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*hinduism*

- Began in India around 1500 B.C.
- The world's oldest religion.
- There are 750 million Hindus in the world today.
- Most Hindus still live in India.

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*hindu beliefs*

- Polytheistic.
- Brahman
  - a transcendent power beyond the universe.
  - is present in everything
  - is the power which upholds and supports everything
- Other gods are aspects of this supreme power.
- Altogether, there are 33 million gods in Hinduism.

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*trimurti*

- Trimurti is the Hindu "triumvirate."
- Three primary gods
- Responsible for the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world.

A colorful illustration of the Hindu Trimurti. On the left is Brahma, the creator, with four faces and four arms, seated on a lotus. In the center is Vishnu, the preserver, with a blue complexion and four arms, seated on a lotus. On the right is Shiva, the destroyer, with a white complexion and four arms, seated on a lotus. They are all adorned with jewelry and are set against a blue background with a white lotus at the bottom.

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*brahma*

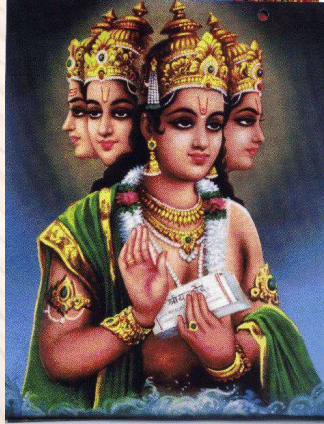
- First god in the Trimurti.
- Creator of the universe and everything in it.
- Least worshipped of the three Trimurti gods.



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*brahma*


- Depicted with four heads.
- Had five heads, but Shiva cut one of them off.
- Not to be confused with “Brahman” or “Brahman” caste.



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*brahma*


- Sometimes he is shown with four arms.
- Sometimes he is bearded.



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*विष्णु*

- The second god in the Trimurti.
- The preserver and protector of the universe.
- Hindus believe he comes to the earth in troubled times and restore the balance of good and evil.



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**राईकन**



- What does he look like?
  - Blue skin
  - Four arms
  - Always carries certain items:
    - Conch shell: symbolizes creation
    - Chakra (disc): symbolizes the mind
    - Lotus flower: represents freedom and beauty
    - Mace: strength
  - Often shown with snakes above his head and below his feet.

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**इशिव**



- The third god in the Trimurti.
- The destroyer
- He is the source of both good and evil.
  - He destroys in order to allow for recreation.

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**इशिव**



- He is always shown with the following features:
  - He is blue.
  - Third eye
  - Cobra necklace
  - Three lines across forehead
  - Crescent moon in hair.
  - Trident
  - Often dressed in simple clothing (animal skins)

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**इशिव**



Sometimes Shiva is depicted dancing.


- Shiva Nataraja (Lord of the Dance)

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**Ganesha**

- Remover of obstacles
- One of the most worshipped gods in Hinduism.

A colorful painting of Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity, seated on a throne. He has four arms, holding various symbolic objects like a sword, an axe, a bowl, and a conch shell. He is adorned with a large, ornate golden crown and jewelry.

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A painting of Lord Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu. He is depicted as a young man with a fair complexion, wearing a yellow dhoti and a blue shawl. He has four arms, holding a bow, an arrow, a mace, and a conch shell. He is adorned with a golden crown and jewelry.

**Rama**


- An avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.
- hero of the Hindu epic called the *Ramayana*.

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**Krishna**

- Another avatar of Vishnu.
- Shown as a boy playing the flute.
- Teacher of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

A painting of Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu. He is depicted as a young boy with a blue complexion, wearing a green dhoti and a peacock feather in his crown. He is playing a flute and is adorned with a golden crown and jewelry.

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**Saraswati**

- Goddess of learning
- Wife of Brahma
- Hindu students pray to her before taking exams.

A painting of Goddess Saraswati, the Hindu deity of knowledge, music, and art. She is depicted with a fair complexion, wearing a white sari with a gold border. She has four arms, holding a veena, a book, a conch shell, and a lotus flower. She is adorned with a golden crown and jewelry.

