



The Beliefs of Hinduism

Brahman (oneness of all)

Atman (the true self)

Maya (illusion)

Brahman

- *Brahman* is:
 - The underlying unity of all things
 - The power that sustains the universe and its deepest reality
 - That power that unites and sustains all things is “Consciousness”

What does it mean to be “One”?

Look at this beautiful painting. The paint is one substance, yet the colours and objects are many.



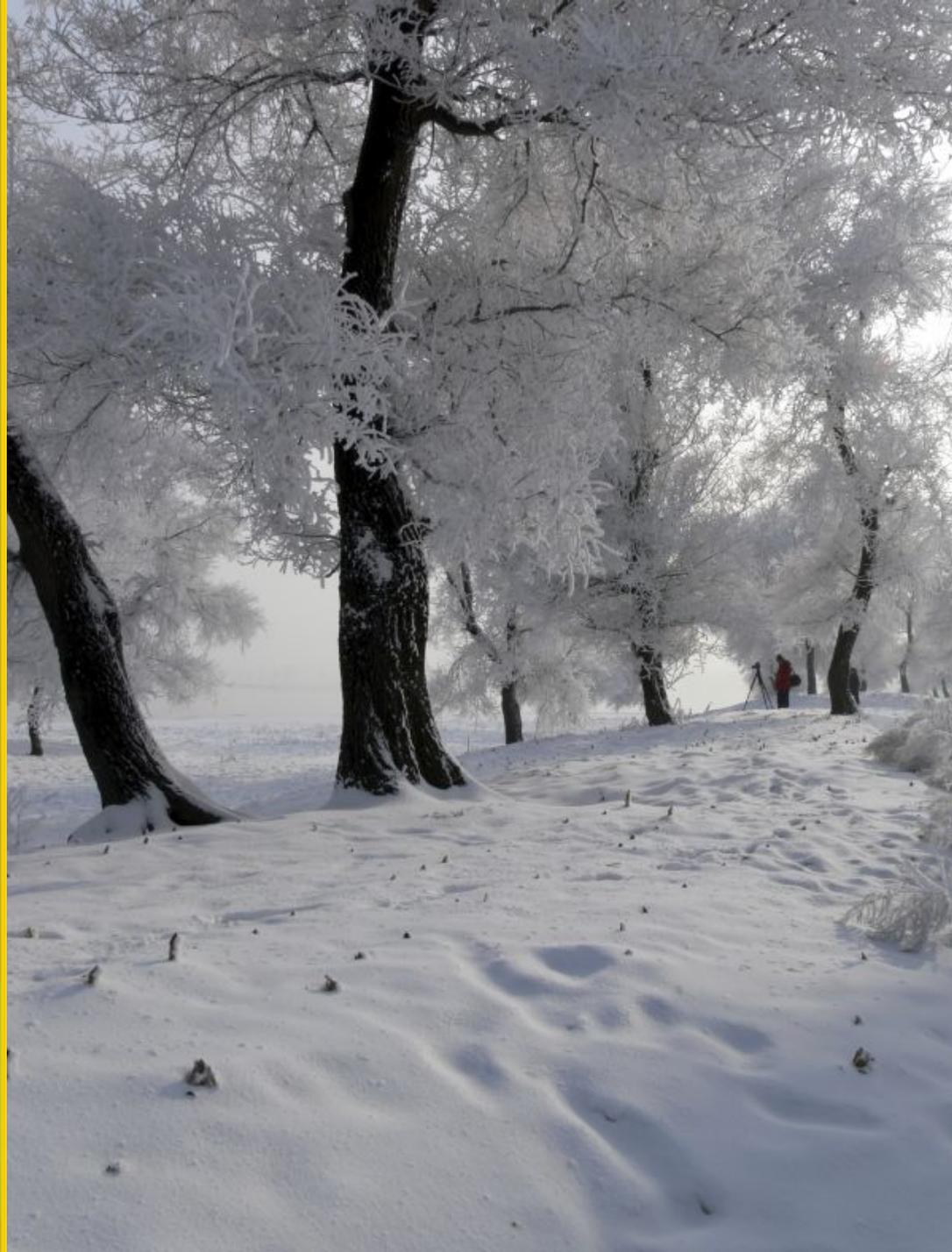
The Ocean is One Body of Water

Yet each drop is individual





As the wave
churns and
crashes, it
creates
hundreds of
drops of
water.
Each drop
appears
separate and
unique.



Some
drops
evaporate
with the
heat of the
sun and
fall to the
earth as
rain or
snow.

Some drops live for a while in flowers and trees, nourishing life.



The drops of water flow into rivers and streams on their journey back to the ocean.



Union with *Brahman* comes through awareness of *atman*.





Brahman

- What sustains this unity of all things is Consciousness.
- Consciousness is:
 - Subjective experience
 - Awareness
 - Wakefulness
- The search for *Brahman* is the search for reality.

What is *Atman*?

The True Self

- Remember that drop of water that came from the ocean.
- Drops of water are found in everything, even rocks.
- Humans are between 55 to 75 percent water.





