

Hinduism

Questions answered

How does Karma affect a person?

Hindus believe that every action has an effect and there is a cause for everything. This is called the law of Karma.

It is believed that after someone dies, their soul lives on and starts a new life in another body - not necessarily a human one. This is known as **reincarnation**. In practice this means that, depending on how you have behaved in the previous life (generating good or bad Karma), you will be reborn into a better or worse life.

The main aim for all Hindus is to break out of this cycle of birth and death.

What is the Arti ceremony?

It is a ceremony of worship that takes place in front of the deities.

The priest has a tray with a small lighted oil diva lamp, burning incense, a small bell, offerings of food, a bowl of water and flowers. The four elements: fire, earth, water and air are all represented.



The ceremony ends with everyone sharing the food which has been offered to the deities.

Many Hindus perform Arti daily in their homes.

What are the Hindu rites of passage?

Birth

- When a baby is born into a Hindu family it is often welcomed with a ceremony in which some honey is put in the child's mouth and the name of God is whispered in the child's ear.
- Ten to twelve days after the birth, the priest announces the baby's name and prayers are said. Ear-piercing and first haircut ceremonies are also considered highly significant.

Growing Up

- In some Hindu families the Sacred Thread ceremony is performed when a boy is growing up. He is given three strands of the sacred thread which represent three promises (vows) he makes: to respect the knowledge, the parents and the society.

Marriage:

- Hindu wedding ceremonies vary from region to region and often take several hours to complete.
- During the ceremony marriage vows or promises are made around a sacred fire. The couple walk around the sacred fire four times.
- At the end of a Hindu wedding ceremony, the bride and groom take seven steps together around the sacred fire. For each step they share a promise or a hope. Each promise or hope is about something they believe is really important and will help them have a happy marriage.
- The couple are blessed by the elders and the priest.