



HINDUISM – How do Hindus respond to the natural world?

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Key Scripture

Dharma Shastras

Moral codes showing people how to act

Epics

Excerpts from the Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2 show Hindus how to act in their own lives by looking at the actions of the characters in these epics.
18-22

31-33

68-72

The story of King Yudhishtira (Yoo-dish-tir-a, taken from the end of the Hindu text called the Mahabharata, shows the importance of dharma.

Practices

Many Hindus are vegetarian and the majority of Hindus will not eat beef.

Hindus believe that they must care for the natural world including humans and all living things. They believe their reincarnation is affected by karma. If they exploit the environment for selfish gain then they will build up negative karma – cause and effect.

Many Hindus see respecting the natural order and looking after the natural world as part of their dharma. Recently, this thinking has extended to thinking about how Hindu festivals can be celebrated in a more environmentally friendly way.

Key Vocabulary

Brahman	The one supreme, absolute being from which the entire universe develops.
reincarnation	The cycle of birth, death and re-birth. Hindus believe that how they live their life determines how they are reincarnated
ahimsa	Non-violence; non-harm to all living creatures
atman	The eternal spirit or soul.
karma	Karma refers to the law that every action has an equal reaction either immediately or at some point in the future.
samsara	Samsara is the cycle of reincarnation, which is governed by the law of karma.
dharma	A Hindu's duties in life. This varies from person to person; the proper way to act.

Key Theological Concepts

Hinduism is a monotheistic religion believing in one God called Brahman, who is unseen and never depicted in a picture or statue. Hinduism is not polytheistic even though there are a number of gods & goddesses used in worship. These gods and goddesses only display the different characteristics of Brahman

Hindus hold the pantheistic idea that God is in every living thing. They believe that all living things contain the atman – soul or spark of God. Many are therefore vegetarian. Hindus believe all living things are inter-connected and that humanity should live in harmony with nature. Hindus regard the cow as sacred. The majority of Hindus will not eat beef.

Hindus believe life is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, governed by Karma. The soul passes through a cycle of lives and the next life is dependent on how the previous life was lived.

