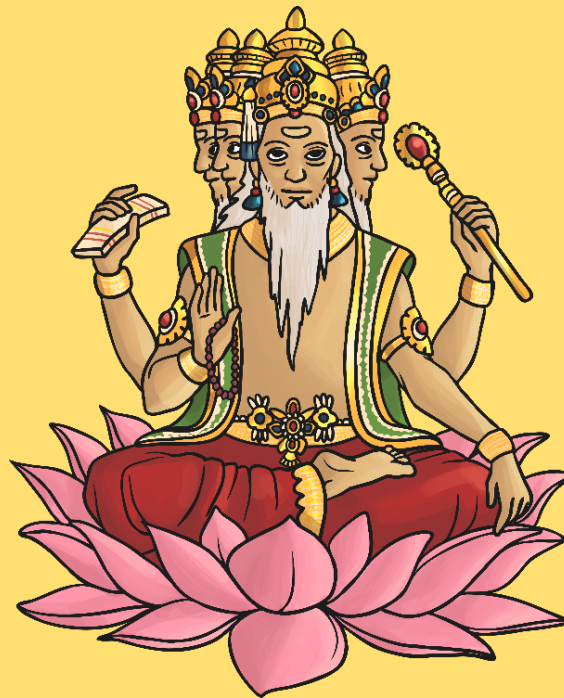
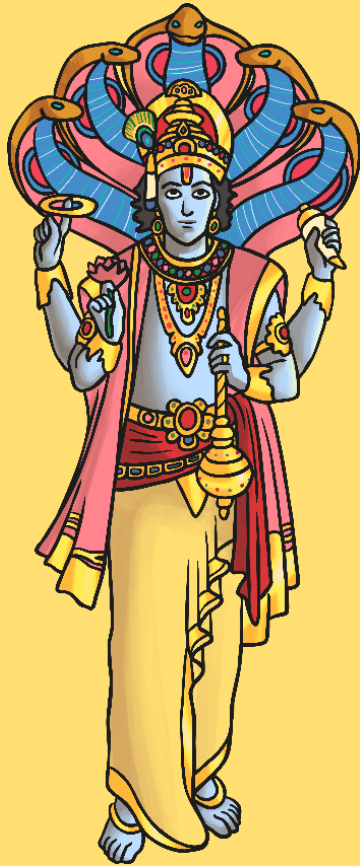
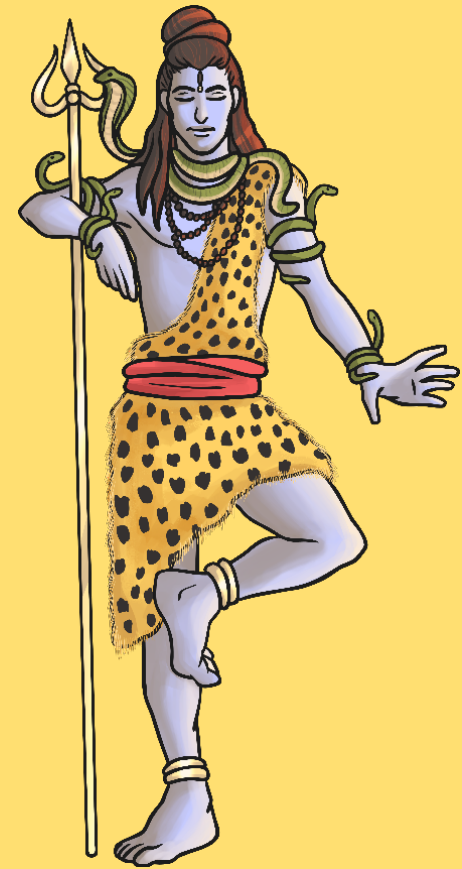


