

Hinduism

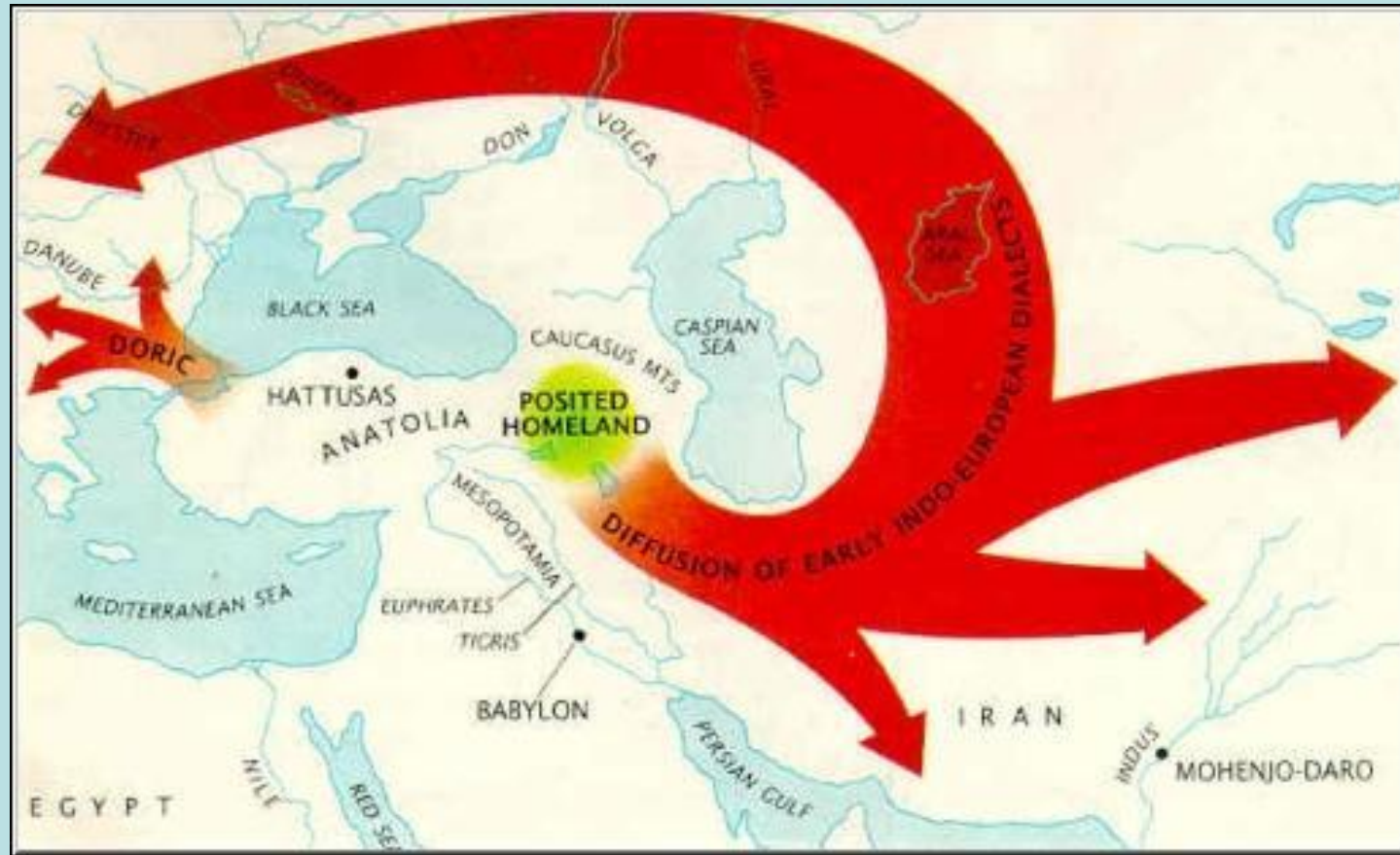


Hinduism

- About 900 million people around the world practice the Hindu religious tradition.
- More than 80% of the people living in India are Hindu.
- Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religious traditions and has been around for 4,000 years.



