

HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God



<p>What this unit contains</p>	<p>God, and the various deities; the Trimurti and the three main focuses of worship; God and the universe; God as male and female; Shiva and Parvati; avatars; the festival of Holi; the murti and the shrine; puja and arti; special places such as the temple, holy spots and sacred rivers; pilgrimage; dharma in action - Hindu communities in the UK, Hindu charities, and other ways ideals are put into practice.</p>																						
<p>Where the unit fits and how it builds upon previous learning</p>	<p>This unit will develop pupils' knowledge and understanding about God and worship in Hinduism and completes the Hinduism content for Key Stage 3.</p>																						
<p>Extension activities and further thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In connection with ideas of creation, evaluate how Hindu notions of time differ from the predominant, modern Western idea of linear time. ➤ Contact the local Swaminarayan Temple to find out more about Lord Swaminarayan as an avatar of Vishnu. ➤ Contact the Lewisham Shaivite Temple to find out about the Temple and worship. ➤ Identify what worship means to Hindus and how it differs from, and is similar to, worship in one other religion. ➤ Consider love – does it just 'happen' (as often in films) or does it require loving actions like service and commitment (as exemplified by puja)? Does love need to be worked at? ➤ Discern between reasons for believing that a place has special religious significance which are helpful and those that promote religious conflict. ➤ Investigate the significance of the word 'tirtha' (literally 'ford', but meaning 'holy place') 																						
<p>Vocabulary</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">Shiva</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Brahma</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Avatar</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Varanasi</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consort</td> <td>Saraswati</td> <td>worship</td> <td>bhajan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parvati</td> <td>Ganesh</td> <td>Dharma</td> <td>kirtan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shakti</td> <td>Swaminarayan</td> <td>pilgrimage</td> <td>prasad</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vishnu</td> <td>Trimurti</td> <td>Prahlad</td> <td>tirtha</td> </tr> </table>	Shiva	Brahma	Avatar	Varanasi	Consort	Saraswati	worship	bhajan	Parvati	Ganesh	Dharma	kirtan	Shakti	Swaminarayan	pilgrimage	prasad	Vishnu	Trimurti	Prahlad	tirtha	<p>SMSC/Citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The importance of valuing oneself and others. ◆ The community of faith incorporates and values diversity. Humanity cannot be judged on outward appearances. 		
Shiva	Brahma	Avatar	Varanasi																				
Consort	Saraswati	worship	bhajan																				
Parvati	Ganesh	Dharma	kirtan																				
Shakti	Swaminarayan	pilgrimage	prasad																				
Vishnu	Trimurti	Prahlad	tirtha																				

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Unit 6 Session 1

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Know that Hindus believe that God is perceived in three ways, and relate this to their own experience and understanding (e.g. experiencing and appreciating God through nature); ➤ Understand the role of the Trimurti, and their respective functions in the universe; ➤ Understand how other Hindu deities (i.e. those studied so far) relate to the six main deities (the Trimurti and their wives); ➤ Know the three main focuses of worship, and the three corresponding Hindu 'denominations'. 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>Explain unit aims. Recall Hindu beliefs about God. Where is God? Recap on & develop Hindu belief that God is present:</p> <p>a) Everywhere as the all-pervading Brahman. Initially perceived by understanding the eternal, spiritual nature of the self (atman).</p> <p>b) Within the heart; consider experiences of some from the following: What is conscience? Consider experiences of genuine remorse; Instinct in animals – e.g. bird migration; Exceptional ability in people. Where do our abilities originate?</p> <p>c) Outside us - as creator, sustainer and destroyer -the supreme artist (flowers, birds, sunsets, etc.); the supreme mathematician / scientist /designer. The supreme person.</p> <p>Watch the first part of the Belief File video, which explains the Trimurti. Give pairs of pupils pictures of 12 deities and 'The 12 main deities' diagram. Recap on the functions of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, relating to Hindu beliefs of cyclical time. Discuss the fact that to Hindus God is both male and female. Students to match pictures to the diagram and answer the questions on the worksheet and record. Watch the next part of the Video explaining that Hindus worship different aspects of God. Explain the three main focuses, how & why Brahma is hardly worshipped, and whom the Shaktas worship. Relate to '12 main deities' diagram & set homework.</p> <p>Homework</p> <p>a) Record brief examples of Hindu beliefs about God and compare with personal views about / responses to the examples given as evidence of God,</p> <p>b) Express their own opinions as to whether God is male, female, both or neither, and support them with well-reasoned arguments.</p>	<p>Resources</p> <p>BBC Video: <i>Belief File – Hinduism</i>. Programme 1: God Pictures of the Trimurti and their consorts: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Shakti (Parvati)</p> <p>“12 Main Deities” Diagram, pictures and Worksheet</p> <p><i>Note: Shiva’s consort goes by many names, such as Shakti, Devi, Parvati, Mataji, Amba, Durga, etc. (see supplementary notes)</i></p> <p>Posters/pictures of various deities, i.e.Rama & Sita, Krishna & Radha, Ganesh, Hanuman. Sets of 12 deity photo-cards are available from ISKCON Educational Services; also included in The Heart of Hinduism. The Heart of Hinduism, Worksheet no. 07</p>

