

Elements of Atheism in Hindu Thought

Introduction

Hindu thought spans thousands of years and various schools. Hinduism can be considered one of the oldest and most complex schools of philosophy in the world. However, because of its rich history and often seemingly conflicting ideas it can be very difficult for Westerners to comprehend. However, there are many concepts for the Westerner to learn. Parallels to western philosophy and religion may be found combined differently or with different flavors, which can be extremely elucidating to inquiring minds.

One such concept is atheism, which is often viewed much differently across cultures. In western schools of thought, atheism is considered mutually exclusive to the religious and spiritual. Similarly, materialism is often found in schools that reject God. However, in Hindu thought we often find quite the opposite; atheism and spirituality are often intimately joined and related.

Definitions

The term atheism has several subtle meanings. Theism literally refers to a belief in a God or gods. Since the prefix “a” means “without,” the term atheism literally means “without theism.” Therefore atheism is the absence of a theistic belief. However, this term encompasses two meanings. Essentially, atheism holds to a weak epistemological position – it is simply the negation of theism. Regarding this weak atheism, a person simply does not include God/gods in his metaphysics. However, atheism can also relate to a strong epistemological position when it refers to the belief that God or gods do not exist. A person holding this strong atheistic stance actively regards the existence of

God/gods as impossible or contradictory to his metaphysical framework.¹ From the strong atheism of the Câr vâkas and Mîmâmsakas to the weak atheism of the Vaicē'ikas, both forms of atheism are displayed in Hindu philosophy.

God also must be defined to properly discuss religious philosophy. God can have several definitions in respect to Hinduism, and it is especially tricky because Hinduism contains within it several definitions, often combined in different forms. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam conventionally contain one definition of God, namely an omnibenevolent, omniscient, omnipotent, holy creator and ruler of the universe. Certain sects of Hinduism contain this type of God as well. Another definition of God is *Brahman*, a World Soul that may be impersonal and pantheistic, or a personal *Îvara*, from whom the universe has emanated from and will, in time, return to. God, in Hinduism, may also refer to one of the hundreds of beings within the traditional Vedic pantheon, such as Vi'ou or Siva. These gods (I refer to these with a lower case "g", while any supreme being is referred to with a capital letter) are not necessarily all-powerful or benevolent, but may be omniscient.²

Scope

In this paper, I have decided to cover both *âstika* and *nâstika* schools of thought. Among the *âstika* schools, I have included the Vaicē'ika, Sâmkhya, and Pûrva Mîmâmsa schools. Most of these schools exhibit weak atheism – they simply do not contain a God in their metaphysics. Also, the God they omit is specifically a creator God, or Prajâpati, a personal supreme God. These schools all accept traditional Vedic deities such as Vi'ou or Îiva. The Pûrva Mîmâmsa school, however, goes further and posits arguments designed

to prove such a Being could not exist, thereby falling into the strong atheism category. Among the *nâstika* schools, I omitted Jainism and Buddhism because although they do exhibit atheistic elements, they are not considered under the umbrella of pure Hinduism. However, I included the Câr vâkas because they are not a separate religious system, and are always associated with Hindu thought, albeit a heretical system. The Vedas, particularly the Upaniads, exhibit atheism but are also not included in this discussion. These texts are too large to be commented upon in such a short paper, but more importantly, are subject to a wide range of interpretation. I found it easier to present systems that have interpreted these scriptures on their own rather than tackle the Vedas by myself.

