

# KS2 Hinduism: Beliefs & Questions



**How do questions about Brahman and atman influence the way a Hindu lives?**

**The *EMMANUEL* Project 2020:  
Teaching World Religions effectively in Key Stage 2**



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich

## Before you start:

RE is statutory for Key Stage 2 pupils in state-funded schools. RE should:

- 'educate' pupils about religions and worldviews and their impact on individuals, communities and the wider world.
- develop the religious 'literacy' needed to discuss issues of faith and belief in today's society.
- offer a safe space for children to consider their own ideas and demonstrate respect for others.



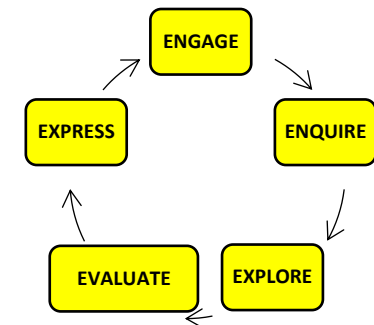
**This unit for Key Stage 2 pupils focuses on the Hindu concepts of 'Brahman' and 'atman'.** It is important to read the guide to the concept so that teaching, questioning and assessment reflect this focus. A simple 'image' is provided to symbolize each KS2 concept and acts as a reminder of the key beliefs of different faiths.

**It links with common themes in RE syllabuses** e.g. in the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus it links with 'Beliefs and Questions: What key beliefs people hold about God, the world and humans.

**It is designed to last 6-8 hours**, taught weekly or blocked. Teachers must decide how to distribute time effectively; guidance is offered below. As they plan, teachers may adapt activities to their particular class / resources but must ensure they maintain the focus on the belief / concept central to the unit.

**Learning is developed through an enquiry cycle** in which pupils:

- **Engage** with the key concept in their own lives / world (at least 1 lesson)
- **Enquire** into an aspect of Hinduism which relates to the key concept (at least 1 lesson)
- **Explore** a Hindu understanding of the key concept through 3 areas **(i) Hindu Narrative / Story (ii) Hindu Community Practice (iii) Hindu Living** (at least 1 lesson on each)
- **Evaluate** and **Express** their learning about the key concept.



**Assessment guidance is provided at the back of the unit.** It should be read and acted on before teaching begins. Schools will differ in the approaches they need or wish to use.

**The Resource List** in this unit was current at time of publication, but teachers should watch out for new resources to add.

**Further guidance, other units and various support materials** (introduction to the Emmanuel Project, outline schemes of work, quick quizzes, solo taxonomy, pictures, scrapbooking, literacy plans) are found on the Emmanuel Project Flash Drive.

## HINDU CONCEPTS

# BRAHMAN / ATMAN



Brahman (the one Supreme Being or cosmic principle) and Atman (the true self in each human), it's a bit like:

- **God the fire giving out sparks**
- **God as sunlight glinting off waves**
- **God looking out through human eyes**
- **The ultimate connection or unity behind all things**

'Hindu' comes from Sindhu, a river in NW India, which in Sanskrit means 'a vast expanse of water'. Hinduism itself is vast, a collection of ancient traditions with more emphasis on doing the right thing than agreeing a particular creed. Many Hindus call their tradition *Sanatana-dharma*, the eternal law, which governs all irrespective of belief, and which points to origins beyond human history.

Hinduism has no single founder or scripture, but is continually refreshed by living gurus, whose claim to experience God, drives others to seek them out as sources of guidance. Its wide variety of beliefs and practices are confusing but some ideas are fairly constant e.g.

- one Supreme Being or life principle, underlying the universe (**BRAHMAN**), approached through chosen deities
- all living beings connected to this Supreme Being (**ATMAN**)
- time as cyclical, with humans living, dying and being re-incarnated

**Aum / Om** is the key symbol of Hinduism. It is said to be the sound at the heart of the universe, which is heard when attaining God-realisation through deep meditation. Using the sound in prayer helps a worshipper focus on and become united with God, the aim of all existence.

### The Gayatri Mantra

"We meditate on the glory of that Being who has produced this universe; may He enlighten our minds."

