

Hinduism: History & Belief

A talk by

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to

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Hinduism: History & Belief

Talk overview

- Hinduism timeline
- Key words & concepts in Hinduism
- Most important God's in Hinduism
- Hindu scriptures
- Hindu's key belief's
- Hindu influence in Popular Western culture
- Comparing Hinduism with Christianity
- Summary of Hinduism

Hinduism: History & Belief

Hinduism origin & timeline

Hinduism: History & Belief



Hinduism originated in North East India around the river Indus (Sindhu)
There are no known founding Father's of the religion.

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Timeline of Major World Religions



~ 2000 BC

Abraham

Genesis 15:5 ...Look up at the sky and count the stars....So shall your offspring be.

Oldest Hindu Scriptures

~ 1700 – 1100 BC

Judaism

30 AD
Jesus

Christianity

622 AD
Muhammad

Islam

Hinduism

Humanity
2010

33%

23%

14%

2000 BC

1000 BC

1 AD

1000 AD

2000 AD

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Key words & concepts in Hinduism

Hinduism: keywords

- Brahman – the one supreme cosmic spirit that fills the Universe
- Karma – good life leads to good rebirth in next life
- Samsara – endless cycle of death & rebirth
- Moksha – release from cycle of rebirth by following the path of devotion, insight, & action so person becomes united with Brahman
- Dharma – a person's moral duty
- Atman – eternal soul is a person's essential self
- Ahimsa – non-violence and respect for all living things

Hinduism: History & Belief

Most important God's in Hinduism

Hinduism: History & Belief

- Some Hindu's worship many God's whilst others treat them as emanating from the One Cosmic Spirit BRAHMAN.
- So different forms of Hinduism can be viewed as both Monotheistic (One God) or Polytheistic (many Gods)
- **All Hindu's share the ideas of reincarnation & the release from this cycle once enlightenment has been attained.**

