

**Hindu Pantheon for Initiates and Members
of
Circulos Tenebris Matrem Arcanas
Circle of the Dark and Mysterious Mother**

Hindu Pantheon

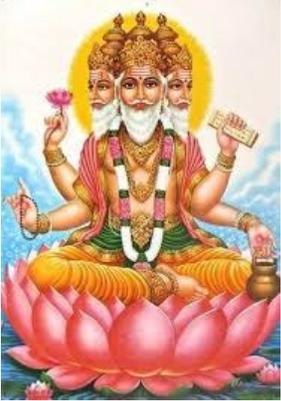
Hinduism, in its core philosophy, believes that there is one supreme being or god. All the other deities are manifestations or avatars. There are very important manifestations, and there are also a few relatively unknown ones. If you ask a layman to approximate the number of gods in the Hindu religion, he comes with the parrot reply, '330 million'.

The Hindu scriptures are vast and very deep in meaning, hence, there are so many commentaries by many scholars. There are infinite manifestations of the supreme being according to Vedic scriptures, and the numbers 33 million or 330 million are just the way of signifying that the one god has infinite manifestations. All these avatars have specific qualities, powers, and roles in the working of the universe. The reason people have the misconception that the Hindu religion is polytheistic, is because of the sheer number of gods and demigods narrated in the Vedic scriptures. But this is not so. In the end, the bottom line of every scripture states that the final goal of spirituality is that of realization of the One God. To get there, deity worship may be required and personalization may be needed. This is the reason why there are so many gods with so many qualities. One person may take a liking to one quality of a god and then worship him/her. This way, he takes the first step of realization of the Supreme.

In Hinduism there are three main sects - Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism. Shaivism is the worship of Shiva, Vaishnavism refers to the worship of Vishnu, and Shaktism is the worship of Shakti or Devi. Smartism is a modern tradition that believes in the worship of more than one Gods, including Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesha, and Surya.

Deity	Image	Functions and attributes
Aditi		<p>In the Vedic phase of Hindu mythology, the personification of the infinite and mother of a group of celestial deities, the Adityas. As a primeval goddess, she is referred to as the mother of many gods, including Vishnu in his dwarf incarnation and, in a later reappearance, Krishna. She supports the sky, sustains all existence, and nourishes the earth. It is in the latter sense that she is often represented as a cow.</p>

<p>Agni</p>		<p>Fire-god of Hinduism, second only to Indra in the Vedic mythology of ancient India. He is equally the fire of the sun, of lightning, and of both the domestic and the sacrificial hearth. As the divine personification of the fire of sacrifice, he is the mouth of the gods, the carrier of the oblation, and the messenger between the human and the divine orders. Agni is described in the scriptures as ruddy-hued and having two faces—one beneficent and one malignant. He has three or seven tongues, hair that stands on end like flames, three legs, and seven arms; he is accompanied by a ram, the usual sacrificial animal. In the Rigveda he is sometimes identified with Rudra, the forerunner of the god Shiva. Though Agni has no sect in modern Hinduism, his presence is invoked in many ceremonies, especially by Agnihotri Brahmins (who perform fire rites), and he is the guardian of the southeast.</p>
<p>Adhanarishvara</p>		<p>Composite male-female figure of the Hindu god Shiva together with his consort Parvati. As seen in many Indian and Southeast Asian sculptures, the right (male) half of the figure is adorned with the traditional ornaments of Shiva. Half of the hair is piled in a hairdress of matted locks, half of a third eye is visible on the forehead, a tiger skin covers the loins, and serpents are used as ornaments. The left (female) half shows hair well combed and knotted, half of a tilak (a round dot) on the forehead, the eye outlined in black, a well-developed breast, a silk garment caught with girdles, an anklet, and the foot tinted red with henna.</p>
<p>Ayyappan</p>		<p>Ayyappan, also called Sartavu or Śāsta, in Hinduism, a deity who is always celibate, generally depicted in a yogic posture, with a bell around his neck. His most prominent shrine is at Shabarimalai, in the southern Indian state of Kerala, where he is most popular, though the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka also house many Ayyappan temples. Ayyappan may bear a historical relationship to the tutelary deity Aiyanar of Tamil Nadu.</p>

