

Hinduism

Founder/founding story/how it spread

- Hinduism does not have a founder
- It is a synthesis of various traditions
- It started in about 2300 bc in Pakistan
- Merchants and sailors spread Hinduism throughout the Indian Ocean and Asia

Basic beliefs/doctrine

- The soul never dies but is continually reborn until it becomes divinely enlightened-Samsara
- Persons achieve happiness and divine enlightenment after they free themselves from their earthly desires
- Freedom from earthly desires comes from many lifetimes of worship, knowledge, and virtuous acts
- Cause and Effect-Karma

Holy Books

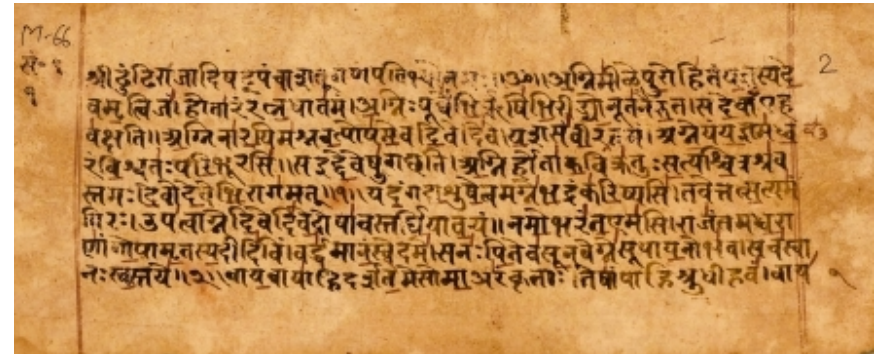
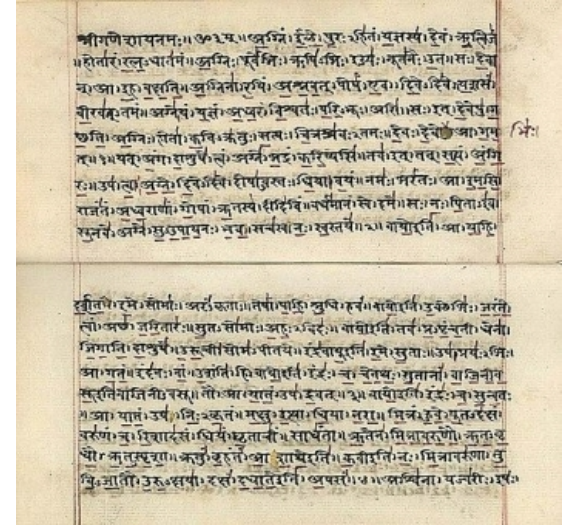
Four sacred texts (Vedas):

Rig Veda

Yajur Veda

Sama Veda

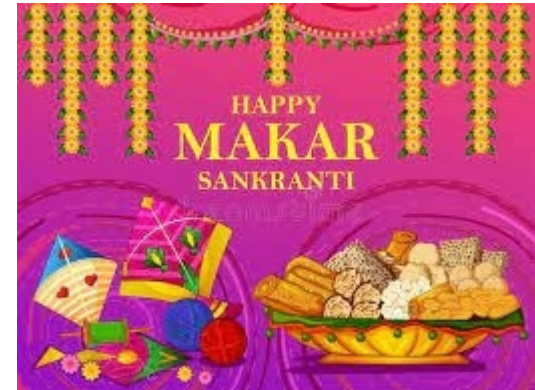
Atharva Veda



Major holidays/Festivals

Diwali - The most important holiday for Indian people's culture. It a time to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. Over a billion of people take part in this festival that introduces the new year for them.

Makar Sankranti- is also called the harvest festival. It's the day which the festival also marks the beginning of the harvest season when new crops are worshipped and shared with delight. It came about when they defeated the terror wreaked by demons by severing their heads and burying them under a mountain, symbolizing the end of negativities whilst giving way to righteousness and good intentions to live well and



Divisions

There are 4 major traditions throughout the world. Each one believes in a different central god. They each have their own sacred texts, but they all believe in the Vedas.

- Vaishnavism
- Shaivism
- Shaktism
- Smartism

World today

- There are about 1 billion Hindus around the world, representing 15% of the global population.
- About 95% of Hindus live in India but people are spread around the world.
- 99% of Hindus live in South Asia



Role of Women

- Everyone has both masculine and feminine traits, in different amounts
- Certain deities have both male and female forms
- Traditionally, women can play similar roles to men, like rituals and becoming priestesses
- Socially, women usually help their husbands and support their families

Symbols



Aum- the most important symbol in Hinduism, it is the sound through which the universe was created



Swastika- the second most important symbol in Hinduism, symbolizes good fortune and prosperity



Lotus blossom- represents water and creation