

Hinduism

Name

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## **Hinduism**

### **Introduction**

Hinduism is amongst the oldest and organized religion that dates back to about five thousand years. Based on the ancient teachings, it is a religion that has experienced numerous changes. Characterized by an infinite number of gods, the faith is open to embracing the deities that have come from other religions (Bailey, 2017). The primary mechanisms in practice include Karma, Reincarnation, Caste system, Brahman, Moksha, Purushartha, God, Dharma, and Atman and an exploration into these contrivances helps in developing an in-depth knowledge on the faith.

### **The Caste System**

According to research, the Caste system may have existed as early as four thousand years ago. The system has four levels or Varnas as it is locally known. The lowest level is Shudras; the next is Vaishyas which is followed by Kshatriyas then finally the Brahmins is the highest level. Harijan also was known as Dalit or the untouchable exist as unofficial caste and ranks lower than the varnas as mentioned earlier. In Hinduism, the Caste put people into categories by virtue of their birth and families (Smith, 2017). The duties as specified by the system are known dharma. The system limits social interactions, place of residence and the type of job an individual can hold.

### **Brahmins**

Traditionally, this is the highest level in the religion. This level is made up of by people who are expected to become scholars or priest by birthrights. The faith requires them to nourish the other members of the lower castes with spiritual and religious knowledge.

**Kshatriyas**

The members in this category predominantly serve in the government and public administration positions. It includes a variety of jobs such as soldiers, bureaucrats, governors or even kings. In most cases, those with positions in the public service fall under this category.

**Vaishya**

This caste includes a wide range of positions. Artisans, craftsmen, farmers, bankers, and merchants fall under this category. Any position within the enterprise and commercial activities fall under this category.

**Shudra**

This is the lowest category under the caste system is shudra. Individuals found in this category usually engage in jobs that require physical labor or construction activities. Finally the untouchable were considered to conduct jobs that the religion considered to pollute a person physically or spiritually. The activities could include preparing cowhides, slaughtering animals, or disposing of human waste. Even though the system is not legally practiced today, people of different castes rarely marry, especially in upcountry regions. However, discrimination based on the system is widely considered illegal.

**At man**

The concept relates to eternal self. Atman is in most cases called the soul or spirit and shows our self or essence which underlies the human existence. The ideology has numerous dimensions to with respect to self. It usually ranges from being identified with God to the ideology of self as an eternal servant of God. The explanation of self as eternal support the idea

of reincarnation. Under this explanation, an eternal being can inhabit temporal bodies. At man focuses on the spiritual aspect rather than the material dimension (Williams, 2018). The religion centers on the practices such as asceticism which promotes detachment from the material world.

### **Dharma**

In religion, the concept of Dharma plays a crucial role. Under Hinduism, it means morality, virtue, duty and it implies the forces that hold the society and the universe together. The faithful usually believe that it was revealed through the Vedas. The ideology gives humans the opportunity to act virtuously, makes people moral, make the sunshine and grass grow. The idea of acting virtuously is not the same for all persons. Everyone has a distinct obligation or responsibilities depending on their social position, gender, and age. Although Dharma is universal, it is usually particular and is guided by and operate within concrete circumstances. What is right for an adult may not be so for an infant or what is correct for a man may not be so for a woman.

Bhagavad Gita adequately illustrates the importance of sva-dharma. This historical text came before the dispute of Mahabharata. It talks about a hero called Arjuna. The character rides through great armies, and his chariot is controlled by a charioteer called Krishna (Williams, 2018). As the two move, Arjuna challenges Krishna on the reasons for fighting and is convinced that killing is not right at all. Dharma specifies that the correct action is usually a service to God and humanity. In the texts of Puranas, the ideology is further illustrated to even talk about Sanatana Dharma. Those who subscribe to the concept of dharma are convinced that there are supernatural abilities that come with having committed. Under this ideology, a personal deity influences the attitude of the believers.

### **Karma and Reincarnation**

Karma outlines that for every action, there exists an equal reaction which takes place at some point in the future. The virtuous and good deeds will eventually have good responses while evil actions will attract punishments. The good works are usually in harmony with dharma while the bad acts are against dharma. In the Hinduism system, Karma operates across lifetimes, and the counter-actions might be experienced even after the present life. While living in the world, it is imperative for one to be very careful since the current actions will affect what is to happen later on after human rebirth (Smith, 2017). A person creates terrible or good consequences that he or she, later on, reap the results.

