

HINDUISM 101

So what's the deal with Hinduism?



Well, it teaches that a person's soul does not die when the body does. Instead, it is born again in another body through a process called reincarnation.



You mean my soul will go to a new body?



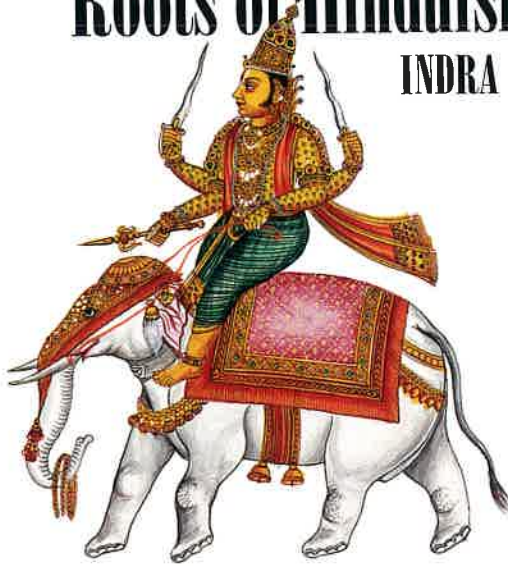
You got it! This process continues until a person leads such a good life that the soul reaches perfection.



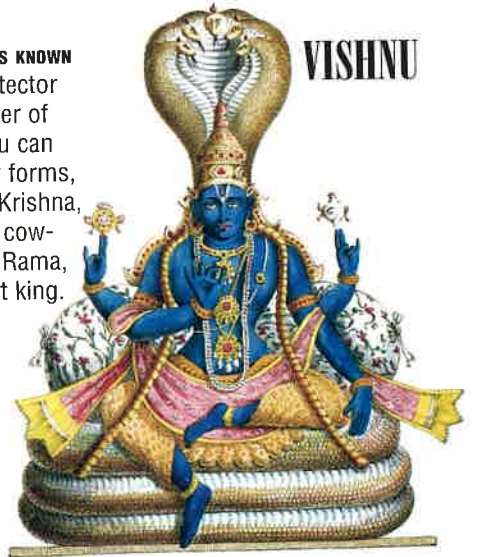
An A+ for the soul!



Roots of Hinduism



INDRA < **THE ARYANS** worshipped many gods. Some were animals, such as the monkey god. Others, like Indra, god of war and chief Aryan god, had human features. Indra was also the god of rain and thunder, and he used his thunderbolt to destroy demons and signal the coming of rain.



> **VISHNU IS KNOWN** as the protector or preserver of life. Vishnu can take many forms, including Krishna, the divine cowherd, and Rama, the perfect king.

VISHNU

The most long-lasting legacy of the Aryans has been Hinduism, one of the world's major religions. Hinduism developed slowly, over a thousand years in its Vedic phase, and is still evolving. Unlike Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam, the start of Hinduism cannot be traced back to one founder with a single set of ideas. Its beliefs came from many sources, including the Vedas of the Aryans and practices borrowed from pre-Aryan peoples of India.



BRAHMA

▲ **HINDUISM HAS** thousand of gods, but Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are especially important ones. Brahma is the all-seeing, supreme god. Hindus believe that Brahma rose from a thousand-petal rose that grew out of Vishnu's navel. Later, Brahma created the universe and everything in it.

> **EVERY HINDU** god travels on a vehicle. Vishnu travels on the bird-god Garuda, an eagle that is part bird and part human.



SHIVA

< **SHIVA, THE GOD OF** destruction, is also associated with creation. He sometimes holds the drum of creation and the flame of destruction. Shiva destroys to make room for new life.



actly! The caste system is closely tied to Hindu beliefs about reincarnation, and members of each caste have their own dharma, or duties and rules, to follow.

The way a person behaves in this life is called karma, and everything one does in this life affects that person's position in a future life.

So a lower-caste person who has done his or her duties well and lived a good life may be reborn in a higher caste?

Yup, that's the Hindu way!

Cool!



◀ **HINDU WEDDINGS** today contain many traces of the early Aryan religion. The couple walk around a sacred fire, an Aryan custom dating back thousands of years. At weddings and funerals, participants recite verses from the Vedas.

▶ **HINDU IDEAS AND** beliefs shaped two of the world's greatest epic poems—the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. One of the world's longest poems, the *Mahabharata* survived for several hundred years by word of mouth before being written down. It describes some essentially



mythical events that took place as the Aryans moved south and tells of a great war between two sets of cousins.