Hindu Gods and Goddesses



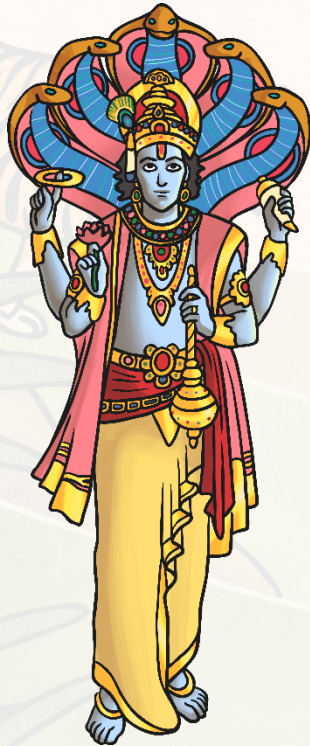
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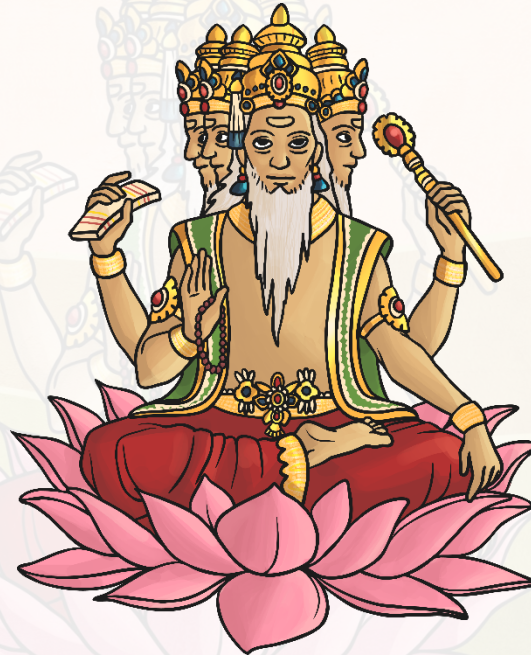
Great Gods

Hindus believe that there are three great gods (Māhadevas). These are considered the **Trimurti** – the three aspects of the universal supreme God. We are going to look at these in more detail next lesson!

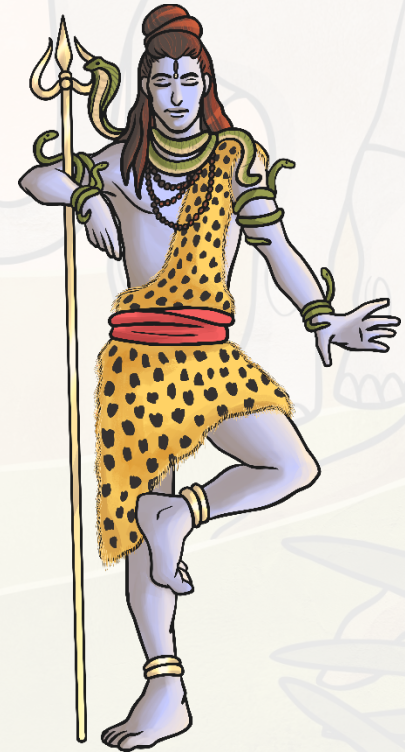
Vishnu



Brahma



Shiva



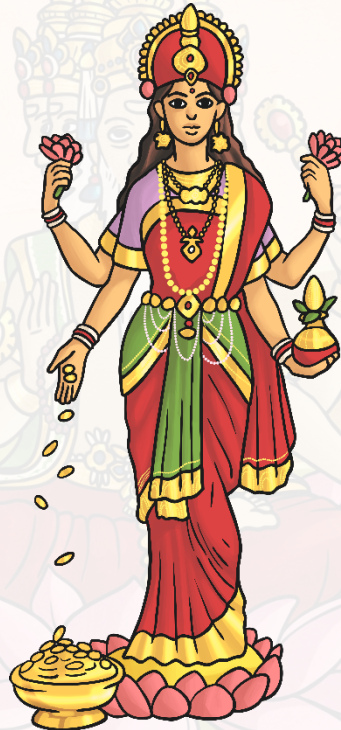
Great Gods

The **Tridevi** are Goddesses who are equally important.