Origins of Hinduism



- No single founder can be traced back in history.
- The Aryans, an invading group of nomads came from the north around 1500 B.C.

Origins of Hinduism



- The worship of Aryan priests followed complicated rituals and hymns known as **The Vedas**, or The Books of Knowledge.
- The Vedas, which contained prayers and rituals, along with many other Aryan beliefs, led to the development of the religion known as Hinduism.

Hinduism is Polytheistic



- Hinduism is polytheistic, meaning they worship many gods.
- However, Hindus believe that all of these gods are part of a supreme spirit called Brahman.

Three Major Forms of Brahman

Brahma the Creator



Shiva the Destroyer

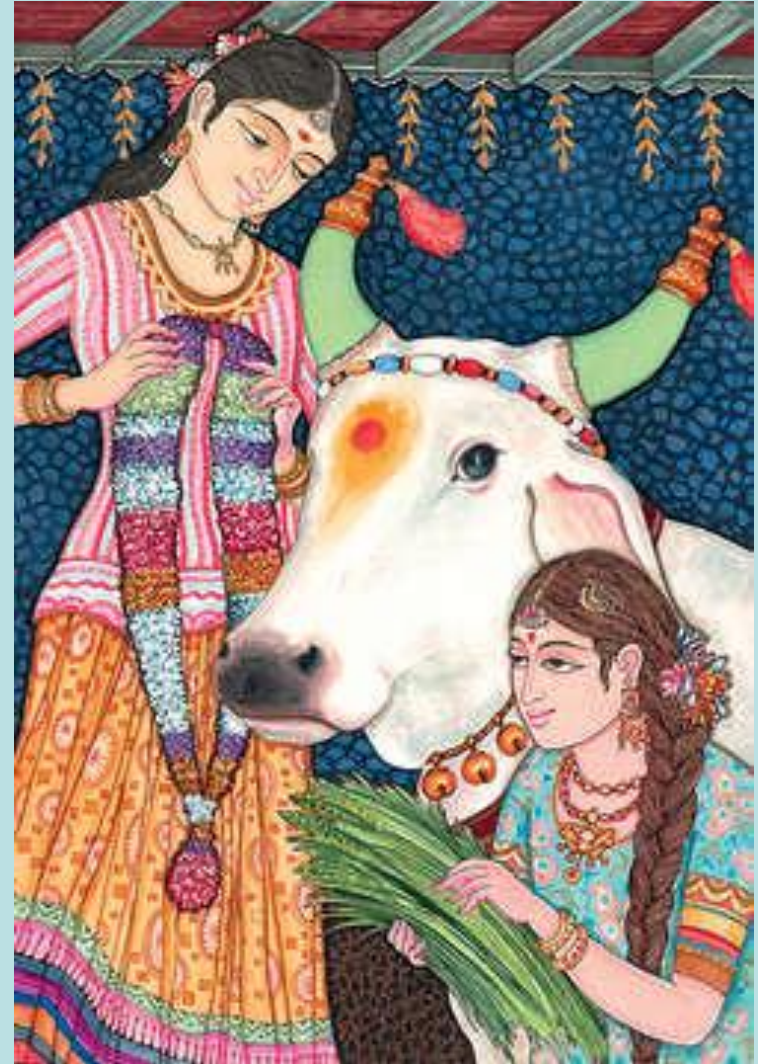


Vishnu the Preserver



Beliefs - Souls

- Hindus also believe that all living beings have souls – animals as well as people.
- Some animals, like the cow, are considered sacred.
- Many Hindus are vegetarians, meaning they do not eat meat.



Beliefs - Souls

- Souls are born and reborn many times



Beliefs -- Reincarnation



- All Hindus believe in **reincarnation**, the idea that the soul does not die with the body, but enters the body of another being, either a person or an animal.
- The type of life a person leads determines what his next life will be like.

