



Hinduism
A study of ancient wisdom
through modern science

Raj Kaushal Gita Bhawan Hindu Temple

Manchester

Registered Charity No. 1197206
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Guide for Visitors

Welcome

The temple welcomes everyone who wishes to visit it.

Visitors should enter the temple with respect, having left their shoes in the racks outside the main hall.

Visitors are asked to maintain silence so as not to disturb other devotees. The exception would be a programmed conversation / discussion.

Visitors are asked to show respect to the religious icons, to the temple authorities and the priest. They should also treat everyone else present in the temple with courtesy.

Gita Bhavan Temple

Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple is a place of worship for all Hindus, irrespective of social class, gender, age, ethnic or linguistic background.

Any non-Hindu is also welcome, provided they conduct themselves properly, showing respect.

to the temple and to the images therein of the divine.

The holy images (icons, pictures, etc.) in temples are used for the devotees to focus their minds on the Supreme Being, and its various manifestations.

Namastai:



Hinduism
A study of ancient wisdom
through modern science

Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple - Guide for Visitors

We welcome / meet / greet each other with folded hands. The word includes nama (= I bow down in respect) and astai (= to that which is also in you = the divine spiritual core = aatmaa, that which exists in me, and in every other living being.)

Basic Tenets of Hindu Faith (Sanatana Dharma):

1. Hindus believe in the **One Supreme Being**. The Supreme Being manifests in the world in many forms, those best known being Brahmaa, Vishnu, Mahesh (Shiva), Saraswati, Lakshmi and Durga (Kali) etc.
2. The Supreme Being **incarnates** in the world as avatar - the icons placed in the temple are shown in the following picture (include picture and the list with brief description taken from the Explaining Hindu Dharma book).



3. Hindus believe that the life in the body is due to the presence of an eternal **aatmaa** (the soul). At the time of death, the aatmaa **transmigrates** from one physical body into another body.
 - the principle of transmigration of the aatmaa.Death, hence, is not an end-stage but a moment in transmigration to life in another body.



Hinduism
A study of ancient wisdom
through modern science

Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple - Guide for Visitors

4. Dharma:

For a Hindu, the most important principle is to live life according to **Dharma** (a number of moral and ethical guidelines, duties, natural laws and worship) that includes:

importance of truth

importance of knowledge, and of learning and teaching

importance of sharing with others who are in need

benevolence towards all

non-violence, except when having to defend oneself

importance of the family, and

respect for the elders, parents, teachers, and others esp. those not previously known, e.g., an unexpected guest.

5. The Law of Karma:

Hindus believe that they act in life, ultimately guided by their free will. These self-willed acts are called **karma**.

If they act benevolently, their karma is good. If they act malevolently, that is bad Karma. They must face the results of this karma - **karma-phala** - later, either in this life, or in future lives. The cycle of life and death (Sansara) is dictated by the Law of Karma.

6. The outlook of a Hindu is inclusive and universal.

Hence when Hindus pray, they pray for everyone in the world, not just Hindus.

One example: *sarvai bhavantu sukhinah*
sarvi santu niraamayah
sarvai bhadraani pashyantu
maa kashchid dukkha bhaagbavait

[may all be happy, may no one experience illness / disability
may all see (experience) what is auspicious
may no one ever encounter grief]



Hinduism
A study of ancient wisdom
through modern science

Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple - Guide for Visitors

7. Hindus enjoy **freedom of thought and expression**. There are many religions, sects and sub-sects within Hinduism. Hinduism is seen as home of many religions with many forms of worship.

8. Hindu must regard **duties** as paramount. Rights are enshrined in duties.

E.g., in the duties of the husband to his wife, the rights of the wife get protected.

9. Hindu faith is **eco-friendly** - it instructs Hindus to treat everything in this creation with love

and respect, and makes clear that exploiting natural resources, maliciously or motivated by

greed, is against dharma. It is this belief that makes Hindus treat everything in the world with

respect, be it mountains, rivers, trees, etc. Suggest we include 'Shantipath here.

