



# What does it mean to be a Hindu?

## KEY VOCABULARY:

**Hindu:** Someone who follows Hinduism.

**Ahimsa:** Showing compassion and trying not to hurt or injure anyone.

**Arti:** Moving lighted candles in a circle to show respect in front of the shrine.

**Bhagavad Gita:** One of the most important holy books.

**Chanting:** Prayer with several words sung repeatedly.

**Deity:** A form of God.

**Dharma:** Duty to act in the right way as God teaches.

**Guru** – Teacher or Spiritual guide.

**Incense** – Sweet smelling stick burnt in front of a shrine as an offering.

**Mantra** – Sacred sound or word said again and again. Important in lots of Hindu ceremonies.

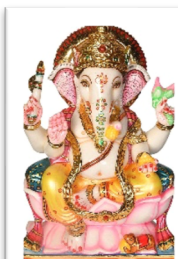
## KARMA

**Karma** is a **Sanskrit** (sacred language of Hinduism) word which means 'action'. Hindus believe that every action has a reaction and that there are consequences for everything we do.

## REINCARNATION

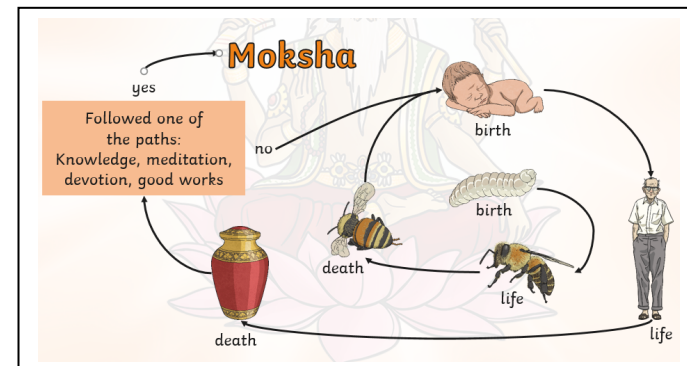
**Reincarnation** is the belief that life is a cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth. When a person dies, they are then reborn as another living thing. This cycle can go on for thousands of lifetimes.

The ultimate aim of Hinduism is to leave the cycle of rebirth and become one with the god **Brahma**. This is called **Moksha**.



## MANDIRS

Hindus can worship at home or in a **mandir** (a Hindu holy temple). In a mandir, Hindus can perform **puja** (a Hindu act of worship). Some mandirs are very tall buildings. Hindus believe it brings them closer to heaven. In a mandir, there are **shrines** (a place where gods and goddesses are worshipped) and lots of **murtis** (statues representing different deities). Offerings of flowers are brought to the murtis.



## HINDU PILGRIMAGE

A pilgrimage is a journey or search of moral or religious significance. The **Kumbh Mela** is the biggest Hindu pilgrimage on earth. Pilgrims visit the **River Ganges** in India. It is a very holy river for Hindus. Here Hindus believe they can wash away their sins. Many Hindus travel to Varanasi to bathe in the Ganges and experience the holy city.

