



Gods, Divine Masculine Energies

Description

The Hindu Trinity



- Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva make up the Hindu Trinity.
- They are said to personify the cosmic energies of one supreme Reality, known as Brahman or Isvara.
- Some consider this as similar to the Christian trinity of God as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
- Brahma brings the world into manifestation through his [shakti \(power\)](#) and consort, [Saraswati](#).
- Vishnu sustains and protects the world through his [shakti \(power\)](#) and consort, [Lakshmi](#).
- Shiva destroys and transforms structures through his [shakti \(power\)](#) and consort, Parvati. His power is said to be embodied by other forms of the [Mother Goddess](#), as well, including [Durga](#) and Kali.



Readings

DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF BRAHMAN

Contrary to popular understanding, Hindus recognise one God, Brahman, the eternal origin who is the cause and foundation of all existence. The gods of the Hindu faith represent different expressions of Brahman. Different Hindu communities may have their own divinities whom they worship, but these are simply different ways of approaching the Ultimate. bbc.co.uk, Brahman

FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF THE ONE AND ONLY

The trinity of gods, namely Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva occupy the second highest tier. Collectively they are the three functional aspects of the one and the only Brahman. Hinduwebsite.com

THREE ASPECTS OF THE SUPREME REALITY

To the question whether these gods are different, the answer is both yes and no. They are different because, from a human point of view they perform different tasks [and] have qualities and energies that differ widely from one another. But at the highest level they are three aspects of the one and the same supreme Reality. Together they are like a mighty flow of energy branching out into three different streams at the point of contact with human awareness. It is difficult for us to understand them, because we can understand reality in terms of comparisons, with reference to one another, not by the thing itself. Imagine an intelligence that can understand infinity without the need for any comparisons. Hinduwebsite.com

Brahma The Creator



- Brahma is known as the Creator.
- He appears seated on a lotus, a symbol of glorious existence.
- He has four heads and hands.
- His vehicle is the swan.

Readings

ON A LOTUS, FOUR HEADS & HANDS, NO WEAPONS

Lord Brahma, the Creator God of the Trinity appears seated on a lotus (a symbol of glorious existence). He has four heads and hands. In each hand he holds a sacrificial tool, the Vedas (knowledge), a water pot and a rosary or mala respectively. Unlike most other Hindu Gods, none of his arms holds a weapon. The four faces of Brahma are said to represent the four Vedas (sacred texts). The lotus symbolizes reality, and his heads also represent four ways we perceive that reality, namely: the mind, the intellect, the ego and conditioned-consciousness. YogaLife Academy

HOW BRAHMA CREATES

How does Lord Brahma create? Some tell of how he grows lonely and splits himself in two to create male and female. Then he becomes one again and human beings are created. In the same way he creates all the other living things, from the great animals to the tiniest insects. Others say that

everything comes from different parts of Lord Brahma's body. All the different animals and all the people come from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet. Everything comes from one—Lord Brahma, who is part of the Supreme One—so everything is part of the Supreme One. This universe, this world and this Lord Brahma, like all those before and all those to come, will be destroyed by Lord Shiva. — crystalwind.ca

ROLE OF THE SWAN

The swan is the vehicle of the creator god Brahma. — Richard Rosen

Vishnu The Preserver



- Vishnu is known as the Preserver of the cosmos.
- He is said to constantly participate in worldly affairs, either on his vehicle, Garuda or by sending incarnations of himself, called avatars, to earth.



- Vishnu's ten avatars are Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parashurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki.

Readings

SAVES THE WORLD ON VEHICLE GARUDA

As the preserver of the cosmos, Vishnu upholds the universal laws. Unlike Shiva, who often seeks refuge in the forest to meditate, Vishnu constantly participates in worldly affairs, ensuring that all is well. When order prevails in the universe, Vishnu sleeps on the coils of Sesha (serpent), ruler of the Nagas. As Sesha floats along the cosmic ocean supporting Vishnu, the universe unfolds from Vishnu's dream. But when there is disorder in the universe, Vishnu either mounts his vehicle, Garuda (eagle), and battles with the forces of chaos, or he sends one of his Avatars (incarnations) to save the world. Vishnu is said to use both force and guile to ensure the stability of the universe. Vishnu is invoked as the All-Pervading essence of all beings, who supports, sustains and governs the Universe. YogaLife Academy

A MESSENGER BETWEEN HUMANS AND GODS

Vishnu's role is to protect humans and to restore order to the world. His presence is found in every object and force in creation, and some Hindus recognize him as the divine being from which all things come. Vishnu appears in a number of Hindu texts, including the Rig-Veda, the Māhābhārata, and the Ramayana. Vishnu's most famous feat in the Vedas was to take the three steps that measured the extent of the world, an act that was part of creation. Some stories credit Vishnu with a major role in creation; others say he assisted the god Indra. Early myths also portray Vishnu as a messenger between humans and the gods. Over time, the character of Vishnu combined the attributes of a number of heroes and gods, and he eventually became one of the most important and popular Hindu deities. mythencylopedia.com