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Unit 6 Session 2

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Know some of the symbols, names and stories associated with Shiva and his consort, Parvati; ➤ Understand the term 'avatar' and know at least three avatars of Vishnu; ➤ Know the three reasons why Vishnu's avatars come to Earth 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Explain that in this lesson, pupils will focus on Shiva and Vishnu.</p> <p>Revisit the Belief File video and show the next part of the programme demonstrating worship of Shiva in a Hindu home and the story of Parvati and Ganesh. The video also shows Varanasi as a centre for worship of Shiva and pilgrims worshipping, relating to the concepts taught in unit 6.</p> <p>Ask why Varanasi is so appropriate as a centre for Shaivite worship. Having seen the video, what benefits do pupils feel pilgrims gain from their visit? What symbols are associated with Shiva and Parvati? Remind pupils that, for a Hindu, meditation is aimed at perceiving God within.</p> <p>Recap on God being also outside, beyond the world, but how he enters it as an avatar (define the term). Recall the avatars Krishna and Rama. Watch the next part of the Video, which talks about avatars, and worship of Vishnu.</p> <p>Give out the Avatars worksheet and present the three reasons why avatars of Vishnu come down to earth. If necessary have copies of appropriate information about the avatars available to support this activity. Complete the worksheet.</p> <p>Re-visit the programme to see the Swaminarayan Hindu Temple at Neasden and to find out about Lord Swaminarayan, who many Hindus consider a further incarnation of Vishnu.</p>	<p>Resources BBC Video: <i>Belief File – Hinduism</i>. Programme 1: God</p> <p>Avatars information and worksheet</p> <p>There is a Shaivite Temple in Lewisham which welcomes visits / enquiries: London Sivan Kovil, 4A Clarendon Rise Lewisham SE13 5ES 020 8318 9844</p> <p>In Brixton see the Caribbean Hindu Temple 16 Ostade Road SW2 2BB 020 8674 0755</p> <p>In Tooting Sri Muthamuri Amman Temple 180-6 Upper Tooting Rd. SW17 7EJ 020 87679881/5277</p>

HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Unit 6 Session 3

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ know some features of the festival of Holi; ➤ know the story of Prahlad, identifying some possible meanings we can derive from the story; ➤ explore how good and bad can only be reckoned in terms of qualities and behaviour, not in terms of race, nationality, gender, sectarian religion, etc. 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>Review knowledge about the festival Holi (e.g. the throwing of colours, the bonfire) and about the avatars of Vishnu. Break the class into groups of 4-5 students and hand each a copy of the story behind the festival. Pupils read to the story and answer the questions.</p> <p>Debrief, matching student responses to the significance behind the story for Hindus themselves and adding points and guiding discussion where needed. Relate answers to basic Hindu concepts, such as the law of karma.</p> <p>Using bonfires as a common feature compare Holi to Guy Fawkes night. Explore how the good-evil paradigm has been wrongly misappropriated and associated with certain groups of people (i.e. Catholics versus. Protestants, Christians versus Muslims, etc.).</p> <p>NB. the teacher might mention how Hindus see the world more in terms of 'knowledge versus ignorance' than 'good versus evil'.</p> <p>Homework</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reflecting on the story, write a statement explaining how you would perceive the differences between good and evil and between right and wrong, giving examples of behaviour / people who appear to embody these. b) Explain how your view compares with that of a Hindu c) Explain how important it is to ensure that views about good and evil counter judgementalism, negative discrimination and religious conflict. 	<p>Resources</p> <p>The story of Prahlad</p> <p>Teachers' notes about Hindu beliefs shown through the story of Prahlad.</p>

HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God



Unit 6 Session 4

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Know some features of the shrine, both at home and in the Mandir ➤ Know some of the features of Puja and arti, and understand their significance ➤ Know the significance of the murti and its role in worship. 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>Watch again the sections of the Belief File video showing Shaivite worship at home and worship of Vishnu in a Hindu Temple (Mandir) including the section where the mother talks about her worship of Ganesh and prayers for healing.</p> <p>Using the 'Ten types of worship' worksheet, recall from the video examples of as many of these as possible in action. What else can pupils recall about worship as seen in the video?</p> <p>Worship of the murti or sacred image is central in Hinduism and has been seen in practice in the video programme. Explain that some Hindus consider the murti an avatar. This is more than just a focus for worship as for Hindus the deity resides in the murti during worship. In the video there is a part of the Navaratri festival when the worshippers believe the deity leaves the murti and it is destroyed.</p> <p>Discuss the function of the murti in worship and notions of how to reciprocate with God. Mention that Hindus may see 'worship' somewhat differently from other religious traditions, and it may have a significantly different 'feel'.</p> <p>Examine the significance of the various practices of puja and the items offered during arti. Include the offering of food (prasada) and bhajan/kirtan (play some out loud, debriefing pupil responses).</p>	<p>Resources</p> <p>BBC Video: <i>Belief File – Hinduism</i>. Programme 1: God</p> <p>Ten types of worship' worksheet, "Heart of Hinduism", Teachers Book, page 55 (on the murti); page 49 (distinctive features of Hindu worship); pages 54-65 (worship).</p> <p>Puja artefacts</p> <p>Murtis of deities referred to in this unit.</p> <p>"Heart of Hinduism", Audio CD</p> <p>Heart of Hinduism Teachers Book, pages 70-75</p> <p>Notes</p> <p>a) Alternatively this lesson and the next could be delivered as part of a visit to a temple</p> <p>The teacher may need to address concerns about of 'idolatry'. Deity worship is not so unfamiliar if we relate it to practices we know (statues of famous people, photographs of loved ones, veneration of graves, etc.)</p>

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Unit 6 Sessions 5 & 6 continued

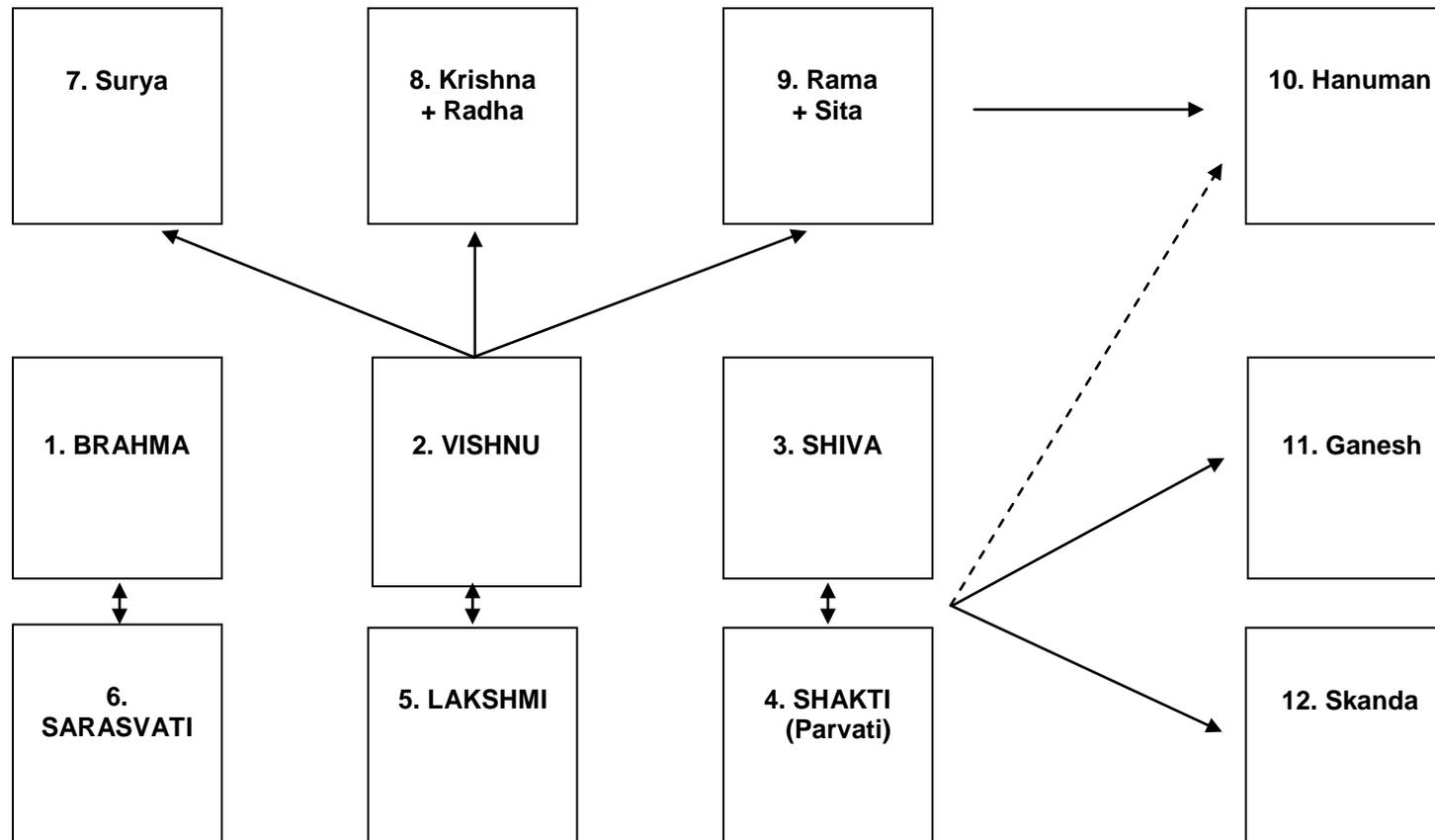
Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
<p>Project 2 Aims:</p> <p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Know the connection between <i>dharma</i> and <i>seva</i>, and how appropriate service to others is a form of worship. ➤ Know about some Hindu charities, identifying for each which ideals (concepts and values) underpin their work. ➤ Know how Hindu ideals (concepts and values) affect the lives of some Hindus living today in Britain. 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>For project 2 pupils should contact through internet research, e-mail, direct contact, etc. organisations such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seva International • Swami Narayana Mission • Food for Life <p>And others . . .</p> <p>Links should be made to ways in which members of other faiths put their beliefs into action in similar ways.</p>	<p>Resources</p> <p>http://www.swaminarayan.org/activities/index.htm</p> <p>http://www.ffl.org/index.html</p> <p>http://www.iskcon.org.uk/ffl/news/</p> <p>http://www.noblecauses.com/</p>

