



CREATING SPACES  
TO SHARE OUR STORIES  
AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS DIVIDES

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## How did it all begin? – HINDUISM

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### Background:

The Hindu tradition has many creation stories. This is because for Hindus there is no single creation moment, but cycles of creation. Stories about creation from the Hindu tradition focus on how God is not separate from creation but is in every living and non-living thing; God is the energy that creates, looks after and destroys everything in the universe. Hindus see all of creation, from everything on Earth to the galaxies in the universe as all having a *Prana*- meaning life force- running through it. Everything is connected, with the energy creating, preserving and destroying it. Below is a selection of verses from important texts in the Hindu tradition that demonstrate how Hinduism approaches creation.



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## The Origins of the World - (Story can be found on back)

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### Follow up questions:

1. Can you describe one aspect of this creation story that made you curious?
2. Can you recall what happened to start the creation process in this story?
3. Do you notice any similarities with other creation stories you have heard?
4. What reasons do you think some Hindus might give for respecting nature and the environment?
5. What do you have learnt about the Hindu view of God? What do you want to remember from this story?

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## The Origins of the World

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How can we really understand the beginning of our world? Any story can only hint at one part of this mystery, and so Hindus have many different ways of talking about the birth of our universe. One story begins with stillness and darkness – a vast ocean of silence that rolled out to the edges of everything. On the surface of this ocean swam a giant serpent that carried the Lord Vishnu, who slept so completely that he neither moved nor dreamed. But somewhere in this ocean a great vibration began. Quietly at first but growing in strength – the sound of a single word, ‘Aum’ hummed through the dark ocean. Vishnu awoke, and from his navel grew a lotus flower. Within the flower sat Vishnu’s servant: Lord Brahma the creator. “Brahma,” Vishnu called, “it is time to begin the work of creation!”

At this moment, Vishnu and serpent disappeared, and Brahma raised his hands to calm a storm that had been whipped up across the ocean. Then the Lord Brahma plucked three petals from the lotus flower: one became the universe, one became the sky and the third became the land from which the fish, sea creatures, trees, mountains, grass and all other living things on Earth emerged. One day this Universe, like all others before it, will be wiped out when Lord Shiva, the destroyer, grows angry with the world’s evil. At this time, he will dance his ferocious dance of destruction and once again there will be a time when nothing exists.

So everything that exists is part of God’s body: all the sky, air, fire water, planets, all creatures, directions, trees and plants, rivers and seas, animals and birds – yes, even you and I – are parts of the body of God. We should remember this, and respect every part of this creation.

How was our world created? There is one truth, but a wise person calls it by many names: perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not; perhaps God’s will created it, or perhaps God was silent. There is one God, but a wise person approaches by many ways.

*(These texts were adapted from Hindu sacred texts the Rig Veda and Bhagavat Gita)*