Let there be peace in heaven	(dyauh)
Peace in the atmosphere	(antariksha)
Peace across waters	(apah)
May there be peace on earth	(prithvi)
May peace flow from	(oshadh)
herbs, plants and trees	(vanaspat)
May all beings radiate peace	(vishwa)
May peace be everywhere	(sarva)
May that peace come to me too	(sama)
May there be peace, peace, peace	(Aum Shanti, shanti,

10. Hindu faith is **compatible with science**, and with the advances made by scientists. It has never conflicted with science. Hindus are advised to seek knowledge and its advancement.

Scientists, all those whose actions are based on dharmic principles, are regarded as rishis (literally meaning 'seers'): people who are wise and saintly.

Stages in the Life of the Hindu:

Four stages of life are:

1. Brahmacharya (Student Life): Period of physical and mental development and maturity
2. Grihastha (Family/Working Life): Married life, raising a family and performing duties to it and to the Society.
3. Vanaprastha (Retirement): After retirement look after grandchildren, carry out social service, and undertake spiritual studies.

4. Sanyaasa (Renunciation): Gradual withdrawal from worldly affairs and focus on spiritual studies.

Aim in Life - Purushartha:

A Hindu should lead a good and righteous life by pursuing four goals:

Dharma: To always be guided by dharma in thinking, acting and in communicating

Kaama: To seek fulfilment of desires and aspirations that are righteous and consistent with dharma, but in doing so, to abstain from anger, greed, hatred, envy, etc.

Artha: To work to achieve economic stability, but not using any inappropriate means to obtain wealth; use the wealth earned to look after the family, in providing social service, etc.

Moksha: To obtain pious merit in life to achieve the ultimate goal of freedom from the cycle of life-death-life also known as 'Mukti' in Sikhism and 'Nirvana' in Buddhism.

Practices and Rituals:

Worship:

- a) Venue: A Hindu can worship on his/her own anywhere including at home, also in formal places of worship called the mandir (Hindu Temple).
- b) Rites: Hindus may carry out formal rites of worship - rituals / pooja - at home, at a selected place, or at the temple.
- c) Pilgrimage: Hindu is advised to go and visit places that are held sacred, shrines, etc. in order to draw inspiration to be steadfast on the path of dharma.

Artefacts in Hindu Temple:

Hindus use the following artefacts whilst performing the aarti/puja/havan:



Hinduism
A study of ancient wisdom
through modern science

Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple - Guide for Visitors

Include brief description of coconut/fruits, bell, lamp, sprinkler and kalash representing the five physical elements (panchbhoot) earth, air, fire, water and space related with the five senses (smell, hearing, sight, taste and touch). Use extracts from Explaining Hindu Dharma book.

Five Physical Elements



Hindu Artefacts	5 Elements	5 Senses	5 Organs
Fruit/Coconut	Earth	Smell	Nose
Sprinkler	Water	Taste	Tongue
Lamp	Fire	Light	Eyes
Bells	Air	Sound	Ears
Container	Space	Touch	Skin

Diet:

Most Hindus are vegetarian. Some do eat meat. But almost all Hindus abstain from eating beef, as the cow is sacred and adored as a secondary mother for giving milk.

Dress:

One should dress to cover the body according to the climate. This applies to all. A small number of mendicants (sadhus) who do not wear clothes, are a very rare exception. They live in their own groups, in isolation from human settlements. There are no obligations in respect of how one should dress.

Appendix:

Social Stratification: Varna, not Caste

Human society has been placed by the Hindu sacred texts in four groups, called *varnas*:



Hinduism
A study of ancient wisdom
through modern science

Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple - Guide for Visitors

Those whose principal aim is to acquire knowledge (from the sacred texts) and then pass the knowledge to others are called Brahmins.

Those who take on the job of defending the country and protecting the community, and securing national and community assets are called Kshatriyas.

Those who carry out trade, farming, jobs to increase the nation's wealth, etc., are called Vaishyas, and all other people who carry out jobs in the general service of society are called Shudras.

According to Hindu sacred texts (*shastras*), all these four groups are interchangeable (i.e., there is social mobility across these groups).