Vishnu's Ten Avatars

According to Hindu mythology, Vishnu comes to earth in a variety of animal and human forms called avatars. These avatars are incarnations of the god that contain part of his divine spirit and power. Hindus believe that an avatar of Vishnu appears whenever the world or humans are in danger, and in this way, the god helps to overcome evil, bring justice, and restore order. Vishnu had ten principal avatars. mythencylopedia.com

#1 Matsya

- Fish
- Saved the first human, Manu, from a great flood by leading his ship to safety

#2 Kurma

- Tortoise
- Recovered some precious objects that the gods had lost during another great flood, and saved Lakshmi, who became Vishnu's wife.



#3 Varaha

- Boar
- Rid the world of a demon giant named Hiranyaksha, who had dragged the earth to the bottom of the ocean and threatened to keep it there
- After a thousand-year struggle, Varaha killed the demon

#4 Narasimha

- Man lion
- Freed the world from demon, Hiranyakashipu, who had forbidden worship of the gods

#5 Vamana

- Dwarf
- When the evil king Bali gained control of the world, Vamana persuaded Bali to give him whatever land he could cover in three steps; the dwarf then changed into a giant, and his steps extended over both heaven and earth

#6 Parashurama

- Young man
- Freed the Hindu priests from a class of warriors known as the Kshatriyas

#7 Rama

- Great hero of the Ramayana
- Saved humans from the demon king Ravana

#8 Krishna

- Great hero of the Mahabharata
- Rid the world of many demons and took part in a long struggle against the forces of evil

#9 Buddha

- Religious leader whose beliefs weakened the opponents of the gods
- Founded the Buddhist faith

#10 Kalki

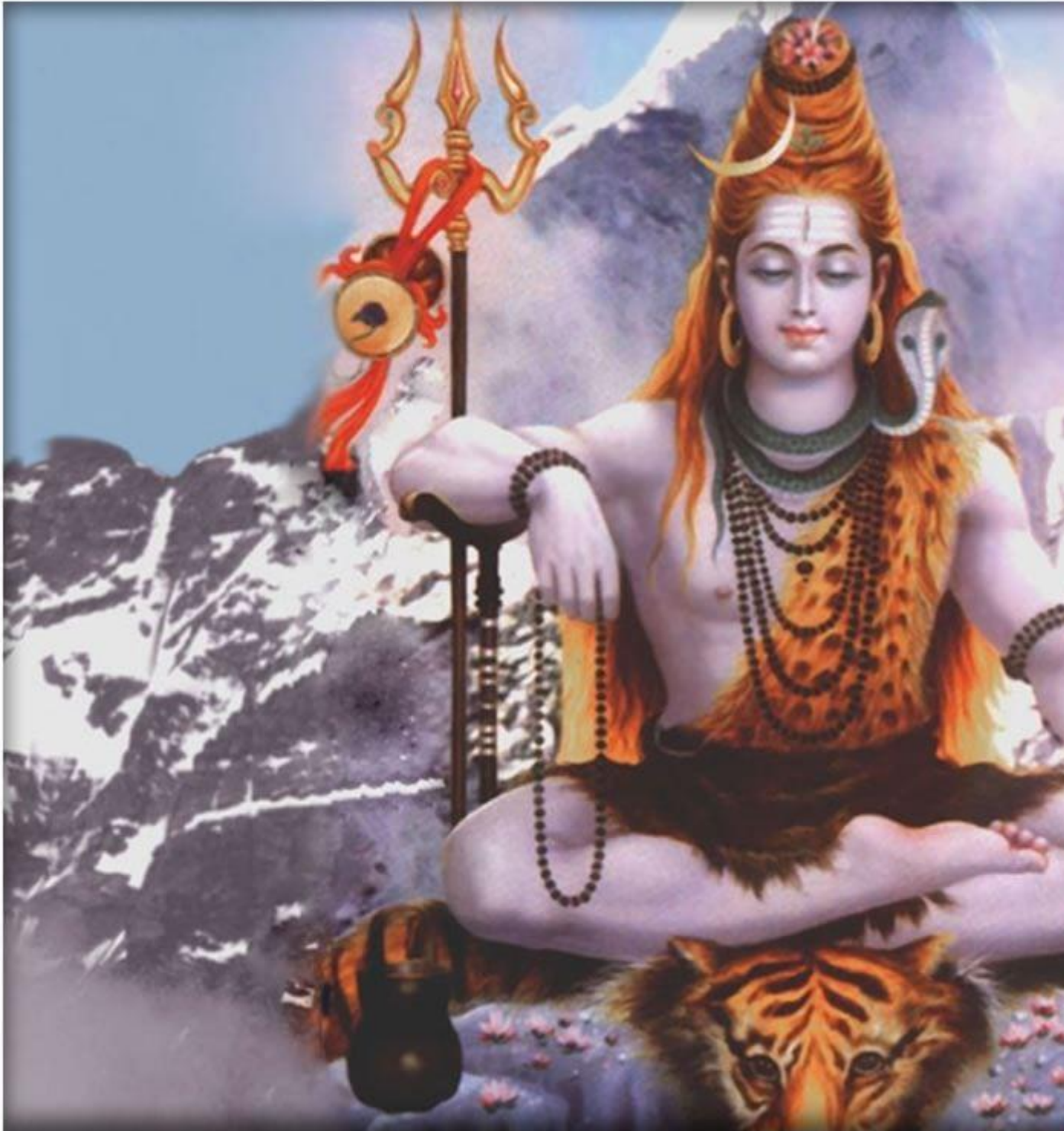
- Has not yet arrived on earth
- He will come one day, mounted on a white horse, to oversee the final destruction of the wicked, restore purity, renew creation, and bring forth a new era of harmony and order: (mythencyclopedia.com, Vishnu)

