of ants that were once gods
- **Agni**: fire god; intermediary between humans and gods
- **Soma**: gave gods strength to fight demons; moon is filled with it; also a god
- **Yajna**: the sacrifice; ritual of fire sacrifice
- **The Upanishads**: "sitting down near to"; secret knowledge; big questions; more inward approach than Vedas; ritual action becomes less important than knowledge
- **Tapas**: creative, transformative heat
- **Vac**: cosmic feminine sound energy; also god; Om
- **Brahman**: priest
- **Atman**: the inner, universal self that transcends the ego
- **Tat tvam asi**: that is how you are; Svetaketu
- **Jnana**: knowledge of ritual practice
- **Samsara**: cycle of rebirth
- **Karma**: a universal force that one accumulates based on deeds
- **Moksha**: enlightenment, escape from samsara (rebirth)
- **Varna**: social classes
 - **Brahman**: priests
 - **Kshatriya**: warriors
 - **Vaishya**: working class, merchants, etc.
 - **Shudra**: servants

- **Ashrama**
 - 4 ashramas
- **Jati**: subclasses of varnas
- **Dharma**: that which upholds and sustains; truth duty, righteousness law; cosmic principle; human behavior
- **Shruti**: that which is heard; more important; Vedas, Upanishads, Baghavad Gita, Tantras (higher than vedas)
- **Smriti**: that which is remembered; Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas
- **Three (or Four) Aims of Life**
 - dharma
 - artha: money, wealth, political power, success
 - kama: pleasure and desire
 - moksha (later)
- **Kama**: desire
- **Artha**: an aim of life; Upanishadic; money, wealth, political power, success
- **Mahabharata**: story of war between Pandavas and Kauravas
- **Pandavas and Kauravas**
 - Pandavas: 5 sons of Pandu
 - Kauravas: 100 sons of Dhritarashtra
- **Bhagavad Gita**: portion of Mahabharata where Krishna counsels Arjuna
- **Arjuna**: protagonist of Bhagavad Gita; discourses with Vishnu his charioteer
- **Three Yogas (of Gita)**: yoga is discipline
 - Bhakti: devotion
 - Karma: action
 - Jnana: knowledge
- **Ramayana**: story of Rama
- **Valmiki**: writer of oldest full version of Ramayana
- **Rama**: avatara of Vishnu; protagonist of Ramayana; defeats Ravana
- **Sita**: wife of Rama; born of the earth; daughter of Janaka
- **Lakshmana**: half brother of Rama; goes with him into the forest when he is banished
- **Hanuman**: monkey servant of Rama

- **Ravana:** demon; gained power through worship of Shiva who granted him boon that he can't be killed by gods or demons
- **Tulsida/Ramcaritmanas:** Author of North Indian version of Ramayana; Rama is more god-like
- **Ram Lila:** festival in which Ramayana was reenacted
- **The Puranas:** stories and myths
- **The Tantras:** liturgical guidelines
- **Brahmanization & Sanskritization**
 - Brahmanization: top down
 - Sanskritization: bottom up
- **Nirguna v. saguna:** representation of god
 - gun: quality
 - nir: without
 - sa: with
- **Vishnu:** sustainer; many avatars
- **avatara:** descent; human incarnation of god
- **Shiva:** portrayed about ascetic
- **Devi (Mahadevi):** the goddess

Essay Questions

1.
 - agni
 - fire (smoke)
 - generate tapas
 - sacred sound
 - power in sound words
 - vac: cosmic feminine sound energy; the divine as sound; sometimes equated with Om
 - everything is different vibrations of one universal voice
 - mantras
 - family
 - cycle of reproduction
 - duty to procreate
 - only married men could sacrifice
 - man produces semen and sacrifices it into woman and they create child

2.
 - Upanishad's basic understanding of the world as we know it
 - trapped in samsara, bound by earthly desire
 - escape through moksha
 - sacrifice becomes less important
 - emphasis on jnana
 - emphasis on atman
 - karma
 - shruti

3.
 - Bhakti
 - devotion
 - beginning shift toward worship
 - Karma
 - action without desire
 - based on dharmic duty rather than result of action
 - Jnana
 - knowledge of sacrificial practice
 - attain knowledge to divorce self from ego
 - sacrifice fruits of action

Gita synthesizes jnana and karma yoga in pursuit of bhakti yoga

4.
 - Rama
 - accomponies sage to protect him
 - fulfills father's boon
 - Sita
 - goes with husband into forest
 - accepts ascetic into home
 - Ramayana vs. Mahabharata
 - dharma is more intact in Ramayana yuga
 - more subtle conflicts in Mahabharata; addresses contradictory parts of dharma