The grouping is not determined by birth but determined by one's aptitude and vocation. Shaastras make it clear that human beings should treat each other as equal and with respect, and any discrimination is forbidden.

The concept of 'Caste system' was promoted during the colonial period that sought to link the social malpractices prevalent in the country to Hindu Dharma. This (the social malpractice – regarding the above-mentioned four groups as unequal and the resulting discrimination) is clearly a malpractice to be found in the entire Indian subcontinent, practiced by people of all backgrounds and faiths. It is important to recognize that there is absolutely no justification for it in Hindu dharma.

After India became independent, discrimination linked to this social stratification was made illegal, and any such practices are gradually getting eliminated.

The three main concepts: Varna , Ashrama and Dharma are together called 'Varnashramdharma' that represent the social order, stages of life and duties.

Brief History of Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple in Manchester

A group of Hindu families living in Manchester area came together under leadership and guidance of Mr Raj Kaushal to hold regular prayer meetings and celebrate Hindu festivals. They used to hire community halls or church halls in the Chorlton area.

On 23 Feb 1980, the group formed the Manchester Hindu Cultural Society which was registered as a charity under registration number 509858. This charity, with help of local Hindu community purchased an unused church building at the present site and established a Hindu mandir under the name of Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple. The charity was given the working name of Gita Bhawan Hindu Temple on 26 May 2010 under the same registration number. The four founding trustees were: Mr Kaushal, Mr Lamba, Mr Jairath and Mr Kapoor.

In Dec 2021, a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was formed named Raj Kaushal Gita Bhawan Hindu Temple Manchester (also known as 'RKGBHTM-CIO') with registration number 509858. The RKGBHTM-CIO replaced the Manchester Hindu Cultural Society. On 11 April 2022, the Charity Commission authorized, under the Charities Act 2011, the transfer of assets and liabilities from the Manchester Hindu Cultural Society to the new CIO Raj Kaushal Gita Bhawan Hindu Temple Manchester. The CIO owns and operates the Gita Bhawan Hindu Temple and has the following objectives:

- A. advancing the Hindu religion and doctrines.
- B. advancing education in Hindu traditions, history, language, literature, and music; and
- C. providing relief to persons who are in conditions of need, hardship, distress or are sick.

Statement of Faith

(Submitted to the Charity Commission)

The faith tradition of this CIO is based on Hindu Dharma also known as the Sanatana Dharma. 'Hinduism' is now generally accepted as a generic term to identify this ancient faith tradition that originated in India. It was not started by any single individual, seer or prophet, and its origin cannot be traced to a particular period of human history. It is not based on one single book or a set of dogmas; on the contrary, it allows a great deal of freedom of thought, faith and worship. Hinduism is not a single religious faith system because it does not insist on any fixed set of doctrines. There are a variety of religious sects or traditions in Hinduism and the CIO welcomes all of them. In spite of this diversity, there is a certain unity



Hinduism
A study of ancient wisdom
through modern science

Gita Bhavan Hindu Temple - Guide for Visitors

among all the various doctrines and schools of thought because their basic principles are based on the 'eternal laws of nature' which can be rightly defined as Sanatana (eternal) Dharma (laws of nature). These basic concepts are as follows:

- Belief that God is one but as he has many attributes and many functions, he is called by many different names.
- God is worshipped in diverse forms.
- There is Divinity in all. The Divine spark in all living creatures is Atman (soul). The soul is eternal and immortal, only the body made from the five physical elements perishes.
- Life does not end with death. There is a cycle of Life and Death called Sansara.
- The cycle of life and death is dictated by theory of Karma which is the law of cause and effect.
- Humans can achieve liberation from round of birth and death called Moksha, Mukti or Nirvana.

The above concepts are explained in various Hindu scriptures including the most ancient Vedic scriptures which are summarised in the Bhagwat Gita, now known as the most popular Hindu scripture. This is the reason for naming the Hindu temple building as Gita Bhawan.

The essence of Hindu Dharma is that God exists in all creation so there is no room for any kind of discrimination. The CIO believes in promoting communal harmony and interfaith dialogue.