



KEY KNOWLEDGE -

Hinduism has its roots in an ancient civilisation known as the Indus Valley Civilisation which flourished between 3500 and 1500 BCE. The civilisation ended around the same time a nomadic people called the Aryans arrived in India. Hinduism developed from the religious ideas of both peoples and therefore there is no one founder.

Hinduism is the oldest of the world's living religions and there are over 750 million Hindus in the world today. Hindus do not call their religion 'Hinduism', but refer to it simply as **sanatana dharma**. This means 'eternal teaching', 'eternal law' or 'eternal truths'.

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Hinduism



The word 'avatar' comes from the ancient Indian Sanskrit word 'avatar'. It is written in the Devanagari script like this: अवतार. This word means 'manifestation' or incarnation. In other words it means that a God has taken on a human or animal form.

Hindus call the soul, the **Atman** and Hinduism teaches that each living being has a soul. The Atman is part of **Brahman**. (Our individual soul is part of a universal soul.)

Dharma is an important term in Indian religions. In Hinduism it means 'duty', 'virtue', 'morality', even 'religion' and it refers to the power which upholds the universe and society. Hindus generally believe that dharma was revealed in the Vedas. Dharma is the power that maintains society, it makes the grass grow, the sun shine, and makes us moral people or rather gives humans the opportunity to act **virtuously**.



KEY VOCAB

Karma: - Means action—the belief that actions have consequences that will effect the peoples rebirth.



Vedas: - The holy books containing the ideas and practices of Hinduism.



Samsara: - The cycle of death and rebirth to which people are tied to.



Atman: - The spiritual aspect of person that would move on through the cycle of death and rebirth.



Trimurti: - There are three gods which Hindus believe are most important collectively called the **Trimurti**.

Brahma (the creator), **Vishnu** (the preserver) and **Shiva** (the destroyer).



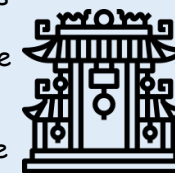
Dharma: - Your duty to follow law and customs.



Moksha: - Release from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

The Ramayana- The Ramayana is one of India's best known tales. It tells the story of Prince **Rama** who was sent into exile in the forest with his wife, **Sita**, and his brother, Lakshmana. The symbolism of the story has been widely interpreted but basically is the story of good overcoming evil. Many people have said that it is a story about **dharma** or duty. Sita was abducted by the evil demon Ravana but ultimately rescued by Prince Rama with the help of the Monkey God, Hanuman.

Puja—Hindu worship, make take place in a temple or at home. Puja at home tends to bring together the whole family. It takes place before the family shrine usually decorated with pictures and statues of the **gods**. The family members light a lamp and pray together each day at the shrine. A family will choose gods to worship depending on their family background but their worship may take their focus onward to understand **Brahman**. Objects in the shrine appeal to the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, these involve the whole person in the worship.



FURTHER READING

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/>

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/religion/hinduism.htm>

THINK, READ, ARTICULATE, WRITE, SPELL
LIKE AN EXPERT.

A religious map of India

