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Hindu Belief on the Meaning of Life

Hinduism, one of the world's oldest religions, is difficult to define. The religion has both monotheistic and polytheistic components. It has many deities, but these deities are a manifestation of Brahman.

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Vishnu and Shiva -- are givers of creation and life as well as of destruction. Although its complex cosmology is layered, it does encourage four universal goals, or purusharthas, that shape the meanings of life: dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

Karma and Samsara-

Karma is the belief that every action has a consequence, and a person's karma strives to create a balance between these actions. Karma shapes reincarnation-the rebirth of one's soul into another physical form-as a person's actions decide the

circumstances

of his or her next life. This cycle of rebirth is called samsara. The ultimate goal in life is to achieve moksha or enlightenment, which ends this cycle of rebirth.

Dharma

-- meaning virtue, morality or duty -- is one of the four concepts that give meaning to life for a Hindu. Dharma is different for each person, as a Hindu's obligations are wholly dependent on a number of factors, including social position or caste, age and gender.

Kama

Hindus should also seek out kama, or pleasure. Kama refers to a range of pleasures, from aesthetic -enjoying the arts, music, writing and dance - to sexual pleasure. Perhaps one of the better-known publications underlying the principle of kama (in the West) is the "Kama

Sutra," which is a guide to love, family life, sexual activity and pleasure.

#SanatanDharma

Moksha- is the ultimate aim in life for Hindus. It means to be saved (salvation). When a Hindu achieves moksha, they break free from the cycle of samsara. Hindus aim to end the cycle of samsara through gaining good karma, which means doing good actions and deeds.

Therefore, the actions of their previous lives and the actions of their mortal life today are all part of their effort to break the cycle of samsara, which each individual Hindu works towards.