Hinduism: History & Belief



Brahma

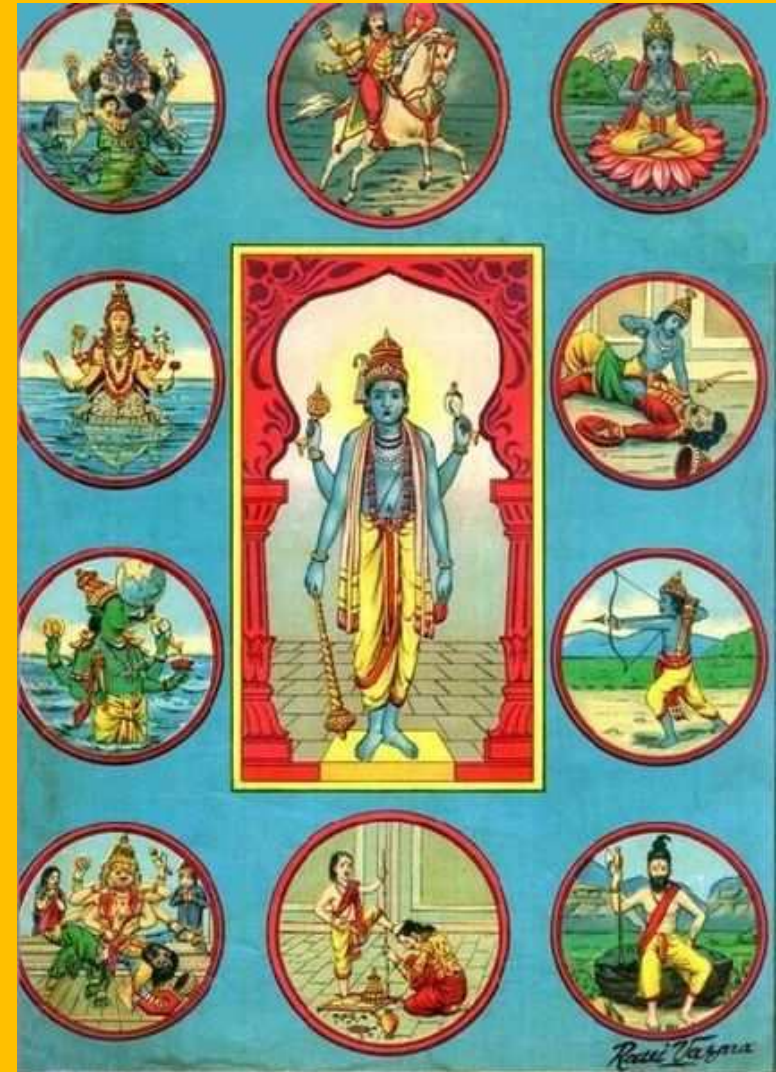
Vishnu

Shiva

Hinduism: History & Belief

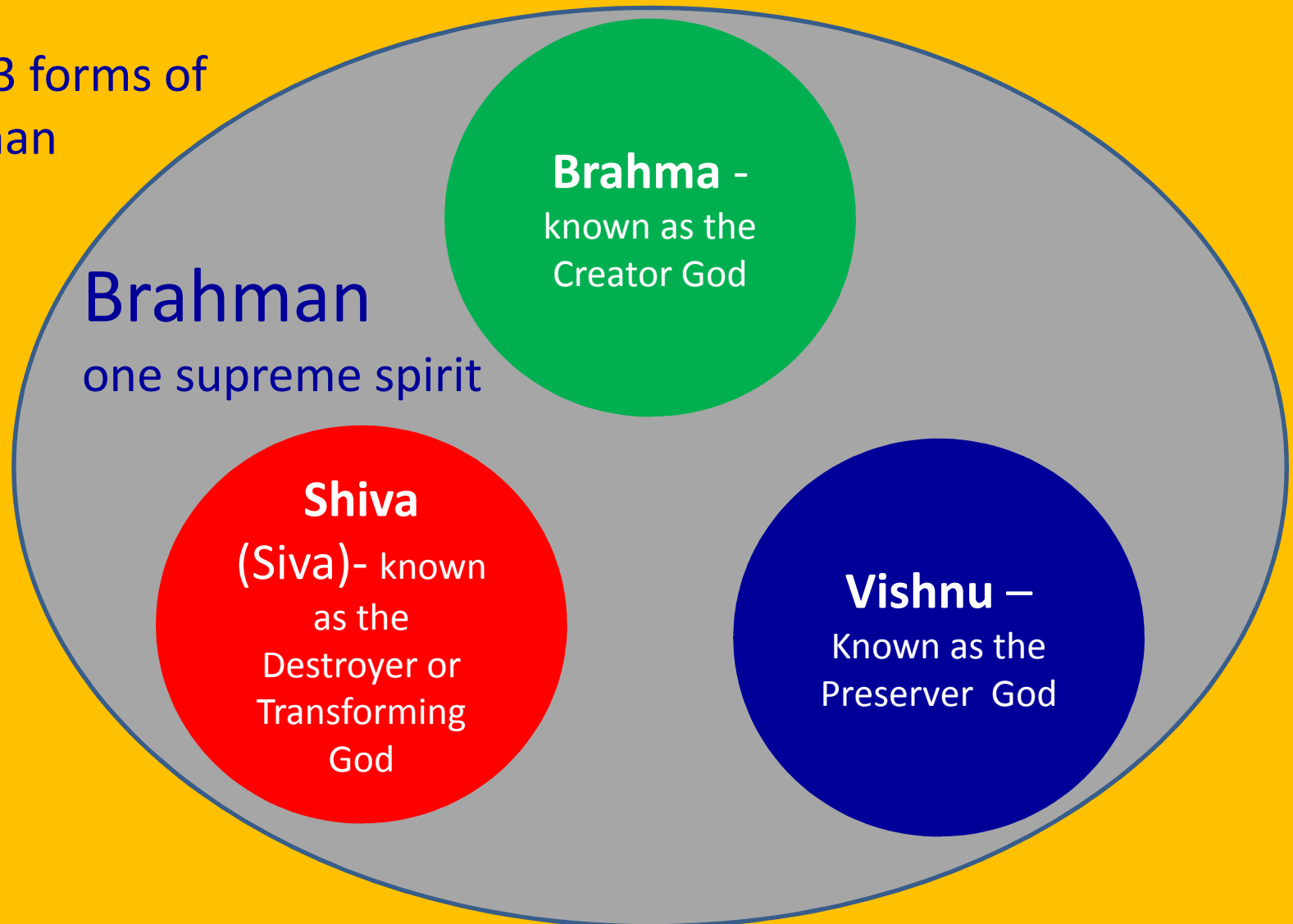
Avatars (Incarnations) of Preserver God Vishnu

1. **Matsya** (fish)---saves Sage Manu from floods.
2. **Kurma** (tortoise)---sustains the earth on his back.
3. **Varaha** (boar)---brings the earth back from the bottom of the ocean
4. **Narasimha** (man-lion)---kills the demon
5. **Vamana** (dwarf)---the first human incarnation
6. **Parasurama** (the warrior with an axe)---s
7. **Rama**---kills Ravana, the demon king of Lanka.
8. **Sri Krishna**---the most popular incarnation
9. **Buddha**---Hindus consider Buddha as an incarnation
10. **Kalkin** (a man on a white horse)---this incarnation is yet to come and will mark the end of all evil in the world for 10,000 years.



