

- Harappan civilization ended by early 1700s BC, but know one is sure why.
- Perhaps invaders destroyed the cities or natural disasters, like floods or earthquakes, caused the civilization to collapse.
- Not long after the Harappan civilization crumbled, a new group took power in the Indus Valley.

- They were called the Aryans, invaders from Central Asia.
- The Aryans were skilled warriors. Using chariots and advanced weapons, these invaders took new territory.



- Much of what we know about Aryan society comes from religious writings called Vedas. These collections of poems, hymns , myths, and rituals were performed by Aryan priests.
- The first Aryan settlers did not read or write. Because of this, they had to memorize the poems and hymns that were important to their culture.

- The language in which these Aryan poems and hymns were composed was **Sanskrit**, the most important language of ancient India.
- At first, Sanskrit was only a spoken language. Eventually, people learned how to write it down so they could keep records.
- Sanskrit is no longer spoken today, but it is the root of many modern South Asian languages.

Origins of Hinduism



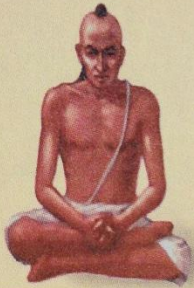
Picture source:
<http://www.prestonfaithforum.org.uk/hinduism/hinduism.html>

- Key Terms: **caste system, Hinduism, reincarnation, karma, Jainism, nonviolence**
- What you will learn:
 1. Indian society divided into distinct groups under the Aryans.
 2. The Aryans practiced a religion known as Brahmanism.
 3. Hinduism developed out of Brahmanism and influences from other cultures.
 4. The Jains reacted to Hinduism by breaking away to form their own religion.

- As the Aryans moved into India, they developed a strict system of social classes. As the Aryans' influence spread through India, so did their class system. Before long, this class system was a key part of Indian society.

- As Aryan society became more complex, their society became divided into groups. **Mostly these groups were organized by people's occupations. Strict rules developed about how different groups could interact. As time passed, these rules became stricter and became central to Indian society.**





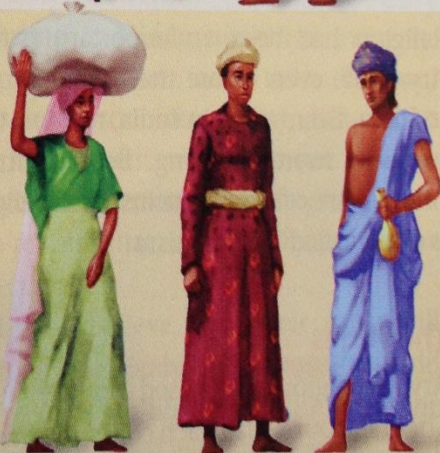
Brahmins

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.

- According to the Vedas, there were four main *varnas*, or social classes, in Aryan society. These *varnas* were:
 - Brahmins, or priests
 - Kshatriyas, or rulers and warriors
 - Vaisyas, or farmers, craftspeople, and traders
 - Sudras, or laborers and non-Aryans

- As the rules of interaction between the *varnas* got stricter, the Aryan social order became more complex. In time, each of the four *varnas* in Aryan society was further divided into many castes, or groups. This **caste system** divided Indian society into groups based on a person's birth, wealth, or occupation.

- The caste to which a person belonged determined his or her place in society. On rare occasions, people could change caste.
- The Sudras had a hard life, but there was a group even worse-off. They didn't belong to a caste at all. They were called the untouchables because people in castes weren't supposed to have any contact with them. They were considered unclean and were outcastes from society.

- The Vedas and other texts remained the basis of Indian religion (called Brahmanism) for centuries.
- Eventually, the ideas of these texts began to blend with ideas from other countries. In time, this blending of ideas created a religion called **Hinduism**, the largest religion in India today.

- The Hindus believe in many gods. But they believe that all gods are aspects of a single universal spirit called Brahman.

