



Chapter 3: Brahmanism-Hinduism



https://kalyanamitra.org/th/article_detail.php?i=12507

THE WORLD'S OLDEST RELIGION: PATHS OF FAITH AND THE ATTAINMENT
OF MOKSHA

Introduction and Influence



- ▶ Significance: The oldest religion with no single identifiable founder.
- ▶ Influences:
- ▶ On Indian Society: The Caste System remains a powerful social force.
- ▶ On Southeast Asia: Long-standing influence on Thai culture and traditions since the Dvaravati period.
- ▶ Core Teachings: Focused on Ahimsa (Non-violence) and Moksha (Liberation).



<https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/97>

3.1 Meaning of Brahmanism-Hinduism

- ▶ Identity: They are essentially the same religion; "Brahmanism" evolved into "Hinduism."
- ▶ Chronological Names:
 - ▶ 1. Sanatana Dharma: The Eternal/Ancient Law.
 - ▶ 2. Vaidika Dharma: Teachings from the Vedas.
 - ▶ 3. Arya Dharma: The Noble Path of the civilized.
 - ▶ 4. Brahmana Dharma: Teachings of the Brahmin masters.
 - ▶ 5. Hindu Dharma: Later name emphasizing the doctrine of Ahimsa.



<https://www.chulabook.com/literature/97251>

Origins of the terms "Hindu" and "India"

- ▶ India: Derived from "Indos" the Greek term for the Indus River.
- ▶ Hindu: Derived from "Hindo" a Persian term referring to people living east of the Indus River (Sindhu).
- ▶ Hindustan: The land situated beyond the Indus River.
- ▶ Definition: A way of life encompassing diverse beliefs, universal in nature, yet deeply respecting individuality.



3.2 History and Origins



- ▶ Cultural Fusion of Two Races:
- ▶ 1. Aryans (The Migrants/Invaders): Fair-skinned, worshipped gods of nature (Indra, Yama, Varuna, Surya).
- ▶ 2. Dravidians (The Natives): Dark-skinned, worshipped the elements (Earth, Water, Wind, Fire).
- ▶ Historical Event: Around 1,457 years before the Buddhist Era, Aryans moved into the Indus Valley, pushing Dravidians south, resulting in a cultural merger that established Brahmanism



ภาพ พระอินทร์เจ้าแห่งไฟทรงเป็นหนึ่งในเทพเจ้าที่ยิ่งใหญ่ยุคแรก
ที่มา : (สยามคณศ ดอทคอม, ๒๕๕๗)

General Characteristics (Part 1)



- ▶ 1. Scriptural Authority: Revering the Vedas and later epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana
- ▶ 2. Concept of God: God is both personal (with form) and impersonal (without form).
- ▶ 3. Ethics: Belief in the Caste System the four goals of life (Purushartha), and the four stages of life (Ashrama).
- ▶ 4. Rituals (Samskara): Spiritual ceremonies linking the individual to ancestors from birth to death.



<https://www.siamganesh.com/hinduthailand.html>

General Characteristics (Part 2)



- ▶ 5. Devotion to Gurus: Faith in enlightened teachers (Rishis) as guides to spiritual truth.
- ▶ 6. Unity of Brahman and Atman: Brahman is the Ultimate Reality; the physical world is Maya (illusion).
- ▶ 7. Karma and Reincarnation: The soul undergoes a cycle of birth and death based on past actions.
- ▶ 8. Avatar (Incarnation): The belief that God descends to Earth to restore Dharma and punish evil.



<https://fliphtml5.com/jfcig/wico/basic>

3.2.2 Evolution of Thought (Conceptual Map)

ยุคก่อนพระ เวท	ยุคพระเวท		ยุค พราหมณ์		ยุคฮินดู
วิญญาณนิยม ยม	พหุเทวนิยม	อติเทวนิยม	เอกเทวนิยม	เอกนิยม	พหุเทวนิ ยม
(Animism)	(Polytheism)	(Henotheism)	(Monotheism)	(Monism)	(Polytheism)



<https://www.siamganesh.com/hinduthailand.html>

The Vedic Period

- ▶ "Veda" means Knowledge (Divine sounds heard by Rishis during meditation).
- ▶ Polytheism: Worship of nature deities divided into three realms:
- ▶ Celestial Gods: (e.g., Varuna - The Just God).
- ▶ Atmospheric Gods: (e.g., Indra - God of War/Storms).
- ▶ Terrestrial Gods: (Gods of the Earth).
- ▶ Rituals: Sacrifice (Yajna) involving animals, Soma nectar, and chants.

