

Indian Spirituality

Teacher Training

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* All spirituality addresses the question, “Who am I?”

- **YOGA:** To yoke or join oneself with all life.
 - * Yoga’s goal is Moksha, liberation from cyclical existence (samsara)
 - * Moksha occurs by transcending the ego and realizing the Self
 - * Sat, Citta, Ananda (Being, Consciousness, Bliss)
 - * Patanjali: wrote “The Yoga Sutra”
- **VEDANTA:** Monist view of the world; all things are in fact one thing.
 - * Neti, neti (not this, not this): reality is none of the things that one supposes
 - * Upanishads: texts that explain in detail oneself and relationship to all things
 - * Macrocosm/Microcosm: the entire universe can be studied within oneself
 - * Maya: the world of form is but an illusion; and an underlying truth exists
 - * Shankara: wrote “The Crest Jewel of Discrimination”
- **TANTRA:** Everything can act as a vehicle to growth, “the fast path”.
 - * “Energy Spirituality”: attention on bringing kundalini (energy) up one’s spine
 - * Often contains both deeply philosophical & sexual (masculine/femine) elements
 - * Shiva/Shakti; masculine/feminine; lingam/yoni
 - * When practicing, attention is often on pranayama practices
 - * Can involve a deliberate attempt to shift one’s identity to that of a chosen deity
 - * Also called: Tantrayana & Vajrayana
- **HINDUISM:** A monist (one thing) worldview: not monotheism (one God).
 - * Holds that there is one thing Brahman, that expresses itself infinitely
 - * Trinity: Brahma (creation), Vishnu (preservation), Shiva (transformation)
 - * Immanent Religion: heaven is here; all that is needed is to shift one’s perception
 - * Orthopraxis: Hinduism is based on daily practices
 - * Mahabharata; great Indian epic that contains the Bhagavad Gita
- **BUDDHISM:** A subscribed path to liberate beings from suffering.
 - * The term ‘Buddha’ means awakened one; to awaken is Buddhism’s goal
 - * Four Noble Truths: suffering exists, it is caused, a cause can be stopped, a path to do so
 - * Eight-fold Path: view, intention, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, focus
 - * Shunyata: emptiness of inherent existence; all things arise dependent upon prior things
 - * The Dhammapada: short collection of some of the Buddha’s central ideas
- **JAINISM:** Ascetic tradition that holds non-violence as the highest good.
 - * Four Vows: not to kill, not to lie, not to steal, not to own
 - * Rejects the concept of maya (the world of form is an illusion)
 - * Finds its ethical structure from cause & effect (karma yoga based)
 - * Union of matter & emotion

Jonathan has authored two books, *Poetic Listening* and *Learning To Listen: Simplifying Spiritual Practice*. He has also produced three practice CDs – one for meditation, another for Sanskrit chant, and a third on vinyasa yoga. For permission to reproduce this work, send an email to: jonathan@learningtolisten.info.