



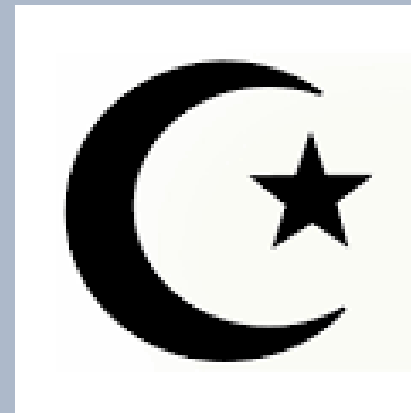
Aim: How has
Hinduism affected
Indian society?

How is a person's class determined in the United States? If you want to move into a higher class in the United States, can you do it? How?



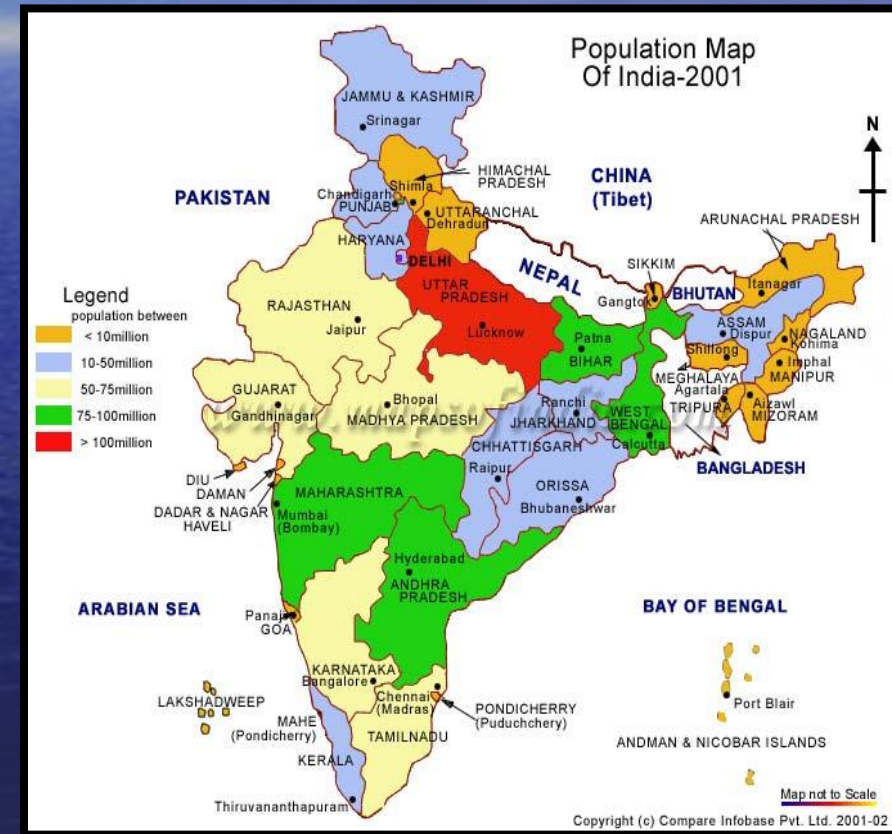
Major Religions

- Christianity: 2.1 billion.
- Islam: 1.3 billion.
- Hinduism: 900 million.
- Buddhism: 376 million.
- Sikhism: 23 million.
- Judaism: 14 million.



Basics of Hinduism

- Originated in India
- Dates back to at least 1500 BCE and many consider it the oldest religion in the world
- Third largest religion (# of adherents)
- Practiced by 80% of India's inhabitants
- 99% of Hindus live in India



What is Hinduism?

- Originated in the **Indus River Valley**
- **No single founder** or date of the belief system's creation because it is based on the beliefs and practices of a diverse group of people who added to the religion over thousands of years.
- **Hinduism's Sacred Text**
 - **The Vedas** - a collection of hymns and ritual texts that were compiled over a long period of time from different authors.
 - **Upanishads** - **Discussion between teacher and student on how to achieve Moksha**
 - **Bhagavad Gita**
- Followed by the majority of people in **India** and Nepal, but it also exists among significant populations outside of the sub continent and has over 900 million followers worldwide.