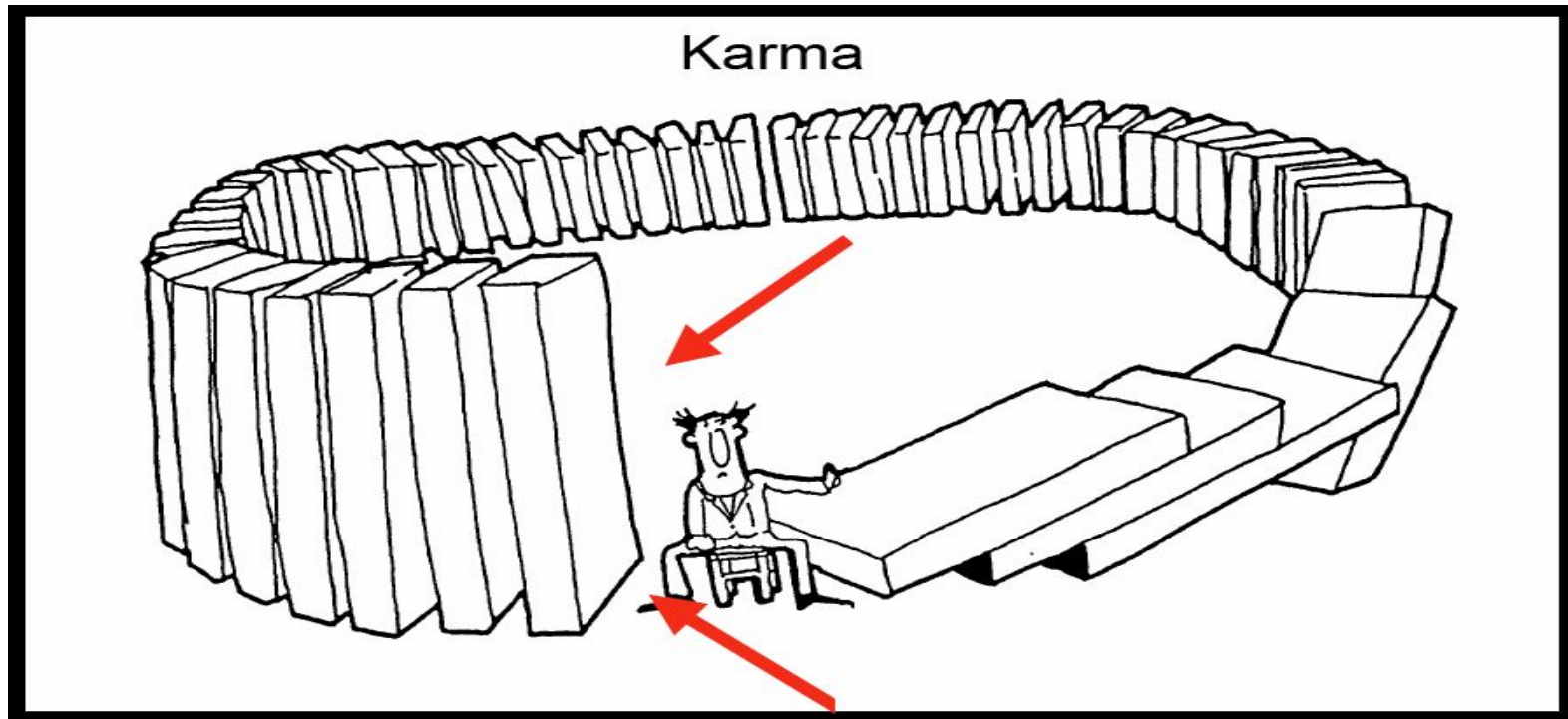


Major Beliefs of Hinduism

- 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 Brahman.
- A person's karma affects how he or she will be reincarnated.

- Hindus believe that souls are born and reborn many times, each time it has a new body. This process is called **reincarnation**.
- According to the traditional Hindu view of reincarnation, a person who has died is reborn in a new physical form.