<p>Balarama</p>		<p>Balarama, in Hindu mythology, the elder half brother of Krishna, with whom he shared many adventures. Sometimes Balarama is considered one of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of the god Vishnu, particularly among those members of Vaishnava sects who elevate Krishna to the rank of a principal god. Other legends identify him as the human incarnation of the serpent Shesha. He may originally have been an agricultural deity, for as early as the 2nd–1st century BCE he was depicted holding a plowshare and a pestle, with a snake canopy above his head. Among the earliest Brahmanic gods to be given sculptural representation, he is always shown in paintings with fair skin, in contrast to Krishna's blue complexion. The stories associated with him emphasize his love of wine and his enormous strength. He was rarely worshipped independently.</p>
<p>Brahma</p>		<p>Brahma, one of the major gods of Hinduism from about 500 BCE to 500 CE, who was gradually eclipsed by Vishnu, Shiva, and the great Goddess (in her multiple aspects). Associated with the Vedic creator god Prajapati, whose identity he assumed, Brahma was born from a golden egg and created the earth and all things on it. Later myths describe him as having come forth from a lotus that issued from Vishnu's navel.</p>
<p>Brihaspati</p>		<p>Brihaspati, (Sanskrit: "Lord of Sacred Speech") in Vedic mythology, the preceptor of the gods, the master of sacred wisdom, charms, hymns, and rites, and the sage counselor of Indra in his war against the titans, or asuras. As such, Brihaspati is the heavenly prototype of the class of Brahmins and, most particularly, of the earthly purohita, or family priest. To him is attributed a hymn in the Rigveda, the oldest of the Vedas (the sacred books of Hinduism). An ancient sage and the founder of a skeptical philosophical group also bear his name. He is the regent of the planet Jupiter.</p>

Chandi		<p>Chandi, (Sanskrit: “The Fierce”)also called Chandika, demon-destroying form of the Hindu goddess Shakti, particularly popular in eastern India. She is known by various names, such as Mahamaya (“Great Magic”) or Abhaya (“She Who Is Without Fear”). Her representation is similar to that of Durga, another form of Shakti. She is shown with either 8 or 10 arms, seated on a lion vehicle. Hundreds of folktales and songs tell of her exploits. She is the central figure of an extensive medieval Bengali literature known as Chandi-mangal, the most famous of which is that of Mukundarama Chakravarti (c. 16th century).</p>
Durga		<p>Chandi, (Sanskrit: “The Fierce”)also called Chandika, demon-destroying form of the Hindu goddess Shakti, particularly popular in eastern India. She is known by various names, such as Mahamaya (“Great Magic”) or Abhaya (“She Who Is Without Fear”). Her representation is similar to that of Durga, another form of Shakti. She is shown with either 8 or 10 arms, seated on a lion vehicle. Hundreds of folktales and songs tell of her exploits. She is the central figure of an extensive medieval Bengali literature known as Chandi-mangal, the most famous of which is that of Mukundarama Chakravarti (c. 16th century).</p>
Ganesha		<p>Ganesha, also spelled Ganesh, also called Ganapati, elephant-headed Hindu god of beginnings, who is traditionally worshipped before any major enterprise and is the patron of intellectuals, bankers, scribes, and authors. His name means both “Lord of the People” (gana means the common people) and “Lord of the Ganas” (Ganesha is the chief of the ganas, the goblin hosts of Shiva). Ganesha is potbellied and generally depicted as holding in his hand a few round Indian sweets, of which he is inordinately fond.</p>

