Document 1 is from Emperor Akbar, grandson to Babur and 3rd Emperor of the Mughals. “I perceive that there are varying customs and beliefs of varying religious paths... But the followers of each religion regard the institution of their own religion as better than those of any other... wherefore I desire on appointed days the books of all the religious laws be brought forward, and the scholars meet and hold discussion, so that I may hear from them, and that each one may determine which is the truest and mightiest religion.”

According to this account, what was Akbar attempting to do?

Document 2 is an excerpt from Jahangir, Akbar’s son and Mughal emperor from 1605-1627. He is most noted for increasing the size of the empire by conquering new lands and continuing his father’s policies. He also wrote a memoir that was intended to glorify himself and set an example to his successors. While it covered the first thirteen years of his reign, his addiction to alcohol and opium eventually stripped him of his ability to lead effectively. In this passage, he retold a conversation he had with Akbar regarding Hindus in the Empire.

“I find myself a powerful monarch, a shadow of God upon earth. I have seen that he bestows the blessing of his gracious providence upon all his creatures without distinction... with all of the human race, with all of God’s creatures, I am at peace; why then should I permit myself to be the cause of any molestation or aggression to any one?... I have thought it therefore my wisest plan to leave those men alone. Neither is it to be forgotten that the class of whom we are speaking... are usefully engaged, either in the pursuit of the arts or science, or of improvements for the benefit of mankind...”

How did Jahangir view his Hindu subjects? What were his reasons for allowing them to practice their religion?

Document 3 was the Akbarnama (Book of Akbar) by Abul Fazl, Akbar’s advisor from 1759 to 1602. Abel, like Akbar, was religiously tolerant and intended to present a favorable view of Hindus to his Muslim subjects.

“The Hindus one and all believe in the unity of God, and as to the reverence they pay to images of stone and wood and the like, which simpletons regard as idolatry, it is not so... In all their ceremonial observances and usage... they regard the pure essence of the Supreme Being as transcending the idea of power in operation.”

How did Abul Fazl address the charge that Hindus are idol worshippers?
Document 4 This painting circa 1640 is an illustration of Lord Krishna raising Mount Girdavhan on one finger. It coincided with the rise of a movement by Hindus known as the “Way of Devotion.” This movement downplayed caste distinctions found in Hindu society in favor of overwhelming love and devotion of a single Supreme God. In the painting, Krishna is protecting farmers from flooding caused by an angered god, Indra. According to the story, Indra realizes his error, ended the flood, and himself became a follower of Krishna.

How did this painting combine both principles of Islam and Hinduism?