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ਗੁਰੂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਭਗਵੰਤ



**Lakshmi**

- goddess of good fortune, wealth, and well-being.
- Wife of Vishnu

The image shows the Hindu goddess Lakshmi seated on a large pink lotus flower. She has four arms: her upper right hand holds a lotus flower, her upper left hand holds a conch shell, her lower right hand is in the Varada mudra (boon-giving gesture), and her lower left hand holds a golden pot. She is adorned with a crown, jewelry, and a green and gold sari. Two white elephants are visible in the background.

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ਗੁਰੂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਭਗਵੰਤ



**Durga**

- Protective mother of the universe

The image depicts the Hindu goddess Durga with ten arms. She is seated on a lion. Her arms hold various weapons and symbols, including a trident, a sword, a mace, a conch shell, a lotus flower, and a bowl. She is wearing a red and pink sari and a crown. The background shows a landscape with mountains and a blue sky.

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ਗੁਰੂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਭਗਵੰਤ



**Indra**

- King of Heaven and lord of the gods
- a protector and provider of rain.

The image shows the Hindu god Indra riding a white elephant. He is wearing a crown and a blue and gold outfit. He has four arms, holding a mace, a bow, and a conch shell. The elephant is decorated with a purple and gold saddle.

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ਗੁਰੂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਭਗਵੰਤ



**Agni**

- God of fire
- Presides over all fire rituals

The image depicts the Hindu god Agni riding a brown bull. He has three faces and four arms, holding a mace, a conch shell, and a bowl. He is wearing a crown and a red and gold outfit. The bull is decorated with a purple and gold saddle.

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## other hindu deities



### Hanuman

- The monkey king
- Helper of Rama
- Features in the epic *Ramayana*

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## other hindu deities



### Kali

- Goddess of death and time.
- An incarnation of Parvati, the wife of Shiva

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## sacred writings

- The *Vedas* collections of Sanskrit hymns.
  - c. 1500-500 BC.
  - Written down c. 600 BC
- The *Upanishads*: the mystical and philosophical teachings of Hinduism.
  - composed between 800-200 BC

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## sacred writings

- The *Mahabharata*: one of the great epic poems of ancient India.
  - The story is about the battle of one family over a kingdom in northern India.
  - written between 300 BC and AD. 300.
- The *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of God)
  - part of the *Mahabharata*.
  - A dialogue between Krishna and the hero Arjuna on the meaning of life.

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*kriṣṇa and arjuna*



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*sacred writings*

- The *Ramayana*:
  - written 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC
  - tells story of Rama, and his wife, Sita
  - Rama and Sita are generally seen as ideal examples of great manly heroism and wifely devotion.
  - Reciting the *Ramayana* is considered a religious act, and scenes from the epic are portrayed throughout India and Southeast Asia.

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*rama and sita*



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*hindu concepts*

- Dharma: the power that maintains society
  - People maintain dharma by living virtuously and fulfilling their duty.
- Reincarnation: the belief that the soul repeatedly goes through a cycle of being born into a body, dying, and being reborn again in a new body.
- Karma: a force that determines the quality of each life, depending on how well one behaved in a past life.
  - Hinduism says we create karma by our actions on earth. If you live a good life, you create good karma. If you live a bad life, you create bad karma.

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### *hindu concepts*

- Samsara: the cycle of rebirth
- Moksha: Freedom from samsara
  - Each time a Hindu soul is born into a better life, it has the opportunity to improve itself further, and get closer to ultimate liberation (i.e. freedom).
  - One attains Moksha when one has "overcome ignorance", and no longer desires anything at all.
  - The ones who reach this state no longer struggle with the cycle of life and death.

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### *hindu duties*

- Each Hindu has 4 daily duties:
  - Revere the deities
  - Respect ancestors
  - Respect all beings
  - Honor all humankind

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