<p>Harihara</p>		<p>Harihara, also spelled Hari-Hara, in Hinduism, a deity combining the two major gods Vishnu (Hari) and Shiva (Hara). Images of Harihara (also known as Shambhu-Vishnu and Shankara-Narayana, variants of the names of the two gods) first appeared in the classical period, after sectarian movements, which elevated one god as supreme over the others, had waned sufficiently for efforts at compromise to be attempted. The dual form found special favour in Cambodia, where inscriptions and images from the 6th–7th century are known. In images of Harihara, the right half is depicted as Shiva and the left as Vishnu. The hands of Shiva hold the trishula (“trident”), a drum, and a small deer, and he may wear a tiger skin. The hands of Vishnu hold his characteristic conch shell and a chakra (discus). Half the headdress is shown with Shiva’s matted locks, which hold a crescent moon, and half as Vishnu’s crown; on the forehead, half of Shiva’s third eye is visible.</p>
<p>Indra</p>		<p>Indra, in Hindu mythology, the king of the gods. He is one of the main gods of the Rigveda and is the Indo-European cousin of the German Wotan, Norse Odin, Greek Zeus, and Roman Jupiter.</p> <p>In early religious texts, Indra plays a variety of roles. As king, he leads cattle raids against the dasas, or dasyus, native inhabitants of the lands over which his people range. He brings rain as god of the thunderbolt, and he is the great warrior who conquers the anti-gods (asuras). He also defeats innumerable human and superhuman enemies, most famously the dragon Vritra, a leader of the dasas and a demon of drought. Vritra is accused as a dragon of hoarding the waters and the rains, as a dasa of stealing cows, and as an anti-god of hiding the Sun. Indra is strengthened for those feats by drinks of the elixir of immortality, the soma, which priests offer to him in the sacrifice. Among his allies are the Rudras (or Maruts), who ride the clouds and direct storms. Indra is sometimes referred to as “the thousand-eyed.”</p>

<p>Jagannatha</p>		<p>Jagannatha, (Sanskrit: “Lord of the World”) form under which the Hindu god Krishna is worshipped at Puri, Odisha (Orissa), and at Ballabhpur, a suburb of Shrirampur, West Bengal state, India. The 12th-century temple of Jagannatha in Puri towers above the town. In its sanctuary, wooden images represent Jagannatha, his brother Balabhadra (Balarama), and his sister Subhadra. Modern representations made in Puri of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of Vishnu often show Jagannatha as one of the 10 in place of the more usually accepted Buddha.</p>
<p>Kali</p>		<p>Kali, (Sanskrit: “She Who Is Black” or “She Who Is Death”) in Hinduism, goddess of time, doomsday, and death, or the black goddess (the feminine form of Sanskrit kala, “time-doomsday-death” or “black”). Kali’s origins can be traced to the deities of the village, tribal, and mountain cultures of South Asia who were gradually appropriated and transformed, if never quite tamed, by the Sanskritic traditions. She makes her first major appearance in Sanskrit culture in the Devi Mahatmya (“The Glorifications of the Goddess,” c. 6th century CE). Kali’s iconography, cult, and mythology commonly associate her not only with death but also with sexuality, violence, and, paradoxically, in some later traditions, with motherly love.</p>
<p>Kalkin</p>		<p>Kalkin, also called Kalki, final avatar (incarnation) of the Hindu god Vishnu, who is yet to appear. At the end of the present Kali yuga (age), when virtue and dharma have disappeared and the world is ruled by the unjust, Kalkin will appear to destroy the wicked and to usher in a new age. He will be seated on a white horse with a naked sword in his hand, blazing like a comet. He is less commonly represented in painting and sculpture than the other avatars of Vishnu and is shown either on horseback or accompanied by his horse. According to some legends of the end of the world, Kalkin’s horse will stamp the earth with its right foot, causing the tortoise which supports the world to drop into the deep. Then the gods will restore the earth once again to its former purity.</p>