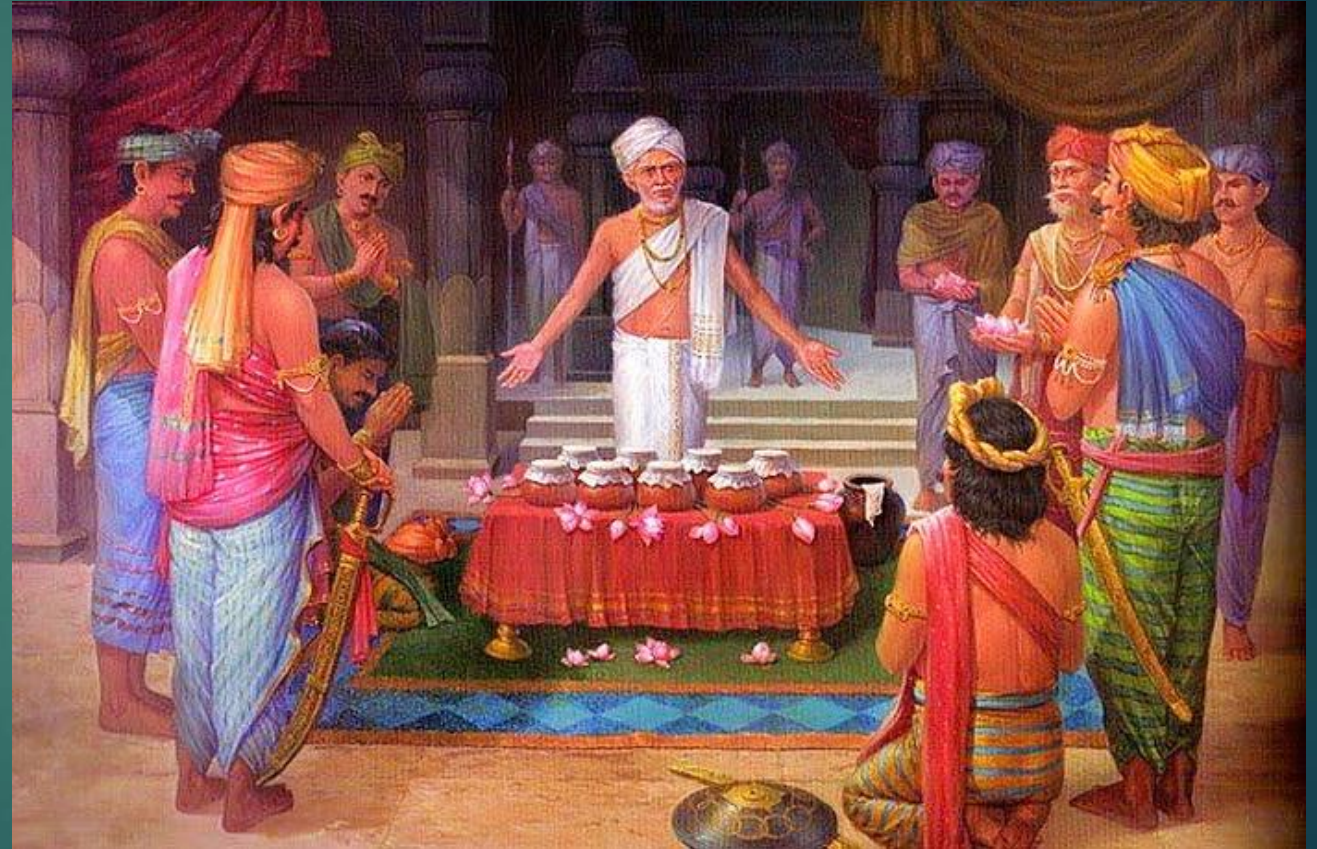


https://www.matichon.co.th/weekly/featured/article_13470

The Brahman Period



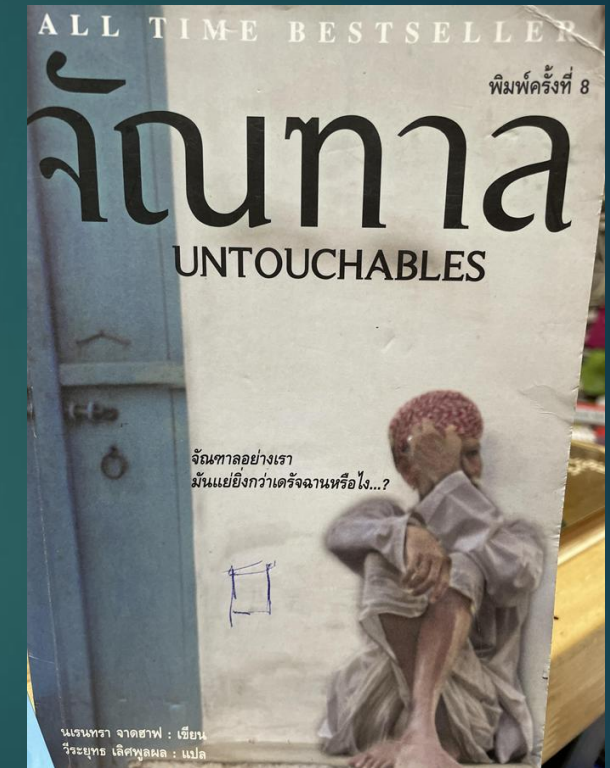
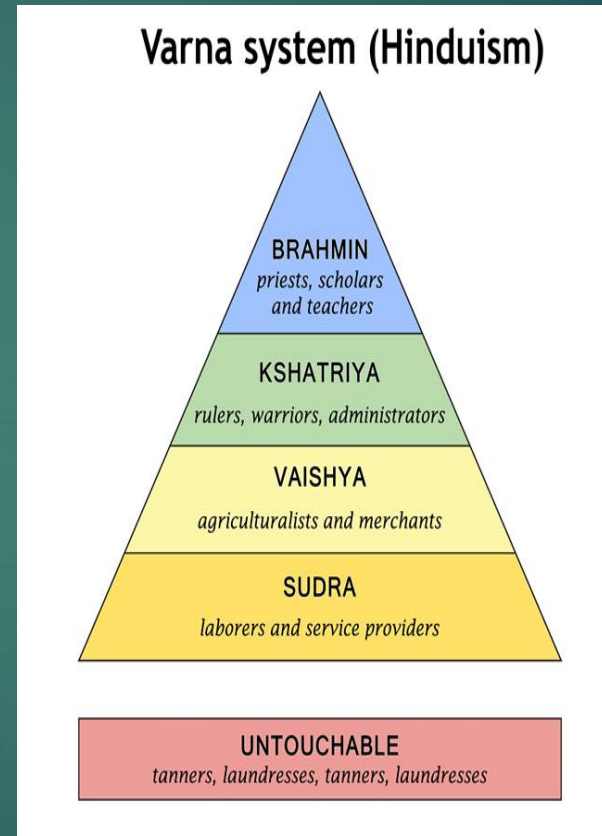
- ▶ Power of Brahmins: The priestly class held supreme influence as the sole mediators between humans and gods.
- ▶ Shift to Monotheism: Centered on Lord Brahma(The Creator) as the supreme deity.
- ▶ Creation of the Caste System: Explaining that humans were created from different parts of Brahma's body.



: The Caste System (Varna)



- ▶ Brahmin: (Mouth) - Priests, scholars, and teachers.
- ▶ Kshatriya: (Arms) - Warriors, rulers, and protectors.
- ▶ Vaishya: (Thighs/Hips) - Merchants, farmers, and artisans.
- ▶ Sudra: (Feet) - Laborers and servants.
- ▶ Untouchables (Chandalas): Those born outside the caste system (lowest social status).



