



Hindu Dharma

Common Questions and Answers

Primary Schools

1. Do Hindus believe in lots of gods?

Hindus believe in one main divine power called *Brahman*. Brahman is everywhere, in everything and beyond anything we can fully understand. The many gods and goddesses in Hinduism, like Vishnu, Shiva, Lakshmi and Durga, are different ways of understanding and connecting with that one Divine power. Each deity shows a different part of Brahman's qualities – like kindness, strength or protection. So even though there are many gods, they are all linked to one ultimate source.

2. Do Hindus worship statues?

Hindus worship the Divine through the *murti*. A murti helps a person to focus and feel close to the god or goddess during prayer. Just like looking at a photo of someone you love can make you feel connected to them, looking at a murti helps Hindus connect with the Divine. The murti is treated with great respect because it is seen as a doorway to the presence of God.

3. Do all Hindus believe the same thing?

No, Hinduism allows different people to believe and practise in different ways. Some people pray to God with love and devotion (*bhakti*), others try to understand God through learning and thinking (*jnana*), some focus on doing good actions (*karma*), and others use meditation and breathing to calm the mind (*raja yoga*). All of these are accepted paths. Hinduism teaches that there are many ways to reach the same truth.

4. Is Hinduism only about going to temples and doing rituals?

Temples and rituals are important, but Hinduism is much more than that. It's a whole way of life. Hindus try to live by *dharma* – doing the right thing, helping others, being kind, and looking after the world. Reading holy books, meditating, doing yoga, helping family, and caring for nature are all seen as ways to live a spiritual and good life.

5. Do Hindus care more about animals than humans?

Hindus believe that all living things – humans, animals, and plants – are connected and part of the Divine. So they are taught to treat all life with care and respect. Animals are not seen as more important than people, but they are still special. For example, cows are respected because they give milk and are gentle, not because they are gods. This is part of a belief called *ahimsa* – which means non-violence and kindness.

6. Are all Hindus vegetarians?

Many Hindus choose not to eat meat because they believe in *ahimsa* (not harming living things). But not all Hindus are vegetarian – it depends on the region, family tradition, and personal choice. Some may eat meat but avoid beef, because the cow is a respected animal. Food is seen as more than just something to eat – it affects your body, mind and spirit. Some foods are called *sattvic* – meaning pure and calming – and these are encouraged for spiritual growth.

7. Why do Hindus believe in reincarnation?

Hindus believe that the soul (called *Atman*) never dies. When a person dies, their soul is born again in a new body. This cycle is called *reincarnation*. What kind of life the soul is born into next depends on their *karma* – the actions and choices they made in previous lives. If someone does good things, their next life may be happier. The aim is to eventually break free from this cycle and reach *moksha* – a peaceful, spiritual freedom where the soul joins with Brahman.

8. Is Hinduism only for Indian people?

Hinduism started in India, but its ideas are for everyone. It teaches that all people have a soul and can discover truth, no matter where they are from. In the UK, many Hindus live peacefully and work in areas like teaching, science, medicine, and business. Hindu temples are also centres of learning, charity and environmental care. Lots of non-Hindus enjoy Hindu practices like yoga, meditation and Ayurvedic health because they help the body and mind feel better.

9. Is Hinduism still important in the modern world?

Yes! Hindu values like kindness to others, looking after the environment, self-control and meditation are very useful today. Many modern problems – like stress, climate change and inequality – are things Hindu teachings help us deal with. For example, *yoga* and *mindfulness* are now used all over the world to help people stay calm and healthy. Hinduism has stayed strong for thousands of years because its wisdom can still help people today.

10. Do Hindus believe in God?

Yes, Hindus believe in *Brahman*, the Supreme Spirit that is everywhere and in everything. Brahman doesn't have just one form or face. So people can worship God in the form that helps them feel close – like Krishna, Shiva, or Durga. Some Hindus see God as a loving person, while others feel God as a peaceful energy or light. Hinduism allows both ways of thinking about God.

11. Why do Hindu gods sometimes have animal features?

Some Hindu gods have animal parts to show important meanings. For example, Ganesha has the head of an elephant to show wisdom and the power to remove obstacles. Hanuman is a monkey god who shows strength and loyalty. These images remind people of good qualities and spiritual truths. They teach that animals and nature are part of the Divine too.

12. Do Hindus care about the environment?

Yes. Hindus believe nature is sacred because God is present in all of creation. Rivers like the Ganga, trees like the Peepal, and mountains like the Himalayas are all respected as holy. Hindu teachings say we should live in harmony with the Earth, take care of nature, and not waste resources. Looking after the planet is part of spiritual life.

13. Why do Hindus do aarti?

Aarti is a prayer ceremony using light, usually a flame or lamp. The flame is moved in a circle in front of a god's image to show love and respect. The light means knowledge and goodness, and it helps take away darkness – like removing ignorance or bad thoughts. People sing songs, ring bells, and sometimes blow a conch shell. At the end, they wave their hands over the flame and touch their eyes or forehead to receive blessings. Aarti is a way of saying, "Thank you" to the Divine and remembering that God's light is within all of us.

14. Why do Hindus wear a mark on their forehead?

This mark is called a *tilak* or *bindi*. It is often worn during prayer or festivals and is placed between the eyebrows – a spot known as the “third eye” in Hindu tradition. This is believed to be where your inner wisdom lives. Wearing a tilak is a way of focusing your mind and remembering God. The type of mark can show which god a person prays to – like a red dot for the Goddess, or three lines of ash for Shiva. It’s a sign of devotion and a reminder to live a good life.

15. Why do Hindus wear a red and yellow thread on their wrist?

This thread is called *kalava* or *mauli*. It is tied on the wrist during prayers by a priest or family elder. The thread is a sign of blessings and protection. It’s often red and yellow – red stands for strength and yellow means wisdom and good fortune. Boys and men wear it on the right wrist, and girls and women wear it on the left. Wearing it reminds you to stay on the right path, make good choices, and remember God in your daily life.