*Rig Veda (Mandala 3.62.10)*

In the Buddhist / Hindu story of the blind men and the elephant, each man describes a part of the elephant and interprets it as the whole. Hindus live with very different ideas of God, but see each as part of something much bigger. Their understanding of God is defined as pluralism, rather than polytheism.



### Three approaches to God / Brahman

#### God as a personality with attributes and forms

– this most popular approach allows devotees to develop a relationship with God, who may be seen as friend, mother, brother, child. Depictions of God are made in human form but incorporate superhuman attributes e.g. many arms / heads. These many forms or deities, are God's response to the needs of devotees.

**Murtis**, statues of different deities, are installed ritually in a temple, preparing them to be inhabited by God, infused with living breath (prana). From that point, the divine is manifest in the murtis and they are served like an honoured guest: woken, dressed, viewed, worshipped and put to

rest daily. Devotees visit the murtis to take **darshan** i.e. to see, and be seen, by their chosen deity. They offer flowers, incense, food and praise in a ritual called puja.

**God as a personality with attributes but no form** – this means God has attributes like love and truth, but no form or shape.

Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) said, "*God can be both with and without form. It is the love of the devotee that freezes the formless God into the form the devotee chooses. Many are the names of God and infinite the forms through which he may be approached. In whatever name and form you worship him, through that you will realise him.*"

**God as principle that underlies everything** - Some Hindus believe any attempt to describe God with form or attribute imposes human limitations on the concept. God is unlike all we can imagine and it is better to replace the name with the term 'ultimate' or 'cosmic reality'.

Vivekananda (1863-1902) saw the whole universe as a projection of Brahman, not that the universe is God i.e. not 'pantheism'. Brahman is more manifest in living things, and most clearly manifest in human beings.

### Atman

Humans associate themselves with their minds and bodies; they are concerned with

nationality, race and gender but the real self is distinct from these. The real self is non-material and never changes. Hindus believe this is the spark of Brahman within each person and call it the Atman.

This belief, that the self is none other than Brahman, gives dignity to all humanity. Mahatma Gandhi said, "I am endeavouring to see God through service to humanity, for I know God is neither in heaven nor down below, but in everyone." It is as if God looks out through all human eyes, like the sun shining off individual waves of the sea, or sparks flying out of a fire.

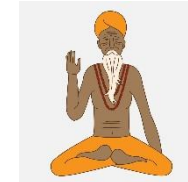
Subramuniyaswami, a modern guru, wrote in 'Hinduism Today' in 1996:

Rishis proclaim that we are not our body, mind or emotions. We are divine souls on a wondrous journey. We came from God, live in God and are evolving into oneness with God. We are, in truth, the Truth we seek. We are immortal souls living and growing in the great school of earthly experience in which we have lived many lives.

The word 'Namaste' or 'Namaskar' is a respectful form of greeting in Hindu custom, used with a slight bow and hands pressed together, palms touching and fingers pointing upwards, thumbs close to the chest. The gesture means "I bow to the divine in you"; the spark of the divine in me greets the spark of divine in you.

### Upanishads

"Now (while one has a human birth), one should inquire into Brahman." *Vedanta Sutra 1.1.1*



The Upanishads are philosophical texts debating issues of my-self, its relationship to God and the world, whether it continues after death and how it

is affected by our actions, and liberation. The Chandogya Upanishad, tells the story of Svetaketu, whose father taught him that Brahman was in everything, as salt is in water. 'Tat tvam asi', the father ended his lesson: you are like that – the one who underlies the whole universe is in you.

### Sacred Cow

In India the cow has long been linked with prosperity, her products considered pure and good. Respect for her as a great mother and provider, became an identifying mark of Hindus, a symbol for mother India, but also a focus of great religious, and political debate. Neo-Hindus have taken up the symbol of the cow too – a sign of non-violence in a new context of ecological awareness, vegetarianism and commitment to the integrity of all creation.





## How do questions about Brahman and atman influence the way a Hindu lives?

### ENGAGE with a dilemma for some Hindu monks

#### End of year expectations

These Y5/6 'I can's' are to help with assessment. For Y3/4, see grid at the back.

