

# ॐ RE: HINDU GODS AND GODDESSES KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER ॐ

## Overview

Hindus are the people who follow Hinduism.

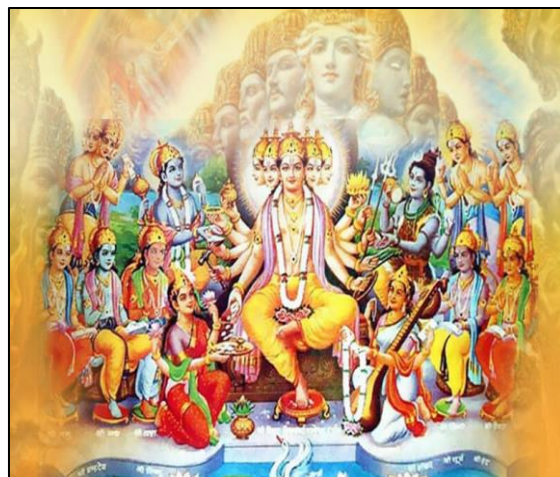
Many Gods and Goddesses are worshipped in Hinduism. All of these different deities are believed to be a part of the supreme God named 'Brahman.'

Hindus believe in many stories about their Gods and Goddesses. These stories are associated with different Hindu festivals and celebrations.

Hindus believe in karma and reincarnation – that when you die you are reborn as something else.

Hindu religious art is widely used to show Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

Hindus believe in many Gods and Goddesses, who are all a part of 'Brahman': the Supreme God.



## Stories About Hindu Gods/ Goddesses

### How Ganesh Acquired his Elephant Head

- Shiva and his wife Parvati were devoted to one another, but did not have any children.
- One day, when Parvati was bathing, she moulded soap with her own skin flakes to create a child: Ganesh. He was handsome and loyal. When his father was away, he guarded his mother.
- Once, Shiva was away for so long that when he returned, he and Ganesh did not recognise one another. Nx As Ganesh tried to guard Parvati, Shiva struck off his head in rage. He was soon distraught with what he had done.
- The servants searched the kingdom for a replacement head, and eventually found a baby elephant sleeping away from its mother. Shiva used this to bring the boy back to life. The boy was now a creation of both his mother and father.



### Matsya the Fish



- The story shares similarities with Noah's Ark, and there is some discussion about whether both have the same source.
- The first man, Manu, was bathing by the river, when he was asked by a fish for help. Manu took the fish home, so that he could not be eaten by bigger fish.
- As the fish grew, he revealed that he was really the God Vishnu. He warned Manu of a terrible flood, which he would need to build a boat to escape from. He would need to fill it with two of every animal.
- In this way, Vishnu saved all of the creatures on Earth.

## Key Vocabulary

- Hinduism
- Hindus
- Gods
- Deities
- Brahman
- Karma
- Reincarnation
- Vishnu
- Ganesh
- Indra, Surya, Agni
- Brahma
- Saraswati
- Lakshmi

## Hindu Gods and Goddesses

### Brahman – The One and The Many

-Hindus believe in one supreme God called Brahman. He can be found in everyone and everything, including the other Gods. He can be seen as a man (Vishnu), a great hero (Rama), a faithful wife (Sita), a beautiful woman (Lakshmi), a refined woman (Saraswati), a terrifying woman (Kali), a young man (Krishna), an animal (Hanuman), an elephant-headed man (Ganesh), a man living with self-denial (Shiva) and as the forces of nature (Indra, Surya, Agni).

### Indra, Surya and Agni



- These Gods are linked with the forces of nature.
- Indra is the God of the sky, who rides an elephant. Surya is the Sun God, who rides in a chariot pulled by seven horses.
- Agni is the God of fire, who rides on a ram.

### Brahma



- Brahma is the creator, who brought everything into existence.
- He is shown with four faces, so that he can look into all corners of existence at once.
- He has four arms, which represent the four points on a compass.

### Ganesh



- Ganesh is an elephant-headed God who is thought to bring wealth & success.
- He is a popular deity, and there are images of him all over the country of India.
- His elephant head shows that he is gentle and wise, & his big stomach represents indulgence.

### Vishnu



- Vishnu is the preserver or sustainer of life. His skin is blue, as like the sky he is everywhere and everlasting.
- Vishnu protects the world from evil, coming down as an avatar to combat wickedness. The avatars include a fish, a boar, & a dwarf.

## Festivals Related to Hindu Gods

### Saraswati Pujar



- Saraswati is the beautiful wife of Brahma. She is the Goddess of learning and the arts.
- In many parts of India, Saraswati Pujar takes place on the first nights of Navaratri.
- Sacred books are piled up, with an image of Saraswati on the top. This is in respect of her wisdom. She is then worshipped for three days.
- In other parts of India, clay models of Saraswati are paraded and then submerged in water, to show the life cycle of life, death & reincarnation.

### Diwali



- Lakshmi is the wife of Vishnu & the Goddess of wealth.
- She is often shown with four arms, two holding lotus flowers (to show beauty and peace) and two holding gifts (e.g. gold coins).
- During Diwali, lights are lit in order to welcome Lakshmi into Hindu homes.
- To attract her into the home, elaborate patterns are drawn in the entrance to the home.
- Diwali is a large Hindu festival that takes place around October/ November time.

## Personal Spirituality – Key Questions

What could different items/ animals represent in your life?

What can the stories of the Hindu Gods teach you in your life?

Which animal would you use to represent yourself?

What are the important events/ stories that have shaped your life?

What stories do your community pass down generations?

What groups do you belong to?

How does membership in these groups make you feel?

Why are festivals/ ceremonies important?

What festivals/ ceremonies do you attend? Why?