Beliefs - Reincarnation

- A good person will have a better life in his next reincarnation.
- An evil person will suffer in his next life.
- A soul is reincarnated over and over again, until the life it lives is good enough to bring it to be united with Brahman.
- The belief that one's actions determine one's fate is called **Karma**.

Beliefs - Reincarnation

- Karma – the effects that good or bad actions have on a person's soul.



Beliefs - Reincarnation

- The Ultimate Goal: To reunite one's soul with Brahman, the universal spirit

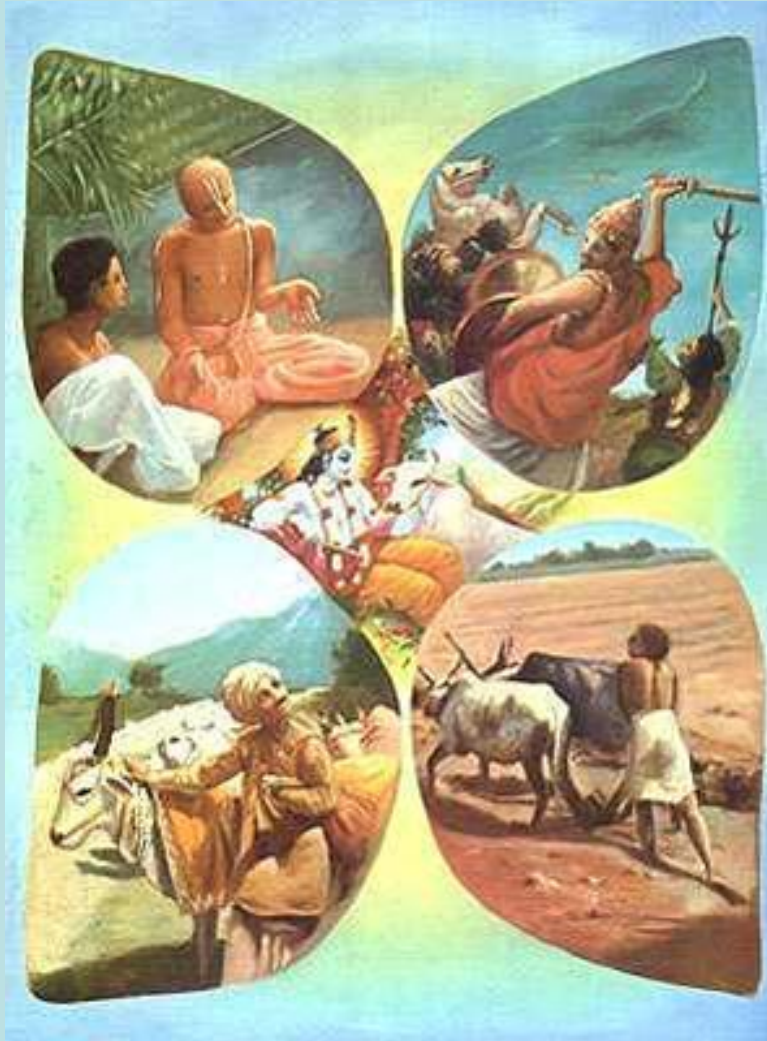


Beliefs - Reincarnation

- Moksha – Salvation from the cycle of rebirth. This happens after building enough good karma.