- The type of form a person is reborn into depends upon his or her **karma**, the effects that good or bad actions have on a person's soul.



- Hinduism was popular at all levels of Hindu society. By teaching people to accept their place in life, Hinduism helped preserve the caste system in India.

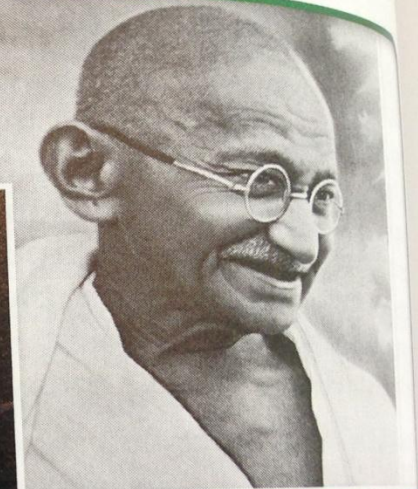
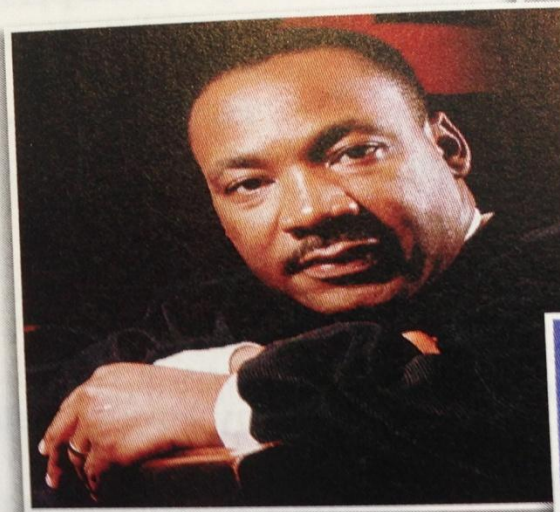
- Although Hinduism was widely followed in India, not everyone agreed. One such group was the Jains, believers in a religion called Jainism
- **Jainism** was based on the teachings of a man named Mahavira. The Jains had four principles: injure no life, tell the truth, do not steal, and own no property.

- In their efforts not to injure anyone or anything, the Jains practiced **nonviolence**, or the avoidance of violent actions.

LINKING TO TODAY

Nonviolence

In modern times, nonviolence has been a powerful tool for social protest. Mohandas Gandhi led a long nonviolent struggle against British rule in India. This movement helped India win its independence in 1947. About 10 years later, Martin Luther King Jr. adopted Gandhi's nonviolent methods in his struggle to win civil rights for African Americans. Then, in the 1960s, Cesar Chavez organized a campaign of nonviolence to protest the treatment of farm workers in California. These three leaders proved that people can bring about social change without using violence. As Chavez once explained, "Nonviolence is not inaction. It is not for the timid or the weak. It is hard work. It is the patience to win."



**Mohandas Gandhi (top),
Martin Luther King Jr. (above),
and Cesar Chavez (right)**

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING INFORMATION

How did these three leaders prove that nonviolence is a powerful tool for social change?

Hinduism

Aum-is a Hindu sacred sound that is considered the greatest of all mantras.

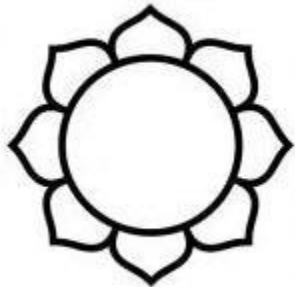


One of the most recognizable items in Hinduism is the **bindi**, a dot worn on women's foreheads.



The **trihsula**, Sanskrit for "three spear" is a **trident** spear that is the emblem of the god [Shiva](#). The weapon symbolizes empire and the irresistible force of transcendental reality.

A **yantra** is a geometrical diagram representing the universe.



In Hinduism, the **lotus** (Sanskrit: *padma*) primarily represents beauty and non-attachment.