Hindusim

Since Hinduism has been compiled from so many different belief systems throughout its history, some people refer to it as 'a way of life' or 'a family of religions' rather than a single religion. There are, however, some unifying concepts:

- *Brahman*
- **Reincarnation**
- **Caste**
- **Dharma**
- **Karma**

Hindu Concept of God(s)

- Hinduism is considered a polytheistic religion, but it is more complex than that.
- It is estimated that Hinduism includes more than 33,000 deities (gods).
- Each god has its own story, personality, and responsibilities.
- Though there are many gods, they are seen by many Hindus as different forms of the same god, called the “ultimate reality,” or *Brahman*. Because of this, some people consider Hinduism to be a monotheistic religion.

Vishnu

The Preserver or Protector

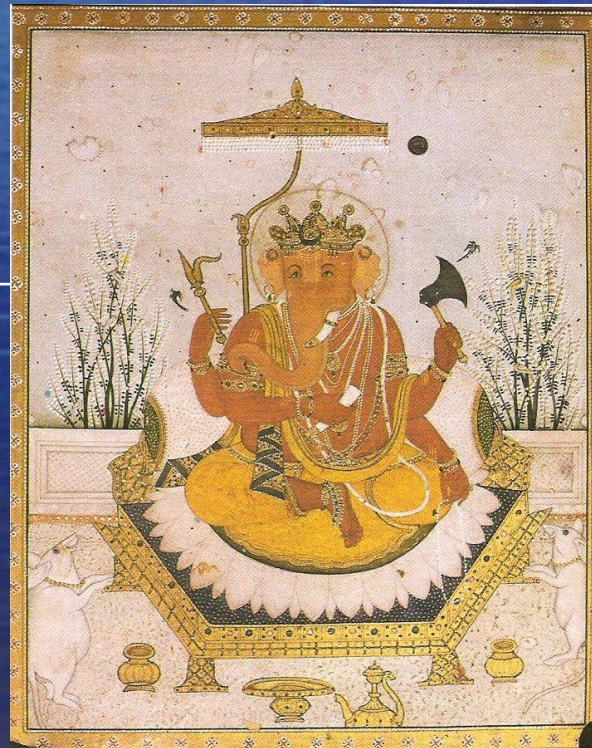
Closeup of Vishnu, seated in the lotus position on a lotus.
[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia and is in the public domain



Shiva

The Destroyer

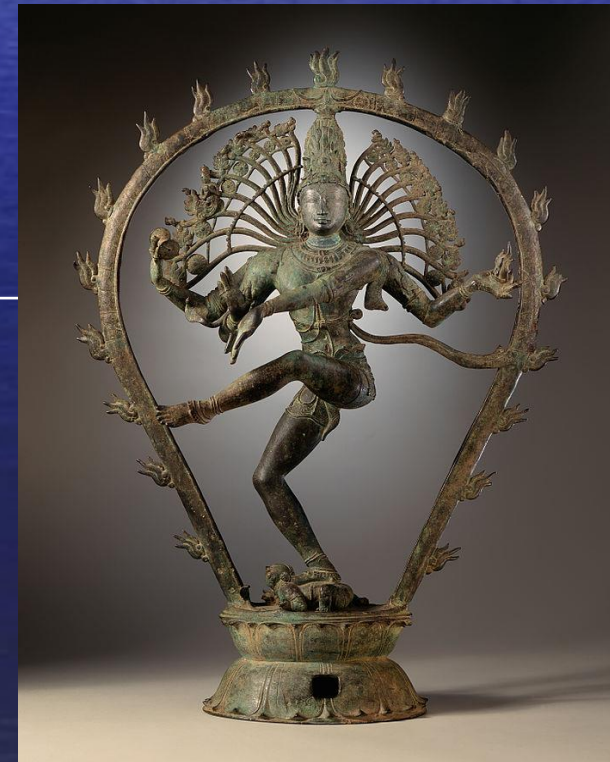
Shiva as the Lord of Dance
[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia and is in the public domain