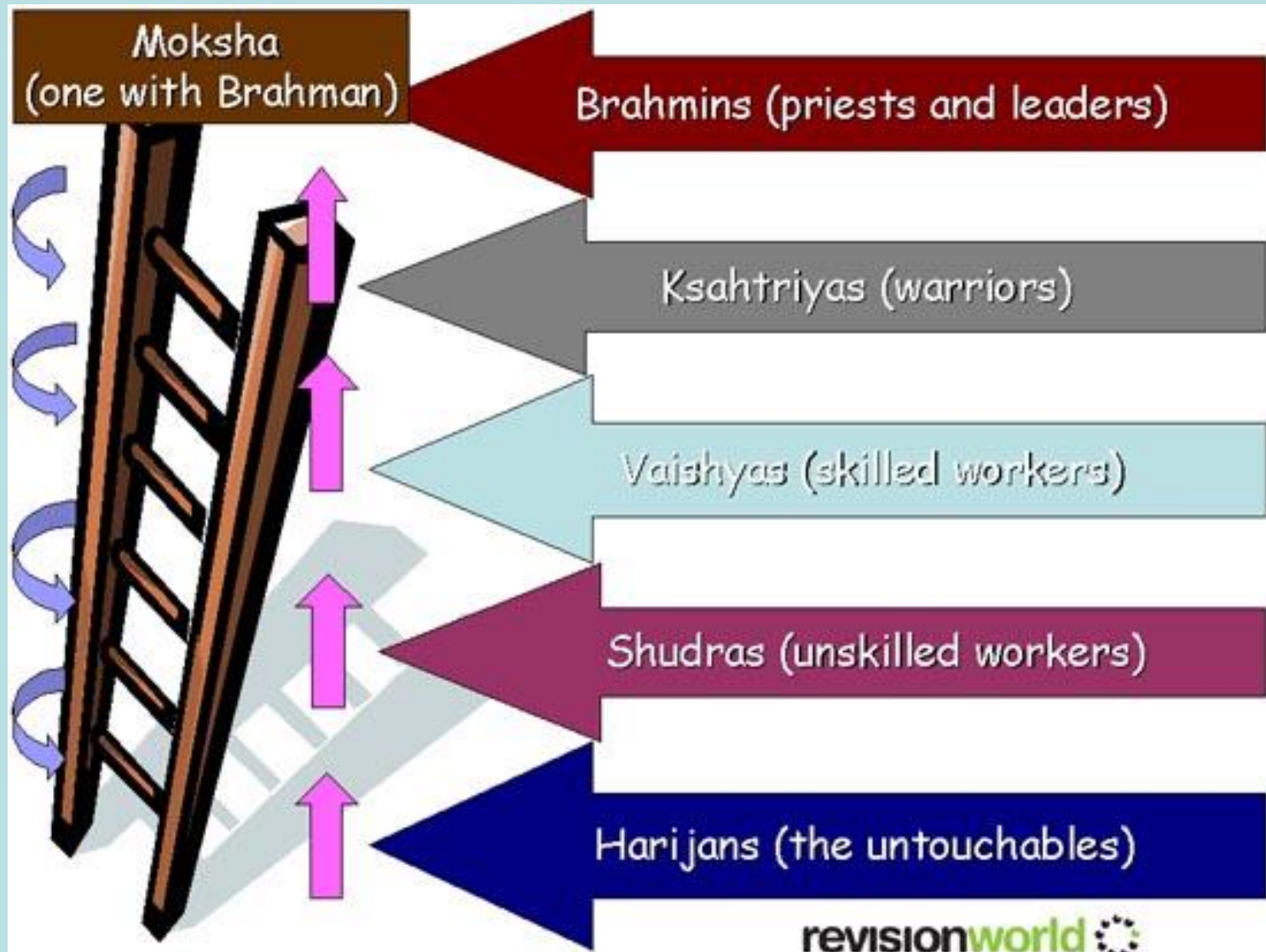


Caste System



- Ancient Hindu teachings divided people into four classes or **varnas**, a social hierarchy that evolved into the modern social structure known as the caste system.