Hinduism: History & Belief

Trimurti- 3 forms of
the Brahman



Hinduism: History & Belief

- Brahman – the one supreme, universal Spirit that is the origin and support of the universe . All things emanate from the Brahman.

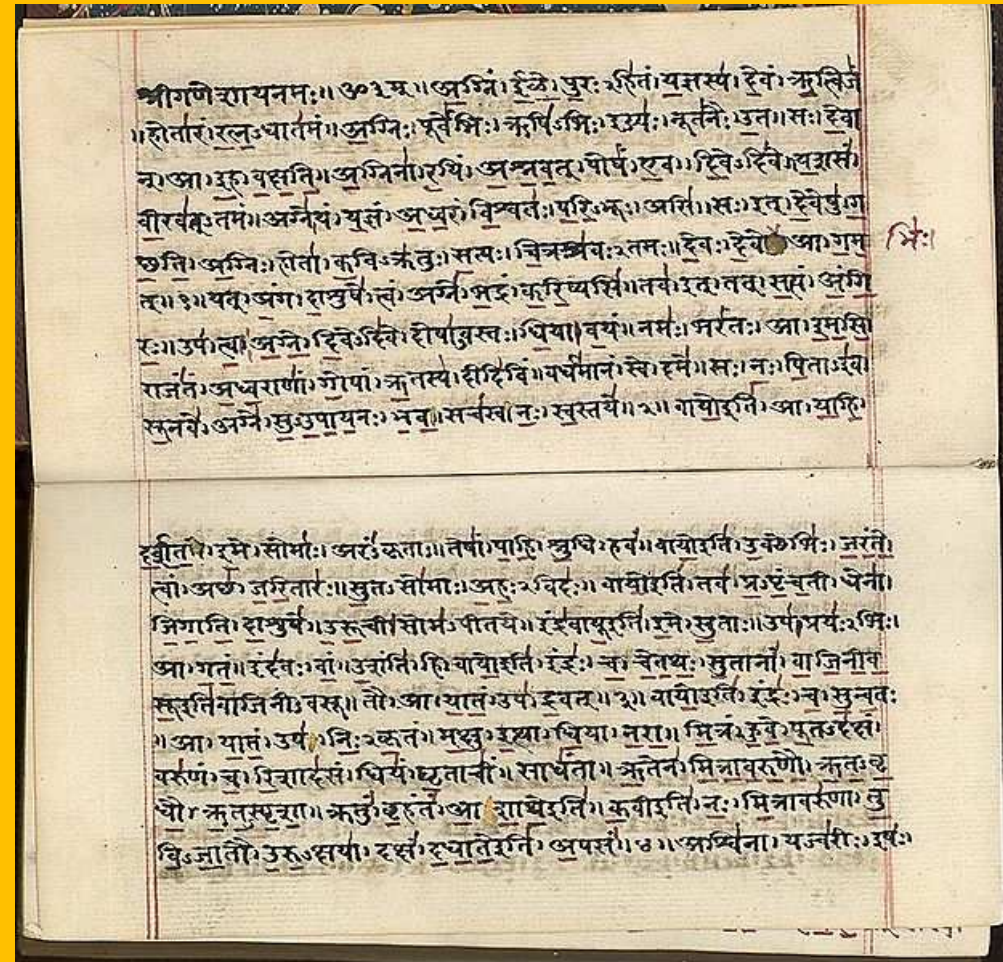


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Hindu scriptures

Hinduism: Sacred Texts

- Earliest Hindu scriptures Rigveda ~ 1700 BC written in Sankrit text.
- *Shruti* –that which is revealed. Includes the Vedas
- Veda – means knowledge
- *Smriti*–that which is remembered



