

Hinduism

- 📄 Hinduism is the oldest religion which dated back more than 3000 years.
- 📄 It worships many gods. Yet it also adheres to the view that there is only one God, called Brahman.
 - All other divinities are aspects of the one absolute and unknowable Brahman.

Hinduism

- 📄 Hindus believe in the transmigration of souls or reincarnation
- 📄 All living things are part of the same essence.
- 📄 The *karman* is the law of cause and effect.
- 📄 The goal of the individual is to escape this cycle of birth and rebirth so that the individual soul (*atman*) becomes one with Brahman.

Caste System

📄 The caste system of India in its most ancient period was divided in four classes :

- priests (Brahmins),
- warriors,
- merchants,
- and servants.

📄 But there is actually more than thousands of sub-castes.

Origins

- It is known for certain that there was, from about 2300 to 1500 BC, a highly developed civilisation in the Indus Valley.
- Around 1500 BC the Indus Valley was invaded by an Indo-European people called Aryans who imposed a new form of religion.

Aryan Religion

- ☞ The Aryan religion is a religion of the household, of veneration for ancestors.
- ☞ The Aryans had numerous gods.
- ☞ The complex ceremony of the Aryans involved ritual sacrifice of animals.
- ☞ Hymns were composed for these rituals called the Vedas.

The Vedas

- ☞ Sometime between 1500 and 1200 BC, the Rig Veda was composed. It is the oldest religious scripture in the world.
- ☞ The Rig Veda is a collection of 1,028 hymns to the gods.
- ☞ Three other collections the Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda were added later.

Scriptures

From 700 BC to AD 800

- 📄 The writers of the Vedic hymns seem to have believed in a heaven and hell.
- 📄 Sometimes after 600 BC, the belief in reincarnation appeared.
- 📄 The Upanishads represent the beginnings of philosophy in India and develop the concept of a single supreme being Brahman.

600 BC to AD 800

- 📄 The belief in reincarnation was firmly established.
- 📄 The doctrine of reverence for life is called *ahimsa*.
- 📄 At this same time, the primary older gods of the Vedas named Brahma, Indra, Agni, and Varuna were slowly displaced by newer deities primarily Vishnu, Shiva, and Shakti.

Bhagavad-gîtâ Chapter 4: 7-10

📄 Khrisna says: Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself. In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium. One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.

Influences on Hinduism

- 📄 By AD 300-650, the worships of images was firmly established.
- 📄 After 550 BC, Buddhism and Jainism emerged.
- 📄 Sikhism was founded by Kabir's disciple Nanak in the 15th century.

Vishnu, Shiva, and Shakti

- 📄 Vishnu is the protector and the preserver of the world, his worship is called Vaisnavism.
- 📄 Shiva is both destroyer and restorer, his worship is called Shivaism.
- 📄 Shakti is the Mother Goddess. She can be either beneficial or fierce manifested sometime as Parvati or sometime as Kali.
- 📄 Temple worship