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Hinduism Unit 6 Session 1

Twelve Main Deities - Schematic Representation and Worksheet



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Unit 6

Twelve main deities

These notes accompany the separate sheet that diagrammatically represents the relationships between the main Hindu deities.

Exercise: Using the worksheet schematically representing the 12 main deities, please write down:

- ◆ The names of the Trimurti
- ◆ The names of the three main focuses of worship
- ◆ The relationship each of the arrows represents (e.g. wife / consort) and
- ◆ Find out the meaning of the words consort and avatar



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Unit 6 Session 1

Twelve main deities

These notes accompany the separate sheet that diagrammatically represents the relationships between the main Hindu deities.

Answers for the teacher:

1, 2, 3 are the Trimurti

4, 5, 6 are the Consorts of the Trimurti

2, 3, 4 are the Three Main focuses of Worship, worshipped by Vaishnavas, Shaivas and Shaktas.

Note: Shaktas often worship the other goddesses, 5 + 6, together with Parvati (Shiva's consort).

7. A form of Vishnu (*Surya Narayana*)

8. An avatar of Vishnu

9. An avatar of Vishnu

10. Servant of Rama. Some consider him (see dotted arrow) a son of Shiva & Parvati (but adopted by foster parents)

11. Son of Shiva and Parvati

12. Son of Shiva and Parvati

Important note:

Shiva's wife goes by many different names and this can be confusing. We have used the term 'Shakti'. However, this name is also generic and can refer to the Shakti (literally 'energy', i.e. 'consort') of other deities. So, Shakti specifically refers to Shiva's consort but can include other goddesses. In a similar vein, Shaktas most specifically worship Shiva's wife (in one of her forms) but often worship Lakshmi and Sarasvati as well. Shiva's consort is also called Parvati, and may be addressed as Devi (goddess) and Mataji (respected mother). She has other forms, most notably Durga and Kali

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Unit 6 Session 2

Avatars

Using a story of Rama or Krishna explain how the story demonstrates that either Rama or Krishna were avatars and how their incarnations fulfilled these purposes.

Definition:

Avatar means 'one who descends'. We often use the word incarnation, but for many Hindus this is not quite accurate since it suggests that God, like us, takes on a material body. In actual fact, (most Hindus believe) God appears in his original, spiritual form.

Why Avatars come:

- a) to protect devotees
- b) to destroy the wicked
- c) to re-establish religious principles

(see Bhagavad-Gita, text 4.8 for a relevant verse)

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Unit 6 Session 3

The Story of Prahlad

When the demon Hiranyakashipu heard of the death of his twin brother Hiranyaksha, he became enraged. Staring up into the sky with blazing eyes, he clenched his fists. “Fellow demons,” he cried out, “I will defeat the demigods and conquer the entire universe. I will destroy Vishnu by slicing His head from His body.”