Hinduism: History & Belief

Hindu's key belief's & Festivals

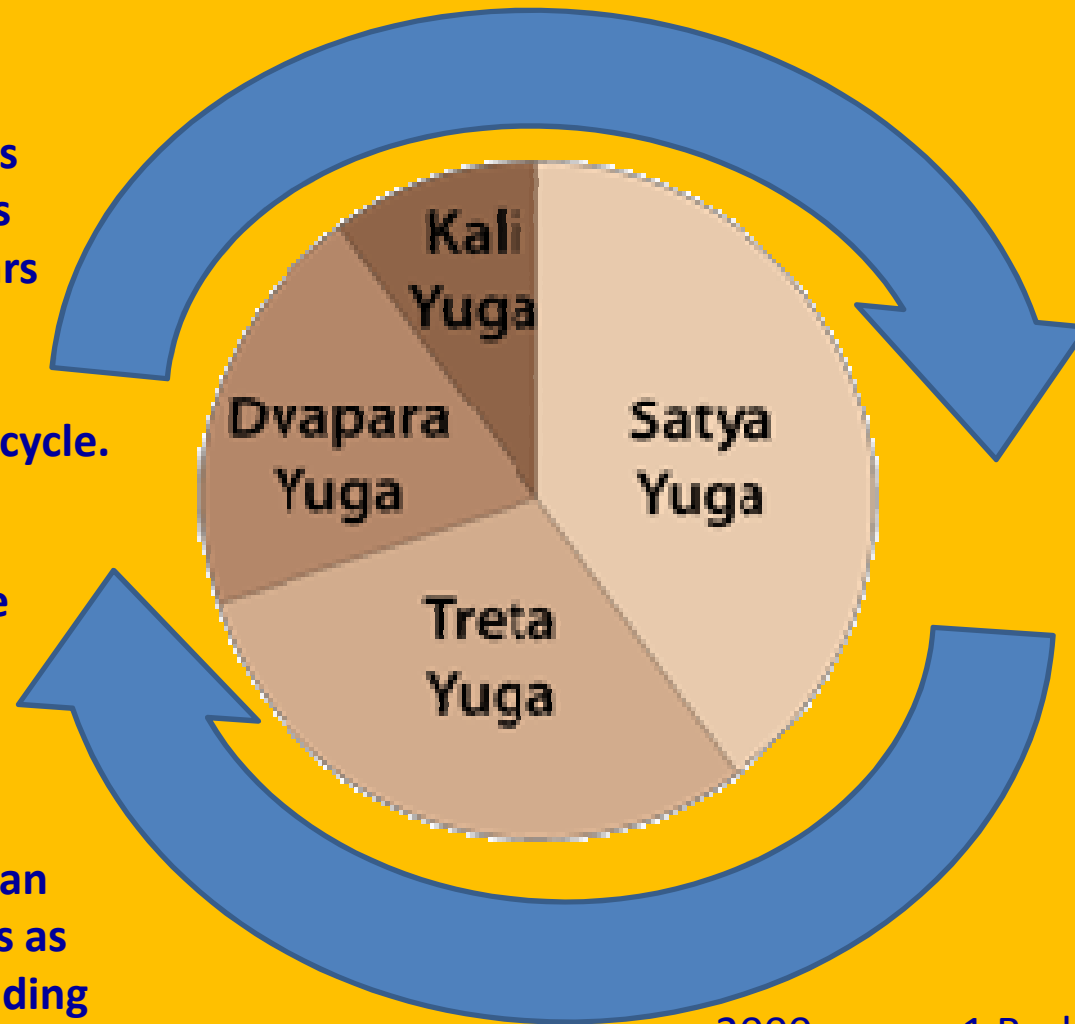
Hinduism: Time in Hinduism

Satya Yuga 1,728,000 years
Treta Yuga 1,296,000 years
Dvapara Yuga 864,000 years
Kali Yuga 432,000 years

Total 4,320,000 One *yuga* cycle.

Satya Yuga – a golden age
life spans 100,000 yrs.

Kali Yuga – said to have
started about 3,000 BC
Age of discord comes to an
End when Vishnu returns as
Kalkin (his 10th Avatar) riding
On a white horse.



2000 yuga = 1 Brahman day/night
= 2 kapla.

Hinduism: different sects

Hinduism is not a single set of belief's but has many different forms but all share the ideas of reincarnation & the release from this cycle once enlightenment has been reached.

Shaivism

Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are not Deities different from Shiva, but rather are forms of Shiva.

