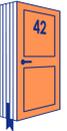




# Key Terms: Hinduism



## Ideas about the Nature of God and Existence

**Brahman:** The ultimate reality or universal consciousness in Hinduism; can be understood as formless (nirguna) or with form (saguna).

**Nirguna Brahman:** The concept of Brahman as a formless, non-personal divine consciousness.

**Saguna Brahman:** The manifestation of Brahman in a personal, tangible form.

**Tri-murti:** The three principal deities representing creation (Brahma), preservation (Vishnu), and destruction (Shiva).

**Brahma:** The creator god, part of the Tri-murti.

**Vishnu:** The preserver god, part of the Tri-murti, associated with maintaining cosmic order.

**Shiva:** The destroyer god, part of the Tri-murti, representing transformation and renewal.

**Avatara:** The descent of a deity to earth, especially Vishnu's incarnations, like Krishna and Rama.

**Ganesh:** The elephant-headed deity, remover of obstacles and patron of new beginnings.

**Lakshmi:** Goddess of wealth, prosperity, and fortune.

**Hanuman:** Devotee of Rama, symbolizing strength and devotion.

**Saraswati:** Goddess of learning, wisdom, and arts.

**Prakriti:** Material nature, consisting of three qualities (tri-guna): sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance).

**Maya:** Illusion or the perception of reality that veils the ultimate truth of Brahman.

**Cosmology:** Hindu understanding of the universe, including the cycle of creation and destruction.

**Samsara:** The cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, governed by karma.

## Beliefs about the Nature of Human Life

**Atman:** The eternal, individual inner self distinct from the material body and mind.

**Karma:** The law of moral action and reaction; good or bad deeds determine future outcomes.

**Moksha:** Liberation from the cycle of samsara; the ultimate goal of human life.

**Dharma:** The moral law or duty; can refer to individual, social, or eternal duties.

**Sanatana Dharma:** The eternal law or universal principles guiding all Hindus.

**Varnashrama Dharma:** Duties based on one's caste (varna) and stage of life (ashrama).

**Ahimsa:** The principle of non-violence toward all living beings.

**Four Aims of Life:** Dharma (duty), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure), and Moksha (liberation).

**Ignorance (Avidya):** A lack of true knowledge, which prevents liberation.

**Empathy:** A personal virtue of understanding and sharing others' feelings.

**Respect:** A personal virtue that reflects humility and consideration for others.

## Worship and Festivals

**Puja:** Worship involving offerings and prayers to deities.

**Havan:** A fire ritual in which offerings are made to sacred fire.

**Arati:** Ritual offering of light to a deity, symbolizing the removal of darkness.

**Darshan:** Seeing and being seen by a deity during worship.

**Bhajan/Kirtan:** Devotional songs and hymns sung in praise of the divine.

**Japa/Mantra:** Repetition of sacred sounds or words during meditation or prayer.

**Murti:** An image or statue representing a deity, used as a focus for worship.

**Diwali:** Festival of lights, celebrating the victory of good over evil and light over darkness.

**Holi:** Festival of colors, celebrating love, spring, and devotion to Krishna.

## Lifestyle

**Karma Yoga:** Path of selfless action and service.

**Jnana Yoga:** Path of knowledge and wisdom, seeking truth.

**Bhakti Yoga:** Path of devotion to God, emphasizing love and surrender.

**Astanga Yoga:** Path of meditation and physical discipline to unite with the divine.

