



HINDUISM

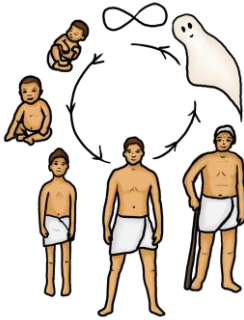
Hinduism is the world's oldest surviving religion, with most historians believing it has existed since prehistoric time. Hinduism is now a collection of practices belonging to several different religious groups that developed in ancient India. It is also an entire culture based on many customs and ideas about faith.

BELIEFS

People who practice Hinduism are Hindus. They believe in the idea of Brahman, a divine force present in all things. Hindus often worship one or several gods. Hinduism's many individual gods are said to represent this eternal, or ongoing, force. The main goal for most Hindus is for their soul, the atman, to be one with Brahman. If they do this, they will



achieve *moksha*, the highest level of existence. Moksha is a state of inner peace and spiritual awareness. Hindus also believe it is freedom from *samsara*, a cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation. Reincarnation involves a person's atman being reborn into a new body.



KARMA

Hindus believe a person's karma, or life force, determines what kind of rebirth he or she experiences. If a person is selfless and performs good works, he or she is said to have good karma. Hindus believe these individuals are rewarded by being reborn into a life that brings them closer to moksha. In contrast, a person who is evil or lack morality are believed to have bad karma. They may be reincarnated as animals, making it harder for them to break the cycle of rebirth. Being reincarnated as an animal is much less desirable than being reincarnated as a human.

DHARMA

Another important feature of Hinduism is dharma. This power gives order to the cosmos, or universe, and is driven by everyone following particular rules and customs. Through this, Hindus fulfill their individual responsibilities.



The Vedas

COMBINING CULTURES

The exact history of Hinduism is complicated because it does not track back to a single founder. Historians believe Hinduism formed in the Indus River valley across present-day Pakistan and India. Around 1500 BCE, members of the Aryan culture traveled from Asia to the Indus valley and introduced the Vedic religion. Between 1500 BCE and 1000 BCE, they wrote the *Vedas* in an ancient language called Sanskrit. They were later embraced by Hindus, so they are considered the earliest scriptures, or holy texts. They contained myths, prayers, and religious songs and poems related to samsara, karma, and dharma. People living the Indus valley created the *Upanishads* around 700 BCE. They are sometimes called the final chapters of the *Vedas*. They dealt with topics like Brahman, atman, and moksha. A lot of the Vedic religion remains a mystery, but it is likely that Hinduism grew as Vedic beliefs blended with those of earlier Indus valley cultures.

BHAKTI

The idea of the bhakti started influencing the growth of Hinduism in the Indus valley between 500 BCE and 500 CE. Bhakti is the belief that devotion, or displays of religious loyalty, will help people achieve their faith goals. Hindus were inspired to build elaborate temples, or houses of worship, all



across the Indian subcontinent. A series of emperors ruled over this entire area up until the sixth century. Around 550, most of India was divided into many smaller kingdoms. Separate forms of Hinduism began taking shape as a result. They had some of the same basic beliefs, but individual kingdoms often focused on different gods, like Vishnu and Shiva.

INFLUENCES

Merchants and traders help spread Hinduism throughout Southeast Asia as time passed. Outside cultures impacted the religion's development in India. Muslim (members of the Islamic faith) and European forces controlled much of the Indian subcontinent from the 15th century. As a result, Hinduism reached parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Hindus struggled to continue practicing their faith in some cases though, experiencing persecution, or poor treatment, and pressure to convert to Islam or Christianity.

TENSION

Hinduism became a stronger feature of Indian nationalism, or national pride, in the 19th century, but tensions between Muslim and Hindu populations were common. Great Britain divided India into two separate nations, India and Pakistan, in 1947. Many Muslims and Hindus relocated. Both India and Pakistan gained independence from Great Britain in the late 1940s. The decades that followed were filled with unrest. The development of new governments and disagreements over Indian-Pakistani borders led to religious persecution. Some Hindus moved to Europe and North America, where they built temples in their new homes and educated people about their faith.

TODAY

About 1 billion men, women, and children practice Hinduism today, around 15 percent of the world's population. It's the world's third largest religion. More than 99 percent of Hindus live in Asian nations on or near the Indian Ocean. About 94 percent live in India, around 2 percent in Nepal, and around 1 percent in Bangladesh. The rest of the Hindu population is scattered across the globe in North America, the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe.