Transition to "Monism"



- ▶ Reasons for the Shift:
- ▶ Dissatisfaction with "human-like" gods who possessed greed and lust.
- ▶ Skepticism toward overly complex and expensive rituals.
- ▶ New Philosophies:
- ▶ Brahman: The one absolute, abstract reality.
- ▶ Atman: The eternal soul within.
- ▶ Moksha: The ultimate goal of merging back into Brahman.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui3sNZmjysM>

The Hindu Period



- ▶ Revival: Abstract concepts became concrete again through the Trimurti and Avatar theories.
- ▶ External Influence: The rise of Buddhism and Jainism (which rejected the Vedas) forced Brahmanism to reform and evolve into "Hinduism" to regain its glory.



<https://www.facebook.com/p>

The Trimurti (The Great Trinity)*



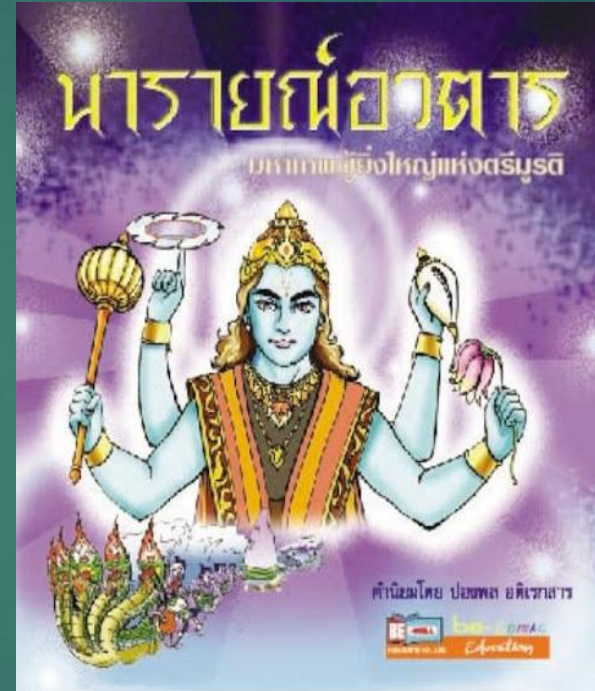
Deity	Role	Consort	Vahana (Vehicle)
Brahma	The Creator	Saraswati	Swan (Hamsa)
Vishnu	The Preserver	Lakshmi	Garuda
Shiva	The Destroyer	Parvati/Uma	Nandi (White Bull)



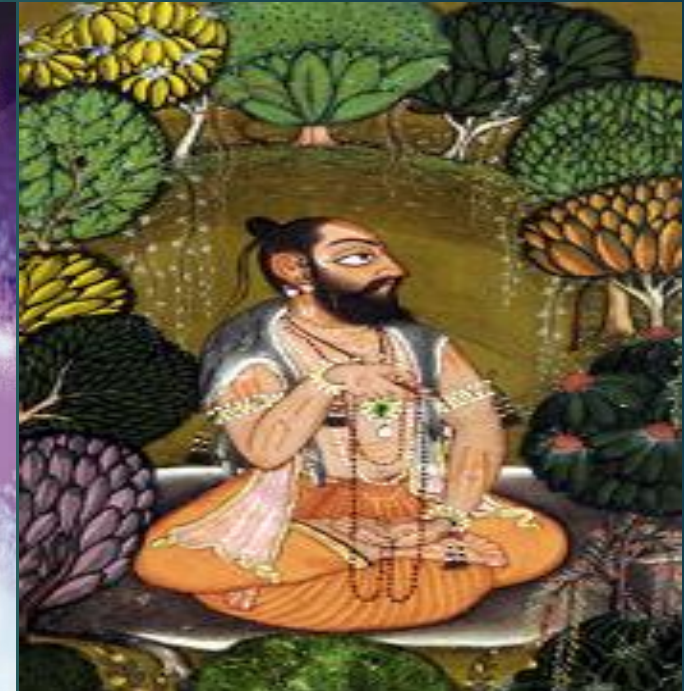
<https://www.sanook.com/horoscope/200569/>

3.3.1 The Founder (An "Apersonic" Religion)

- ▶ Unique Trait: Hinduism lacks a single historical founder (unlike Buddhism or Christianity).
- ▶ Divine Origin: Believed to originate from Brahma (The Supreme God). Teachings were received as Sruti (Divine Sound) by ancient sages.
- ▶ Types of "Founding" Figures:
 - ▶ 1. Avatar Prophets: Deities descending to Earth to restore Dharma (e.g., the 10 Avatars of Vishnu).
 - ▶ 2. Rishis (The Seers): Sages who "heard" the Vedas during deep meditation.
- ▶ Note: The Buddha identified 10 primary Rishis (e.g., Ataka, Vamaka, Angiras) who compiled the Vedas.