Please consult your RE leader about assessing RE and check advice at the end of the unit.

*5f I can ask about moral decisions I, and others including Hindus, make as a result of particular values or commitments, referring to the Shambo debate*

**Teacher's note:** *The story of Shambo is used below to initiate discussion of Hindu beliefs about the world, and about God; it can be used throughout the unit, ending with a debate or presentation by pupils. Respect for the sanctity of life in Hindu tradition is broadly based on the concept of Brahman, the Supreme Being, pervading the universe, including all living beings.*

#### What happens in this story by a famous author?

Listen to the fable of 'The Magpie and the Bull', written by Michael Morpurgo in response to a story in the news. I wonder what happened to make him write it. It's not just a sad story about a bull dying. What questions do you have about the story?

Play the audio version read by Morpurgo, alongside a picture of Shambo with a garland round his neck **OR** tell it yourself, see details at the side.

<https://soundcloud.com/randomupload/the-magpie-and-the-bull>

#### What dilemma did Shambo the bull create for his owners?

The bull was called Shambo and his story made national news.

Divide class into groups of six. Each group needs a different image of the Shambo dilemma to discuss *e.g. worship outside Shambo's pen, caring for the bull, police walking Shambo away, etc.* After 2/3 minutes, children leave their picture behind.

Each child now joins a different new group and must describe the picture they saw. The new group tries to formulate an opinion as to what the dilemma might be. Whiteboard ideas and then share answers as a class.

Explain: *Shambo lived at a Hindu Temple in Skanda Vale in Wales. He was given a slaughter notice in 2007 after being infected with TB. The Hindu monks wanted to care for him till he died, rather than have him slaughtered. They started a petition and even went to court.*



**Read the notes on Brahman / atman on p3-4 to inform effective teaching of this unit.**

**Morpurgo's story:**  
<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/moral-story-kindness-precious-life-2236406>

**Summary of the Shambo affair:**  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shambo#Sanctity\\_of\\_life\\_in\\_Hindu\\_tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shambo#Sanctity_of_life_in_Hindu_tradition)

**Try internet search for good pictures, using: Shambo Skanda Vale 2007**

**Info on Bovine TB – see Wikipedia.**

**You could use blog excerpts on the Shambo debate to run a 'news desk' each lesson:**

*6f I can discuss some of the benefits and problems of holding strong values and commitments, including those held by Hindu communities*

Listen to a monk at Skanda Vale (2.5 mins) explaining the situation. Gather his reasons for wanting to keep Shambo alive. *NB Final two slides show the results; you may want to hide them.*

<http://www.skandavale.org/shambo-sanctity-of-life/>

<https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/shambo-cow>

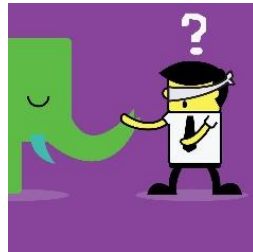


**Shambo news desk:** At the end of the unit, we will debate whether the monks should have won the case or lost it. What are your initial thoughts? Children could write down some initial ideas and develop them as the unit progresses, tracking any change of views.

## ENQUIRE

into Hindu ideas about God, the world and living beings

**Teacher's Notes:** *One of the most difficult things to decide in studying Hinduism is what to say about Hindu belief in God. The multiplicity of ancient traditions upon which this religion draws has led to a range of views about the nature of God, and a clear distinction from those faiths, such as Islam and Christianity, which are firmly monotheistic.*



### What does this story from India say about having different ideas?

This is a story told in India, in various religions. Six blind men are taken to meet an elephant. Each touches a different part and concludes something different about what the animal is like. None can see the whole elephant.

Investigate the story with the video or poem below, or tell in your own words.

- Video: The Blind Men & the Elephant (many available online)
- Poem - Try "The Blind Men and the Elephant" by [John Godfrey Saxe](#) (1816–1887). Beautifully old-fashioned and huge fun to read as a choral piece. Source on the internet e.g. <http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/blind-men-and-the-elephant.htm>



Ask children to retell the story in small groups. Does it help explain why Hindus have different views about God? i.e. no human mind can come close to the whole truth about reality / God.

