- Make sure you have your map.

- If you are late, you are late.
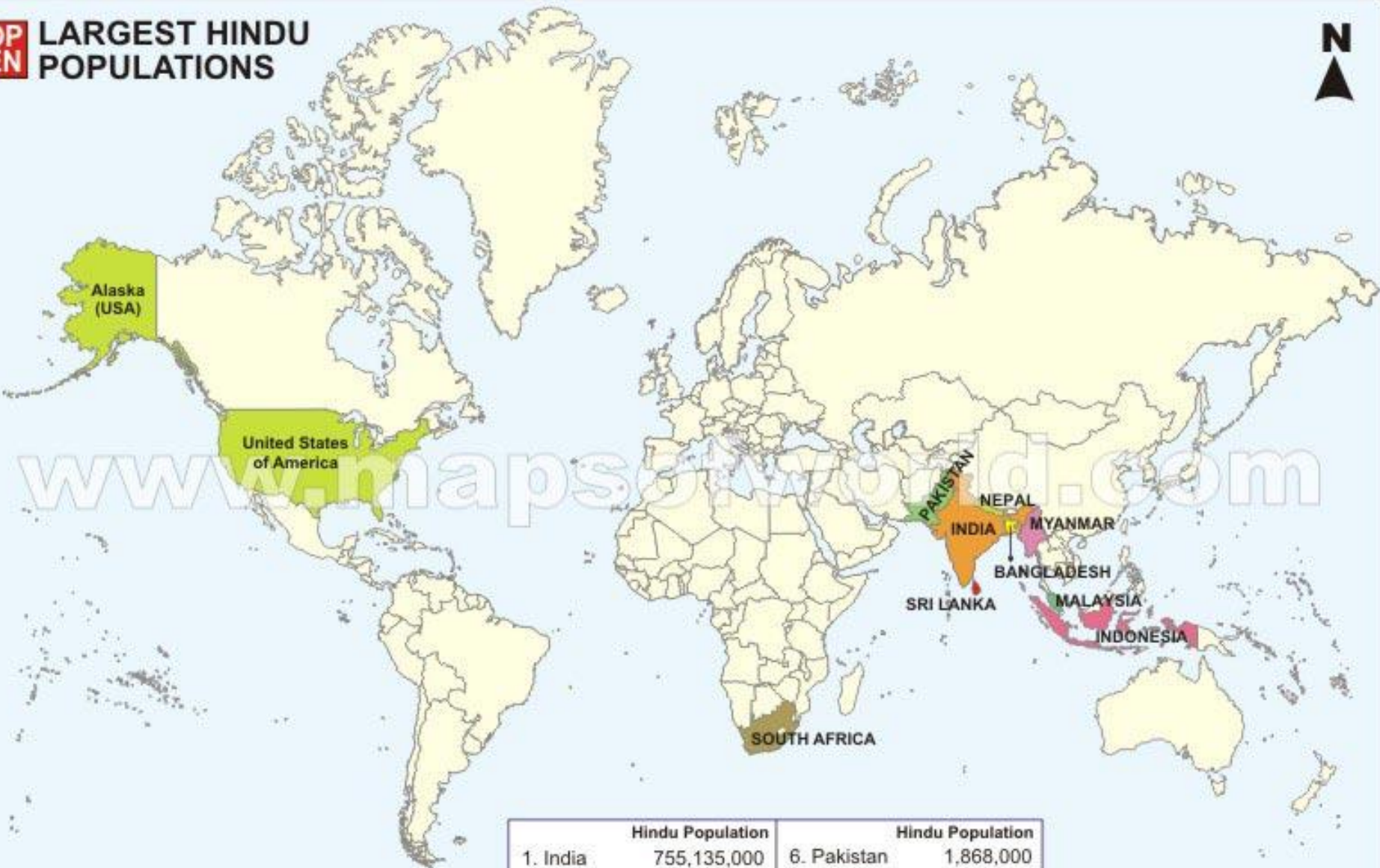
Introduction to Hinduism

An Introduction

- Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world, with approximately 900 million adherents

- It is also the oldest known religion in the world today

- The origins cannot be ascribed to any single founder or a specific time or a single place

TOP TEN LARGEST HINDU POPULATIONS

N

Alaska (USA)

United States of America

PAKISTAN
NEPAL
INDIA
MYANMAR
BANGLADESH
SRI LANKA
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA

SOUTH AFRICA

	Hindu Population			Hindu Population
1. India	755,135,000		6. Pakistan	1,868,000
2. Nepal	18,354,000		7. Malaysia	1,630,000
3. Bangladesh	15,995,000		8. USA	1,032,000
4. Indonesia	7,259,000		9. South Africa	959,000
5. Sri Lanka	2,124,000		10. Myanmar	893,000

Map Not To Scale

3 major texts of Hinduism

- **The Vedas**
  - The oldest and most important is the Vedas *(in 4 parts)*
    - First in the form of oral histories

- **The Bhagavad Gītā** (400 BCE)
  - It is perhaps the most famous, and definitely the most widely-read text of ancient India.