Ganesha

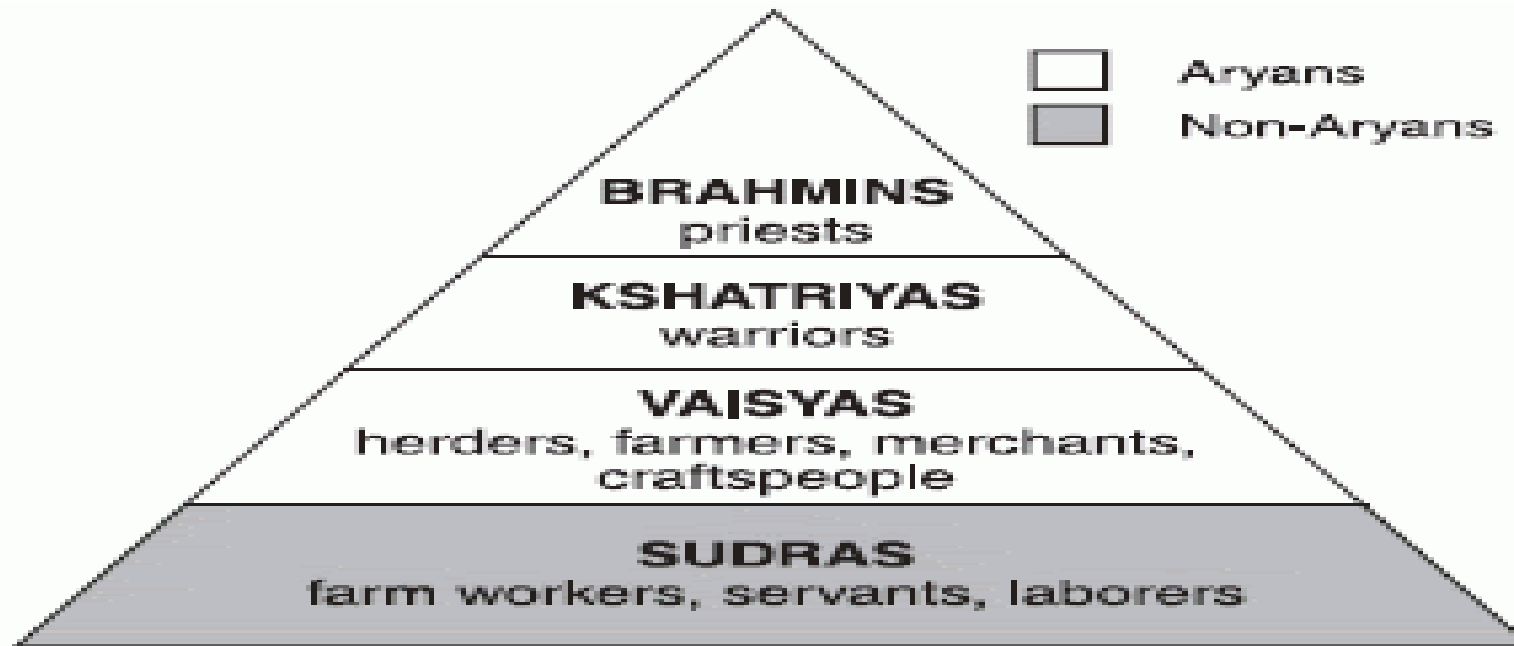
The God of Good Fortune

Four-armed Ganesha.
[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia and is in the public domain



Timeline of Indian History through the Classical Age





Source: *Guide to the Essentials of World History*, Prentice Hall, 1999 (adapted)

The Hindu Caste System: is a **rigid social hierarchy**. It is a system for grouping people in society. It is called “rigid” because you cannot leave whichever caste you are born into. There is **no social mobility**.

Your caste determines your **job**, where you **live**, and who you can **associate with**

Source: *Guide to the Essentials of World History*, Prentice Hall, 1999 (adapted) from the New York State Global History and Geography Regents Exam.