### What different ideas are there about God?

In the Hindu religion, there are many ideas about God and they are not all the same. It depends who you ask and what aspect of the religion you look at.

There are some words it helps to know. Play a word game, using dictionaries to find and learn the definitions of these words. NB all the words connect with the Greek 'theos' or God.

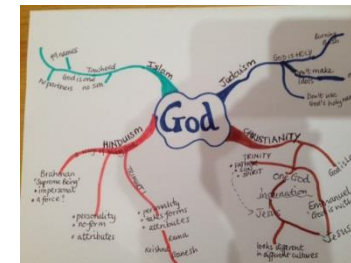
<b>Monotheism</b>	<b>Atheism</b>	<b>Pantheism</b>
<b>Polytheism</b>	<b>Henotheism</b>	<b>Theism</b>

### What ideas do you know about God in other religions?

As a class, share ideas about God from their work on Christianity and Islam. Add other religions / atheism, if wished.

You could make a mind map, using the names of faiths as the main branches.

Christianity and Islam are both 'monotheistic' but in Islam, God never takes any 'form' whereas in Christianity, God is incarnated as Jesus.



Add to the Hindu branch as you go along; *this branch will split into different branches – see introduction.*

Most people of a faith agree what their religion says about God; Hinduism is different. It had no single founder and has many different holy books. Many Hindus today follow spiritual teachers or gurus who help them think about God in different ways.


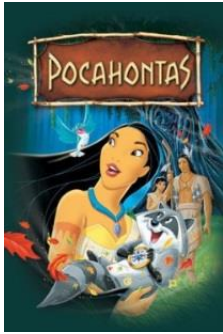
Watch **Hinduism: My Life, My Religion** (first 6.5 mins) from BBC Learning Zone online. Work with a partner to decide which 'theism' word fits best for Hinduism.

Finish this sentence together on whiteboards and then compare with others in class.

**We think Hindus are xxxxxx-eist because Vraj and Simran said ....**

*Use any word game children are familiar with for this exercise.*

*More able children could find out about important spiritual leaders for Hindus e.g. Vivekananda or A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.*

	<p>Each word <u>could</u> apply to Hindus. Discuss the reasons for the children's choices. All the words could be made to fit because Hindu beliefs about God vary.</p> <p>Introduce an umbrella term: <b>pluralist</b>. This is one way of describing how Hindus approach the idea of God. Connect with 'plural'. Can children link this with the Elephant story?</p> <p>Children can make notes of what all these words mean and be rewarded for trying to use them accurately in class. Maybe the words could be pinned on an 'elephant'.</p>  <p><b>Shambo News desk.</b> Look at 1 or 2 new entries in the Shambo blog. Add new thoughts or questions about Shambo from today's lesson, to your notes.</p>	
<p><b>EXPLORE</b> beliefs about Brahman / Atman in <b>(1) Hindu Narrative</b></p> <p><i>5e I can ask about the meaning and purpose of life as sung about in 'Colours of the Wind' and suggest a range of answers, including my own and a Hindu view</i></p>	<p><b>Teacher's note:</b> At the heart of Hindu tradition is the concept of Brahman. This term may simply be used to mean 'God' but God beyond any possible human classification, without form or attributes. Brahman may also mean an impersonal absolute being or 'world soul' which pervades everything in the universe. Whichever meaning is used, Hindus talk of all living things containing a 'spark' of Brahman, which in humans is known as the 'atman'.</p> <p><b>What ideas underlie this song?</b> (see note on Native Americans)</p> <p>As a starter, play 'Colours of the Wind' from Disney's 'Pocahontas'.</p> <p>Play the clip again. Ask children to think what lessons Pocahontas is trying to teach John Smith.</p> <p>In talking groups, ask children to list these lessons. It will be easier if the children can annotate the lyrics.</p> <p>Report back on possible ideas e.g. <i>there is life in everything, all things are connected, we don't know everything, the world isn't just about humans, we must care about the world, all creatures are important.</i></p> <p>Why is Pocahontas trying to show Smith these ideas?</p> 	<p><b>You might clarify that Native Americans (Red Indians) are different from Hindus or Indians from the sub-continent.</b></p> <p><b>Vivekananda, a Hindu teacher, said the universe was a <u>projection of God or Brahman</u>. Think about how the light of a projector comes out from one point and produces an image for all to see. The image is not the</b></p>