SECTS

Hindus have the shared beliefs of Brahman, atman, karma, dharma, samsara, and moksha. However, many believe in different pathways to spiritual truth. There are many Hindu sects, with the four major ones: Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, and Smartism.

VAISHNAVISM

Hindus believe Vishnu is the supreme god in Vaishnavism. They think every so often Vishnu takes physical forms called avatars. Two of his most famous avatars are Krishna and Rama. Vishnu is shown as having four arms and blue skin in art. Vaishnavites, members of Vaishnavism, describe Vishnu as wise, majestic, independent, and extremely strong. They also see Vishnu as a personal being. They believe through devotion, it is possible to develop a loving relationship with him.



SHAIVISM

Shiva is worshiped as the main, or only, god by members of Shaivism. They believe he is a passionate and powerful being who occasionally destroys the universe. Shaivites think this paves the way for the creation of a more perfect world. Shiva is often portrayed with a blue face and throat and a cobra necklace. This god is thought to have a third eye that is a symbol of wisdom.



SHAKTISM

Hindus worship the Hindu goddess Shakti in Shaktism. It is thought that Shakti takes many forms and names, including Devi, Uma, Parvati, Ambika, Kali, Durga, and Lakshmi. Shakti is sometimes shown holding flowers and appears to be sensitive and compassionate. Shakti is shown fiercer in other art. Some images feature the Hindu goddess riding a tiger, devouring demons, or wearing a necklace of skulls. For many Shaktas, followers of Shaktism, Shakti represents great power and strength. Shaktas often perform a variety of rituals in hopes of summoning mystical forces.



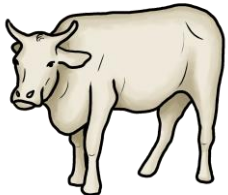
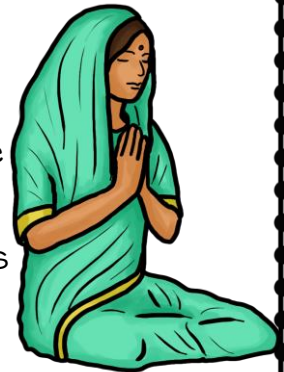
SMARTISM

Hindus who practice Smartism are called Smartas. They worship five main gods and goddesses: Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesh, and Surya. Hindus believe Ganesh is an elephant-headed god who removes obstacles from his followers' paths. Surya, the sun god, is shown having three eyes and four arms. He often appears in a chariot drawn by seven horses. Surya is viewed as a divine healer who brings people good fortune.



WORSHIP

Hindus have many unique ways of expressing their faith. Hindu clergy is made up of priests, monks, and spiritual teachers called gurus. Specific religious practices vary depending on the sect. Worship (puja) takes place in temples (mandirs) and homes, typically in front of a religious icon. Hindus often make offerings of incense, water, flowers, and fruit to the gods. Mantras—sounds, words, or phrases, are said once or several times during prayer and meditation. Meditation is a mental exercise involving quiet thought and reflection. Hindus meditate and perform rituals, like yoga, to achieve inner peace and spiritual awareness. Hindus sometimes go on pilgrimages, or religious journeys, to holy sites. They often travel to rivers to participate in ritual bathing. Pilgrims believe that entering the water washes away their sins and helps them regain purity. The Ganges River in northern India is especially sacred to Hindus.



DIET

Hindus believe all living things have souls, so many are vegetarians. Most Hindus who do eat meat do not eat cows. They are considered sacred animals because they produce milk for people. Cows are allowed to wander freely in India. Some Hindus refuse to use leather products.

CELEBRATIONS

There are many several holidays and festivals in Hinduism that serve as opportunities for people to celebrate their beliefs. Holi is celebrated in late February and/or March. This two-day festival celebrates spring, color, merrymaking, and various events from Hindu mythology. People enjoy squirting each other with colored water or powder during Holi. Krishna Janmashtami occurs in August and/or September. This two-day festival celebrates the birth of the god Krishna (Vishnu). Ganesh Chaturthi also takes place in August and/or September. It is an 11-day festival that celebrates the birth of the god, Ganesh. Navaratri is celebrated in early October. This nine-day festival celebrates devotion to the goddess Durga (Shakti) and the triumph of good over evil. Diwali, or the Festival of Lights, is a five-day festival in October and/or November celebrating the victory of light over darkness. The dates vary often, depending on the geographic location.