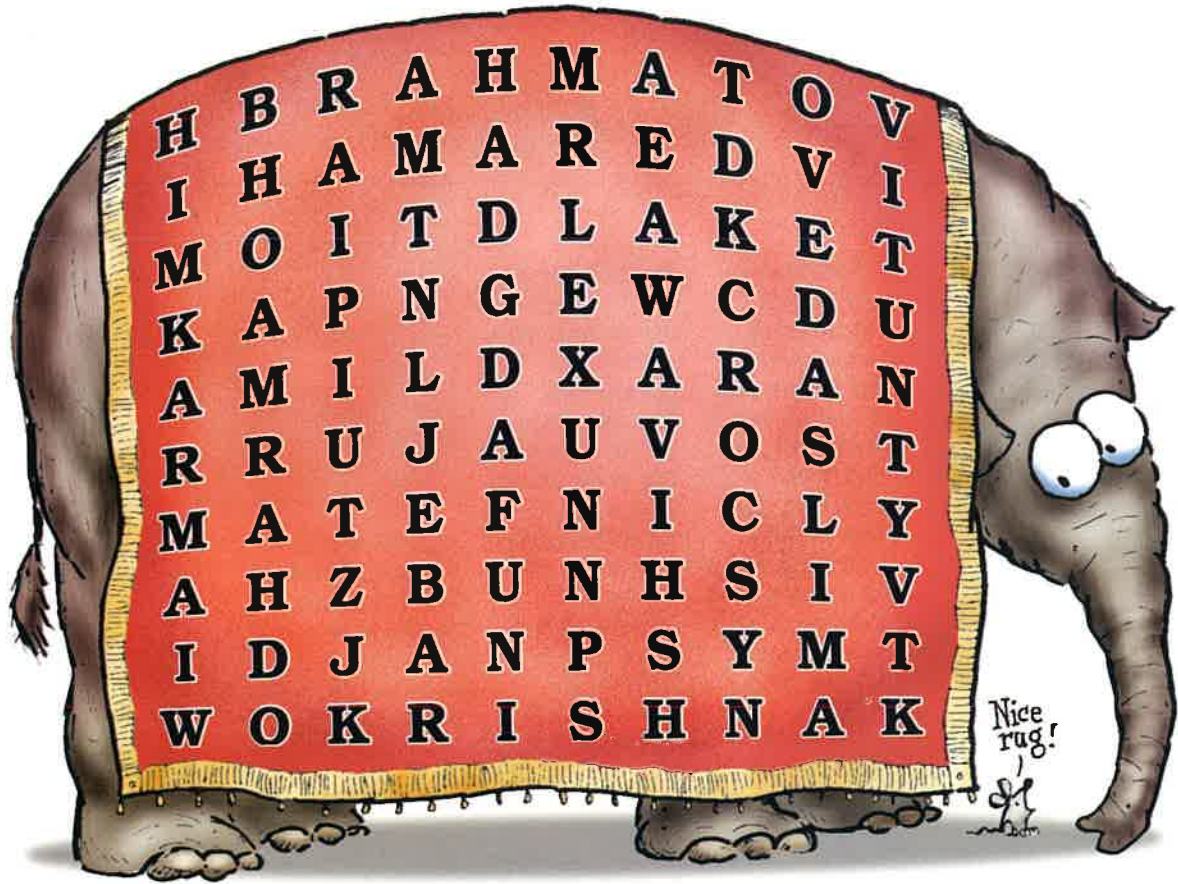
▲ **THE RAMAYANA** tells the story of how Hanuman, the monkey god, helps the good king Rama rescue his wife, Sita, from the evil demon Ravana. Here, Hanuman shows his devotion to Rama and Sita by revealing they are in his heart.



◀ **IN INDIA TODAY,** just as in ancient times, cows are sacred because of the Hindu belief that they are a gift from the gods.

Hindu Word Search

Find these ten words related to the religion that started in ancient India: Hinduism, Indra, Brahma, Vishnu, Krishna, Rama, Shiva, dharma, karma, Vedas. Words may be written forward, backward, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.



Ancient India Matchup

Match each name with the best description.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Harappa | a. Classes in Aryan society |
| ___ 2. Aryans | b. Indian epic poem about war between cousins |
| ___ 3. Varnas | c. River in northeast India |
| ___ 4. Himalayas | d. One of the capital cities of ancient India |
| ___ 5. Vedas | e. Mountains that separate India from the rest of Asia |
| ___ 6. <i>Mahabharata</i> | f. All-seeing supreme god in Hinduism |
| ___ 7. Gandhi | g. Four holy books of Aryans |
| ___ 8. Ganges | h. Language of the Aryans |
| ___ 9. Brahma | i. Modern Indian leader who opposed the caste system |
| ___ 10. Sanskrit | j. People who migrated to India starting in 1500 B.C. |

Ancient Civilizations

This map shows the rivers where four ancient civilizations were located. Write the name of the civilization next to the number that shows its location.