<https://digital.nlt.go.th/dlib/items/show/11961?collection=54>



<https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki>

3.3.2 Religious Dharma (Sacred Texts)

- ▶ Meaning of "Veda": Derived from Vid meaning "Knowledge"—specifically, divine knowledge from Brahma.
- ▶ The Four Vedas (Chatur-Veda):
 - ▶ 1. Rig Veda: Hymns praising nature deities (The oldest).
 - ▶ 2. Yajur Veda: Ritual instructions and sacrifices.
 - ▶ 3. Sama Veda: Melodies and chants for rituals.
 - ▶ 4. Atharva Veda: Spells, incantations, and ancient medicine (Ayurveda).



Categories of Scripture (Sruti vs. Smriti)

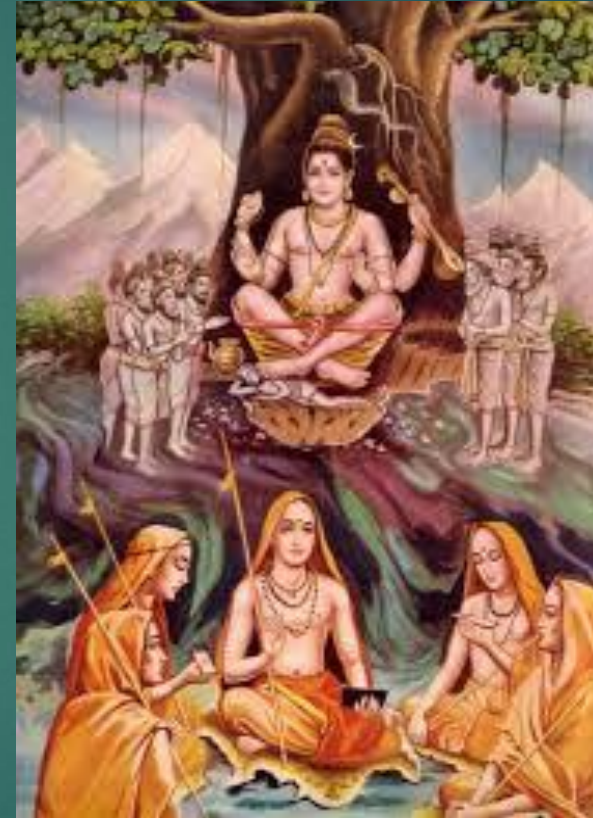
- ▶ Sruti (Primary): "That which is heard."
Revealed directly by God to sages.
Includes the Vedas and Upanishads.
- ▶ Smriti (Secondary): "That which is remembered."
Written by humans based on divine inspiration.
- ▶ Itihasa: Epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata (which includes the Bhagavad Gita).
- ▶ Puranas: Mythology and stories for common people.
- ▶ Dharmashastra: Social laws and ethics (e.g., the Laws of Manu).



3.3.3 – 3.3.4 Religious Personnel & Places



- ▶ Religious Personnel:
- ▶ Brahmins: The priestly class; mediators between humans and gods.
- ▶ Sadhus/Yogis/Sannyasis: Ascetics who renounce the world to seek truth.
- ▶ Sacred Places:
- ▶ Temples (Mandir/Devalaya): Beautifully carved dwellings for the gods.
- ▶ The Ganges River: The holiest site for washing away sins and performing life-cycle rituals.



<https://www.facebook.com/>



<https://travel.trueid.net/detail/43GrOD6lmW4>

3.3.5 Religious Rituals (Samskaras)

- ▶ Samskaras: 12 major life-cycle rituals.
- ▶ Upanayana: The "Sacred Thread" ceremony (Initiation into student life).
- ▶ Vivaha (Marriage): A sacred duty to ensure the continuation of the family and lineage.
- ▶ Other Key Rituals:
- ▶ Shraddha: Merit-making for ancestors.
- ▶ Shivaratri: A night of vigil and prayer dedicated to Lord Shiva.