<p>Krishna</p>		<p>Krishna, Sanskrit कृष्ण, one of the most widely revered and most popular of all Indian divinities, worshipped as the eighth incarnation (avatar, or avatara) of the Hindu god Vishnu and also as a supreme god in his own right. Krishna became the focus of numerous bhakti (devotional) cults, which have over the centuries produced a wealth of religious poetry, music, and painting. The basic sources of Krishna's mythology are the epic Mahabharata and its 5th-century-CE appendix, the Harivamsha, and the Puranas, particularly Books X and XI of the Bhagavata-purana. They relate how Krishna (literally "black," or "dark as a cloud") was born into the Yadava clan, the son of Vasudeva and Devaki, who was the sister of Kamsa, the wicked king of Mathura (in modern Uttar Pradesh). Kamsa, hearing a prophecy that he would be destroyed by Devaki's child, tried to slay her children, but Krishna was smuggled across the Yamuna River to Gokula (or Vraja, modern Gokul), where he was raised by the leader of the cowherds, Nanda, and his wife Yashoda.</p>
<p>Kubera</p>		<p>Kubera, in Hindu mythology, the king of the yakshas (nature spirits) and the god of wealth. He is associated with the earth, mountains, all treasures such as minerals and jewels that lie underground, and riches in general. According to most accounts, he first lived in Lanka (Sri Lanka), but his palace was taken away from him by his half brother, Ravana, and he now resides in a beautiful mountain residence near the god Shiva's home on Mount Kailasa, where he is attended by all manner of demigods.</p>
<p>Kurma</p>		<p>Kurma, (Sanskrit: "Tortoise") one of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of the Hindu god Vishnu. In this incarnation Vishnu is associated with the myth of the churning of the ocean of milk. The gods and the asuras (demons, or titans) cooperated in the churning to obtain amrita, the elixir of immortality. The great serpent Vasuki offered himself as a rope, and Mount Mandara was torn out for use as a churning stick. A firm foundation was required to steady the mountain, so Vishnu took the form of a tortoise and supported the churning stick on his back. An earlier reference to a divine incarnation as a tortoise identifies the animal with Prajapati (the god Brahma), who took that shape in order to create offspring.</p>

<p>Lakshmi</p>		<p>Lakshmi, also spelled Lakṣmī, also called Shri, Hindu goddess of wealth and good fortune. The wife of Vishnu, she is said to have taken different forms in order to be with him in each of his incarnations. Thus, when he was the dwarf Vamana, she appeared from a lotus and was known as Padma, or Kamala, both of which mean “Lotus”; when he was the ax-wielding Parashurama, the destroyer of the warrior class, she was his wife Dharani; when he was King Rama, she was his queen Sita. In the most widely received account of Lakshmi’s birth, she rose from the churning of the ocean of milk (an important event in Hinduism), seated on a lotus and holding another blossom in her hand. Controversy arose between the gods and demons over possession of her.</p>
<p>Lokapala</p>		<p>Lokapāla, in Hindu and Buddhist mythology, any of the guardians of the four cardinal directions. They are known in Tibetan as 'jig-rtenskyong, in Chinese as t'ien-wang, and in Japanese as shi-tennō. The Hindu protectors, who ride on elephants, are Indra, who governs the east, Yama the south, Varuṇa the west, and Kubera the north. Kubera, also referred to as Vaiśravaṇa, is common to both Hindu and Buddhist traditions. The other Buddhist lokapālas are Dhṛtarāṣṭra (east), Virūḍhaka (south), and Virūpākṣa (west).</p>

<p>Matsya</p>		<p>Matsya, (Sanskrit: “Fish”) one of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of the Hindu god Vishnu. In this appearance Vishnu saved the world from a great flood. Manu, the first man, caught a little fish that grew to giant size. When the flood approached, Manu saved himself by tying his boat to the horn on the fish’s head. Some early accounts refer to the fish-saviour as Prajapati (whose identity is later merged with that of Brahma). Later sources identified him as Vishnu.</p>
<p>Mitra</p>		<p>Mitra, in the pantheon of Vedic Hinduism, one of the gods in the category of Adityas, sovereign principles of the universe. He represents friendship, integrity, harmony, and all else that is important in the successful maintenance of order in human existence. He is usually paired with the god Varuna, the guardian of the cosmic order, whose powers he complements as guardian of the human order. As spirit of the day, he is sometimes depicted with solar characteristics. His Iranian counterpart is Mithra, who eventually came to be worshipped as the god of one of the great mystery religions, Mithraism.</p>
<p>Narasimha</p>		<p>Narasimha, (Sanskrit: “Man-Lion”) one of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of the Hindu god Vishnu. The demon Hiranyakashipu—twin brother of Hiranyaksha, the demon overthrown by Vishnu in his previous incarnation as Varaha—obtained a boon from the god Brahma that he could not be killed by human or animal, from inside or outside, by day or by night, and that no weapon could harm him. Thus, feeling secure, he began to trouble heaven and earth. His son, Prahlada, on the other hand, was a devotee of Vishnu, even though his father threatened his life because of it. One day the demon challenged Prahlada and, kicking a stone pillar, asked: “If your god is omnipresent, is he in this pillar also?” Vishnu emerged from the pillar in the form of a man-lion and slew the demon at dusk on the threshold.</p>