- **The Upanishads** (400 BCE)
  - Focus on 1) meditation and 2) religious instruction with a **guru**

Brahman (the boss)

- The Vedas depict *Brahman* as the Universal Soul, the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything, beyond the universe.

Thousands of deities in one universal spirit.

Polytheistic?

- Many Hindus believe in many deities

- **Key**: These very interesting looking gods are not to be taken literally

- <u>The Hindu Trinity (the big 3)</u>:
  - *Bramah-the Creator*
  - *Vishnu- the Preserver / Continuer*
  - *Shiva- the Destroyer*

- After this top tier, there is a virtually endless list of second-string deities
  - Kali
  - Ganesha

Brahma

- **Brahma** is the Hindu God of Creation

- Brahma is traditionally depicted with four heads and four faces and four arms.

Vishnu

- **Vishnu** is the *Preserver*, he is most famously identified with his human and animal incarnations *(AKA, avatars)*
  - He manifested Himself as a living being in ten avatars.

- They are (in order of avatar)
  - Fish
  - Turtle
  - Pig/Boar
  - Lion man / from the torso upwards lion, below, human
  - First fully human form as a dwarf sage who has the ability to grow very, very tall
  - Fierce man / Hunter
  - Greatest Warrior/ Ideal man
  - Mentally advanced man
  - Sage who is completely still
  - Prophesied, yet to take place

- For Vaishnavas, he is the Ultimate Reality or God. The *Brahman.*

Shiva

- **Shiva** is the **Destroyer**
- Even though he represents destruction, Shiva is viewed as a positive force

- Shiva is the supreme God in Shaivism, a sect in Hinduism

Kali

- Kali is the goddess for the destruction of evil forces

- Kali wears a a necklace made from men's skulls

- Consort of Shiva

Ganesha

- Ganesha is one of the most well-known and venerated representations of God

- The *Lord of Good Fortune*
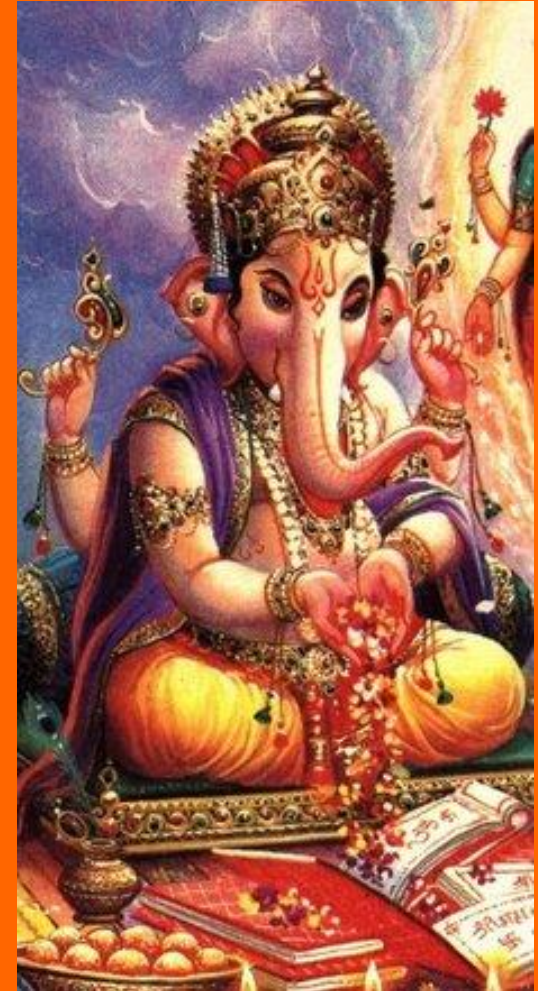
Some Ideas That Unite Hinduism

- **1) Reincarnation**
  – Based on the idea that every living being has an eternally existing spirit
  – *Reincarnation is* the soul's cycle of birth and death until it attains Mokṣha (Moke-sha) (salvation) and is governed by *Karma (see below)*

- **2) Karma**
  – Karma rests on the idea of human free-will (not moved by God)
  – One's actions determine the course of one's life cycle & rebirth

  *You can't refine your soul overnight, however. Hindus believe it takes many lifetimes to achieve *moksha*

Main Ideas in Hinduism

- ## 3) Moksha
  - When a soul finally escapes the karmic cycle, it becomes one with Brahman when the last bodily incarnation dies.

- ## 4) Stages of life
  - There are stages to "lives" that we all go through —some quicker than others
  - All humans seek:
    - 1. *kāma* (pleasure, physical or emotional)
    - 2, *artha* (material wealth)
    - 3. *dharma* (righteousness)
      - happens with maturity
      - learn to govern these desires within the higher framework
    - 4. *mokṣha* (salvation)
      - Results in ultimate happiness
      - Escape from the cycle of births and deaths

- # Where's the Beef?
  - A large section of Hindus embrace vegetarianism in a bid to respect higher forms of life.
  - While vegetarianism is not a requirement, it is recommended as a purifying lifestyle

4 Daily Duties

- Each Hindu has 4 daily duties:
    - Revere the deities
    - Respect ancestors
    - Respect all beings
    - Honor all humankind

The End

or is it just a new beginning to be followed by another end, and another, and

another, and another…