



Key Scripture

The authors and dates of most Hindu sacred texts are unknown, although the oldest text are estimated to date from as early as 1500 BCE. These are the vedas (collections of hymns of praise). Veda means knowledge. They are written in an old form of Sanskrit. Other texts regarded as sacred include the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, the Puranas and the Upanishads. Many venerate these believing that these writings help humans connect to the divine.

Key Vocabulary

deity	God or goddess.
Trimurti	Three forms of the supreme deity.
Dharma	Dharma can be described as right conduct, moral law, or duty.
Atman	Means 'soul.' It refers to the eternal essence of each individual living thing that is housed in a body until the body dies.
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.

Practices

Many Hindus will worship at the home shrine everyday but most Hindus will also attend a mandir. The focal point of the mandir is the shrine.

Murtis - image of a god or goddess (deity) used as a focus during worship - are treated as the most important members of the family and are washed and adorned afresh every day.

Art has always played an important role in both Indian culture and Hindu faith.

During worship a Hindu aims to engage each of their senses in order to concentrate fully on what they are doing and be free from distractions.

Key Theological Concepts

Hinduism is a contrived name given to the many different traditions that were found in the Indus valley. It is therefore impossible to look at the origins of Hinduism or identify one creed that all 'Hindus' would absolutely agree with.

Hindus believe that no one religion teaches the way to salvation above all others, but that all religious paths are aspects of God's love and light, and so deserve tolerance and understanding.

The Trimurti is three forms of the supreme deity: Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, Shiva, the destroyer

Although there are hundreds of gods worshipped within Hinduism many argue that all are simply aspects of the one supreme God – Brahman.

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.

