

# HT3M- 2.3 Hindu Concept of God (b) Vishnu



# Vishnu



- The name Vishnu means “ to settle ,  
“to enter into, and to pervade”
- To sum up we will refer to the name  
meaning, “the All-Pervading One”

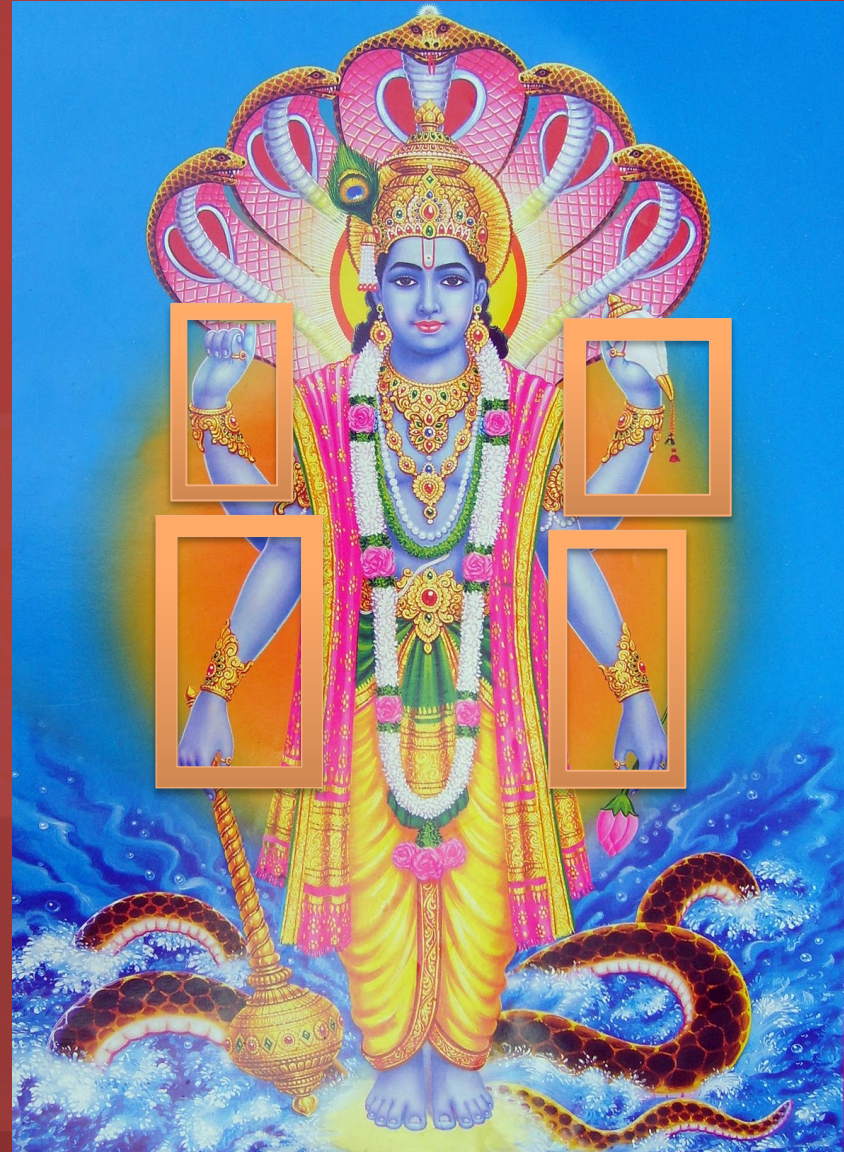


# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

### Four Arms

- Represents his all-powerful and all-pervasive nature

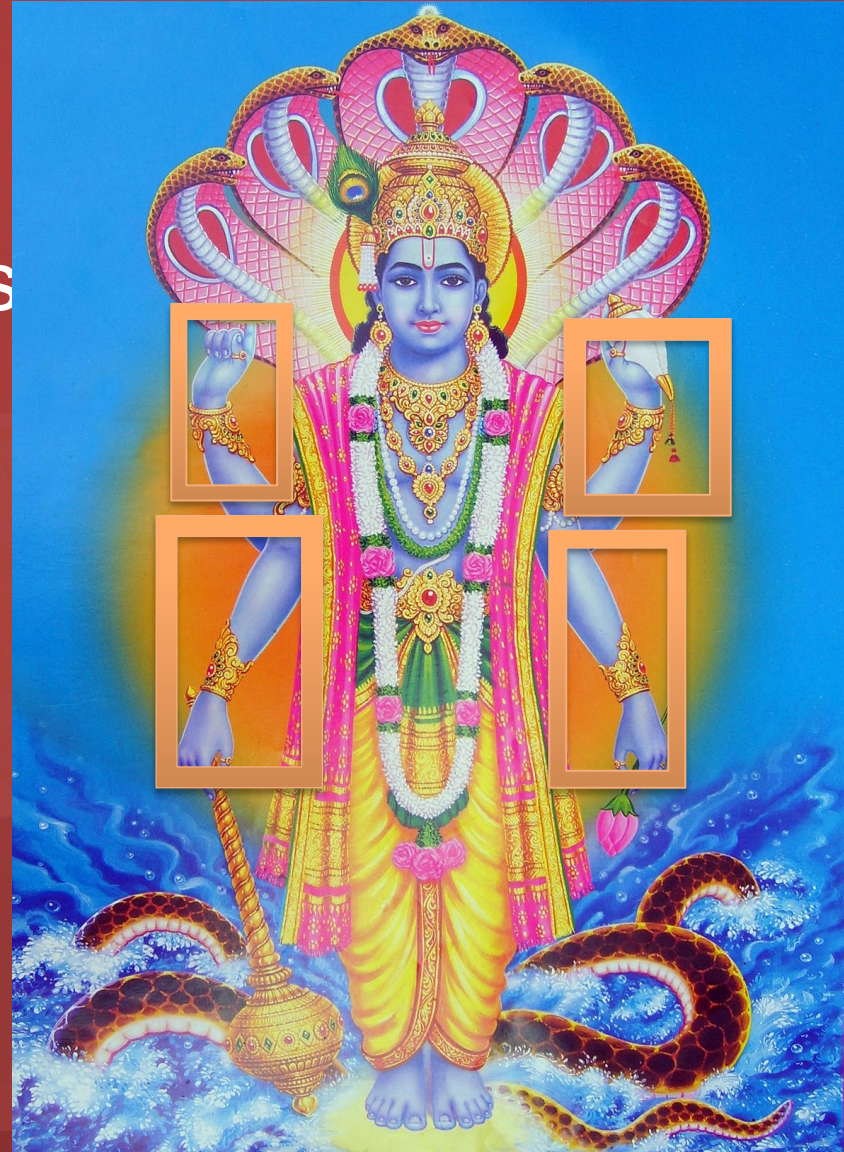


# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

### Four Arms

Symbolize the four stages  
of human life



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

### 4 Stages of Life

The quest for knowledge

