

Color Symbolism in Hinduism

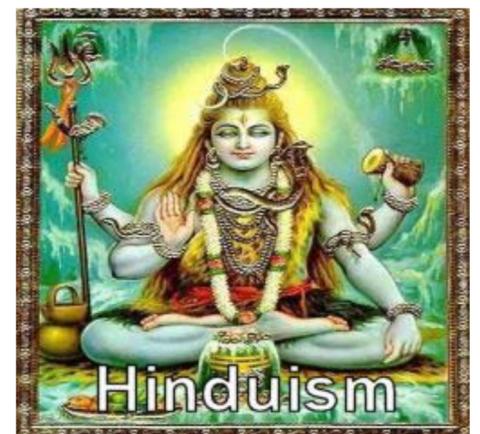
For the Hindu, colors play a very important role in the religion and culture and have a very deep significance, transcending purely decorative values. Hindu artists use color on the deities and their dresses signifying their qualities. Proper use of colors creates an environment, which should keep a person cheerful. Some of the main colors used in religious ceremonies are red, yellow (turmeric), green from leaves, white from wheat flour. etc.

Red indicates both sensuality and purity. In Hindu religion, red is of utmost significance and the color most frequently used for auspicious occasions like marriages, birth of a child, festivals, etc. A red mark is put on the forehead during ceremonies and important occasions. As a sign of marriage, women put red powder on the hair parting. They also wear a red sari during marriage. Red powder is usually thrown on statues of deities and phallic symbols during prayers. It is also the color of Shakti (prowess). A red colored dress is put on deities who are charitable, brave, protective, and who have the capacity to destroy evil. On the death of a woman, her body is wrapped in a red cloth for the cremation.



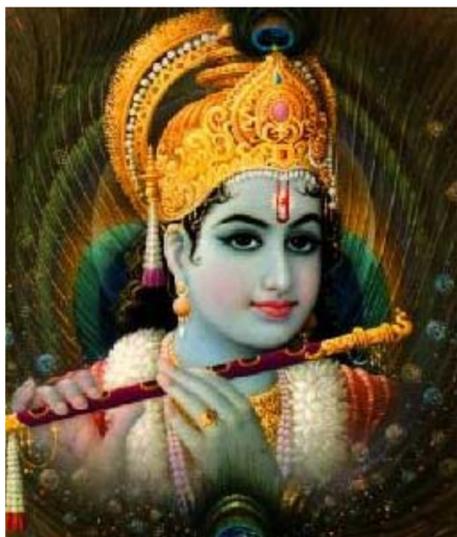
Saffron The most sacred color for the Hindu saffron. Represents fire and as impurities are burnt by fire, this color symbolizes purity. It also represents religious abstinence. This color connotation has a sacred meaning for the Hindu. It is the color of holy men and ascetics who have renounced the world. Wearing the color symbolizes the quest for light. It is the battle color of the Rajputs, the warrior caste.

Green is a festive color. In Maharashtra, it represents life and happiness. For that reason, a widow does not wear green. Symbolizing peace and happiness, green stabilizes the mind. The color is cool to the eyes and represents nature.



Yellow is the color of knowledge and learning. It symbolizes happiness, peace, meditation, competence and mental development. It is the color of spring and activates the mind. Lord Vishnu's dress is yellow symbolizing his representation of knowledge. Lord Krishna and Ganesha also wear yellow dresses. Yellow clothes are worn and yellow food is eaten at spring festivals. Single girls wear yellow to attract a mate and keep evil spirits away.

White is a mixture of seven different colors hence it symbolizes a little bit of the quality of each. It represents purity, cleanliness, peace and knowledge. The goddess of knowledge, Saraswati is always shown as wearing a white dress, sitting on a white lotus. The Brahmin - the highest social caste - is associated with white. Hindu religious leaders cover themselves with white ashes to represent their spiritual rebirth. White is also the color of mourning. The other prominent deities would also have a touch of white on their dress. A Hindu widow would wear a white dress in mourning.



Blue The Creator has given the maximum of blue to nature (i.e.) the sky, the oceans, the rivers and the lakes. The deity who has the qualities of bravery, manliness, determination, the ability to deal with difficult situations, of stable mind and depth of character is represented as blue colored. Lord Rama and Krishna spent their life protecting humanity and destroying evil, hence they are colored blue.