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism generally does not accept the Trimurti concept. For example, the Dvaita school holds Vishnu alone to be the supreme God, with Shiva subordinate

Śrauta

The Saura sect that worships Surya as the supreme person of godhead. Doesn't accept the Trimurti. Surya is Brahman in the morning, Vishnu in the afternoon and Shiva in the evening.

Smartism

Smartism is a denomination of Hinduism that places emphasis on a group of five deities rather than just a single deity.¹

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In Hinduism, there is not just one purpose of human life, but four:

- **Dharma** - fulfilling one's purpose
- **Artha** - prosperity
- **Kama** - desire, sexuality, enjoyment
- **Moksha** - enlightenment

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Festival of Ganga Dashara at Har-ki-Pauri, Haridwar, 2005

Hinduism: Festivals

- Diwali (festival of lights) held on the date of the new moon in either October or November. (Diwali was on 13th Nov in 2012)
- One story says the festival is celebrated on the occasion of Lord Krishna and his wife Satyabhama killing a demon Narakasura.
- Krishna said to have had a virgin birth (~ 3228 BC) and is the incarnation (Avatar) of the preserver God Vishnu



Hinduism: History & Belief

Hindu influence in Popular Western culture

Hinduism: History & Belief



**Eternal struggle between the forces of light & darkness
The Force is in all things just like Hindu Cosmic Spirit Brahman**

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Avatar film premiered in London on December 10, 2009



Colour blue signifies
Vishnu's
infinite attributes



Hindu God Vishnu has blue skin and
takes on many forms known as Avatars

Hinduism: History & Belief

Comparing Hinduism with Christianity

Hinduism: Hinduism & Christianity

Doctrine	Christianity	ref.	Hindu	Comments
Creation	By God	Gen 1:1	By Brahma	Brahma is the creator God in the Hinduism.
Nature of God	Trinity	Matt 28:19	Trimurti	Hindu Trimurti (Great Trinity) is personified in 3 forms (Brahma the creator, Vishnu - the preserver, Shiva - the destroyer or transformer) of the Brahman - the One Supreme Cosmic Spirit .
Nature of Man	Fallen, sinful	Rom 5:12	Man's problem is ignorance	Man soul separate from realising he is part of Brahman Cosmic Spirit. When man realizes that he is part of God, he will leave the cycle of reincarnation and will achieve the state of moksha or enlightenment.
Jesus Christ	Saviour, Eternal Son of God	Mt 1:21 Lk 1:35	Avatar	Hindus believe that Jesus was the incarnation of a Hindu deity in human form. They will gladly worship Him along with other gods.
Bible	Only inspired Word of God	2 Tim 3:16	Inspired	Hindus believe that all the "Holy Books" are inspired of God. This includes the Bible and even the Qu'ran.
Bhagavad Gita	False revelation	Rev 22:18	Inspired Word of God	Hindu's believe there are many inspired Holy Books which include the Gita, Bible & Qu'ran.
Salvation	By grace through faith in Christ	Eph 2:8-9	By works	Moksha or salvation is achieved by accumulating enough good karma to exit the endless cycle of reincarnation.
Means of Salvation	Blood of Christ	Eph 1:7	Good karma	see above.
Assurance of Salvation	Realized in Christ	1 Jn 5:13	Impossible	No one can have it.
Atonement	Penal Substitution	2 Cor 5:21	None	Hindu teaching about grace see no need for an atonement for sin, but simply offers forgiveness without satisfaction of the judgement on sin required by a holy God.

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Hindu Caste System

- The caste system, prescribed in the vedas, was 'a division of society to preserve society'
- The caste system divided people by occupation i.e. teachers and philosophers were brahmins;
- fighters were kshatriya;
- shopkeepers, moneylenders and trades people were vaishya;
- servants and cleaners were shudra.
- No caste was higher or more important (superior) to another. All were equal and acknowledged as essential to the society.

Hinduism: History & Belief

Summary of Hinduism

Hinduism: Summary

- World's oldest living religion (4,000 + year history).
- Hinduism 3rd largest religion in world today (14%) with, around 1 billion followers mainly in India.
- Living things go through cycles of birth & rebirth until they attain Moksha (enlightenment) & are re-united with Brahman
- Time runs in cycles lasting 4.32 million years
- Entire Universe will last for 100 Brahma years = 311 trillion human years.