Orthodoxy

One idea that needs to be understood before proceeding in our foray into Hindu philosophy is the concept of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy in Hinduism is not an adherence to a particular creed or specific philosophy; rather, it refers to a philosophy's relationship to the Vedas, the most ancient of Hindu texts. The orthodox, or *âstika*, traditions are those that accept the Vedas – namely the Nyâya, Vaiú e °ika, Sâmkhya, Yoga, Pûrva Mîmâmsa, and Vedânta Systems. This is a fulcrum in Hindu philosophy – different schools contain different, often contradictory, philosophical theories – the main points, even if they are opposing views, will quote the Vedas despite differences in interpretation. However, those that deny the truth of the Vedic revelations are considered *nâstika*, or heterodox. These include the Câr vâka, Buddhist, and Jain doctrines. This is very different from western religions, where a creed is the fulcrum for orthodoxy. In Christianity, for

example, the Nicean Creed is often used as a rule – scriptural adherence is not quite as important as it is in Hinduism.

Atheism is often considered a heterodox system in the west. However, in Hinduism these ideas freely flow through both heterodox and orthodox systems. These elements appear especially in the Vaiçee°ika, S âmkhya, Pûrva Mîmâmsa, and Câr vâka schools.

Câr vâka

The Câr vâka school of Indian atheistic materialism probably best represents a pure school of such thought in the world of Hindu philosophy. The name “Câr vâka ” can be traced to two places in the Hindu mythos. Certain Sanskrit texts refer to a philosopher named Câr vâka who began this school of extreme materialism. In the *Mâhabârata*, Câr vâka is a *râk°asa* friend of the prince Duryodhana who disguised himself as a Brahmin and reviled Yudhi°phira’s triumphant entry into Hastinâpura after the Great War, preaching profane, atheistic, and heretical doctrines. He was soon exposed by real Brahmins and reduced to ashes by the fire of their eyes. The latter Câr vâka most likely represents a metaphorical polemic by the outraged leaders of more orthodox schools of thought.³ This school of thought is also called Lokâyata, from *loka*, the Sanskrit word for “world,” since it holds that only the materialistic world exists and nothing more, such as the soul, heaven, or hell.⁴

Virtually all that is known of this system of thought derives from polemical texts trying their best to refute or deride their doctrines. Some texts include the *Sarvadaræanasamgraha* and the *Sarvasiddhântasârasamgraha* of Çamkara. The school is

referred to in the *Prabodha-candrodaya* (The Rise of the Moon of Intellect), a well-known ancient Indian drama that emphasizes how prominent the movement was. The *Tatvopaplavasimha* is the only text that can be considered an authentic text of the school and includes a series of attacks on all the other schools of Indian thought.⁵

The Cârvãoa school is doctrinally atheistic, anti-religious, nonvedic (*nâstika*), against Brahmanism, rituals, and the caste system. They scorn the Vedic foundations upon which more orthodox schools base their philosophies. This derision is illustrated in the *Sarvadarâinasamgraha*:

If you object that if there be no such thing as happiness in a future world, then how should men of experienced wisdom engage in the *Agnihotra* and other sacrifices, which can only be performed with great expenditure of money and bodily fatigue, your objection cannot be accepted as any proof to the contrary, since the *Agnihotra* are only useful as a means of livelihood, for the Veda is tainted by the 3 faults of untruth, self contradiction, and tautology; then again the imposters who call themselves Vedic pandits are mutually destructive, as the authority of the *jnana-kanda* (section on knowledge) is overthrown by those who maintain that of the *karma-kanda* (section on action), while those who maintain the authority of the *jnana-kanda* reject that of the *karma-kanda*; and lastly, the three Vedas themselves are only the incoherent rhapsodies of knaves, and to this effect runs the popular saying –

‘the *Agnihotra*, the three Vedas, the ascetic’s three staves, and smearing oneself with ashes, - Brhaspati says these are but means of livelihood for those who have no manliness nor sense.’⁶

Also, according to the *Sarvadarāṇasamgraha*, the Cārvākas were against rituals, reasoning that these make no sense. They contend that:

If a beast slain in the *Jyotiḥoma* rite will itself go to heaven,

Why then does not the sacrificer forthwith offer his own father?

If the *Úraddhâ* produces gratification to beings who are dead,

Then here, to, in the case of travelers when they start, it is needless to give
provisions for the journey.