3.4.1 Teachings on Ultimate Reality

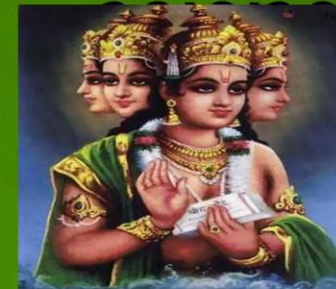
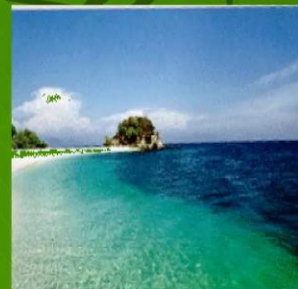
- ▶ Brahman: The Universal Soul—the infinite, eternal reality from which all things arise.
- ▶ Atman: The individual soul. The core belief is that Atman is Brahman (The self is divine).
- ▶ The Trimurti (The Trinity):
 - ▶ 1. Brahma: The Creator (Associated with the creation of the Caste system).
 - ▶ 2. Vishnu: The Preserver (Restorer of balance/Dharma).
 - ▶ 3. Shiva: The Destroyer (Destruction for the sake of rebirth).

การเวียนว่ายตายเกิด

อาตมัน

พรหมัน (ปรมาตมัน =
วิญญาณใหญ่)

ชีวาตมัน =



3.4.2 Saṃsāra and the Law of Karma



- ▶ Jivatman: The individual soul that is immortal, even as the body decays.
- ▶ Saṃsāra: The cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.
- ▶ Karma: The law of action and consequence. Good deeds lead to higher births; bad deeds lead to suffering or lower forms of life.
- ▶ Goal: To overcome Avidya (Ignorance) and reach spiritual liberation.



3.4.3 The Caste System (Varna)

- ▶ Social Structure based on Brahma's Body:
- ▶ 1. Brahmins (Mouth): Intellectuals and priests.
- ▶ 2. Kshatriyas (Arms): Rulers and warriors.
- ▶ 3. Vaishyas (Thighs): Merchants and farmers.
- ▶ 4. Sudras (Feet): Laborers.
- ▶ Dalits (Untouchables): Those outside the caste system who have historically faced significant hardship.



3.4.4 The Four Ashramas (Stages of Life)

- ▶ roadmap for a fulfilling life:
- ▶ 1. Brahmacharya: The Student stage (Learning and self-discipline).
- ▶ 2. Grihastha: The Householder stage (Marriage, career, and family duties).
- ▶ 3. Vanaprastha: The Hermit stage (Retiring to focus on spiritual growth).
- ▶ 4. Sannyasa: The Ascetic stage (Renouncing the world for total liberation).



<https://www.facebook.com/krukongsocial/posts>

3.4.4.1 Brahmacharya (The Student Stage)

- ▶ Age: 8 – 25 years.
- ▶ Role: The Brahmachari (Student).
- ▶ Key Focus: Education and self-discipline.
- ▶ Practicing celibacy (abstaining from sexual matters).
- ▶ Controlling body, speech, and mind through strict discipline.
- ▶ Studying the Vedas and professional arts related to one's caste.



3.4.4.2 Grihastha (The Householder Stage)

- ▶ Age: 26 – 50 years.
- ▶ Role: The Grihastha (Householder).
- ▶ Key Duties:
 - ▶ Working, earning a living, and supporting parents.
 - ▶ Marriage and continuing the family lineage.
 - ▶ Establishing economic stability for the family.
- ▶ Spiritual Duties:** Studying/teaching the Vedas, making offerings to gods and ancestors, and giving charity to the poor and sick. (Withaya Sakyaphinan, 2006).



3.4.4.3 Vanaprastha (The Hermit Stage)

- ▶ Age: 51 – 75 years.
- ▶ Role: The Vanaprastha (Forest Dweller).
- ▶ Transition: Once children have grown and established their own households, the individual retires from worldly wealth.
- ▶ Key Focus:
 - ▶ Living in a forest hermitage.
 - ▶ Intense meditation and spiritual practice.
 - ▶ Devoting time to social service based on one's remaining capacity and wisdom.



