



# Ancient Indus Valley

The Origins of Hinduism



# Caste System

## ■ Four Varnas

- Brahman – Priests
- Kshatriya – Ruler/Warriors
- Vaishya – Farmers & Merchants
- Shudra – Servants

## ■ Fifth Class – Panchamas

- Untouchables

## ■ Caste System was very strict!!



**Brahmins**  
Brahmins were India's priests and were seen as the highest varna.



**Kshatriyas**  
Kshatriyas were rulers and warriors.

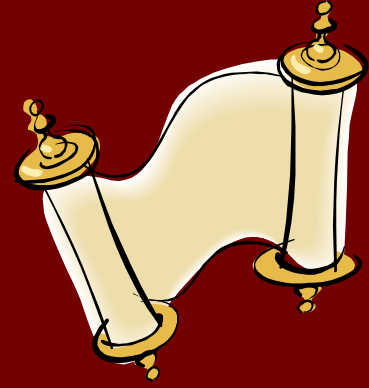


**Vaisyas**  
Vaisyas were farmers, craftspeople, and traders.



**Sudras**  
Sudras were workers and servants.

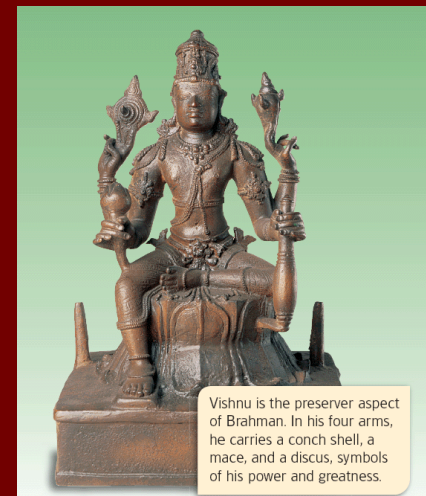
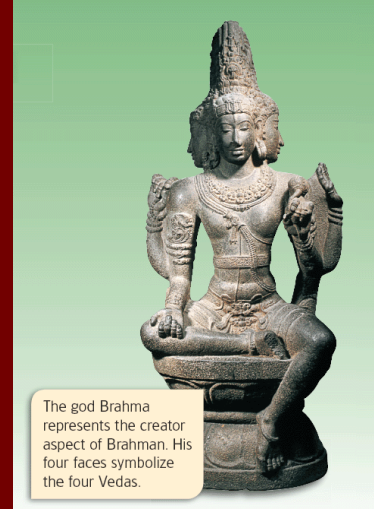
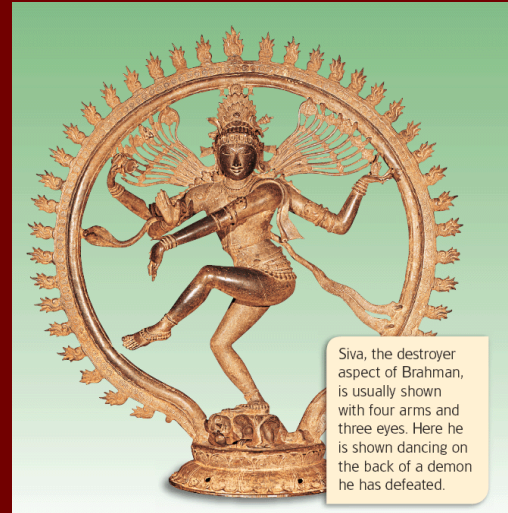
# Brahmanism



- Aryan religion was important
  - Polytheism – worship of many deities
    - Gods controlled different parts of the world
  - Priests = Brahman
    - First Aryan religion became known as Brahmanism
- Brahmanism was based on three things
  - Four Vedas
  - Vedic Texts
    - Describe religious rituals and daily life
    - Sacrifices and how to perform rituals
  - Upanishads
    - Religious thought and sayings

# Hinduism

- Brahmanism began to blend with other religions
- Eventually a new religion develops
  - Hinduism
- Everything is part of the spirit Brahman
  - Universal spirit that is everywhere
- Three main gods
  - Brahma – creator
  - Siva – Destroyer
  - Vishnu – Preserver



# Life and Rebirth

- Everyone has a soul (*atman*)
  - Ultimate goal is to unite your soul with Brahman
- The world is an illusion
  - It takes time to see through an illusion
    - Many lifetimes
  - *Reincarnation* – the process of rebirth
  - What you are born as depends on your *karma*
    - Karma – The effects of a person's actions on the soul
- In time, good karma leads to salvation
  - Called *Moksha*
- It is your moral duty to accept what you are born into
  - Called *Dharma*

# Hindu Gods and Beliefs

Hindus believe in many gods, but they believe that all the gods are aspects of a single universal spirit called Brahman. Three aspects of Brahman are particularly important in Hinduism—Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu.

## Major Beliefs of Hinduism

QUICK  
FACTS

- A universal spirit called Brahman created the universe and everything in it. Everything in the world is just a part of Brahman.
- Every person has a soul or *atman* that will eventually join with Brahman.
- People's souls are reincarnated many times before they can join with Brahman.
- A person's karma affects how he or she will be reincarnated.

# Jainism



- People grew unsatisfied with Hinduism
  - Began a new religion called Jainism
- Based on the teachings of Mahavira
  - Was a Kshatriya – gave it up – became a monk
- Four principles:
  - Injure no life, Tell the Truth, Do not Steal, Own no property
- They practice non-violence (*ahimsa*)