If beings in heaven are gratified by our offering the *úraddhâ* here,

Then why not give the food down below to those who are standing on the
housetop?

While life remains let a man live happily, let him feed on ghee even though he
runs in debt;

When once the body becomes ashes, how can it ever return again?

How is it that he comes not back again, restless for love of his kindred?

Hence it is only as a means of livelihood that *Brahmins* have established here

All the ceremonies for the dead – there is no fruit anywhere.

The three authors of the Vedas were buffoons, knaves, and demons

All the well-known formulas of the pandits, *jarphari*, *turphari*, &c.

And all the obscene rites of the queen commanded in the *Asvamedha*,

These were invented by buffoons, and so all the various kinds of presents to the
priests,

While the eating of flesh was similarly commanded by night prowling demons.⁷

Brahmins are accused of creating the caste system, pilgrimages, and shrines to obtain money for themselves. Brahmins, along with the Vedic teachers, are considered imposters for teaching Vedic lore because they do it solely for providing themselves with a livelihood.⁸

This school is also essentially materialistic. It denies any sort of soul, and furthermore, any other world to which the soul supposedly migrates after death. Only the four material elements of earth, water, fire, and air are real, and thus human beings are also only made of these elements. To quote a description of this from the *Sarvadarāṇasamgraha*:

In this school the four elements, earth, &c., are the original principles; from these alone, when transformed into the body, intelligence is produced, just as the inebriating power is developed from the mixing of certain ingredients; and when these are destroyed, intelligence at once perishes also. They quote the *°ruti* for this [Brhadaranyaka Upani°ad II.iv.12]: “Springing forth from these elements, itself solid knowledge, it is destroyed when they are destroyed, - after death no intelligence remains.” Therefore the soul is only the body distinguished by the attribute of intelligence, since there is no evidence for any self distinct from the body, as such cannot be proved, since this school holds that perception is the only source of knowledge...⁹

Critiques of the Lokāyata system ask how this can be the case, especially since the material elements are unconscious, while a human has consciousness. How can this phenomenon be explained without use of some spiritual element? The Cārvākas defend their position in several ways. First, they contend that stating that a new quality cannot

emerge from a combination of base elements is an assumption – such cases exist. Their example appears in the above quote of the *Sarvadarāṇasamgraha*, where the new intoxicating quality appears in liquor when one mixes ingredients devoid of such a quality in a particular manner.¹⁰

Secondly, the Lokâyatas posit that consciousness must be a product of the material human body. The fact that the body alone is material is admitted by all. The question becomes whether consciousness is a quality of the body and not a spiritual quality of its own. In Indian logic, a causal connection between two phenomenon is established by an *anavaya*, or uniform co-presence, confirmed by a *vyatireka*, or uniform co-absence. For example, fire can be established as the cause of smoke because the two are always together, and similarly the absence of fire also results in the absence of smoke. The same reasoning can be attributed to the body and consciousness. Where there is a body, there is consciousness, and wherever there is an absence of body, there is also an absence of consciousness.¹¹

In Indian logic, there are two counterarguments that were probably used against the materialists. First, by pointing to an absence of consciousness with the presence of body, such as when a human dies. Secondly, by pointing to a presence of consciousness with an absence of the body, such as the transmigrating soul. To the first argument the materialists respond by stating that a corpse is not a fully functioning unit that they mean when they speak of the term “body.” The Lokâyatas also use a different example to circumvent this. A well-nourished body tends to have an improved consciousness, while an absence of nourishment tends to result in a deterioration of consciousness. The latter

counterargument is deemed a circular argument, simply assuming a soul to prove its own existence – according to Cârṡvāka metaphysics, there is no transmigration of the soul.¹²