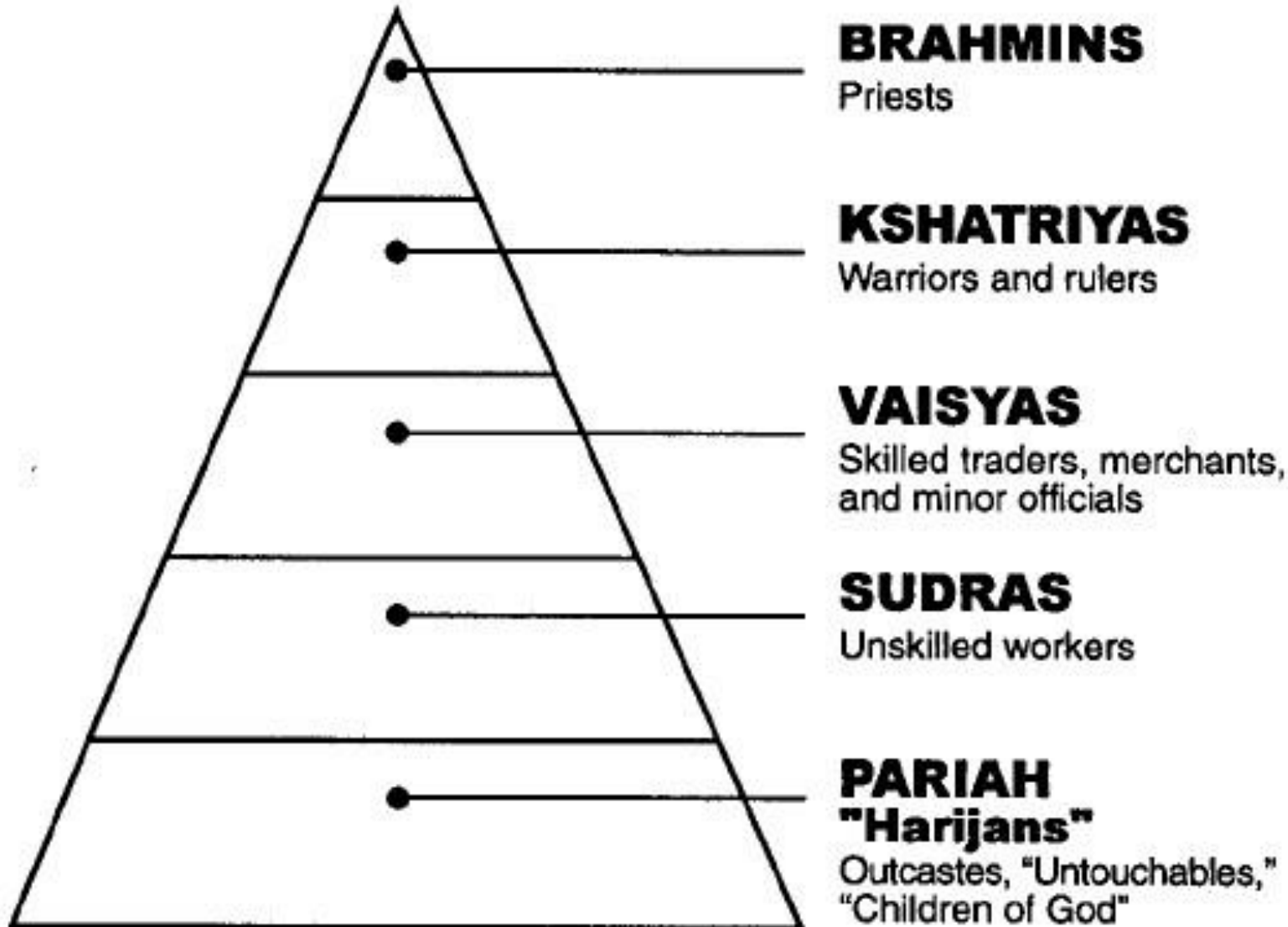
Caste System



Caste System

- Social class is hereditary (inherited) and does not change throughout a person's life.
- The only way to move to a higher caste was to be born into one in the next life.

Caste System



Caste System

- There are divisions within each caste, making Indian social structure very complicated.
- Traditional families would not let their children marry someone from a different caste.
- Many jobs in India are still awarded based on caste connections.

Caste System

- Many modern Hindu's criticize the caste system, yet it remains influential in India today.



Caste System

- Dharma – each person has a duty to accept his or her place in the world without complaint.



Practices

- Most Hindus worship individually outdoors, in temples, or in the home.
- Many Hindu homes have small shrines dedicated to a god chosen by the family.
- During worship, Hindus sing hymns from the Veda, make offerings to statues, and light the sacred fire.





Hindu Temple in Lilburn, GA