

"ONE SHOULD NOT BEHAVE TOWARDS OTHERS IN A WAY WHICH IS DISAGREEABLE TO ONESELF. THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF MORALITY. ALL OTHER ACTIVITIES ARE DUE TO SELFISH DESIRE."

— MAHABHARATA, ANUSASANA PARVA (THE BOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS) 113:8

HINDUISM — An Overview

Inception: 2000 BCE

Adherents: 1 Billion [EBI Estimate]

Primary Value Proposition: Divine Immanence

The Word of (about and/or attributed to) God:

- He is the creator and controller of the universe of universes.
- This one God is our Maker and the last destiny of the soul. The Supreme One is brilliant beyond description; he is the Light of Lights. Every heart and every world is illuminated by this divine light.
- Says the Lord: 'I dwell within their own souls as a lamp of wisdom. I am the splendor of the splendid and the goodness of the good.
- The Eternal Witness to vice and virtue dwells within man's heart. Let us long meditate on the adorable and divine Vivifier; let his spirit fully direct our thoughts.
- God is our sure leader and unfailing guide. He is the great parent of heaven and earth, possessed of unlimited energy and infinite wisdom.
- God is our father, brother, and friend. And we long to know this God in our inner being.
- Our God wears the heavens as a mantle; he also inhabits the other six wide-spreading universes. He is supreme over all and in all.
- The spirit of the Universe Keeper enters the soul of the simple creature.
- Those who strive for perfection must indeed know the Lord Supreme.
- Truth is eternal; it sustains the universe. Our supreme desire shall be union with the Supreme. The Great Controller is the generator of all things — all evolves from him.
- The God-knowing soul rises in the universe like the cream appears on top of the milk. We worship God, the all-worker, the Great Soul, who is ever seated in the heart of his creatures. And they who know that God is enthroned in the human heart are destined to become like him — immortal.

Core Beliefs: The Trimurti is a concept in Hinduism reflecting the cosmic functions of creation, maintenance, and dissolution as personified by the forms of Brahmā the creator, Vishnu the maintainer, and Śhiva the transformer. Practitioners of the faith define it as Sanātana Dharma, a Sanskrit phrase meaning "the eternal law", or the "eternal way". Dharma (ethics/duties), Samsāra (The continuing cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth), Karma (action and subsequent reaction), Moksha (liberation from samsara), and the various Yogas (paths or practices) are prominent and recurring themes.

Most Hindus believe that the spirit or soul — called the ātman — is the eternal and infinite reservoir of reality at the center of every life. This Atman is ultimately indistinct from Brahman, the supreme spirit and soul. The goal of life is to realize that one's ātman is identical to Brahman.

When God is viewed as the supreme personal being (rather than as the infinite principle), He is called Ishvara ("The Lord"), Bhagavan ("The Auspicious One") or Parameshwara ("The Supreme Lord").

The Vedas are the sacred scriptures of classical Hinduism. The four basic Vedic books are the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, and the Atharva-Veda. While Hinduism is deeply rooted in the Vedas, an epic poem known as the Bhagavad-Gīta is likely the faith's most highly esteemed scripture.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, as influenced by the teachings of Jesus and the Jain doctrine of non injury, was perhaps the most prominent in a long line of Indian reformers. And yet Hinduism, often called the mother of all religions, has had a wide range of other external influences throughout its extensive history. As a result it has absorbed an abundance of religious practices and beliefs into the mainstream of Hindu religious expression. It is also composed of many diverse sects, and features many deep divisions or relief lines that contribute to its overall complexity. The one common factor or fulcrum undergirding the entire tradition is the basic belief that all things and beings are an expression of Brahman.