

**Hinduism 4 stages of human soul's journey**

Connection to modern songs?

**Ziggy Marley "Higher Vibration"**

These city walls  
Are like a prison  
Why we gotta keep on living  
With our backs against the wall

We are creatures of love  
Victims of hate  
We gotta keep on living  
With our backs against the wall

No, no, no  
Start living on a higher vibration  
Now we take it to the heights of creation

Perfection of divinity  
Is everyone's duty  
Don't waste your time  
Living for the vanities

We are creatures of faith  
Victims of destiny  
Which we create

Now we living on a higher vibration  
'Cause we take it to the heights of creation

You know what I'm talking 'bout  
Don't tell me, no  
Baby I could scream and shout But I won't

It's a human experience      On another sphere  
Well, it's a human existence  
On another wavelength

Listen to me now  
Now, we living on a higher vibration  
Then we take it to the heights of creation

Let me take you little higher  
And then you take me little higher



## FOUR PATHS TO THE GOAL

**A**LL OF US DWELL on the brink of the infinite ocean of life's creative power. We carry it within us: supreme strength, the fullness of wisdom, and unquenchable joy; but it is deeply hidden. What if we could bring it to light and draw from it unceasingly?

Hinduism's discoveries for actualizing the human potential come under the heading of *yoga*, a word that derives from the same root as the English word 'yoke' and carries connotations of uniting (yoking together), and placing under discipline (as in "take my yoke upon you"). Yoga is a method of training designed to lead to integration or union. It includes physical exercises, but its ultimate goal is union with God. The spiritual trails that Hindus have blazed toward this goal are four. At first this may seem surprising; if there is one goal, should there not be one path to it? This might be the case if we all started from the same point; but in actuality people approach the goal from different angles, so multiple paths are needed. Different starting points here really refers to different types of people. All the religions in this book recognize different spiritual personality types, but Hinduism is exceptional in the attention it has given the matter; it identifies the principal types, and delineates the programs that are suited to each.

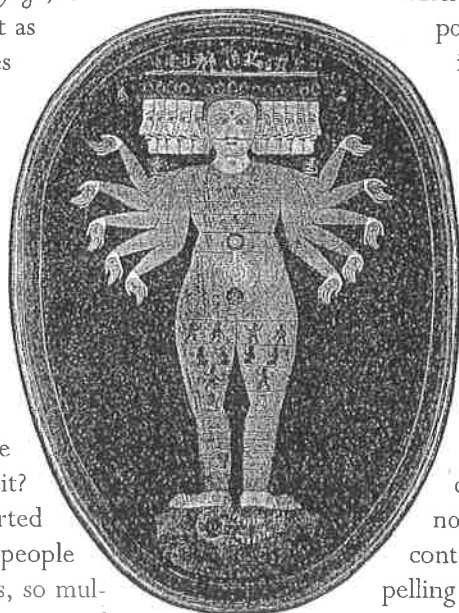
The result is a recognition, pervading the entire religion, that there are multiple paths to God, each calling for its distinctive mode of approach.

Since the paths that Hinduism charts are four, the types they are intended for are likewise four. Some people are primarily reflective. Others are emotional. Still others are active and energetic. Finally, some like to experiment.

For each of these personality types, Hinduism prescribes a distinct yoga that is designed to capitalize on the type's strong suit. The types are not separated into watertight compartments. Every human being possesses some talent in all four directions in the way most hands of cards include all four suits. But one normally leads with one's strongest suit.

All four paths begin with moral preliminaries. As the aim of the yogas is to discern the self's deep-lying divinity, the scum on its surface must be removed. Selfishness muddies the water, ill-will skews objectivity.

The first step of every yoga, therefore, involves the dismantling of bad habits and the acquisition of good ones, such as non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, self-control, cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, and a compelling desire to reach the goal. Keeping these common preliminaries in mind, we proceed to the yogas' distinctive directives.



Above: God is depicted in this image with "a thousand heads and a thousand hands." Opposite: Jain Tirthankara, or great teacher, in the Vimala Sha Temple, Mount Abu, India.



## THE WAY TO GOD THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

**J**NANA YOGA INTENDED for spiritual aspirants who have a strong reflective bent, is the path to oneness with God through knowledge. Such knowledge has nothing to do with factual information. It is an intuitive discernment that transforms the knower into the likeness of what it knows. Reflection is important for such people; their thoughts grasp their lives and transform them. For these knowing types, Hinduism proposes a series of demonstrations designed to convince one that there is more to oneself than had been supposed. The key to the project is discrimination, the power to distinguish between the surface self that crowds the foreground of attention and the larger self that is latent and out of sight.

Cultivating this power proceeds through three stages, the first of which is hearing. Through listening to sages and scriptures, the aspirant is introduced to the prospect that one's essential being is Being itself. The second step is thinking. By prolonged, intensive reflection, that which the first step introduced as a hypothesis assumes life. Several lines of thought are proposed for this project. The disciple may be advised to examine his everyday language and ponder its implications.

