

# Hindu Gods

Religions around the world usually fall into two categories:

- **monotheism** – a belief in one god/goddess
- **polytheism** – a belief in many gods/goddesses

Hindus believe that there are three great gods (Māhadevas). These are considered the Trimurti - the three aspects of the universal supreme God known as Brahman.

**Trimurti** - Lord Brahma is the creator of the universe and all knowledge. He is the first god in the Hindu Trimurti - three gods who are responsible for the creation, preservation and destruction of the world. Brahma has 4 heads.

Lord Vishnu is the Hindu god who looks after the universe and its people. He is the second god in the Trimurti. Vishnu has four arms to represent the four corners of the world.

Lord Shiva is the destroyer of the universe; this means that new life can come again. Shiva is the third god in the Trimurti.

**Tridevi** - The Tridevi are goddesses who are just as important.

Lakshmi is the wife of Vishnu and travels on a lotus flower; she is the goddess of wealth and good fortune. Saraswathi is the wife of Brahma and the goddess of learning and wisdom. She also plays the lute. Finally, Shakti is the mother goddess who represents nature and can be nurturing as well as dangerous.



## Other Important Hindu Gods

There are many more Hindu gods and goddesses. Ganesh has an elephant's head and a human body. His tusks – one broken and the other unbroken – represent the good and bad things in the world. Hindus believe that he grants good fortune. They often pray to him when they are starting something new in their lives, such as getting married. Ganesh is very wise.

Surya is the Sun god. He is a warrior on a chariot pulled by seven white horses. Surya is thought to be able to heal those who are ill. Hindus believe that putting the sign of the Sun over main doors in the home will bring them good luck.

Krishna is often seen with blue skin, playing the flute and wearing peacock feathers on his head. He is the god of love and the most worshipped of all. Krishna is strong and handsome.

Hanuman is the Hindu monkey god. It is believed that as a child, Hanuman was mischievous and liked to play tricks. In the story of the festival of Diwali, he went with his army to help Rama fight against the demon Ravana, in order to rescue Sita.

# Hindu Gods Questions

1. What does monotheism mean?

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2. What does polytheism mean?

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3. What is Lord Vishnu's job?

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4. Which Hindu god is the destroyer of the universe so that new life can come again?

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5. Which flower is associated with Lakshmi?

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6. Which goddess is the wife of Lord Brahma?

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7. A Hindu man is about to start a new job. Which god might he pray to? Why?

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8. Which is your favourite Hindu god? Why?

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