



Key vocabulary, definitions and explanations God and Beliefs

- Brahman** - The one ultimate, supreme spirit or energy that flows through everything in the universe.
Deity - A god or goddess. In Hinduism, the many deities represent different powers of the one ultimate spirit, Brahman.
Trimurti - The three main gods who represent the cycle of life: Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Shiva (the Destroyer).
Brahma - The god who created the universe and all living things.
Vishnu - The god who protects and preserves the universe and keeps order in the world.
Shiva - The god who destroys bad things so new creation and positive change can happen.
Ganesha - The elephant-headed god of wisdom and new beginnings, famous for removing obstacles.
Krishna - A popular avatar (form) of Vishnu who taught lessons about love, duty, and devotion in the Bhagavad-Gita.
Rama-yana - A famous ancient story about Prince Rama rescuing his wife Sita, celebrating the triumph of good over evil.
Lakshmi - The goddess of wealth, good fortune, and light, celebrated during Diwali.
Diwali - The Hindu Festival of Lights celebrating the victory of light over darkness and good over evil.

Worship and Sacred Things

- Hinduism** - One of the world's oldest religions, originating in India, with a rich variety of traditions, beliefs, and gods.
Originates - Where something starts or begins (for example, Hinduism *originates* in the Indus Valley).
Sacred - Special, holy, and treated with deep respect because it connects to God.
Mandir - A Hindu temple, built as a house for God and a place for people to worship.
Shrine - A clean, special altar or holy space (at home or in a temple) set aside for prayer and pictures of deities.
Murtis - Holy statues or images of a deity used in worship to help believers focus on God.
Image - A picture or statue used to represent something else.
Depiction - A drawing, painting, or sculpture that shows what someone or something looks like.
Aum/Om - The most sacred sound and symbol in Hinduism, representing the sound of creation and the universe.
Vedas - The oldest and most sacred holy books in Hinduism, written down thousands of years ago.
Bhagavad-Gita - A famous sacred book containing teachings from Lord Krishna about duty, devotion, and how to live a good life.

Prayers and Religious Actions

- Worship** - Showing love, honor, and deep respect to God through prayers, songs, and offerings.
Devotion - Deep love, loyalty, and dedication to God or a spiritual goal.
Devout - Having strong, serious religious beliefs and practicing them faithfully every day.
Puja - The main Hindu act of worship, involving prayers, making offerings, and showing love to God.
Arti - A beautiful ceremony during worship where a lamp with lighted wicks is waved in front of a deity.
Prasad - Sacred food or sweet treats that are offered to God during prayer and then shared with the worshippers.

Life, Soul and Karma

- Soul** - The immortal, spiritual part inside every living being that lives on after the physical body dies.
Samsara is the continuous cycle of birth, life, death, and being born again (reincarnation).
Karma - The rule that every action has a reaction - good actions bring good results, and bad actions bring bad results.
Reincarnation - The belief that when the body dies, the soul is reborn into a new living body.
Moksha - The **ultimate goal in Hinduism** - breaking free from the cycle of rebirth to join with God.
Liberation - Freedom from something holding you back (in Hinduism, it means the soul gaining freedom through *Moksha*).
Dharma - Doing your moral duty, living in the right way, and making choices that promote good order in society.
Duties - Actions you are expected or required to do because they are right or part of your role in life.
Moral code - A clear set of personal rules about what is right and wrong behavior.
Ethical code - Rules that guide a group or society on how to treat others fairly and honestly.
Ashramas - The four stages of an ideal human life in traditional Hindu teaching (student, householder, retirement, and pilgrim).

Gandhi and Peaceful Action

- Gandhi** - A famous Indian leader who used peace, kindness, and truth to help win independence for India.
Demonstration - A public gathering where people meet in one place to visually show how they feel about an issue.
Protest - Speaking up or taking action publicly to complain about something you believe is unfair.
Boycott - Refusing to buy goods, use services, or take part in an activity as a peaceful way to demand change.