Name _____

HINDUISM



MATCHING: Match each term with its description.

1. _____ samsara	A. God shown as having four arms and blue skin
2. _____ atman	B. The majority of Hindus live in the present-day nation
3. _____ Brahman	C. Hindus believe in this cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation
4. _____ Moksha	D. Earliest scriptures, or holy texts of Hinduism
5. _____ karma	E. A divine force Hindus believe is present in all things
6. _____ dharma	F. The belief that devotion, or displays of religious loyalty, will help people achieve their faith goals
7. _____ Vedas	G. A state of inner peace and spiritual awareness
8. _____ Bhakti	H. A Hindu's soul
9. _____ India	I. A person's life force
10. _____ Vishnu	J. This power gives order to the cosmos, or universe

TRUE OR FALSE?: Identify each statement as true or false.

Statement	T	F
11. All Hindu sects practice the same customs and traditions.		
12. Shaivites believe Shiva occasionally destroys the universe		
13. Smartas worship five main gods and goddesses.		
14. Hindus only pray in their temples, or mandirs.		
15. Ganesh is an elephant-headed god who removes obstacles.		
16. Hindus sometimes take pilgrimages, or religious journeys.		
17. Beef is the main meat eaten by Hindus.		
18. Diwali is also known as the Festival of Lights.		
19. Hindus often make offerings to the gods.		
20. Hinduism is the most popular religion in the world.		

MULTIPLE CHOICE: Choose the best answer.



21. What is the main goal for a Hindu?
A. To be reincarnated as an animal.
B. For their soul, the atman, to be one with Brahman.
C. To take a pilgrimage to the Ganges River.
D. To have good karma.

22. What is the main way a person can achieve good karma?
A. Create a shrine in their home and provide offerings for the gods.
B. Take a pilgrimage to bathe in the Ganges River.
C. Be selfless and performs good works.
D. Build a mandir, or temple, in his or her community.

23. Which of the following is true of Shiva?
A. He is thought to have a third eye to represent wisdom.
B. He is often portrayed with an elephant head.
C. He is usually drawn with three eyes and four arms.
D. He is typically shown riding a tiger.

24. What is the main reason Hindus meditate?
A. To achieve good karma.
B. To pray to Shiva.
C. To achieve inner peace and spiritual awareness.
D. To be reincarnated in a favorable way.

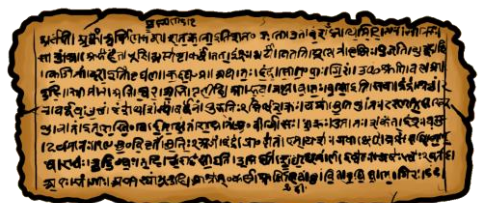


25. Why do many Hindus mainly take pilgrimages to the Ganges River in India?
A. To pray at the special temples located there.
B. To wash away their sins with what is believed to be holy water.
C. To help those who are less fortunate.
D. To attempt to convert Muslims and Christians to Hinduism.

26. Holi is a two-day festival that celebrates which season?
A. Spring B. Summer C. Fall D. Winter

27. Why do Shaivites mainly believe Shiva destroys the universe occasionally?
A. To rid the world of evil.
B. To pave the way for the creation of a more perfect world.
C. To achieve acceptance from Brahman.
D. To create more space for Hinduism to spread.

28. Which of the following is true about the *Vedas*?
A. They were written in the Hebrew language.
B. They were found in a cave in ancient Egypt.
C. They contain myths, prayers, and religious songs and poems.
D. The Upanishads were written before the *Vedas*.





HINDUISM

Hinduism is the world's oldest surviving religion, with most historians believing it has existed since prehistoric time. Hinduism is now a collection of practices belonging to several different religious groups that developed in ancient India. It is also an entire culture based on many customs and ideas about faith.

BELIEFS

People who practice Hinduism are Hindus. They believe in the idea of Brahman, a divine force present in all things. Hindus often worship one or several gods. Hinduism's many individual gods are said to represent this eternal, or ongoing, force. The main goal for most Hindus is for their soul, the atman, to be one with Brahman. If they do this, they will



achieve *moksha*, the highest level of existence. Moksha is a state of inner peace and spiritual awareness. Hindus also believe it is freedom from *samsara*, a cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation. Reincarnation involves a person's atman being reborn into a new body.