Afraid of meeting the same fate as his brother, Hiranyakashipu decided to become immortal. He went to a quiet and lonely valley where he performed austerities. He stood on tiptoe, raising his arms above his heads and fixing his gaze on the top of the sky. He did not eat, drink or sleep. He remained fixed in that position for a hundred and twenty five years – so long that the ants built a nest around him and devoured his flesh. Blazing fire issued from his hair, drying up the seas and scorching the entire universe.

Lord Brahma, the creator of the world, became alarmed. Riding on his swan, he appeared before the demon. “Oh King of the Asuras,” Brahma said, “I am astonished at your determination. Please tell me, what is it that you want so badly?” He sprinkled holy water on the skeleton, which immediately changed into the body of a muscular, young man.

Bowing down respectfully to Lord Brahma, Hiranyakashipu requested, “My desire is to become immortal. I wish to live forever.”

“I can’t help you,” Lord Brahma replied, “for though I live for millions of years, even I must die one day. How can I give you something which I myself do not have?”



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Contd

Hiranyakashipu was disappointed. After all these years of hardship he was not going to give up his life's ambition. His eyes lit up with an idea. "Then let me not be killed by any creature created by you – by any demigod, human being or animal," he requested.

"That I can grant," replied Lord Brahma.

"And let me die neither inside nor outside any building."

"That's fine," agreed Lord Brahma.

"And let me die neither during the day nor during the night. Let me not be killed either in the sky, or on the land, or in the sea. And let me not be killed by any weapon."

"Yes, those wishes I grant you," Said Lord Brahma. And smiling, he mounted his swan aeroplane and left for his heavenly home.

Hiranyakashipu laughed, believing himself now to be immortal. Travelling throughout the universe, he defeated the rulers of each planet, until he conquered Indra, King of the demigods. Living in Indra's palace, Hiranyakashipu enjoyed a life of great luxury. He was very proud of his wealth, his huge army and his beautiful wife. He took even greater pride in his young son, called Prahlad, hoping he would grow up to be a powerful demon.

Though constantly drunk with wine, Hiranyakashipu never forgot his vow to kill Lord Vishnu.



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Contd. 2

When Prahlad was five years old his father began to notice there was something strange about the boy. He was neither proud nor greedy. Indeed, he was quite calm and kind-hearted. Hiranyakashipu was concerned. Taking his son onto his lap he said: “You are very intelligent, but tell me, what is the most important thing you have learned at school?”

The small boy replied, “Studying about politics and the art of war is a waste of time. Those who are really intelligent have no enemies because they understand that they are servants of Lord Vishnu, who lives in everyone’s heart.”

“You fool!” Hiranyakashipu bellowed, thrusting his son to the floor. “Guards! This boy serves my enemy. Take him and kill him!”

The king’s servants were frightful, with long sharp teeth and twisted faces. Prahlad, however, remained calm as they surrounded him. Though they attacked him viciously with spears, swords and tridents, they failed to pierce his tender skin.

Hiranyakashipu ordered them to hurl the child from the top of a cliff. But, protected by Lord Vishnu, Prahlad floated like a feather to the ground.

And they threw him before a charging elephant, which came to a sudden halt just short of the boy.

They cast him into a pit of seething snakes that refused to bite him.



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Contd. 3

They tried everything to kill Prahlad – poisoning him, starving him, freezing him, burning him, and frying him in a cauldron of oil. None of these had even the slightest effect on the boy, who remained smiling as he prayed to Lord Vishnu.

Frustrated, and bowing their heads in shame, the servants returned to Hiranyakashipu. Hearing the news of their failure, the angry king bellowed, “You incompetent fools! You can’t even kill a five-year-old boy. Bring my sister, Holika, here immediately. The King recalled that long ago Holika had pleased Agni, the fire god and that Agni had granted her a boon protecting her from fire.

Holika happily consented to her brother’s plan and, picking up Prahlad, carried him into a blazing bonfire. But it was Prahlad whom Agni protected and the wicked Holika burned to ashes.

The servants again dragged Prahlad before his ferocious father. “How dare you defy me,” Hiranyakashipu demanded, “for I control the entire universe. Tell me, where do you get this power of yours that you cannot be killed?”

“ Dear father, “ Prahlad replied” the source of my strength is also source of yours – Vishnu Himself.”

“What? You dare to say there is someone greater than me? You must wish to die by my hands. You speak of a god, but tell me Prahlad, where is this god of yours?”