Family Life

Retreat into the Forest

Renunciation

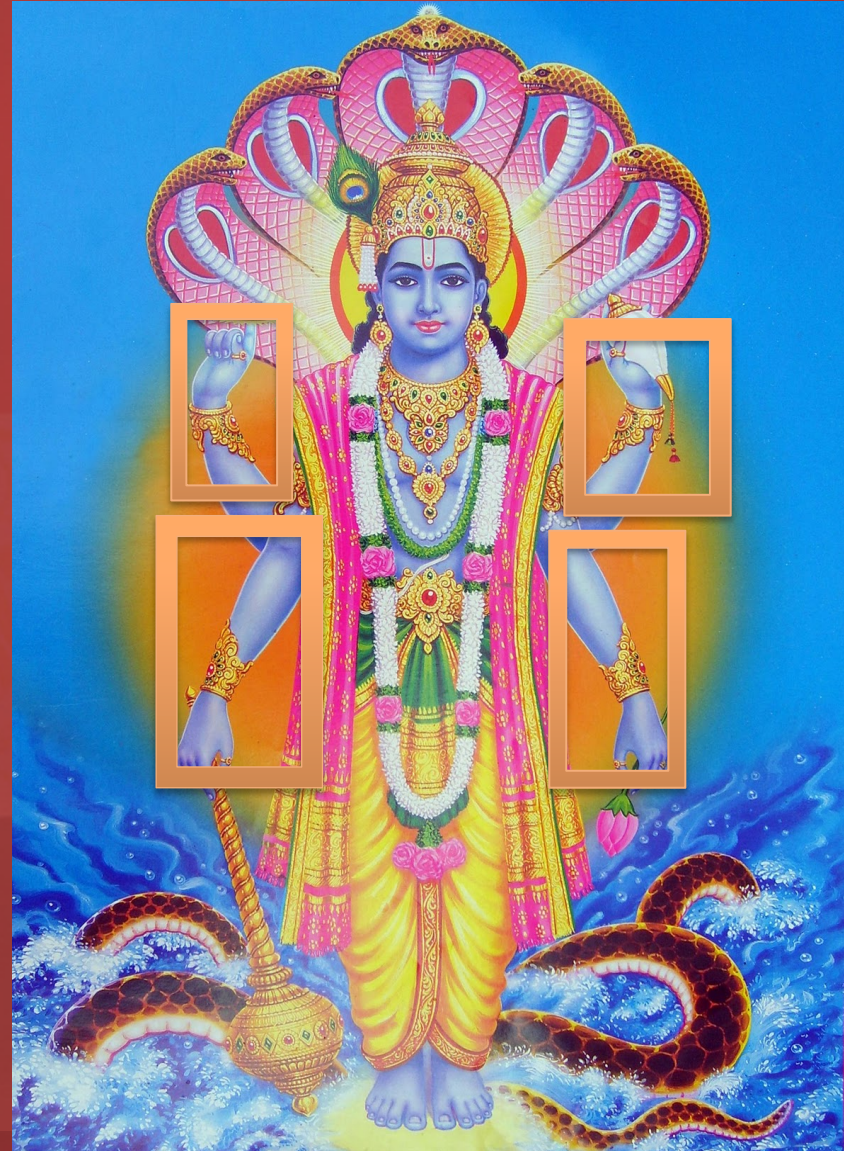


# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

The two back arms signify the Lord's activity in the spiritual world

The two front arms signify the Lord's activity in the physical world

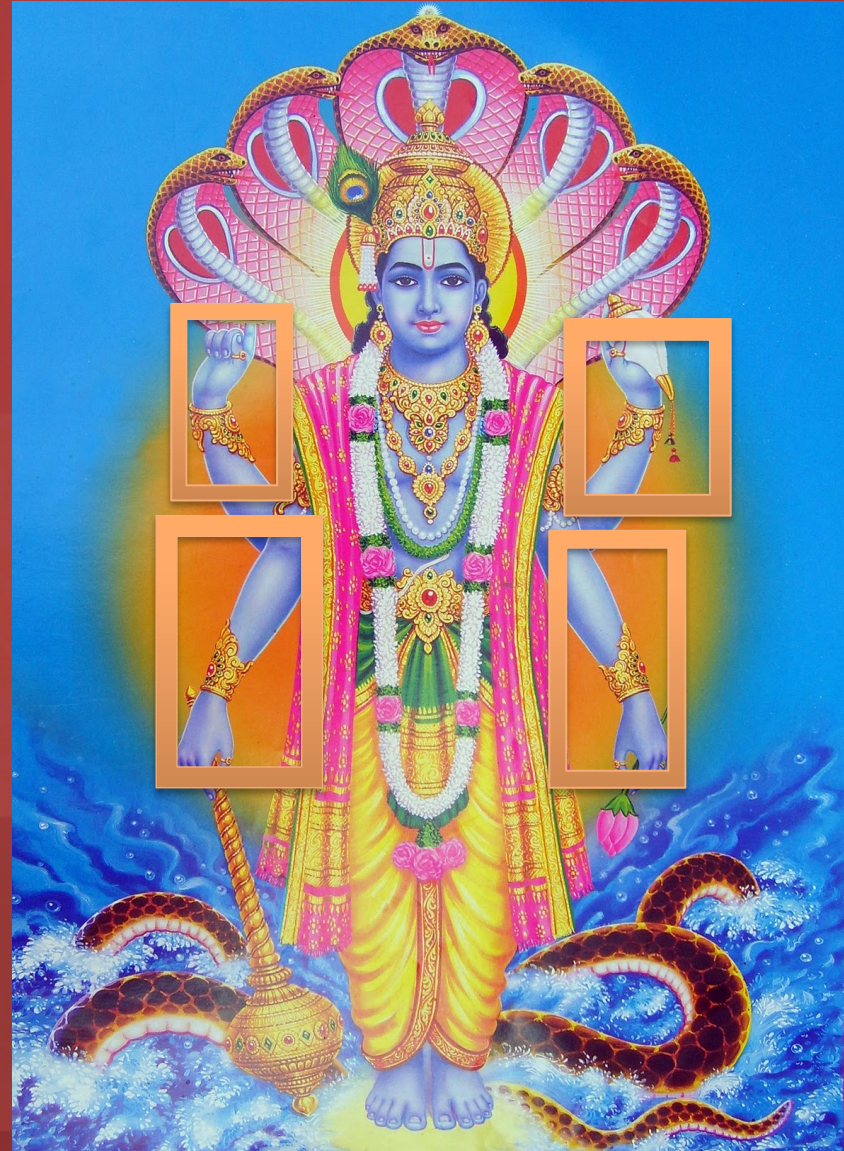


# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

The right side of Vishnu's body represents the creative activities of the mind and the intellect

The left side represents the activities of the heart (love, kindness and compassion)



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

In the upper right hand which represents the revolving or creative tendency, he holds the **conch** symbol of the 5 universal elements

**Conch** also represents universal maintenance





# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

**5 Universal Elements (Conch is the fountain that evolves the elements)**



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

Conch also indicates that the Lord communicates with his devotees with love and understanding

When blowing the conch he reminds his devotees to live in this world with kindness and compassion towards all living beings



