

The Creation, Death, and Rebirth in the Universe

Maha Yuga = Great Age

4,320,000 years long, made up of 4 shorter ages each becoming morally worse for shorter duration

"The last age is always a time of cruelty, pain, grief, and unnecessary death, and is always the age in which the reader is living."<sup>1</sup>

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1<sup>st</sup> Age = *Krita Yuga* = Age of Virtue and Moral Perfection

Duration of 1,728,000 years

Golden Age on earth

*Vishnu* in the form of *Brahma* = Grandfather and creator of the world presiding  
Dharma (ideal, righteous, behavior and moral duty walks on 4 legs

No shelter needed

Gift giving trees provide abundant food, clothing, and decorative objects

Everyone born good

Live happy, contented, unselfish, beautiful lives  
Devoted to meditation  
Loyal to dharma  
Work for pleasure of it  
No sorrows

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2<sup>nd</sup> Age = *Treta (three) Yuga*

Duration declines by 1/4 (-432,000), lasts 1,296,000 yrs

*Vishnu*, lord of heavenly light, preserver of life on earth

Dharma on 3 legs

Moral virtue and perfection exist but decline by 1/4

Pursuit of knowledge = highest virtue

Gift giving trees provide all until the greedy make them private property

They disappear

Life difficult for the 1<sup>st</sup> time

Heavy rainfall provides fertile soil

New trees grow but people must work hard for food and clothing

Must build shelters

Greed and Passion increase

Dissatisfaction, resentment, anger

Strong take from weak, including others' wives

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<sup>1</sup>Donna Rosenberg, *World Mythology* (Chicago: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, Inc., 1999), p. 291.

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3<sup>rd</sup> Age = *Dvapara (two) Yuga*

Duration 1/2 that of Krita Yuga, lasts 864,000 yrs

*Vishnu, preserver of life on earth*

Dharma on 2 legs

Balance shifts from good to evil

Virtue and moral perfection still exist but decline by 1/2 of Krita Yuga

People devoted to sacrifice they consider the highest virtue

Disease, misfortune, suffering, death; all part of existence

Passion and greed increase

War commonplace

Religious doctrine developed to guide toward dharma

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4<sup>th</sup> Age = *Kali (quarrel, war) Yuga* = Dark Age

Duration 1/4 of Krita Yuga, lasts 432,000 yrs

*Vishnu is Shiva-Rudra, destroyer of life on earth*

Dharma on one leg

Virtue barely exists

Noble rank based on money and property

Virtue measured by material wealth

Sexual passion only binds husband and wife

Success based on lies

Enjoyment comes only from sex

Constant fear of hunger, disease, death

Only the poor are honest

Charity only virtue

Oppressed by greedy kings

Some retreat to isolation

Clothes of bark and leaves

Gather foodstuffs

Harsh weather, primitive living conditions

People prey to illness

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1,000 Maha Yugas = 1 Day of the Life of the World