“He is everywhere, father.”



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Contd. 5

“Is He here? Is he in this pillar?” the demon taunted. “Then let me see him protect you now.” Drawing his sword, Hiranyakashipu struck its hilt against the pillar.

As it crumbled in a cloud of dust, a deafening roar reverberated throughout the palace. The earth trembled. Hiranyakashipu watched with wide eyes as an enormous creature emerged from the remains of the pillar. Though walking on two legs, he had the head of a lion. His eyes blazed like fire, his golden mane shook like a million snakes and his long tongue flicked about like a duelling sword. “Who is this strange creature?” Hiranyakashipu thought, “Is this Lord Vishnu, my arch enemy?”

Never before had he seen such awesome anger. But remembering that he, the king of the demons, was immortal, Hiranyakashipu was unafraid. Flashing his razor-sharp sword, he charged the creature.

And so they fought, sometimes on the ground, and sometimes in the sky. God was playing with the demon as an eagle plays with a mouse. Sometimes He caught him, sometimes He let him escape. Finally, in the doorway of the palace, the Lord seized Hiranyakashipu. He placed him on His lap and with His lion claws, ripped open the demon’s belly.

The demon king was killed in neither the day nor night but at dusk, as the sun touched the horizon. He was not killed in the air, nor on the land, nor in the sea, but on the lap of Lord Vishnu. He was not killed inside a building or outside, but the porch of the palace. He was not killed by any weapon, but by the nails of the Lord Himself. Not did he die of any creature, be it be demigod, human or animal, but the Lord in His form as half man-half lion.



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Contd. 6

In this way, Lord Vishnu protected His dear devotee Prahlad, and at the same time ensured that Lord Brahma's promises were not broken. Hiranyakashipu had failed to outwit Lord Vishnu.

Pacified by the selfless prayers of the gentle Prahlad, Vishnu said "My dear Prahlad, best of the Asuras, all good fortune to you! You may ask Me any benediction you may desire."

"My Lord," the boy replied, "please do not tempt me. I am not a businessman, serving You only to meet my own ends. I am happy simply to remain Your servant, life after life."

Narasingha, however, insisted.

"Then I ask You only one benediction, "Prahlad consented. "That You please excuse my father for all his sinful activities."

"My dear Prahlad," The lord replied "because your unflinching devotion your father and twenty one generations of your family have already been liberated from the endless cycle of birth and death."

To this day, whenever there is danger from enemies, the devotees of Vishnu remember how Lord Vishnu rescued Prahlad, and they pray for His protection.

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Unit 6 Session 3

The Story of Prahlad - Questions

- ◆ What practice during Holi relates to this story?
- ◆ What are the attributes of the main three characters in the story - Prahlad, his father and Lord Vishnu?
- ◆ What can we learn from the story about Hindu beliefs (e.g. about where God resides)?



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Unit 6 Session 4 Ten Types of Worship

Some of these can be practised individually and some as a congregation. All can be performed at home or in the Temple

- a) Puja – ritual worship especially of the deity
- b) Arti – the greeting ceremony with lamps etc
- c) Bhajan or kirtan – hymns and chants (often during arti)
- d) Darshan - taking audience of a deity or holy person
- e) Offering & eating prashad (sacred food)
- f) Pravachan – talk or lecture on the scriptures
- g) Havan - sacred fire ceremony
- h) Meditation / japa / prayer – individual and internal practices
- i) Parikram / pradakshina – circumambulation
- j) Seva – active service to the deity, holy people etc.



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Unit 6 Sessions 5 & 6

Places of Pilgrimage to select topics for research:

Holy Rivers

Ganga (connected with Vishnu & Shiva)

Yamuna (connected with Krishna, it merges with the Ganga)

Sarasvati (some say it is now dried up, others that it continues to run underground)

Godavari (South India)

Holy Spots

India:

- Varanasi (connected with Shiva)
- Vrindavana (connected with Krishna)
- Ayodhya (connected with Rama)
- Kanyakumari (connected with Parvati)
- Prayag (the most important Kumbha Mela site)
- Puri (site of the famous Ratha Yatra festival)
- Kurukshetra (where Krishna spoke the Bhagavad Gita)

Britain:

- Swami Narayana Temple
- Bhaktivedanta Manor Temple



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Unit 6 Sessions 6 & 7

Pilgrimage - which of these relate to the place you are studying?