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

In the upper left hand he holds the **discus**

It represents cohesive tendency, shining like an infant sun and a symbol of the mind



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

Wheel of life, think as a water wheel

Life fills and empties due to forces innate in nature



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

In the lower right hand  
Vishnu holds a lotus

When Vishnu  
contemplated the  
creation of mankind, a  
lotus sprang out of his  
navel



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

Seated on it was the four-headed Brahma, illuminating all the directions with his brightness

This lotus lit up the sky with its effulgence and was identified with the sun



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

The lotus was the creative matrix from which all of the world eventually evolved, the lotus thereby became a symbol of creation and fertility



# Vishnu

## Physical Characteristics

The lotus in Vishnu's hand also denotes his better half and constant companion, the source from which he derives his powers, namely Goddess Lakshmi





# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

Lakshmi is the goddess of prosperity who sits on a lotus and also holds stalks of the same flower in her hands.

Thus the lotus is also the feminine force that activates the creative power of Lord Vishnu, like Shakti does for her Shiva.



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

In the bottom left hand is  
the Mace

the mace represents the  
power of time

Just as nothing can  
conquer time, the mace  
too is unconquerable and  
destroys those who  
oppose



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

Thus does Vishnu describe himself: "The world rests as the lotus in the palm of my hand, the cosmos revolves around my finger like a discus. I blow the music of life through my conch and wield my mace to protect all creatures."



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

In visual imagery an upright Vishnu stands with each of his four arms holding a different symbolic attribute

He is straight as a post,

For he is the firm center, and the axis of the universe,



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

He is the sturdy pillar that joins the earth to the heavens



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

The other popular icon of Vishnu shows him in a dreamlike state reclining upon a mighty serpent and floating upon the primordial waters.

This image is Vishnu at his purest



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

World planning is the work of Vishnu, who symbolizes the universal intellect.

The three states of mind (sleep, dream, and awareness) are the relative conditions corresponding to the Hindu trinity



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

Thus Shiva is experienced  
in the dreamless sleep,

Vishnu in the vision of  
dreams

Brahma in the state of  
awareness.





# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

Vishnu in his dream state represents that gap in time someone awaits the birth of a new age

At the physical plane it is parallel to the sperm floating in the germinating waters of the womb when creation can happen at any instant.



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

The snake denotes the mind and the multiple heads denotes the innumerable desires and passions of the individual

Just as a snake destroys its victim by its venom, an uncontrolled mind destroys the world by the venom of its possessiveness



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

The blue sky in the background:

Suggests that he pervades the whole universe

Blue color symbolizes infinity

Blue body of Vishnu symbolizes that he has infinite attributes



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

The yellow symbolizes:

Earthly existence

Yellow clothes represents that he incarnates himself on this earth to uphold righteousness and destroy all evil and unrighteousness



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

Flower Garland:

Symbol of the devotees adoration for the Lord.

Gem on Neck:

Signifies that the Lord fulfills all genuine desires of his devotees and provides for their needs.



# Vishnu Physical Characteristics

The Crown:

Symbol of the Lords supreme power and authority

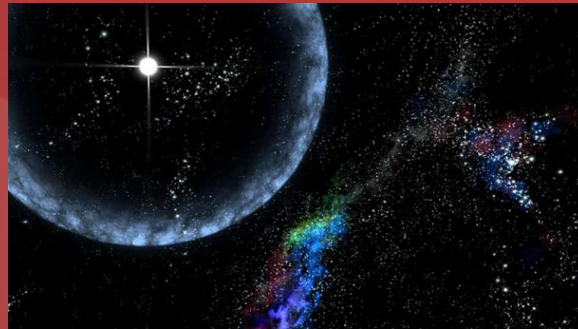
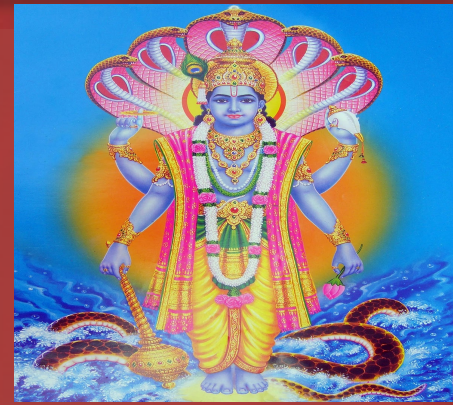
Two Earrings:

Signify the dual nature of creation (ignorance and intelligence, right and wrong, happiness and unhappiness)



# Vishnu

- Preserver and protector of the



- His role is the return to the earth in troubled times and restore the balance between



# Vishnu

Vishnu is accompanied by his companion  
Lakshmi

How does Vishnu return to the earth?

## ACTIVITY