Lastly, the Cârṡvāka school is characterized by extreme hedonism. This is in direct opposition to the Buddhist school of thought. The Buddhists believe that suffering, or *dukkha*, exists wherever there is life, although it is transitory in nature. Suffering in turn may be avoided by extinguishing desire. A part of avoiding desire is avoiding the extremities of attachment to worldly passion and pleasure on one hand and asceticism and self-mortification on the other hand.¹³ Although the Cârṡvākas agree that suffering must be avoided, and self mortification and asceticism are foolish to engage in, they have a different view on worldly pleasure, as seen in this quote from the *prabodha-candrodaya*:

Materialist: These fools are deceived by the lying *uâstras*, and are fed with the allurements of hope. But can begging, fasting, penance, exposure to the burning heat of the sun, which emaciate the body, be compared with the ravishing embraces of women with large eyes, whose prominent breasts are compressed with one's arms?¹⁴

Pleasure and pain are the central principles of life, and since death is a final close to life, the ethical ideal for the Lokâyatatas is to aim for pleasure, the principle end in life.¹⁵ They respond to the Buddhist theory that pleasure is mixed with pain in the *prabodha-candrodaya*:

Materialist: (*Smiling*) You ignorant boy, such are the fooleries of these unenlightened men. They conceive that you ought to throw away the pleasures of life, because they are

mixed with pain; but what prudent man will throw away unpeeled rice which encloses excellent grain because it is covered with the husk? ¹⁶

The Cârâvâkas advocated a life of enjoyment, encouraging good eating, living, and drinking. "While you live," they declared, "live well, even if you have to borrow; for once cremated there is no return." Due to this outlook some authorities believe that the name "Cârâvâka " derives from epicures (*charva*, 'chewing' or *charu*, 'pleasing') rather than the name of a philosopher. ¹⁷

Vaiçee°ika

Vaiçee°ika is one of several orthodox systems of Hindu thought that contains elements of atheism. This system is best characterized by a spiritual atomic pluralism, and takes its name from the Sanskrit *visesa*, or particularity. The school especially concerns itself with discussion and classification of both spiritual and material metaphysical elements.¹⁸ Objects are composed of invisible and eternal atoms that are incapable of division, called *pramanus*. These atoms are divided into four classes – earth, water, light, and air. While this is similar to the atomic theory of Democritus of Greece, the two systems have their differences. While the Greek atomism leans towards materialism, developing a mechanical view of the universe, the Vaiçee°ikas included spirits in their list of particulars as well as moral principles of the universe.¹⁹ This disqualifies the Vaiçee°ika school as containing elements of materialism, but it is not free from atheism. Many scholars have theorized that the Vaiçee°ika system was originally atheistic, especially since the original text of the school, Kanada's *Vaiçee°ika Sutra*, does not refer to God. Rather, the universe is run through natural or moral laws, and the Vedas

are seen as the work of seers rather than of God. Souls exist, yet they are uncreated and eternal. However, scholars believe that a theistic element soon dominated the system to introduce a regulating force of a supreme being instead of a vague, unspecified moral law.²⁰

īrva Mīmāṃsa Atheism is also found in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsa *darśana* of Hindu philosophy. Mīmāṃsa mainly deals with the meaning of *dharma* in the Vedic sense, as well as sacrifice as a means to gain heaven. *Dharma*, to the Mīmāṃsakas, is what is conducive to the highest good, and one of these goods includes obtaining heaven through *yajñ a*, or sacrifice. *Yajñ a* attains such a great importance in Mīmāṃsa that some commentators remark that the Mīmāṃsakas raise *yajñ a* to replace God. *Yajñ a* alone, instead of God, becomes the catalyst for attaining salvation or heaven. The Mīmāṃsakas do not include a creator God in their metaphysics; the world has always existed and was never created and will never be destroyed. The Mīmāṃsa school goes further and formulates arguments that positively disprove such a God.²¹ The *Úlokavārtika* of Kumarila expands on such argumentation in detail. One section of the text brings up agnostic questions and the impossibility of knowing such a creator God:

And at the time (when no men existed) who would know Him and explain His character to the later created persons? (If it be held that He cannot be perceived by any man, then) without perception (or cognition of some sort, by some person), how can we determine this (fact of His existence)?²²

Another argument comes from the quandary of creation. The *Úlokavârtika* essentially wonders, if the Creator made the Universe, who made the Creator?

