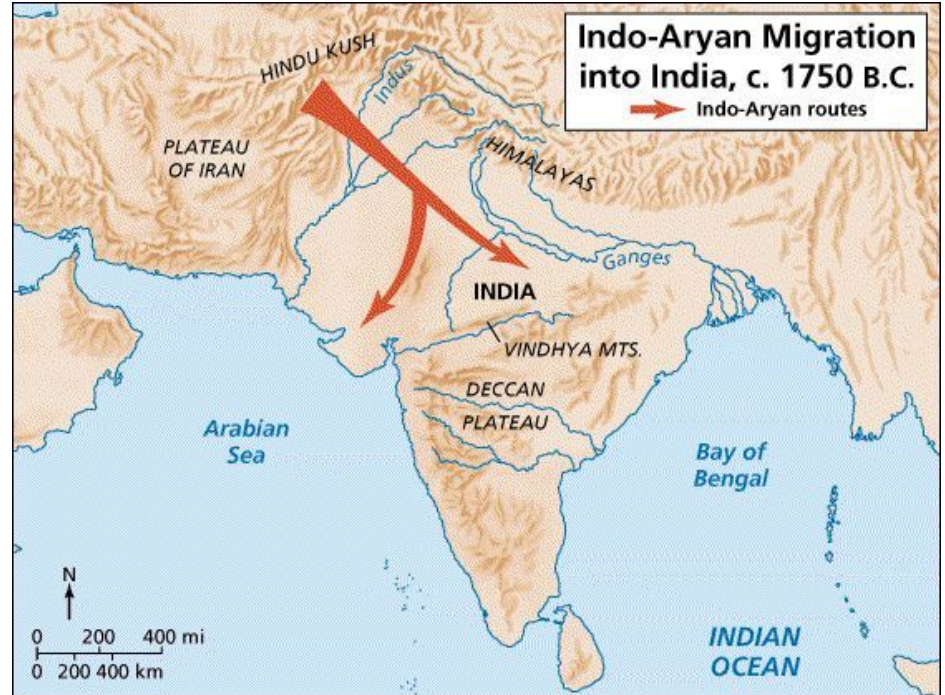




HINDUISM

When did Hinduism begin?

- We do not know.
- There is no record of a founder.
- Formed from a mixing of Aryan and Dravidian peoples.



Holy Books

The Vedas:

- the Vedas, a collection of hymns praising the Vedic gods. Veda means 'knowledge'
- the Ramayana, long epic poems about Rama and Sita
- the Mahabharata, which includes the Bhagavad Gita. (Story of Krishna)
- the Puranas, a collection of stories about the different incarnations and the lives of saints.

Deities/ Gods



Brahman: The creator God

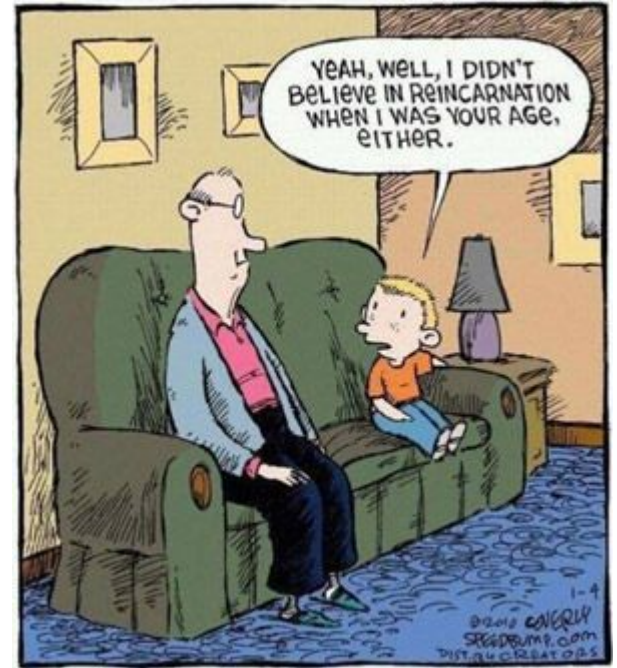
Shiva: The destroyer

Vishnu: The one in charge of upkeep on the earth. Often portrayed with blue Skin. Vishnu often comes to earth in the form of Avatars. The most famous are Rama and Krishna.

Reincarnation

The Goal: Moksha

The spiritual goal of a Hindu is to become one with Brahma. This freedom is referred to as moksha. Until moksha is achieved, a Hindu believes that he/she will be repeatedly reincarnated in order that he/she may work towards self-realization of the truth (the truth being that only Brahman exists, nothing else).



How to achieve Moksha

1. **The path of knowledge** - Jnana-Yoga

Spiritual knowledge -leading to the knowledge of the relationship between the soul (atman) and God (Brahman)

2. **The path of meditation** - Dhyana-yoga

The idea is to concentrate so you can reach the real self within you and become one with Brahman

3. **The Path of Devotion** - Bhakti-yoga

Choosing a particular god or goddess and worshipping them throughout your life in actions, words and deeds.

4. **The path of good works** - Karma-yoga

Indian Caste System

Brahma and the origins of caste



Source: Alamy

BBC

The Aryan god Prusha was divided and became the different castes.

Mouth: Brahmins

Arms: Kshatriya

Thighs: Vaisyas

Feet: Sudra

Only the Brahmins can achieve Moksha.

Dharma & Karma

Karma: The sum of your bad deeds which will decide how you will be reincarnated.

Dharma: It is better to perform the duties of your caste than the duties of another.

Story of Krishna and Arjuna



Symbols

The Om is one of the most important religious symbols to Hindus. It is made up of three Sanskrit letters. The syllable Om is composed of the three sounds a-u-m (in Sanskrit, the vowels a and u coalesce to become o), which represent several important triads: the three worlds of earth, atmosphere, and heaven; the three major Hindu gods. Is a Hindu sacred sound that is considered the greatest of all mantras. The aum symbol is often found at the head of letters, pendants, enshrined in every Hindu temple and family shrines.



Ceremonies/ Holidays

Funerals: It is traditional to cremate the remains of a person and to place them in the river Ganges. Other rivers have been used as well.

Kumbh Mela

Once every 12 years, up to 10 million people share in ritual bathing at the Kumbh Mela festival at Allahabad where the waters of the Ganges and Jumna combine.

Hindus from all walks of life gather there for ritual bathing, believing that their sins will be washed away.

The bathing is followed by spiritual purification and a ceremony which secures the blessings of the deity.

Holi: The festival of colors. (March 25th and 26th)