3.4.4.4 Sannyasa (The Ascetic Stage)

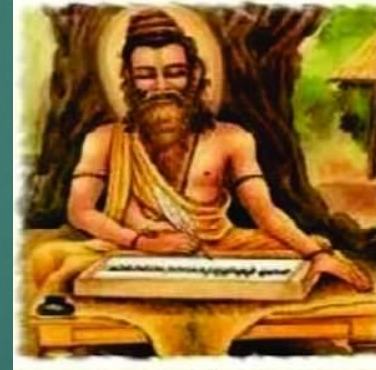
- ▶ Age: 76 years and above.
- ▶ Role: The Sannyasi (Renunciant).
- ▶ Key Focus: Complete renunciation of the world.
- ▶ Seeking Moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth).
- ▶ Living a life of supreme goodness and celibacy.
- ▶ Viewing all humans as kin and focusing entirely on merging with the Divine.



Brahmacharya



Grihastha



Vanaprastha



Sannyasa

3.5 The Four Goals of Life (Purushartha)

- ▶ To align with the Ashramas, Hinduism defines four levels of life goals:
- ▶ 1. Dharma (Norm): Morality, duty, and social ethics.
- ▶ 2. Kama (Pleasure): Legitimate happiness and family love.
- ▶ 3. Artha (Wealth): Economic success and providing for society.
- ▶ 4. Moksha (Liberation): The ultimate goal—freedom from Avidya (ignorance) and the cycle of death.

สี่เป้าหมายชีวิตและสี่อศรมในศาสนาฮินดู

ส่วนที่ 1: สี่เป้าหมายชีวิต (Purusharthas) - แปลจากภาษาไทย



1. DHARMA (The Foundation):
Virtue, Duty, and Social Ethics
Duty, and Social Ethics



2. KAMA (Pleasure):
Lawful Pleasure and Family Love



3. ARTHA (Prosperity):
Economic Success and Giving Back to Society



4. MOKSHA (Liberation):
The Supreme Goal is Freedom from Ignorance (*Avidya*) and the Cycle of Death

To align with the Ashramas, Hinduism defines four levels of life goals.

ส่วนที่ 2: สองอศรมแรก (The First Two Ashramas)



Age: 8 – 25 years
The Brahmachari / Student

- ▶ Key Focus: Education and Self-Discipline
- ▶ Practice Celibacy
- ▶ Control Body, Speech, and Mind with Strict Discipline
- ▶ Study the Vedas and Caste-related Arts



Age: 25 – 50 years
The Grihastha / Householder

- ▶ Key Duties: Wedding, Living as Family, Supporting Parents
- ▶ Manage and Distribute the Family Income
- ▶ Establish Economic Stability for the Family
- ▶ Spiritual Duties: Veda teaching, rituals, and charity (Simson, 2005).



Part 3: The Second Two Ashramas -
The Vanaprastha (Forest-Dweller) and Sannyasa (Renunciate)

These stages represent the path to detachment and Moksha.

3.6.1 Paths to Moksha (The 4 Yogas)

- ▶ To achieve Moksha, one can follow four paths of Yoga (Union of Atman with Brahman):
- ▶ Karma Yoga: The path of selfless action (duty without attachment).
- ▶ Jnana Yoga: The path of knowledge (realizing the unity of self and God).
- ▶ Bhakti Yoga: The path of devotion (pure love and service to God).
- ▶ Raja Yoga: The path of meditation (mental and physical discipline).

1 THE FIRST TWO ASHRAMAS (LIFE STAGES) - AGE 8 TO 50



Age: 8 – 25 years.
Role: The Brahmachari (Student).
Key Focus: Education and self-discipline.
Practicing celibacy.
Controlling body, speech, and mind.
Studying the Vedas and professional arts related to caste.



Age: 25 – 50 years.
Role: The Grihastha (Householder).
Wedding, domestic living, and supporting parents.
Manage and distribute the family income.
Establishing economic stability.
Spiritual Duties: Veda teaching, rituals, and charity (Simson, 2005).

