

Understanding Major World Religions
“Background of India – Introduction to Hinduism”

Glossary of Terms -- Hinduism

1. **Agni** -- The Vedic god of fire. Could also refer to a fire in a fireplace.
2. **Ahimsa** -- Principle of non-injury found in Jainism and Buddhism.
3. **Aryans** -- The Indo-European group (Iran) who migrated to India in the fifth century B.C. who invaded and eventually brought in the caste system.
4. **Atman** -- The self or soul, individual self or greater ultimate self of Brahman.
5. **Avatar** -- Incarnation of a god in human or animal form. Most famous is Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu.
6. **Bhati** -- Path of devotion as in yoga; devotion to a god or devotional practice.
7. **Brahma** -- God the creator.
8. **Brahman** -- The three gods viewed into one. Include the force.
9. **Brahmanas Vedic Commentator** -- holy book.
10. **Brahmines** -- The priestly caste, highest of the four caste system.
11. **Castes** -- The socioeconomic divisions of Hinduism.
12. **Dharma** -- True teaching, moral virtue, first of four goals of Hindu life.
13. **Ganesha** -- The elephant god, one of the sons of Shiva, the destroyer.
14. **Guru** -- teacher, Holy teacher.
15. **Inbra** -- Vedic warrior God who led the Aryans to victory when they entered India.
16. **Jains** -- practitioners of Jainism.

17. **Jnana** -- Path of knowledge or knowledge.
18. **Kama** -- Pleasure or desire. Basic things of life. Dances of Pleasure. Also God by same name. God of love -- like Greek Eros.
19. **Karma** -- The way of works and deeds.
20. **Karma Yoga** -- The way of works.
21. **Krishna** -- The avatar of Vishnu.
22. **Kshtrya** -- Caste of princes or lawyers. Pronounced Shatri. Second highest of Hindu castes.
23. **Moksha** -- release, Nirvana.
24. **Rana** -- Hero god. Also an avatar of Vishnu. His wife is Sita.
25. **Rig Veda** -- Earliest of the Vedic scriptures which is a collection of over 1000 hymns to many gods.
26. **Sanskrit** -- Written language of the Vedic period -- Aryans.
27. **Shiva** -- The destroyer God and death. He is said to have four wives. Two of them are the most powerful goddesses in all Hinduism. He is not the devil of Hindus. Destruction is a good thing as it leads to creation.
28. **Shudra** -- The worst of the four hindu castes.
29. **Transmigration** -- Soul to another force in another life.
30. **Upanishads** -- Vedic scripture, sacred writing.
31. **Vaishya** -- Third caste of Hinduism.
32. **Vedas** -- Also sacred writing of Hinduism.
33. **Vishnu** -- Presence god. Third part of Brahman.
34. **Yoga(i)** -- Person who practices yoga.