Reasons for Pilgrimage

- a) To remember special people (saints)
- b) To fix the mind on God and to glorify Him
- c) For spiritual development and to gain spiritual merit
- d) For purification and atonement of sins
- e) To gain a particular benediction (e.g. birth of a child)
- f) For meeting and taking guidance from holy people.
- g) To perform specific religious rites
- h) For self-reflection and contemplation
- i) For an uplifting and memorable experience

Activities Performed on Pilgrimage

- a) Taking *darshan* of specific deities (or saints)
- b) Participating in worship and glorification (e.g. *kirtan*)
- c) Charity, especially to priests and temples
- d) Austerities and penance (such as shaving the head and following vows such as celibacy)
- e) Listening to spiritual talks and receiving advice on spiritual life
- f) Specific rites (such as the shraddha ceremony in Gaya)
- g) Circumambulation of holy places



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Unit 6 Sessions 5 & 6

Dharma (duty) and Seva (service)

Dharma can be translated loosely as religion, duty or religious duty. More precisely, it means:

“Duties that sustain us according to our nature”.

Santana dharma (the Eternal Religion) is another name of Hinduism. It refers to the nature of the eternal soul (atman), which is to serve God.

The Hindu word for service is **seva** (or *sewa*).

Some of the values & concepts that underpin Hindu charity work might include:

- Ahimsa (non-violence)
- Compassion
- Seva (service)
- Dharma (religious duty)
- Inclusion
- Atman (we are all the same underneath)
- Karma (understanding of personal responsibility)
- God's grace ('there but for the grace of God go I')



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Unit 6

Brahma Iconography

Brahma is one of the Trimurti. He is the creator.
His wife or consort is Saraswati who is the goddess of learning.

In Hindu mythology Brahma was born from Vishnu and appeared out of the golden egg produced in the boundless, cosmic waters. His wife Saraswati was born out of him. From their union all the creatures of the world were created. Brahma represents the Vedas and Saraswati their spirit and meaning. All knowledge, sacred and secular, comes from them.

Brahma is frequently represented:

- with four arms to show he is creator of everything in all directions, reaching the four quarters of the world;
- with four heads to show that he is responsible for the four holy books, 'the Vedas, the four yugas (ages) the four varnas;
- each head faces in all directions – north, south, east and west to illustrate that he is the creator of everything;
- sitting on a lotus;
- with a swan that is a sign of wisdom and discrimination.

In the hands of his four arms he carries:

- A string of beads used to say prayers;
- A spoon or ladle, as is used in the sacred fire sacrifice;
- A water pot to show that he is the first living being that came from the ocean;
- A small book which is a symbol of the Vedas, representing sacred knowledge.

Brahma





HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Unit 6 VISHNU Iconography

Vishnu means 'one who pervades', i.e. who has entered everything. He is the preserver, who is the cause and the power by which all things exist. As the preserver amongst the Trimurti, Vishnu is eternal and always existing. Even when the world is destroyed, he will remain to create it again.

His wife or consort is Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune. Hindus who worship Vishnu are known as Vaishnavites or Vaishnavas.

Vishnu is frequently represented :

- With four arms showing his power in all directions;
- He is sometimes depicted with blue skin, the colour we associate with infinite space;
- Dressed in yellow;
- Wearing a garland of jasmine flowers.

In the hands of his four arms he carries:

- A lotus, which is a symbol of purity and beauty;
- A conch shell to represent the five elements – earth; air; fire; water; wind. The conch is also used as a signal in battle. It was blown by Indian warriors;
- Chakra – a wheel or discus, which represents the rotation of cosmic time. It is also a weapon;
- Mace –also a weapon.

These two weapons show that God can overcome demons and evil things in the world.

Symbols associated with Vishnu:

A sword associated with wisdom

A bow, which depicts cosmic senses

Ananta – a thousand –headed serpent on which Vishnu reclines

Ananta means endless or infinite and stands for cosmic time, which is infinite. It is represented by the thousand heads, which depict the countless divisions of time

Garuda – a large eagle which Vishnu rides.

Garuda means 'wings of speech' and is identified with the words of the Vedas

Other names for Vishnu are:

Narayana which has many meanings including 'One who is the abode of all human beings' or 'One who is the final goal of all human beings'

Nilameghasyama, in which his skin is shown as dark blue



Vishnu is also worshipped in the form of avatars. **Avatars** descend from the heavenly realms to earth in human or animal form. There are ten main avatars of Vishnu. The most popular are Rama and Krishna



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Unit 6

Shiva - Iconography

Shiva means 'kindly' and 'auspicious' He is one of the Trimurti, known as the 'destroyer' He is known as **Mahadeva** which means 'great god' and Maha-yogi which means 'great ascetic'. He is master of all science and as **Shiva Nataraja** (Lord of the Dance) he brings the world into existence through a continuous process of preservation and destruction. Those who worship Shiva are known as Shaivites or Shaivas His wife or consort is known in three main ways as Parvati, Durga and Kali