<p>Nataraja</p>		<p>Nataraja, (Sanskrit: “Lord of the Dance”) the Hindu god Shiva in his form as the cosmic dancer, represented in metal or stone in many Shaivite temples, particularly in South India.</p>
<p>Parashurama</p>		<p>Parashurama, (Sanskrit: “Rama with the Ax”) one of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of the Hindu god Vishnu.</p>
<p>Parvati</p>		<p>Parvati, (Sanskrit: “Daughter of the Mountain”)also called Uma, wife of the Hindu god Shiva. Parvati is a benevolent goddess.</p> <p>Born the daughter of a mountain called Himalaya, she won Shiva’s affection only after undergoing severe ascetic discipline. The couple had two children. The Mahabharata, the Ramayana, Kalidasa’s poem Kumarasambhava (“The Birth of Kumara”), and the Puranas all relate that their son Kumara (Skanda) was born without her agency from Shiva’s seed. The Puranas also tell how, against Shiva’s will, Parvati created their other son, the elephant-headed Ganesha. Parvati is often represented in sculpture with Shiva—as an attendant figure, or looking on as he performs a miraculous feat, or engaged in a game with him in their mountain kingdom of Kailasa—and is always depicted as a mature and beautiful woman. The Tantras—texts of sects worshipping Shiva—are written as a discussion between Parvati and Shiva.</p>

<p>Prajapati</p>		<p>Prajapati, (Sanskrit: “Lord of Creatures”) the great creator deity of the Vedic period of ancient India. In the post-Vedic age he came to be identified with the Hindu god Brahma.</p> <p>The frequent speculations on the creation of the world in the early Vedic literature allude to various primal figures, such as Hiranyagarbha (“Golden Egg”) and Vishvakarman (“All-Accomplishing”), and the title of Prajapati was applied to more than one such figure. Later it was used to signify one deity—the lord of all creatures. According to one of the stories of creation, Prajapati produced the universe and all its beings after first preparing himself by undergoing tapas (ascetic practices); other stories allude to his own creation from the primal waters. His female emanation, who aided him in the creation of other beings, was Vac, the personification of the sacred word, but sometimes his female partner is given as Ushas, the dawn, who is also regarded as his daughter.</p>
<p>Rama</p>		<p>Rama, one of the most widely worshipped Hindu deities, the embodiment of chivalry and virtue. Although there are three Ramas mentioned in Indian tradition—Parashurama, Balarama, and Ramachandra—the name is specifically associated with Ramachandra, the seventh incarnation (avatar) of Vishnu. His story is told briefly in the Mahabharata (“Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty”) and at great length in the Ramayana (“Rama’s Journey”).</p>
<p>Saptamatrika</p>		<p>Saptamatrika, (Sanskrit: “Seven Mothers”) in Hinduism, a group of seven mother-goddesses, each of whom is the shakti, or female counterpart, of a god. They are Brahmani (wife of Brahma), Maheshvari (wife of Shiva), Kaumari (wife of Kumara), Vaishnavi (wife of Vishnu), Varahi (wife of Varaha, or the boar, an avatar [incarnation] of Vishnu), Indrani (wife of Indra), and Chamunda, or Yami (wife of Yama). One text, the Varaha-purana, states that they number eight, including Yogeshvari, created out of the flame from Shiva’s</p>