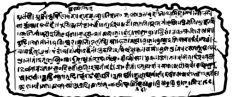
KARMA

Hindus believe a person's karma, or life force, determines what kind of rebirth he or she experiences. If a person is selfless and performs good works, he or she is said to have good karma. Hindus believe these individuals are rewarded by being reborn into a life that brings them

closer to moksha. In contrast, a person who is evil or lack morality are believed to have bad karma. They may be reincarnated as animals, making it harder for them to break the cycle of rebirth. Being reincarnated as an animal is much less desirable than being reincarnated as a human.

DHARMA

Another important feature of Hinduism is dharma. This power gives order to the cosmos, or universe, and is driven by everyone following particular rules and customs. Through this, Hindus fulfill their individual responsibilities.



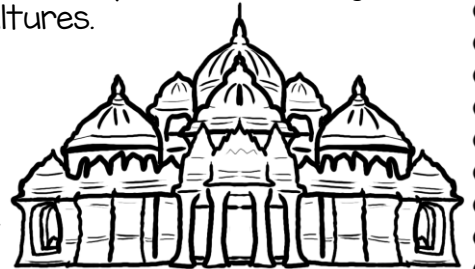
The Vedas

COMBINING CULTURES

The exact history of Hinduism is complicated because it does not track back to a single founder. Historians believe Hinduism formed in the Indus River valley across present-day Pakistan and India. Around 1500 BCE, members of the Aryan culture traveled from Asia to the Indus valley and introduced the Vedic religion. Between 1500 BCE and 1000 BCE, they wrote the *Vedas* in an ancient language called Sanskrit. They were later embraced by Hindus, so they are considered the earliest scriptures, or holy texts. They contained myths, prayers, and religious songs and poems related to samsara, karma, and dharma. People living the Indus valley created the *Upanishads* around 700 BCE. They are sometimes called the final chapters of the *Vedas*. They dealt with topics like Brahman, atman, and moksha. A lot of the Vedic religion remains a mystery, but it is likely that Hinduism grew as Vedic beliefs blended with those of earlier Indus valley cultures.

BHAKTI

The idea of the bhakti started influencing the growth of Hinduism in the Indus valley between 500 BCE and 500 CE. Bhakti is the belief that devotion, or displays of religious loyalty, will help people achieve their faith goals. Hindus were inspired to build elaborate temples, or houses of worship, all



across the Indian subcontinent. A series of emperors ruled over this entire area up until the sixth century. Around 550, most of India was divided into many smaller kingdoms. Separate forms of Hinduism began taking shape as a result. They had some of the same basic beliefs, but individual kingdoms often focused on different gods, like Vishnu and Shiva.

INFLUENCES

Merchants and traders help spread Hinduism throughout Southeast Asia as time passed. Outside cultures impacted the religion's development in India. Muslim (members of the Islamic faith) and European forces controlled much of the Indian subcontinent from the 15th century. As a result, Hinduism reached parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Hindus struggled to continue practicing their faith in some cases though, experiencing persecution, or poor treatment, and pressure to convert to Islam or Christianity.

TENSION

Hinduism became a stronger feature of Indian nationalism, or national pride, in the 19th century, but tensions between Muslim and Hindu populations were common. Great Britain divided India into two separate nations, India and Pakistan, in 1947. Many Muslims and Hindus relocated. Both India and Pakistan gained independence from Great Britain in the late 1940s. The decades that followed were filled with unrest. The development of new governments and disagreements over Indian-Pakistani borders led to religious persecution. Some Hindus moved to Europe and North America, where they built temples in their new homes and educated people about their faith.

TODAY

About 1 billion men, women, and children practice Hinduism today, around 15 percent of the world's population. It's the world's third largest religion. More than 99 percent of Hindus live in Asian nations on or near the Indian Ocean. About 94 percent live in India, around 2 percent in Nepal, and around 1 percent in Bangladesh. The rest of the Hindu population is scattered across the globe in North America, the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe.



SECTS

Hindus have the shared beliefs of Brahman, atman, karma, dharma, samsara, and moksha. However, many believe in different pathways to spiritual truth. There are many Hindu sects, with the four major ones: Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, and Smartism.

VAISHNAVISM

Hindus believe Vishnu is the supreme god in Vaishnavism. They think every so often Vishnu takes physical forms called avatars. Two of his most famous avatars are Krishna and Rama. Vishnu is shown as having four arms and blue skin in art. Vaishnavites, members of Vaishnavism, describe Vishnu as wise, majestic, independent, and extremely strong. They also see Vishnu as a personal being. They believe through devotion, it is possible to develop a loving relationship with him.