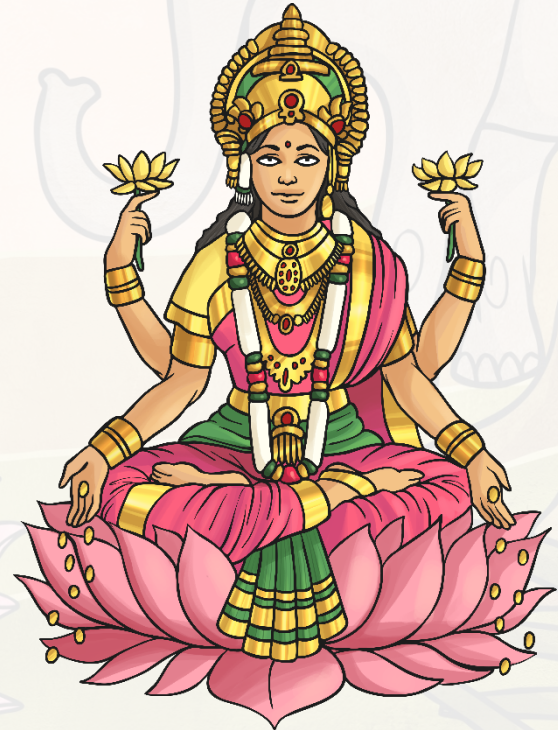
Saraswati



Lakshmi



Shakti



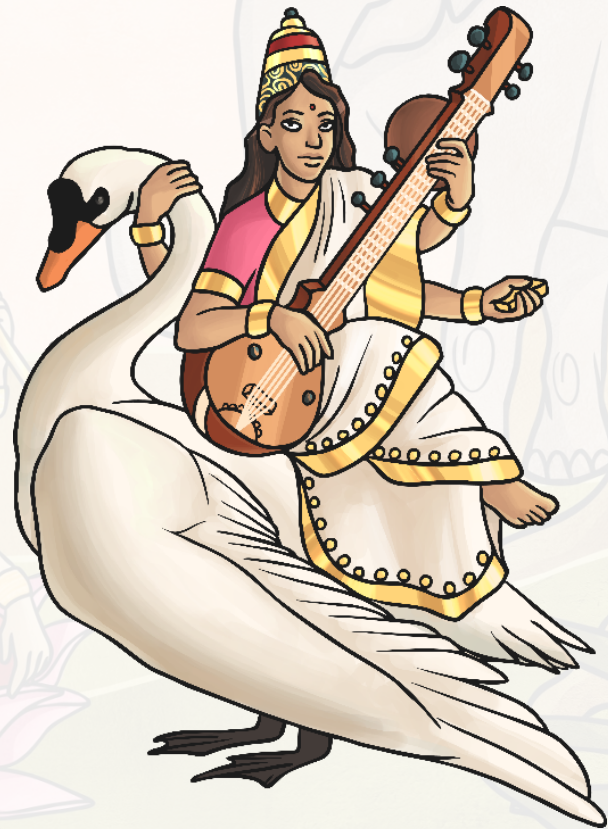
Saraswati

Saraswati is the goddess (devi) of knowledge and the arts.

Her swan personifies pure knowledge. She is sometimes depicted with a peacock which is said to represent the arts.

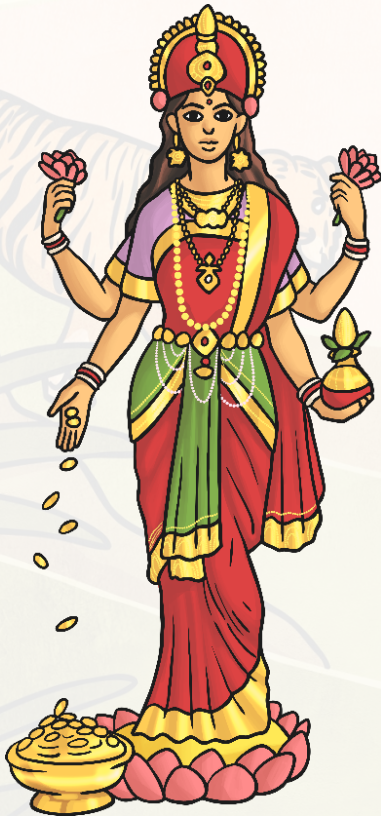
She taught Brahma (her husband) the ability to sense, think, comprehend and communicate.

Saraswati rejected material things in favour of pure wisdom.



Lakshmi

Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and purity.



She is depicted with four arms and standing on a lotus flower.

Hindus believe that if she is worshipped sincerely, and not in greed, she will bless them with fortune and success.

Like her husband, Lakshmi has also had incarnations on Earth as Sita, Radha and Rukmini.

Shakti

Shakti is the mother goddess - the source of all energy, power and creativity in the universe.