Then again, in what manner do you believe the world to have had a beginning in time? (If it be held that it is brought about by a desire on the part of Prajâpati, then) since Prajâpati is (held to be) without a material body, etc., how could He have any desire towards creation? And if He has a body, assuredly this body could not have been created by Himself; thus when we would have to postulate another creator (for this body) and so on (*ad infinitum*). If Prajâpati's body be held to be eternal, then (we ask) – so long as earth (water, etc.,) have not been produced, of what material would that body be composed? ²³

In other sections, the text brings up questions of theodicy:

Then again, in the first place, how is it that He should have a desire to create a world which is fraught with all sorts of troubles to living beings? For at that time (in the beginning of creation) he has not got any guiding agencies, in the shape of the virtue (or sin), etc., of the living beings themselves. Nor can any creator create anything, in the absence of means and instruments ... If it be urged that “without some pain, neither the creation nor the continuation of the world would be possible,” – then (we reply that) when everything depends upon the mere will of the Creator Himself, what would be impossible for Him? ²⁴

Similarly, arguments are used to hamper the existence of a God of creation or destruction from many angles. A creator God cannot depend on laws or outside powers because He

must be an independent agent. He must also have some end in creating the world, because only fools act without a purpose, and God is said to be intelligent, yet this end is not apparent. Also, God is said to be ever content, yet His desire to create the world contradicts his ever-contentedness. No one could know whether or not God created the world because no one except God existed during the time of creation, and his trustworthiness cannot be verified either. Therefore stating that the Vedas come from a Prajâpati cannot be used as valid evidence because this would presuppose a God.²⁵

Sâmkhya

The Sâmkhya school, in its classic state, is also atheistic. Sâmkhya presupposes a dualistic realism comprised of two substances: *prak^oti* and *puru^oa*. The two substances refer to matter and spirit which combine and interact in individuals. According to this school, salvation from the sorrow of life occurs when an individual realizes the difference between these substances. When this knowledge is attained, the two substances disassociate and *puru^oa* becomes emancipated in a state called *kaivalya*, and the individual is liberated.²⁶ Classically, Sâmkhya is indifferent to the supremacy of an absolute spirit. Sâmkhya does not try to establish that God absolutely cannot exist. Rather, it tries to point out that there is no reason to believe in one.

All actions are motivated by self-interest or benevolence. If God is truly free, then he cannot be motivated to create by self-interest, nor would he have the desire to involve Himself with creation. Secondly, God could not be motivated by benevolence because souls before creation have no sorrow from which they must be saved. Also, if He were moved to create out of kindness, He would have only created happy creatures. Thirdly,

material objects cannot issue from an immaterial spirit. Fourthly, belief in Prajâpati conflicts with the immortality of souls because, if there is a creator, then souls could not exist before creation and therefore souls are not truly immortal. Lastly, scriptural references to a Supreme God are, according to the Sâmkhyas, eulogies of liberated souls. The pantheon of Vedic gods is allowed in Sâmkhya metaphysics, but these are neither free nor truly unfettered from the cycle of being (Radhakrishnan Vol. II 316-318).²⁷

Analysis

As an individual who leans towards atheism, it fascinates me to learn of philosophical relatives to the freethought that I know. Freethought as I have learned it tends to associate anti-religious thought with materialism and occasionally hedonism. However, in the eastern traditions, different connections are made, connections that tend to help me push the boundaries of western thinking. This fascination especially extends to atheism as it appears in the *âstika* schools of thought. In the West, the inclusion of atheism tends to exclude a philosophy from the orthodoxy of religion. However, while this occurred to the Câr vâkas, it did not occur to the Vaiú e °ika, Mîmâmsa, and Sâmkhya systems. These schools include a dualism and spirituality. While atheism in the West tends to reject not just God, but spirits and souls as well, *âstika* atheism believes in the immortality of the souls as a groundwork for their philosophies. In fact, it is this groundwork that invalidates a creator God. Rather than going hand in hand, souls and God contradict each other!