		mouth.
Saravati		<p>Sarasvati, Hindu goddess of learning and the arts, especially music. First appearing as the personification of the sacred river Sarasvati and also identified with Vac, the goddess of speech, she is later named the consort, daughter, or granddaughter of the god Brahma. She is regarded as the patroness of art, music, and letters and as the inventor of the Sanskrit language. She is usually represented as riding on a goose of pure white that is able to undertake long flights and holding a lute and a manuscript or book. In modern times her mount has frequently been represented as a swan. Sarasvati is worshipped at the advent of spring (January–February), when her image is taken out in jubilant procession, but she is also invoked perennially and at examination times by students and by artists and performers of all kinds. Sarasvati is also popular in Jain and Buddhist mythology.</p>
Shashthi		<p>Shashthi, in Hinduism, a deity who is the goddess of vegetation, reproduction, and infant welfare. Shashthi is especially venerated in eastern India, largely in Bengal and Odisha. The name Shashthi means “the sixth” and is derived from the name of the sixth day after the birth of a child, the end of the period in which the child and the mother are in greatest danger. On that day and on the sixth day of the lunar fortnight, worship is ordinarily offered to Shashthi in her role as custodian of infant welfare.</p>

<p>Shiva</p>		<p>Shiva, (Sanskrit: “Auspicious One”) also spelled Śiva or Śiva, one of the main deities of Hinduism, whom Shaivites worship as the supreme god. Among his common epithets are Shambhu (“Benign”), Shankara (“Beneficent”), Mahesha (“Great Lord”), and Mahadeva (“Great God”). Shiva is represented in a variety of forms: in a pacific mood with his consort Parvati and son Skanda, as the cosmic dancer (Nataraja), as a naked ascetic, as a mendicant beggar, as a yogi, as a Dalit (formerly called untouchable) accompanied by a dog (Bhairava), and as the androgynous union of Shiva and his consort in one body, half-male and half-female</p>
<p>Skanda</p>		<p>Skanda, (Sanskrit: “Leaper” or “Attacker”) also called Karttikeya, Kumara, or Subrahmanya, Hindu god of war who was the firstborn son of Shiva. The many legends giving the circumstances of his birth are often at variance with one another. In Kalidasa’s epic poem Kumarasambhava (“The Birth of the War God”; 5th century CE), as in most versions of the story, the gods wished for Skanda to be born in order to destroy the demon Taraka, who had been granted a boon that he could be killed only by a son of Shiva. They sent Parvati to induce Shiva to marry her. Shiva, however, was lost in meditation and was not attracted to Parvati until he was struck by an arrow from the bow of Kama, the god of love, whom he immediately burned to ashes. After many years of abstinence, Shiva’s seed was so strong that the gods, fearing the result, sent Agni, the god of fire, to interrupt Shiva’s amorous play with Parvati. Agni received the seed and dropped it into the Ganges, where Skanda was born.</p>
<p>Suya</p>		<p>Surya, in Hinduism, both the Sun and the Sun god. Although in the Vedic period (1500–5th century BCE) several other deities also possessed solar characteristics, most of these were merged into a single god in later Hinduism. Surya was once ranked along with Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, and Ganesha, and many temples dedicated to him are found throughout India. Those five deities are worshipped by a group of Brahmans (priests), the Smartas, but only a small group, the Saura sect, worships Surya as the supreme deity. He is, however, invoked by most Hindus, and the Gayatri mantra, uttered daily at dawn by many Hindus, is addressed to the Sun.</p>