Symbols associated with Shiva

Shiva is represented in various ways:

- With long knotted hair in which there is a moon. From his hair gushing water represents the river Ganges which he caught in his hair as the water plunged to earth from the heavenly planets;
- With a necklace of serpents around his neck and Chest. The snake represents anger and also the Kundalini power that resides within everyone at the base of their spine ;
- With a Third eye which rests between Shiva's eyebrows, and represents Shiva's sovereign power by which he can overcome and save the world from darkness;
- With a Tiger's Hide This is often pictured around Shiva's waist, and represents greed. Shiva's enemies wanted to destroy him and sent a tiger. Shiva killed the tiger and wears the animal skin to show his power over greed and evil;
- With Nandi the bull, which is the mount of Shiva. Symbolically the bull represents animal instincts, and Shiva's mastery of the bull shows that he controls the senses. It is because Shiva can control the senses that he is considered the master-yogi;

Shiva (Shankar - sitting)



- As Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, he stamps on the demon of ignorance whose tongue hangs out as a sign of shame.

With four arms in which he carries:

- A drum, which is a symbol of sound and so off all creation;
- Fire which is a symbol of destruction;
- A trident (when in a seated position) the three prongs of the trident represent God, the soul and the slavery of ignorance.

The Trident indicates that Shiva is the Supreme Ruler.

- One hand is held up in a pose which indicates 'do not fear'
- As Lord of the Dance – Shiva Nataraja, his arm points to the destruction of the demon of ignorance

Symbols associated with Shiva

- | | |
|---------|---------------------|
| Trident | A small drum |
| Rosary | A wand with a skull |



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Notable Features of Hindu worship Supplementary Notes

- Hindu worship encompasses a broad range of activities (including, for example, even dance and drama.)
- The presence of the Divine is perceived in diverse ways and tends to be inclusive. Thus, to accommodate everyone in their gradual spiritual journey, there is a complex array of focuses of worship (see below, point ten)
- Much worship is performed individually, though in some traditions, like many in the UK, communal worship plays a central role.
- Hindu worship often goes on outside the temple, and especially within the home.
- There are no specific days of worship, though days of the week are associated with particular deities (e.g. Shiva is connected with Monday, Hanuman with Tuesday, and so on)
- The time of day is more important and an hour or two on either side of dawn is considered most auspicious for worship, for it is influenced by the quality of goodness (sattva guna) Thus, in India, many temples will begin their first public ceremony at sometime between four and six in the morning. The evenings are also particularly busy.
- Worship is often more spontaneous and less tightly regulated than in much Western religion, and individuals are usually quite free to join and leave ceremonies.
- Hindu worship often appears to lack the solemnity we sometimes associate with religion. God can be worshipped with awe and reverence but also with warmth, joy and affection, as if a close friend or a loved one.
- God is worshipped directly and also through his 'natural representatives' (benign authorities). Hindus consider that venerating items connected with God glorifies Him rather than detracting from His greatness.

HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God



The following list indicates some of the diverse focuses of worship:

- a) The Supreme (God);
- b) The variety of gods (*devas*) and goddesses (*devis*);
- c) The spiritual preceptor (guru);
- d) The teacher (also called guru);
- e) The qualified *brahmin*;
- f) Family elders (e.g. the mother and father);
- g) Sacred plants (such as the Tulasi and Bilva);
- h) Sacred rivers (such as the Ganga);
- i) The land (one of the 'seven natural mothers') and especially those places where God and holy people have appeared;
- j) .All living beings (as parts of God).



HINDUISM Part 3 Unit 6: Relationship with God

Unit 6 Session 3

Teachers' notes about Hindu beliefs shown through the story of Prahlad.

- ◆ God is everywhere (as in the pillar);
- ◆ God has emotions, such as divine anger;
- ◆ God acts for the interest of everyone, even the wicked. He only appears partial;
- ◆ No-one can transgress the laws of God and nature;
- ◆ God cannot be outwitted;
- ◆ God protects the word of his devotee (the promises of Lord Brahma);
- ◆ Sainly people feel no malice for the ignorant and wicked – even those who do them great harm – but only wish them well;
- ◆ Sainly people have full faith that the Lord is protecting them even in the midst of great danger;
- ◆ The saint is always happy within and impervious to personal inconvenience;
- ◆ God protects the good and destroys the wicked, no matter what other protection they seem to have (as with Holika, with her boon from Agni, the fire god);