SHAIVISM

Shiva is worshiped as the main, or only, god by members of Shaivism. They believe he is a passionate and powerful being who occasionally destroys the universe. Shaivites think this paves the way for the creation of a more perfect world. Shiva is often portrayed with a blue face and throat and a cobra necklace. This god is thought to have a third eye that is a symbol of wisdom.



SHAKTISM

Hindus worship the Hindu goddess Shakti in Shaktism. It is thought that Shakti takes many forms and names, including Devi, Uma, Parvati, Ambika, Kali, Durga, and Lakshmi. Shakti is sometimes shown holding flowers and appears to be sensitive and compassionate. Shakti is shown fiercer in other art. Some images feature the Hindu goddess riding a tiger, devouring demons, or wearing a necklace of skulls. For many Shaktas, followers of Shaktism, Shakti represents great power and strength. Shaktas often perform a variety of rituals in hopes of summoning mystical forces.

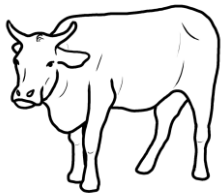


SMARTISM

Hindus who practice Smartism are called Smartas. They worship five main gods and goddesses: Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesh, and Surya. Hindus believe Ganesh is an elephant-headed god who removes obstacles from his followers' paths. Surya, the sun god, is shown having three eyes and four arms. He often appears in a chariot drawn by seven horses. Surya is viewed as a divine healer who brings people good fortune.

WORSHIP

Hindus have many unique ways of expressing their faith. Hindu clergy is made up of priests, monks, and spiritual teachers called gurus. Specific religious practices vary depending on the sect. Worship (puja) takes place in temples (mandirs) and homes, typically in front of a religious icon. Hindus often make offerings of incense, water, flowers, and fruit to the gods. Mantras—sounds, words, or phrases, are said once or several times during prayer and meditation. Meditation is a mental exercise involving quiet thought and reflection. Hindus meditate and perform rituals, like yoga, to achieve inner peace and spiritual awareness. Hindus sometimes go on pilgrimages, or religious journeys, to holy sites. They often travel to rivers to participate in ritual bathing. Pilgrims believe that entering the water washes away their sins and helps them regain purity. The Ganges River in northern India is especially sacred to Hindus.



DIET

Hindus believe all living things have souls, so many are vegetarians. Most Hindus who do eat meat do not eat cows. They are considered sacred animals because they produce milk for people. Cows are allowed to wander freely in India. Some Hindus refuse to use leather products.

CELEBRATIONS

There are many several holidays and festivals in Hinduism that serve as opportunities for people to celebrate their beliefs. Holi is celebrated in late February and/or March. This two-day festival celebrates spring, color, merrymaking, and various events from Hindu mythology. People enjoy squirting each other with colored water or powder during Holi. Krishna Janmashtami occurs in August and/or September. This two-day festival celebrates the birth of the god Krishna (Vishnu). Ganesh Chaturthi also takes place in August and/or September. It is an 11-day festival that celebrates the birth of the god, Ganesh. Navaratri is celebrated in early October. This nine-day festival celebrates devotion to the goddess Durga (Shakti) and the triumph of good over evil. Diwali, or the Festival of Lights, is a five-day festival in October and/or November celebrating the victory of light over darkness. The dates vary often, depending on the geographic location.

Name _____

HINDUISM



MATCHING: Match each term with its description.

1. _____ samsara	A. God shown as having four arms and blue skin
2. _____ atman	B. The majority of Hindus live in the present-day nation
3. _____ Brahman	C. Hindus believe in this cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation
4. _____ Moksha	D. Earliest scriptures, or holy texts of Hinduism
5. _____ karma	E. A divine force Hindus believe is present in all things
6. _____ dharma	F. The belief that devotion, or displays of religious loyalty, will help people achieve their faith goals
7. _____ Vedas	G. A state of inner peace and spiritual awareness
8. _____ Bhakti	H. A Hindu's soul
9. _____ India	I. A person's life force
10. _____ Vishnu	J. This power gives order to the cosmos, or universe

TRUE OR FALSE?: Identify each statement as true or false.