The Five Duties of Hinduism

1. Duty to God (*Deva Yajna*)
2. Duty to Wise Teachers (*Rishi / Brahma Yajna*)
3. Duty to Parents and Family (*Pitru Yajna*)
4. Duty to Other People (*Manushya / Athithi Yajna*)
5. Duty to Nature and Animals (*Bhuta Yajna*)

The Four Stages of Life in Hinduism: Ashramas

Stage 1 - Student Stage

A child may leave home to obtain spiritual and practical knowledge and is taught by a guru (spiritual teacher). They will learn moral correctness (good behaviour).

Stage 2 - The householder

A person might get married, have a family and a career in pursuit of wealth to support their family. They will practise dharma - *duties* to follow in life and the *responsibilities* of life.

Stage 3 - Retirement Stage

A person retires from professional life, retreats from everyday life. Nowadays, it relates to giving back to a Hindu's community - helping others and volunteering. They will spend time praying, deepening their spiritual practice. They would be considered an elder of the community, who can teach dharma and give advice about their duties.

Stage 4 - Pilgrim Stage

Becomes a wandering holy person, who teaches others about the scriptures. The aim is total devotion to God, becoming virtually merged with God and potentially breaking free from the cycle of rebirth.

The Cycle of Life

Hindus believe that life moves in a continuous wheel called **Samsara** - the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

Hindus believe that the physical body eventually dies, but the soul (Atman) lives forever. When a body dies, the soul moves on into a new body. A Hindu's **karma** decides their next form. Good choices lead to a better future life, while bad choices lead to a harder one. **Hindus ultimate goal is Moksha**. They don't want to be reborn continuously. They believe that by living a good, wise, and peaceful life, the soul eventually breaks free from the cycle. This ultimate freedom is called *Moksha*, where the soul rests in peace and unites with God (*Brahman*).

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi was a famous, inspirational Indian political leader who helped guide India to freedom from British rule in 1947. Instead of using weapons or fighting, he achieved this by creating a strategy of peaceful protest, leading millions of people in boycotts, marches and demonstrations. He also fought to end unfair discrimination, protect the poor, and unite people of different religions. His peaceful methods were so powerful that they inspired famous human rights leaders all around the world.

Ganesh

Looking at an image or statue of Lord Ganesha gives Hindus comfort, hope, and visual lessons for daily life: **he is the Remover of Obstacles**, which reminds Hindus they can overcome tough challenges like starting a new school year or taking a test - with his help. He has **big ears**, teaching Hindus to listen more; a **large head**, representing wisdom and good judgment; a **small mouth**, reminding Hindus to speak kindly; a **flexible trunk**, showing how to be strong yet gentle; and his **big belly** teaches Hindus to accept both good days and bad days peacefully.

The Story of Ganesha

Goddess Parvati created a boy out of turmeric paste to guard the door while she took a bath. When her husband, Lord Shiva, came home, the boy didn't recognise him and blocked his path. Furious at being stopped, Shiva fought the boy and cut off his head. When Parvati saw what happened, she was heartbroken. To fix his mistake, Shiva promised to replace the head with that of the first sleeping animal his followers found, which was a wise elephant. Shiva brought the boy back to life with the elephant's head, named him **Ganesha**, and blessed him to be the god of new beginnings!

The Story of Rama and Sita

Prince Rama accepts a 14-year forest exile to honor his father's vow. When the demon king Ravana abducts his wife Sita, Rama builds an army, defeats Ravana, rescues Sita, and returns to rule the city. Message of the story: true strength lies in upholding duty (*dharma*), loyalty, and righteousness, demonstrating that virtue and good will ultimately triumph over ego, injustice, and evil.

Mandir

Hindu worship is called **puja**. Hindus can worship at their holy building, called a **mandir**, or in their home. Puja involves praying to a favourite god or goddess. A statue or image is often used as a focus, and these are sometimes called **murtis** (meaning forms). During puja offerings of fruit and sweet foods are made to the **deity**.