Atman is Your True Self

- *Atman* is a drop of the divine *Brahman*.
- *Atman* exists within a person.
- Therefore, all persons are a part of the divine.
- Hindus believe it is important to become aware of this divine spark of *Brahman* within themselves and within all things.
- They must overcome illusion.

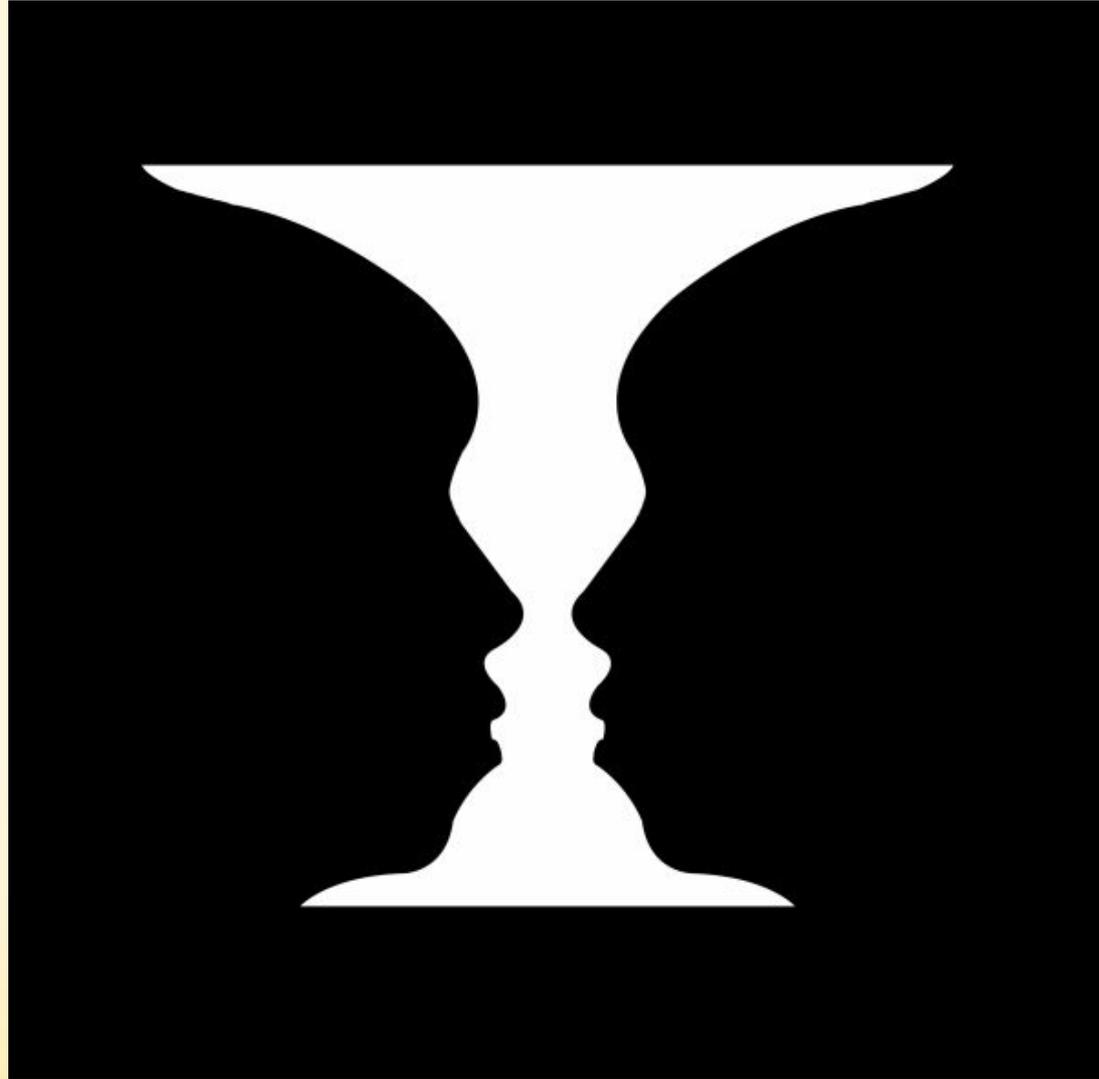
What is *Maya*?

- The Hindu word for illusion is “*maya*.”
- For Hindus, everything we see, smell, touch, hear, or think is illusion (*maya*).
- Seeing things as separate and not One (*Brahman*) is a result of *maya*.

What do you see when you look at this picture?



Do you see a chalice or two
faces? Look Again.





Maya (Illusion)

- Which is real and which is illusion?
- There is no correct answer—faces or chalice—because both possibilities can be seen.
- *Maya*, or illusion, keeps us from knowing the truth.
- For Hindus, *maya* keeps a person from seeing the divine oneness (*Brahman*) that surges through all things.



Brahman, Atman, and Freedom

- Hindus believe that true freedom comes when a person is aware of *Brahman* (*atman*) in all things.
- How might being aware of God's presence in all things change a person's understanding of his or her relationship with others and with all of creation?