<p>Trimurti</p>		<p>Trimurti, (Sanskrit: “three forms”) in Hinduism, triad of the three gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. The concept was known at least by the time of Kalidasa’s poem Kumarasambhava (“Birth of the War God”; c. 4th–5th century CE). The trimurti collapses the three gods into a single form with three faces. Each god is in charge of one aspect of creation, with Brahma as creator, Vishnu as preserver, and Shiva as destroyer. In combining the three deities in this way, however, the doctrine elides the fact that Vishnu is not merely a preserver and Shiva is not merely a destroyer.</p>
<p>Vamana</p>		<p>Vamana, fifth of the 10 incarnations (avatars) of the Hindu god Vishnu.</p> <p>In the Rigveda, Vishnu took three strides, with which he measured out the three worlds: earth, heaven, and the space between them. In later mythology, the dwarf Vamana made his appearance when the demon king Bali ruled the entire universe and the gods had lost their power. One day Vamana visited the court of Bali and begged of him as much land as he could step over in three paces. The king laughingly granted the request. Assuming a gigantic form, Vamana with one step covered the whole earth, and with the second step the midworld between earth and heaven. As there was nowhere left to go, the demon king lowered his head and suggested Vamana place his foot on it for the promised third step. Vamana was pleased, and with the pressure of his foot sent Bali down below to rule the netherworld. Vishnu in this form is often identified as Trivikrama (“God of the Three Strides”).</p>
<p>Varaha</p>		<p>Varaha, (Sanskrit: “Boar”) third of the 10 incarnations (avatars) of the Hindu god Vishnu. When a demon named Hiranyaksha dragged the earth to the bottom of the sea, Vishnu took the form of a boar in order to rescue it. They fought for a thousand years. Then Varaha slew the demon and raised the earth out of the water with his tusks. The myth reflects an earlier creation legend of Prajapati (Brahma), who assumed the shape of a boar in order to lift the earth up out of the primeval waters.</p>

<p>Varuna</p>		<p>Varuna, in the Vedic phase of Hindu mythology, the god-sovereign, the personification of divine authority. He is the ruler of the sky realm and the upholder of cosmic and moral law (rita), a duty shared with the group of gods known as the Adityas (see Aditi), of whom he was the chief. He is often jointly invoked with Mitra, who represents the more-judicial side of their sovereignty—the alliance between one human being and another—while Varuna represents the magical and speculative aspects—the relationship between gods and human beings. He corresponds closely to the Zoroastrian god Ahura Mazdā. In later Hinduism, Varuna plays a lesser role. He is guardian of the west and is particularly associated with oceans and waters. Thus, he is often attended by the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna.</p>
<p>Vasudeva</p>		<p>Vasudeva, in Hindu mythology, the patronymic of the deity Krishna, a son of Vasudeva. The worshippers of Vasudeva-Krishna formed one of the earliest theistic devotional movements within Hinduism. When they merged with another group, the Bhagavata, they represented the beginnings of modern Vaishnavism, worship of the god Vishnu.</p>

<p>Vishnu</p>		<p>Vishnu, (Sanskrit: “The Pervader”) one of the principal Hindu deities. Vishnu combines many lesser divine figures and local heroes, chiefly through his avatars, particularly Rama and Krishna. His appearances are innumerable; he is often said to have 10 avatars—but not always the same 10. Among the 1,000 names of Vishnu (repeated as an act of devotion by his worshippers) are Vasudeva, Narayana, and Hari.</p>
<p>Vishvakarman</p>		<p>Vishvakarman, (Sanskrit: “All Accomplishing”) in Hindu mythology, the architect of the gods. The name was originally used as an epithet of any powerful god but later came to personify creative power. Vishvakarman is the divine carpenter and master craftsman who fashioned the weapons of the gods and built their cities and chariots. He is the architect of the mythical city Lanka and is also said to have made the great image of Jagannatha at Puri (Orissa). He revealed the sciences of architecture and mechanics to humans and is the patron deity of workers, artisans, and artists.</p>

Yama		<p>Yama, in the mythology of India, the god of the dead. The Vedas describe him as the first man who died, blazing the path of mortality down which all humans have since followed. He is the guardian of the south (the region of death) and presides over the resting place of the dead, which is located under the earth. In the Vedas, Yama was represented as a cheerful king of the departed ancestors, not as a punisher of sins, but in later mythology he became known as the just judge (Dharmaraja) who weighs the good and evil deeds of the dead and determines retribution. He is described as majestic in appearance, green or black, with red eyes and red garments. He carries a noose and a mace, which may be ornamented with a skull, and rides a buffalo. His two four-eyed dogs guard the entrance to his kingdom, and the crow and the pigeon act as his messengers. Yama has also passed over into Buddhist mythology in Tibet, China, and Japan, where he occupies a similar but minor role as the guardian of the abode of the dead.</p>
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*This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of Hindu deities but a sampling. Further research can be done to find out more about each deity or others in the Hindu Pantheon.