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### Brahma and the Problem of Popularity

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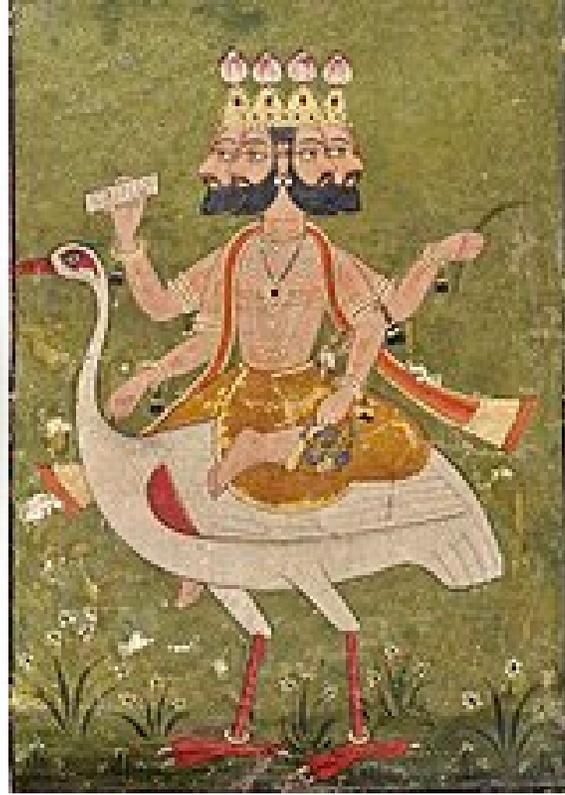
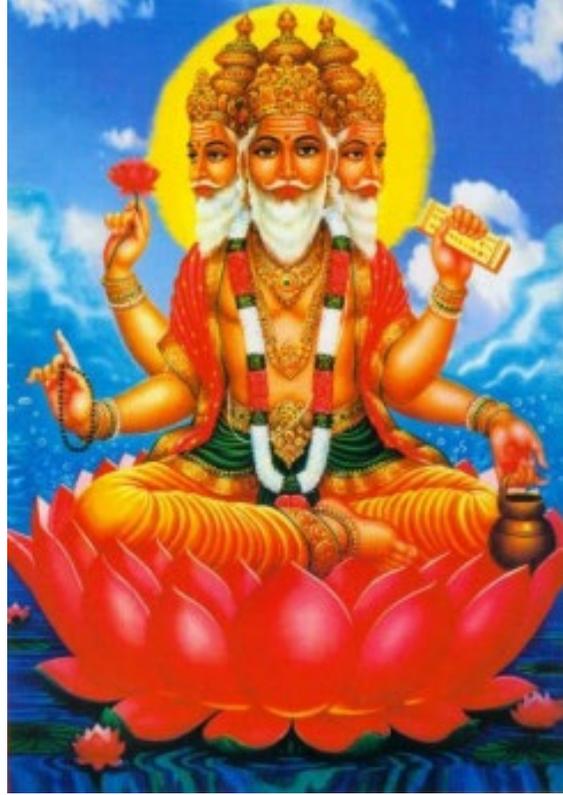


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# Brahma and the Problem of Popularity

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# The Problem



- Brahma is the god responsible for creation.
- He is a member of the *Trimurti* along with Vishnu and Shiva.
- Brahma possesses virtually no followers.

# *Samsara, Moksha, and Bhakti*

- Souls become attached to this world through action, causing reincarnation.
- *Moksha* is liberation from reincarnation, and is often achieved through *bhakti*.
- *Bhakti* is loving devotion to a god. Brahma lacks an appreciable *bhakti* movement.



# Possible Causes For Brahma's Unpopularity

- Certain scholars agree Brahma once had followers.
- Scholar Greg Bailey hypothesizes that Brahma may be too connected to worldly values to serve as a *bhakti* god.
- Km. Rajani Mishra argues that Brahma has nothing to offer after creation is complete.
- Other cults may have absorbed aspects of Brahma's religion, making him redundant.



The front face of Pushkar's Brahma temple



# What do Modern Hindus Think?

- I investigated the cause of Brahma's unpopularity with the help of American Hindus.
- They evaluated scholarly theories and provided their own explanations.
- No definitive reason was found, but many theories emerged.

# Theories

## Respect for Brahma

- All subjects showed great respect for Brahma.
- Members of ISKCON saw him as one of Lord Vishnu's greatest servants.
- Brahma is seen as equal to Vishnu and Shiva by most others
- Those who see him in a negative light do not have the full picture.

## Brahma and Worldly Values

- Bailey's theory proved controversial among subjects.
- Very few subjects felt myths of Brahma's immorality influenced their opinion of him.
- Some subjects stated that Brahma could not give *moksha* as his role is a worldly one, but others saw him as enlightened and otherworldly.

# Theories (Cont.)

## Bramha's Cosmological Position

- Some subjects suggest that Brahma's role does not attract worship.
- Members of ISKCON see Vishnu as the only god deserving of *bhakti* worship.
- Others feel that with creation complete, Brahma has nothing more to give.



# A Historical Cause?

- Based on archeological evidence and textual analysis, some scholars believe Brahma possessed a cult in northern and western India from 400 B.C. to 1300 A.D.
- Several subjects referenced stories that explained Brahma's lack of worship, indicating an attempt to justify Brahma's position by other cults.
- Some subjects claimed that certain myths of Brahma were meant to slander his character.
- Other evidence suggests an attempt to transfer Brahma mythology to Vishnu and Shiva.

# In Conclusion

- History is complex and multifaceted.
- Brahma's unpopularity can be traced to multiple causes.
- Brahma's position reminds us of a fundamental truth.



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