The soul's characteristic of immortality seems to differ. In the West, a soul is immortal because its existence extends infinitely into the future. Thus, this does not

impede creation. However, in the *âstika* schools, immortality consists of a soul existing infinitely into the future and the past. Therefore, any creation contradicts with a soul's immortality by this definition; souls must be uncreated.

The Vaiçee°ika school makes another interesting move in its metaphysics. In the West, atheistic doctrines create a mechanical view of the material universe, while spiritual philosophies contain a supreme God that presides over the world. The Vaiçee°ikas, however, mix these two views – the spiritual realm acts exactly like the material realm. Just as physical laws govern material objects, so too are spirits and souls governed by mechanistic spiritual laws; a presiding God is not needed.

The Mîmâmsakas make a similar move. To some sects, the *yajñ a* takes precedence over a God. While, in many religions, God is the being that decides who goes to heaven, or accepts sacrifices, some sects of Mîmâmsa believe that the sacrifice itself is all that is needed. Mechanistic spiritual laws accept the sacrifice and deem a person fit to enter heaven. Other sects only accept the Vedic pantheon for the purpose of accepting the *yajñ a* while a supreme God is not needed.

In general, it seems as though the line between atheism and theism in Hindu thought is blurred. Brahman, often described as the supreme God of Hinduism, is described as very different from the Judeo-Christian or Islamic representation of God in that it is unconscious, more an inanimate force than a powerful being, very similar to “The Force” of *Star Wars* fame. The line of distinction lies in the question of what exactly constitutes Godhood. An atheist may well believe in a force, such as the one described in the Grand Unification Theory of theoretical physics, i.e., the prime force that combines several major forces in physics. In this sense, the atheist may well believe in

what is equivalent to the Supreme God of Hinduism. Is there really a difference? The only difference I can conceive of is the concept of holiness. To the believer, the supreme God Brahman is holy, worthy of worship, and sacred. On the other hand, the theoretical physicist's Grand Unification force is simply an aspect of scientific curiosity, albeit intense curiosity and awe. Therefore, it seems that if the line is drawn at this point, it must be drawn at an individual's personal interpretation. Either he views this force as worthy of worship or he views it only as an object of scientific curiosity without any personal significance. However, the line is still very blurry. At what point does awe of a force constitute imbuing it with holiness? The famous cosmologist and atheist Carl Sagan comes to mind when I think of this blurry distinction. Although he was a self-labeled atheist, Sagan's writings are filled with his scientific awe of the universe and its principles. From a Hindu perspective, it is very hard to state whether Sagan is a theist or an atheist.

APPENDIX OF SANSKRIT TERMS

These are definitions which I felt were either not defined thoroughly enough in the preceding text or would give the reader further insight into the material. These words were defined with the help of Klaus K. Klostermaier's *A Concise Encyclopedia of Hinduism*.²⁸

<i>Agnihotra</i>	Fire sacrifice, the most common form of Vedic sacrifice
<i>Astika</i>	Literally, someone who affirms "it is", i.e. one who accepts the Veda as normative, an adherent of one of the so-called 'orthodox six systems', namely; Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa, and Vedanta
<i>Asvamedha</i>	Vedic horse sacrifice, a complex ritual stretching out over a year, conducted by kings desirous of establishing their supremacy over their realm
<i>Brahman</i>	The supreme being, universal consciousness, the highest reality. It is characterized by consciousness, infinity, omnipotence, eternity, imminence in all things, blissfulness, and unfathomableness. It is unborn and uncreated, and the source and ultimate destiny of everything
<i>Darsana</i>	'theory', 'philosophical system' Especially one of the six orthodox systems
<i>Dharma</i>	'law' Cosmic and social order and the rules pertaining to it. It is the central concern of Hinduism