Samsara refers to the process of reincarnation in the Hindu religion. The religion argues that life is a incessant cycle in which the soul is reborn over and over again. Guiding the entire process is the law of action and reaction. Hinduism usually specifies that when one dies, the soul is generally carried by a subtle body into another dimension where one can become a divine being, animal or even a human still. To liberate oneself from the cycle, one ought to achieve Moksha.

### **Moksha**

The idea of Moksha aims to liberate one from the cycle of death and rebirth. This concept is the ultimate goal of Hinduism as a religion. To attain this state one must first achieve self-realization. According to some of the religious texts, the path to this state involves the recognition that oneself is the same as the absolute reality comprising the entire universe. This explanation is given by the Advaita which is the non-dual school of thought. In the dualistic school of thought which is called Dyaita, true self-realization comes about when one attains a

loving union with the Supreme Being. While achieving this, a person must maintain the personal uniqueness. While Dyaita Hindus emphasize devotion and devoted worship to the Supreme Being, the Adyaita, on the other hand, focus on thoughtful action and meditation as one tries to achieve Moksha (Lesley, 2017).

Moksha is the ultimate purpose of Hinduism as a religion. It is the primary goal and is similar to the Christian belief of salvation. In India, the ideology is an essential element that is present in many religions. Nirvana is the Buddhist version of Moksha, and it aims at liberating one from suffering. When it comes to Jainism, the religion specifies that all Karmas, good or bad must be annihilated for one to attain Moksha. Finally, in Sikhism, Moksha is known as Mukti and is similar to the Dyaita perception in Hinduism.

### **Purushartha**

Hinduism specifies that depending on a person's position and stage in life different goals exist. Purushartha codified the goals into human goals or the goals of a person. In the text, three main goals are discussed. The first is the broadly specified aesthetic pleasure, worldly success or profit, and dharma or virtuous living. Later on, the goal of liberation was added. Under this dimension, it is specified that people have different purposes and desires that are legitimate in their unique contexts (Weightman, 2017). Over the ages, many have debated which of the goals is more important a discussion that still goes on.

### **Brahman**

In Sanskrit, the word Brahman refers to a transcendent power beyond the world. Although many assume that it refers to "God" the two are not entirely identical. It is the power that supports and uphold everything. While some regard as distinct from self, others identify it

with atman. Many are convinced that it pervades everything and in spite of that, they do not worship it (Smith, 2017). Some Hindus regard specific deities as the manifestation of Brahman.

### **God**

Under the Hindu religion, God exists, and the ideology varies in different traditions. The Sanskrit words Ishvara and Bhagavan mean God and Lord respectively. The term implies an absolute reality which creates, sustains and destroy the world and its content over and over again. God is approachable through various ways, and each individual can relate to God in a particular way. In Hinduism, the different deities represent transcendent powers. God is conceptualized as the creator, pervading spirit who is all knowing.

Typically the Hindu religion has three most popular denominations. The classifications are based on the belief and inclination towards a particular form of God. The first of the three is Vaishnavas that emphasizes on Vishnu and his incarnations. The believers here argue that God incarnates into the world through dissimilar shapes so as to restore dharma. Of the three denomination, Vaishnavas are the most popular. The next category is Shaivas that focuses on Shiva. In this denomination, the Supreme Being is believed to perform destruction, maintenance, concealing of oneself, acts of creation and revelation through grace (Boyett, 2017). The final faith is Shaktas that focuses on the Goddess in her ferocious forms such as Kali, Durga or gentle forms such as Sarasvati, Parvati, and Lakshmi.

### **Guru**

The term Guru refers to master or a teacher of a tradition. Typically the professional uses examples to convey wisdom and knowledge to disciples. The gurus are usually highly revered and become the focus of devotion. The fundamentals specify that the spiritual understanding is

transferred from the teacher to disciples through generations (Bailey, 2017). When a guru passes on, he leaves behind more successors a tendency that leads to the multiplication of traditions.



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