

**MAIN IDEA**

1. Hinduism developed out of Brahmanism and influences from other cultures.
2. A few groups reacted to Hinduism by breaking away to form their own religions.

**Key Terms and People**

**Hinduism** the most widespread religion in India today

**reincarnation** the belief that the soul, once a person dies, is reborn in another person

**karma** the effects that good or bad actions have on a person's soul

**samskaras** rites of passage to prepare a person for an event or next stage in life

**Jainism** a nonviolent religion based on the teachings of Mahavira

**Mahavira** founder of Jainism who taught four basic nonviolent principles to follow

**nonviolence** the avoidance of violent actions

**Sikhism** monotheistic religion founded in India in the 1400s

**Guru Nanak** teacher whose blending of religious ideas from Islam, Hinduism, and other religions came to be called Sikhism

**Lesson Summary****HINDUISM DEVELOPS**

**Hinduism** is India's largest religion today. It developed from Brahmanism and ideas from other cultures. Hindus believe that there are many gods but all gods are part of a universal spirit called Brahman. Hindus believe everyone has a soul, or *atman*, inside them and the soul longs to join with Brahman. This happens when the soul recognizes that the world we live in is an illusion. Hindus believe this understanding takes several lifetimes, so **reincarnation**, or rebirth, is necessary. The form you take when you are reborn depends upon your **karma**, the effect your actions in life have on your soul. Those who build good karma by good actions are reborn to higher

Underline the Hindu name for the soul.

Lesson 3, *continued*

castes. Those who create bad karma by evil actions are reborn into lower castes. Hinduism teaches that each person has a *dharma*, a set of spiritual duties to fulfill in each life. By teaching people to accept their station in life, Hinduism helped to keep the caste system in place.

Rituals and ceremonies have always been important parts of Hinduism. **Samskaras**, rites of passage to prepare a person for a special event or for his or her next stage in life, are still important today.

Hinduism spread throughout Southeast Asia, mostly due to traders exchanging goods, and then through colonization when Hindus went to work in British and Dutch colonies.

### GROUPS REACT TO HINDUISM

The religions of **Jainism** and **Sikhism** developed in reaction to Hinduism. Jainism is based upon the teachings of **Mahavira**, who taught four basic principles: injure no life, tell the truth, do not steal, and own no property. Jains practice **nonviolence**, meaning they avoid violent actions because they believe that everything is alive and part of the cycle of rebirth. The Sanskrit word for nonviolence is *ahimsa* (uh-HIM-sah).

Sikhism was founded centuries after Jainism, based on the teachings of **Guru Nanak**. It is monotheistic, which means Sikhs believe in one god. Sikhism blends elements of Hinduism and other religions, including Islam.

### CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

**Critical Thinking: Make Inferences** The idea of *ahimsa* has proved popular with reformers through the centuries. Write a one-page essay explaining why this might be so.

What is karma?

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Underline the four main teachings of Jainism.

What does *monotheistic* mean?

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## Ancient India

## Lesson 4



### MAIN IDEA

1. Siddhartha Gautama searched for wisdom in many ways.
2. The teachings of Buddhism deal with finding peace.
3. Buddhism spread far from where it began in India.

### Key Terms and People

**fasting** going without food

**meditation** focusing the mind on spiritual ideas

**the Buddha** founder of Buddhism, born an Indian prince named Siddhartha Gautama

**Buddhism** religion based on the teachings of the Buddha

**nirvana** a state of perfect peace

**missionaries** people who spread and teach religious beliefs

### Lesson Summary

#### SIDDARTHA'S SEARCH FOR WISDOM

Not everyone in India accepted Hinduism. In the late 500s BC, a major new religion began to develop from questions posed by a young prince named Siddhartha Gautama (si-DAHR-tuh GAU-tuh-muh). Siddhartha was born to a wealthy family and led a life of comfort, but he wondered at the pain and suffering he saw all around him. By the age of 30, Siddhartha left his home and family to travel India. He talked to many priests and wise people, but he was not satisfied with their answers.

Siddhartha did not give up. He wandered for years throughout India trying to free himself from daily concerns by **fasting** and **meditating**. After six years, Siddhartha sat down under a tree near the town of Gaya and meditated for seven weeks. He came up with an answer to what causes human suffering. Suffering is caused by wanting what one does not have, wanting to keep what one likes and already has, and not wanting what one dislikes but has. He began to travel and

**Why did Prince Siddhartha leave a comfortable home and loving family?**

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**Underline what Siddhartha believed to be the three causes of human suffering.**

**Lesson 4, continued**

teach his ideas, and was soon called **the Buddha**, or “Enlightened One.” From his teachings sprang the religion **Buddhism**.

**TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM**

Buddhism is intent on relieving human suffering. It is based upon the Four Noble Truths. These truths are: suffering and unhappiness are a part of life; suffering stems from our desire for pleasure and material goods; people can overcome their desires and reach **nirvana**, a state of perfect peace, which ends the cycle of reincarnation; and people can overcome desire and ignorance by following an eightfold path to nirvana.

These teachings were similar to some Hindu concepts but went against some traditional Hindu ideas. Buddhism questioned the need for animal sacrifice and challenged the authority of the Brahmins, the Hindu priests. The Buddha said that each individual could reach salvation on his or her own. Buddhism also opposed the caste system.

**BUDDHISM SPREADS**

Buddhism spread quickly throughout India to eventually become a major global religion. With the help of Indian king Asoka, Buddhist **missionaries** were sent to other countries to teach their religious beliefs. Buddhism quickly took hold in neighboring countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, and China. Buddhism soon became very influential in Japan and Korea. Over time, two branches of Buddhism developed—Theravada and Mahayana.

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Make Inferences** Could you leave your family, home, and everything you know to preach what you believe to be a spiritual truth? What do you think inspired the Buddha to do so? Write a short essay in which you explain his choice.

Underline the name of the central teachings of Buddhism.

What is one difference between Buddhism and Hinduism?

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Name three countries to which Buddhism spread.

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