<i>Dukkha</i>	Suffering
<i>Duryodhana</i>	‘hard to conquer’ eldest son of Dhrtarastra and leader of the Kauravas in the Great War of the Mahabharata
<i>Hastinapura</i>	capital city of the Kauravas in the Mahabharata
<i>Isvara</i>	‘Lord’ A generic title given to the creator of the world
<i>Jyotistoma</i>	A special Vedic sacrifice for the deceased
<i>Kaivalya</i>	A state of aloneness, or perfect freedom which a liberated individual experiences when realizing the difference between <i>purusa</i> and <i>prakrti</i> in Samkhya
<i>Mahabarata</i>	‘the great [war of the] Bharatas’ The longest epic ever written, it constitutes a veritable encyclopedia of Hinduism. Consists of the Great War between the Pandavas and Kauravas, ethical discourses, and descriptions of large parts of northern India
<i>Nastika</i>	A heretic, i.e. someone who denies the supreme authority of the Veda; follower of a non-orthodox system, such as Carvaka, Buddhism or Jainism
<i>Prajapati</i>	‘Lord of creatures’ Progenitor, in a generic sense. In the Veda, Indra and other <i>devas</i> are called Prajapati. Later the title is applied to Brahma, the creator
<i>Prakrti</i>	‘nature’

	In a general sense, matter, generative substance
<i>Purusa</i>	In Samkhya, spirit, the counterpart of matter
<i>Raksasa</i>	A goblin, evil spirit, fiend, and enemy of the Aryas. They play a major role in Hindu literature as disturbers of peace and as a constant threat to sages in their forest retreats
<i>Sastras</i>	‘teaching’, ‘rule’ An authoritative source for Hindu <i>dharma</i> , used either as a collective term or as a designation of a single work, especially one dealing with law
<i>Smrti</i>	‘what has been remembered’ Tradition, as opposed to <i>sruti</i> . In a generic sense, all authoritative writings pertaining to Hindu tradition that are not <i>sruti</i> , i.e all works composed after the Veda, such as epics and Puranas. In a specific sense, works dealing mainly with laws ascribed to inspired lawgivers
<i>Sruti</i>	‘what has been heard’, ‘revelation’ The most sacred part of the scriptures of Hinduism. It is the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice: it can be interpreted but not superseded or bypassed
<i>Upanisads</i>	The fourth and last part of the Vedas containing mystical teachings
<i>Yajna</i>	Sacrifice in the general sense

Yudhishthira

'firm in battle'

The oldest of the five Pandavas, a model of calmness, prudence, and justice. After the Great War, he was formally crowned emperor of Hastinapura and reigned righteously for many years

NOTES

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8. Walker, *op.cit.*, p. 229.
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17. Radhakrishnan, S. *Indian Philosophy: Volume 1*. Oxford University Press. New York, NY; 1999. p. 281.

18. Radhakrishnan and Moore, *op.cit.*, p. 386.
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20. *Ibid.*, p. 226.
21. Klostermaier, Klaus K. *Hinduism: A Short History*. Oneworld Press. Oxford, England; 2000. p. 79.
22. Radhakrishnan and Moore, *op.cit.*, p. 498.
23. *Ibid.*, p.498.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 499.
25. Radhakrishnan Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 425.
26. Klostermaier, *op.cit.* p. 242-244.
27. Radhakrishnan Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 316-318.
28. All terms in this Appendix pull directly from Klostermaier, Klaus K. *A Concise Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Oneworld Press. Oxford, England; 1998.