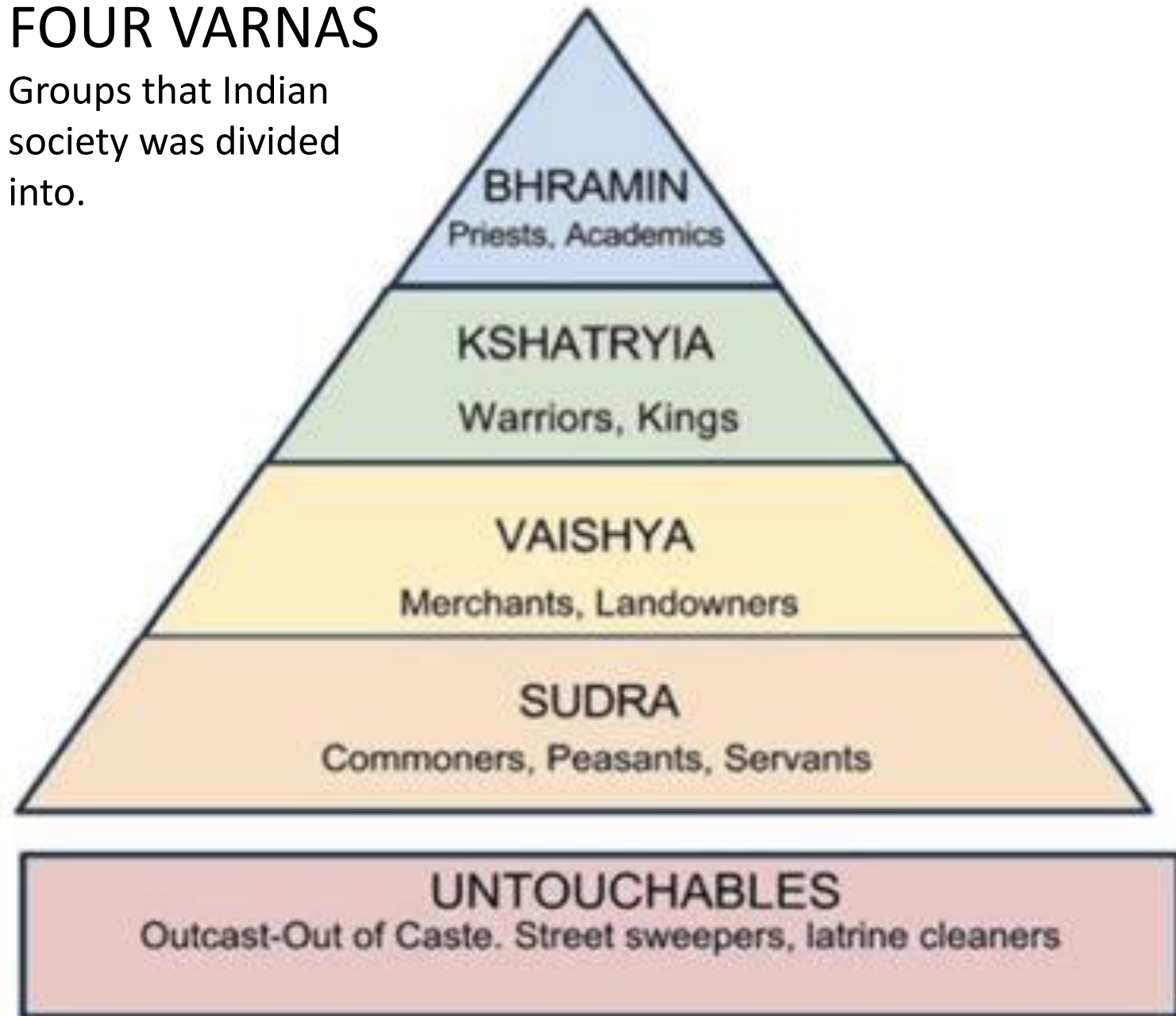
***Aryans** were nobles in ancient India and were believed to be descendants of a group that migrated into India around 1500 BCE. Some of the Aryan belief system was blended with Indian beliefs which contributed to creating Hinduism.

Caste System

- System of legally entrenched social classes
- Hereditary
- No social mobility
- One can only move out of through the process of reincarnation.

FOUR VARNAS

Groups that Indian society was divided into.



Untouchables

- *Dalits*, or “**Untouchables**,” who are considered the lowest in society and required to do “unclean work.”

Reincarnation:

- the idea that the individual soul (*atman*) is reborn in a different form after death and continues to be reborn until the soul achieves “union with Brahman,” also known as *moksha*.

Beliefs of Hinduism



- Beliefs
 - **Dharma** = life path / duty
 - **Karma** = good or bad life actions
 - **Samsara** = reincarnation / cycle of rebirth
 - **Moksha** = when the soul reaches heaven
- **Atman:** Individual Soul
- **Brahman:** Supreme Cosmic Spirit

Hinduism: The Basics

- The ultimate goal for Hindu's is moksha
 - Liberation of the spirit
- To reach moksha you must free yourself of greed and selfish desires
 - Greed and selfish desires separate atman
- When Moksha is reached there is no longer conception of self
- This cannot be accomplished in one life time
 - Leads to concepts of karma

How Hinduism influenced Indian society

Beliefs =

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- **Moksha** = when the soul reaches heaven

Sacred texts =

- 1) Vedas
- 2) Upanishads

GODS

- Polytheistic = gods could take many forms
 - Brahma
 - Vishnu
 - Shiva

How did Hinduism spread?

- Yoga = meditation
- Brahmin = priests
- Gurus = teachers