Shiva The Destroyer / Transformer



- Shiva is known to destroy that which needs to go, in order to make room for new creation. Thus, he is also known as the god of Transformation.
- Shiva is a complex god with many roles and powers.
- He is sometimes seen in the form of Nataraja, performing the cosmic dance.
- He is also known as the *Adiyoga*, the first teacher of Yoga. ([Guru Purnima](#) celebrates Shiva in this role.)

Symbolic Meanings



- Ash of Cremation: Transitory Nature of Material Things
- Phallus / Linga: Creative Force
- Meditating: Asceticism
- Nataraja: Cosmic Dance Sustaining the Universe; when he is finished, this universe will end and a new one will begin



Readings

DESTROYS NEGATIVITY, ILLUSIONS, THINGS THAT HAVE TO GO

Shiva is known as the destroyer in the Indian trinity, but what he destroys is negativity, illusion, the things that have to go in order to make room for new creation and a higher level of consciousness. Zo Newell

A COMPLEX GOD WITH MANY ROLES & POWERS

Shiva is a complex god with many roles and powers. In his destroyer role, he often haunts cemeteries, wearing a headdress of snakes and a necklace of skulls. A band of terrifying demons, hungry for blood, accompanies him. Yet despite his destructiveness, Shiva can be helpful to humans and other gods. He acts as a divine judge who shows no mercy to the wicked. He gains spiritual strength from periods of meditation and deep thought in the Himalayas. When he dances, he represents truth, and by dancing he banishes ignorance and helps relieve the suffering of his followers. According to one myth, Shiva saved the gods and the world from destruction by swallowing the poison of Vasuki, a serpent the gods used to produce the water of life. Drinking the poison made Shiva's neck blue, and he is often shown that way in art. One of Shiva's greatest services to the world was to tame the sacred Ganges River, which flows from the Himalayas.

mythencyclopedia.com

MORE SYMBOLS

Also associated with Lord Shiva is the snake curled three times around his neck, representing the past, present and future, signifying that creation proceeds in cycles, though Lord Shiva himself transcends time. His trident symbolizes his three powers: will, action and knowledge. He wears a tiger skin, representing that he is the source of all creative energy. Shiva also wears a Rudraksha necklace. Rudra, another name for Shiva, means strict or uncompromising and aksha means eye, and the beads symbolize how Lord Shiva adheres to his cosmic laws firmly without compromise. The 108 beads, known as the tears of Shiva, have been worn by yogis of India for thousands of years as an aid to health, self-empowerment and a fearless life. Also prominent is Lord Shiva's third eye, representing his ability to burn up anything which might hinder spiritual insight. YogaLife Academy

FIRST TEACHER OF YOGA

Parvati convinced Shiva to invent yoga out of compassion; she asked Shiva to invent a system that would help people to deal with the inevitable suffering that comes with life as a human, and he did. Therefore, he is honored as the first yoga teacher, and she as the first student. Zo Newell

FIRST TEACHING TO PARVATI & MATSYENDRA

Shiva began to explain to her the practice of Hatha Yoga. Parvati was not attentive. While Parvati was not listening, there in the belly of the fish on the bottom of the river, Matsyendra was listening. Thus was Matsyendra the first human to be given this great gift of knowledge, a gift he was directed to share with deserving seekers of true knowledge. Bernie Clark



See Also

- [Mantras: Om Namah Shivaya](#)

[Holidays & Observances; Maha Shivaratri](#) and Guru Purnima

Author

michaeljoelhall