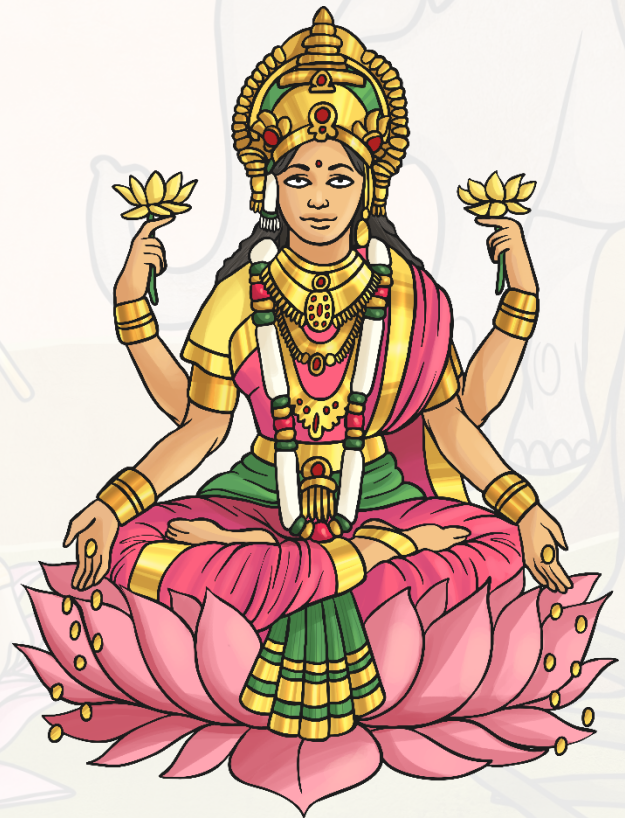
She represents nature and therefore can be nurturing as well as dangerous.

She can appear as:

Parvati
(kind)

Kali
(Cruel and
frightening)

Durga
(protector)



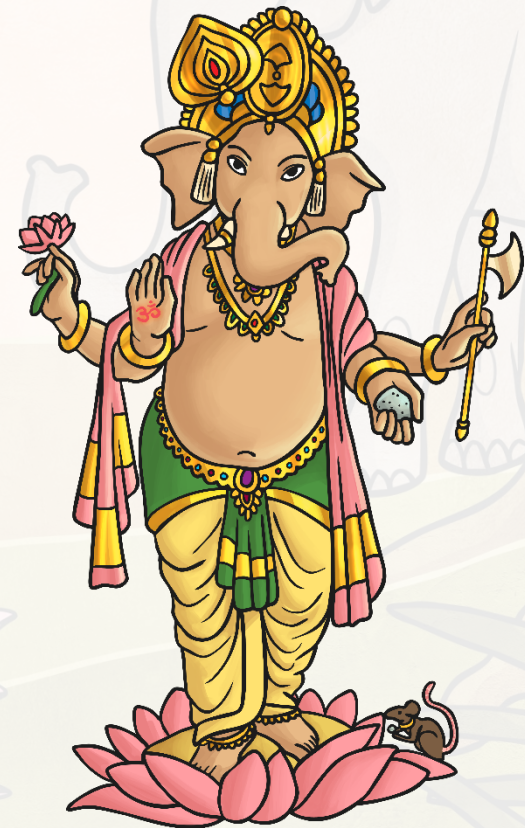
Ganesha

Son of **Parvati** and **Shiva** – he has an elephant's head and a human body.

His tusks – one broken and the other unbroken – represent imperfection and perfection in the world.

Ganesha is worshipped by Hindus who believe he bestows good fortune and wisdom.

He is often prayed to when his followers are starting something new in their lives e.g. getting married, starting a new job.



Indra

Indra is the king of heaven and lord of the gods who maintain the heavens.



He wields a thunderbolt, creates thunderstorms and provides rain.

He wages war against the opponents of the gods and thus is considered the god of war.

The rainbow is referred to as Indra's Bow.

Agni

Agni is the god of fire.

Fire holds a special place in many Hindu ceremonies including weddings.

The sacrifices and offerings made to him go to the other gods as he is a messenger from and to them.

He lives on Earth among humans rather than with the gods.

Surya

Surya is the Sun god.

He is depicted as a warrior on a chariot pulled by seven white horses.

He is thought to be capable of healing the sick and dispelling darkness by illuminating the world.

Hindus believe that placing the sign of the Sun over main doors will bring them good luck.

Vayu

Vayu is the god of air/wind.

He is also considered the god of life as air is vital to being alive.

Vayu is also known by the names of **Pavana**, **Vata** and **Prana**.

He is the father of Hanuman who is known as Pavanaputra (son of Pavana)

Like other gods, he is considered a fighter, destroyer, powerful and heroic.

Hanuman

Hanuman is the Hindu monkey god.



They believe that as a child, Hanuman was mischievous and liked to play tricks!

However, it is his role in the story of the festival of Diwali for which he is known.

He commanded an army to aid Rama's fight against the demon Ravana in order to rescue Sita.