Statement	T	F
11. All Hindu sects practice the same customs and traditions.		
12. Shaivites believe Shiva occasionally destroys the universe		
13. Smartas worship five main gods and goddesses.		
14. Hindus only pray in their temples, or mandirs.		
15. Ganesh is an elephant-headed god who removes obstacles.		
16. Hindus sometimes take pilgrimages, or religious journeys.		
17. Beef is the main meat eaten by Hindus.		
18. Diwali is also known as the Festival of Lights.		
19. Hindus often make offerings to the gods.		
20. Hinduism is the most popular religion in the world.		

Name _____

HINDUISM



MATCHING: Match each term with its description.

1. __C__ samsara	A. God shown as having four arms and blue skin
2. __H__ atman	B. The majority of Hindus live in the present-day nation
3. __E__ Brahman	C. Hindus believe in this cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation
4. __G__ Moksha	D. Earliest scriptures, or holy texts of Hinduism
5. __I__ karma	E. A divine force Hindus believe is present in all things
6. __J__ dharma	F. The belief that devotion, or displays of religious loyalty, will help people achieve their faith goals
7. __D__ Vedas	G. A state of inner peace and spiritual awareness
8. __F__ Bhakti	H. A Hindu's soul
9. __B__ India	I. A person's life force
10. __A__ Vishnu	J. This power gives order to the cosmos, or universe

TRUE OR FALSE?: Identify each statement as true or false.

Statement	T	F
11. All Hindu sects practice the same customs and traditions.		X
12. Shaivites believe Shiva occasionally destroys the universe	X	
13. Smartas worship five main gods and goddesses.	X	
14. Hindus only pray in their temples, or mandirs.		X
15. Ganesh is an elephant-headed god who removes obstacles.	X	
16. Hindus sometimes take pilgrimages, or religious journeys.	X	
17. Beef is the main meat eaten by Hindus.		X
18. Diwali is also known as the Festival of Lights.	X	
19. Hindus often make offerings to the gods.	X	
20. Hinduism is the most popular religion in the world.		X

MULTIPLE CHOICE: Choose the best answer.



- 21. What is the main goal for a Hindu?
 - A. To be reincarnated as an animal.
 - B. For their soul, the atman, to be one with Brahman.**
 - C. To take a pilgrimage to the Ganges River.
 - D. To have good karma.

- 22. What is the main way a person can achieve good karma?
 - A. Create a shrine in their home and provide offerings for the gods.
 - B. Take a pilgrimage to bathe in the Ganges River.
 - C. Be selfless and performs good works.**
 - D. Build a mandir, or temple, in his or her community.

- 23. Which of the following is true of Shiva?
 - A. He is thought to have a third eye to represent wisdom.**
 - B. He is often portrayed with an elephant head.
 - C. He is usually drawn with three eyes and four arms.
 - D. He is typically shown riding a tiger.



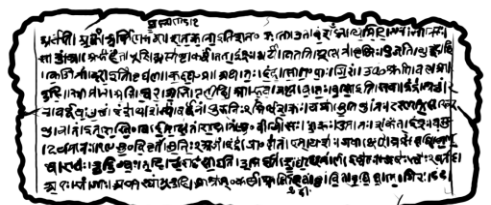
- 24. What is the main reason Hindus meditate?
 - A. To achieve good karma.
 - B. To pray to Shiva.
 - C. To achieve inner peace and spiritual awareness.**
 - D. To be reincarnated in a favorable way.

- 25. Why do many Hindus mainly take pilgrimages to the Ganges River in India?
 - A. To pray at the special temples located there.
 - B. To wash away their sins with what is believed to be holy water.**
 - C. To help those who are less fortunate.
 - D. To attempt to convert Muslims and Christians to Hinduism.

- 26. Holi is a two-day festival that celebrates which season?
 - A. Spring**
 - B. Summer
 - C. Fall
 - D. Winter

- 27. Why do Shaivites mainly believe Shiva destroys the universe occasionally?
 - A. To rid the world of evil.
 - B. To pave the way for the creation of a more perfect world.**
 - C. To achieve acceptance from Brahman.
 - D. To create more space for Hinduism to spread.

- 28. Which of the following is true about the Vedas?
 - A. They were written in the Hebrew language.
 - B. They were found in a cave in ancient Egypt.
 - C. They contain myths, prayers, and religious songs and poems.**
 - D. The Upanishads were written before the Vedas.



Thank you for your purchase!



www.hindukidsworld.org
www.uri.org
www.theschoolrun.com
www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk

***If you don't
already, [Follow Me!](#)**