The word "my" always implies a distinction between the possessor and what is possessed; when I speak of my book or my jacket, I do not suppose that I am those things. But I also speak of my body, my mind, and my personality, which suggests that in some sense I think of myself as distinct from them as well.

From a different angle, science tells me that there is

almost nothing in my body that was there seven years ago, and my mind and my personality have changed even more. Yet throughout these changes I have remained in some sense the same person. What is the something in my makeup that has endured? Our word "personality" comes from the Latin *persona* which originally referred to the mask an actor donned as he or she stepped onto the stage. The mask depicted the actor's role, while behind it the actor remained hidden and anonymous. Hindus see

this as an apt analogy for the roles our enduring souls are cast to play in their various lifetimes.

If the yogi is able and diligent such reflections will eventually induce a lively sense of the enduring Self that underlies the transient self. The two will become increasingly distinct, separating like water and oil where formerly they mixed like water and milk. One is then ready for the third step on the path of knowledge which consists in shifting self-identification to one's abiding

part. One effective way to do this is to think of one's nominal self in the third person. Instead of "I am walking down the street," one thinks, "There goes Sybil walking down Fifth Avenue," and backs up the assertion by trying to visualize Sybil from a distance.

This exercise does two things. It drives a wedge between one's self-identification and one's surface self, and at the same time forces this self-identification to a deeper level until at last — through a knowledge that is identical with being — one becomes in full what one always was at heart.

*"That thou art, other than Whom there is no other seer, hearer, thinker, or agent" (Upanishads).*





## THE WAY TO GOD THROUGH WORK

THE THIRD PATH TOWARD GOD, intended for persons of energetic bent, is *karma yoga*, the way through work.

Work is life's staple. The point is not simply that people must work to survive; most people like to be constructively engaged — they find it satisfying. To such persons Hinduism says, You don't have to retire to a cloister to realize God; he can be found in the world of everyday affairs as readily as anywhere. All you need do is learn how to work in ways that carry you toward God, not away from God.

How this is to be done depends on the other components in the worker's nature. By choosing the path of work the *karma yogi* has already declared his taste for activity, but there remains the question of whether this supporting disposition is predominantly affective or reflective. The answer to that question determines whether the *yogi* will approach work reflectively or in the spirit of love. In the first case, *karma yoga* is practiced thoughtfully, in *jnanic* mode; while in the second, it is performed as loving service (*bhakti*). We need to see how the spiritual dynamics operate in the two cases.

According to Hindu doctrine, every action directed toward the external world reacts on the doer. Everything I do for my private benefit adds another layer to my ego, and in thus thickening it separates me further from God. Conversely, every act that is done without thought for myself diminishes my self-centeredness until nothing separates me from the divine. In keeping with this principle, persons who are emotionally inclined should work for God's sake instead of their own. "*He who performs actions without attachment, resigning them to God, is untainted by their effects as the lotus leaf by water*" (*Bhagavad-Gita*). Such a one is as active as before but works in a different spirit, from dedication. Acts are no longer undertaken for their personal rewards. Not only are they now

performed as service to God; they are regarded as prompted by God's will and powered by God's energy which courses through the devotee. "*Thou art the Doer, I am the instrument.*" Performed in this spirit, actions lighten the ego instead of encumbering it. Each task becomes a sacred ritual, performed as a loving sacrifice for God's glory.

For persons of reflective rather than emotional bent, God-oriented work proceeds differently. They too work unselfishly, but in a different way. We have seen that philosophers tend to find the idea of Infinite Being in one's deepest center more meaningful than the thought of a Heavenly Father who watches over the world with love. It follows that they will approach work less relationally, seeking through it enlightenment rather than a deepening love relationship.

The way they do this is through working in the spirit of detachment: They draw a line between their finite selves and the Infinite Self that underlies them, and then systematically disidentify with the former. In terms of work, this means cultivating an active disinterest in "what's in it for me," whether the reward be cash or recognition. Those emoluments are pleasant, but the *karma yogi* knows their price: if he is invested in them, they inflate his ego. In doing so they thicken the insulation between his current and his true Self, and increase his isolation.

The alternative is work performed detachedly, in virtual dissociation from the empirical self. Identifying with the Eternal, the worker continues to work, but as the deeds are performed by the empirical self, the True Self has nothing to do with them. "*He who performs his task dictated by duty, caring nothing for the fruit of the action, he is a yogi*" (*Bhagavad-Gita*). Having given his best to what's to be done, he lets the chips fall where they may. "*One to me is loss or gain, / One to me is fame or shame, / One to me*



H I N D U I S M



is pleasure, pain" (*Bhagavad-Gita*). Those who are proficient in this way of working are calm, even while busy, like the center of a spinning wheel. It is the stillness of absolute motion. Though philosophically and affectionately inclined persons practice *karma yoga* differently, it

is easy to see their practices as pointed in the same direction.

Both yogis are engaged in radical reducing diets, designed to starve the finite ego by withdrawing interest from the bearing of their work on their finite selves.