

Outline Lecture Nine—Hindu Values in the Bhagavad-Gita

Key Terms for Today's Lecture:

Moksha (Release)	Samsara (Cycle)	Karma (Action)	Bhakti (Devotion)	Dharma (Sacred duty)	Yoga (Discipline)
---------------------	--------------------	-------------------	----------------------	-------------------------	----------------------

I) The Emergence of a “Hindu” Religious Tradition

- a) Origin of the term “Hindu”?
 - i) Ethnic, cultural, social, linguistic, and religious implications
 - ii) Core religious beliefs in India
- b) “Hinduism” as a “Polydox” Tradition
 - i) Syncretic and **polycentric**
 - (1) “One Hindu’s center is another’s periphery”
 - ii) Vibrant spiritual tug-of-war in India ever since the 8th B.C.E.
 - (1) Vedic Brahmanic culture (15th to 8th centuries B.C.E.)
 - (a) *Rig Vedas*
 - (2) Upanishads (8th to 5th centuries B.C.E.)
 - (3) Jainism (Mahavira 6th century B.C.E.)
 - (4) Buddhism (Siddhartha Gautama 6th century B.C.E.)
 - c) What was the unique appeal of Hinduism?
 - i) “Extraordinary Norm” or Renunciation (*Sannyasa*)
 - ii) “Ordinary Norm” or Disciplined Action (*Karma-yoga*)
 - (1) Act according to one’s *dharma* or “sacred duty”
 - (2) Universal accessibility of *moksha*

II) The *Bhagavad-Gita*

- a) Historical Content of the Philosophical Poem
 - i) The war epic, *Mahabharata* (compiled between 400 B.C.E. and 400 C.E.?)
 - (1) Conflict in the 12th century B.C.E
 - (2) Pandava clan vs. Kaurava clan
 - ii) Arjuna’s moral dilemma
 - (1) Conflict between personal feelings and sacred duties
- b) Framing of the Narrative
 - i) Dhritarashtra’s request to Sanjaya
 - ii) Examples of misguided familial sentiments and attachments
 - (1) Dhrita Rashtra’s paternal ties to his sons, the Kaurava usurpers
 - (2) Arjuna’s misguided pity towards kinsmen
 - iii) “Flaw of pity” vs. pragmatic detachment
- c) Dialectic of Pragmatic Detachment
 - i) “Be intent on action; not on the fruits of action”
 - ii) Act without attachment to results
 - iii) The essence of “desire-less action”
- d) Disassociating Actions from Ego
 - i) Cassandra’s wisdom
 - (1) “You don’t have to overdo it, just do it. There are not many who take the work seriously—you do. This is your best and this is all that’s required of any of us.

Not to overdo—not to outdo—but to do our best. This is enough. To try to do more is to dislocate God from the equation.”

- ii) Action does not come from the “*self*” but from Brahman (Universal Soul)
- e) The Transcendence of “Self”
 - i) “Free will” as an illusion
 - ii) Self and discipline
 - (1) Without discipline, egotistical “self” is “like an enemy at war”
- f) The Way to the Disciplined Self—Bhakti
 - i) Sublimation in Krishna
 - ii) The basis of Hindu polytheism
 - iii) Idea of the “divine eye”—Darsan
 - (1) The qualities of a “yogi”