1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

More Reading on Ancient India

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

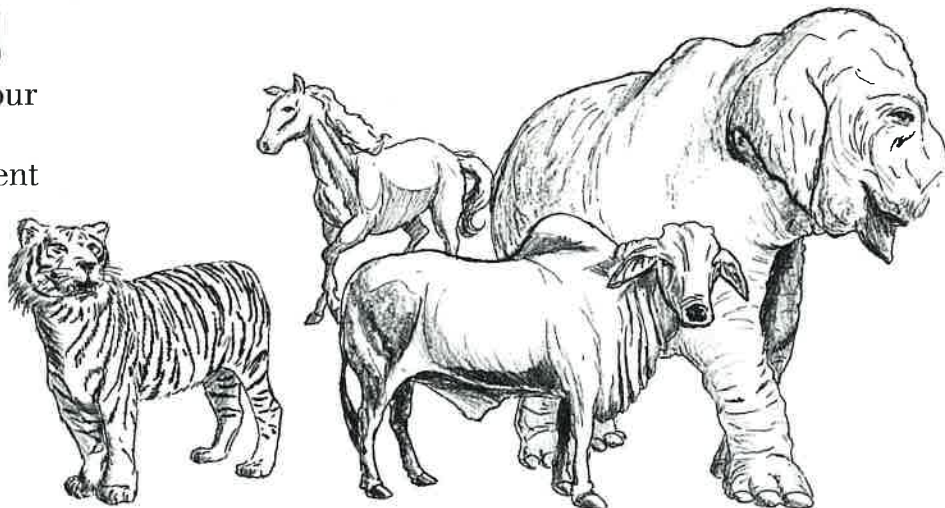
- Dale Brown, editor, *Ancient India*, Time-Life Books, 1995.
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- Gordon Johnson, *Cultural Atlas of India*, Facts on File, 1996.
- John Keay, *India, a History*, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000.
- Jonathan Kenoyer, *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization*, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Barbara and John Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

- Dilip Kadodwalla, *Diwali*, Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1998.
- _____, *Hindu Festivals*, Heinemann, 1997.
- Fiona Macdonald, *The World in the Time of Tutankhamun*, Dillon Press, 1997.
- Amanda O'Neill, *Ancient Times*, Crescent Books, 1992.
- Erin Swan, *India*, Children's Press, 2002.

Missing Parts

Here are drawings of four animals. Three of them could be found in ancient India. The fourth has never been found anywhere. Each animal is missing a part. Draw in each missing part.



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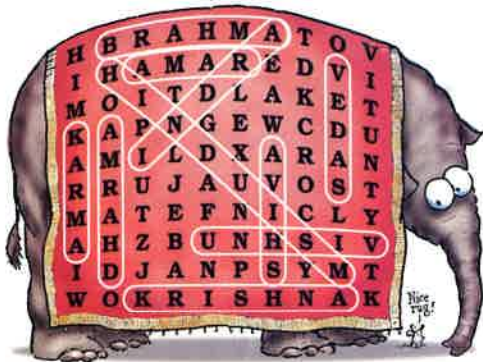
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Acme Design: Maps, pp.2,5,12-13; Ancient India Matchup, p.18; Ancient Civilizations, p.19. Michael Kline Illustration: Cartoons: pp.5,8-9,13,15; footprints, p.8; Phoenician alphabet, p.9; Language Family Resemblances, p.13; Hinduism 101, pp.16-17; Hindu Word Search, p.18; Missing Parts, p.19. Wood Ronsaville Harlin, Inc.: Greg Harlin: People on street in lower part of Mohenjo-Daro, p.6 upper; Matthew Frey: Aerial view of Mohenjo-Daro, pp.6-7; Rob Wood: Blueprint of house, bathroom, p.7 top.

ANSWER:
PAGE 19: MISSING PARTS:



ANSWERS:
PAGE 18: HINDU WORD SEARCH:



ANCIENT INDIA MATCHUP: 1. d; 2. j; 3. a; 4. e; 5. g; 6. b; 7. i; 8. c; 9. f; 10. h.
PAGE 19: ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS: 1. Egyptian; 2. Mesopotamian; 3. Indian; 4. Chinese.



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