2 THE PURUSHARTHAS (FOUR LIFE GOALS) - THAI LANGUAGE SECTION

เพื่อให้สอดคล้องกับอศรม ศาสนาฮินดูได้กำหนดเป้าหมายชีวิตไว้สี่ระดับ:

1. ธรรมะ (บรรทัดฐาน): คุณธรรม หน้าที่ และจริยธรรมทางสังคม
2. กามารมณ์ (ความสุข): ความสุขที่ชอบด้วยกฎหมายและความรักในครอบครัว
3. อาชา (ความมั่งคั่ง): ความสำเร็จทางเศรษฐกิจและการตอบแทนสังคม
4. โมกษะ (ความหลุดพ้น): เป้าหมายสูงสุด คือ อิสรภาพจากอวิชชา (อวิชชา) และวัฏจักรแห่งความตาย

3 THE YOGAS (FOUR PATHS TO LIBERATION)

To achieve Moksha, one can follow four paths of Yoga (Union of Atman with Brahman):

1. Karma Yoga
The path of selfless action (duty without attachment).
2. Jnana Yoga
The path of knowledge (realizing the unity of self and God).
3. Bhakti Yoga
The path of devotion (pure love and service to God).
4. Raja Yoga
The path of meditation (mental and physical discipline).

SUMMARY: ALIGNING LIFE STAGES, GOALS, AND PATHS

3.7 Major Sects of Hinduism

- ▶ Vaishnavism: Worship of Lord Vishnu (and his avatars like Rama and Krishna).
- ▶ Shaivism: Worship of Lord Shiva (represented by the Shivalinga).
- ▶ Shaktism: Worship of the Divine Mother (Shakti/Devi) such as Kali or Durga.
- ▶ Bhakti Movement: Focuses on personal love for God, transcending caste boundaries.



<https://www.facebook.com/socialwithteacherkannika/posts->

3.8 Important symbols

- ▶ Om (ॐ): Symbol representing the Trimurti (A+U+Ma) and the Supreme Paramatman.
- ▶ Swastika (卐): Symbol representing Ganesha and auspiciousness. free from obstacles
- ▶ Forehead mark: indicates sect (e.g. 3 straight lines for Shaivist sect)



3.9 Influence on Society (India & Thailand)

- ▶ India: Shaped the legal system (Manusmriti), art, and the great epics (Ramayana/Mahabharata).
- ▶ Thailand: Heavily influences Royal ceremonies and state rituals.
- ▶ Impacts local beliefs in astrology, Brahmanic deities, and protective talismans.
- ▶ Embedded in Thai literature and language.



Conclusion

- ▶ Brahmanism-Hinduism is an ancient faith that structures human life through the Four Ashramas and the Four Goals. While its peak objective is the spiritual liberation of Moksha, it provides a practical framework for social responsibility and moral living that continues to influence modern Asian societies today.

ศาสนาพราหมณ์ - ฮินดู ศาสนาสากล...

- **ถิ่นกำเนิด** - ในประเทศอินเดีย (ชมพูทวีป)
- เป็นศาสนาที่มีผู้นับถือมากที่สุดในโลก
- ปัจจุบันยังคงมีการนับถือมาจนถึงปัจจุบัน

๐๓

ศาสนา ไม่ปรากฏ

- นับถือ เทพสูงสุดทั้งสาม คือ พระพรหม พระวิष्ณู พระศิวะ
- ๘ พราหมณ์/ฤาษี เป็นผู้ทำพิธีเกี่ยวกับเทพเจ้าและแต่งคัมภีร์
- นับถือมากใน อินเดีย

คัมภีร์ : ไตรเพท

แบ่งเป็น 4 คัมภีร์ย่อย คือ

- 1) ฤคเวท
- 2) ยชุรเวท
- 3) สามเวท
- 4) อาถรรพเวท

นิกายสำคัญ

- 1) ไศวนิกาย - นับถือ พระศิวะ สูงสุด
- 2) ไวษณวนิกาย - นับถือ พระวิष्ณู (นารายณ์)
- 3) คัมภีร์ - นับถือ เทพสฤท

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