*origin, but a reflection of it.*

*Upanishad means "sitting near," alluding to the tutorials given by a guru to his disciples (who sat "at his feet").*

**Svetaketu story:**  
<http://vyjavanthiengarblogs.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/uddalaka-and-svetaketu-insightful.html#!/2014/07/uddalaka-and-svetaketu-insightful.html>

*This text is from the Bhagavad Gita (7:8, 9), a much-loved Hindu holy book.*

*Children may remember Jesus' 'I am' sayings from the unit on Incarnation.*

**What lessons do Hindu children learn about God from their scriptures?**



**Teacher's note:** In ancient Hindu communities, children left home to learn the Vedic scriptures (the 'Knowledge') from high-caste teachers. The Upanishads, also Hindu scriptures, explore the idea that everything is connected to Brahman - the divine essence of everything, including humans. These scriptures also tell us of a student who did not learn as much as he should.

The stories of Svetaketu are found in the Upanishads. Svetaketu had been away to be educated and when he came home, his father, a wise man, was horrified to see how conceited his son had become. Svetaketu thought he knew everything but when his father asked about the essence of everything, Brahman, Svetaketu could not answer.

His father called for a glass of water. Act out what happened (see **Appendix 1.**) When his father had demonstrated how Brahman pervades everything, he said 'Tat tvam asi' – You are that too. Svetaketu had to realise that Brahman is in him too – in fact, this is his real self (the atman).

In another story, the father asks his son to cut open a **fig**. Act this out with any seeded fruit. What is inside? And if you cut into a seed? Svetaketu sees nothing; his father says that from this nothingness a great tree has grown. That nothingness, the mystery that lies at the heart of all life is Brahman, the invisible reality pervading everything.



Another lesson involves a pot of **honey**. Many parts of creation combine to make honey – flowers, bees, humans – and its sweetness becomes part of us too; this reflects how all things are joined together as part of Brahman, the interlocking network of all life.



When the stories are all told, allow children to retell the stories to each other, and /or make their own notes about the one they like best and why.

**What does this text from a Hindu scripture make you think about?** (extension)

Some pupils might enjoy unpicking the text below from the Bhagavad Gita, also describing God.

Do they like these ideas? Do they have any similarity with the Pocahontas film?

**5a** I can make links that show how Hindu belief in Brahman is expressed in what Svetaketu's father taught him from the salt, honey and fig

**6a** I can explain some key teachings Hindus hold about Brahman / Atman linking these to religious texts e.g. the Upanishads, Hindu spiritual teachers or traditional stories

**6c** I can attempt to express ideas about Brahman in a similar style to a metaphorical passage from the Bhagavad Gita and explain what I am trying to convey

***I am the taste in the water***  
***I am the radiance in the sun and moon***  
***I am the sound in space***  
***I am the strength in humanity***  
***I am the sweet fragrance of the earth***  
***I am the brilliance in the fire***  
***I am the life in all beings***

Some children could create additional metaphors, noting the first noun is always intangible and the second tangible. A powerpoint could be made to illustrate the text.

**Would we see the world differently if God was in everything?**

Use the single word 'Brahman' to create a picture of a tree from roots to branches **OR** to fill in an outline e.g. of an animal, or of the items in the Svetaketu stories i.e. glass of water, fig and pot of honey.

While you are working, talk to your neighbours about how people might see the world differently if they thought God was in everything.

For example: How would you treat other people? Would you eat meat? Would you look after yourself better? Would you have a higher opinion of your friends and your parents? Report your best ideas to your teacher.



**Shambo News desk.** Look at 1 or 2 new entries in the Shambo blog. Add new thoughts or questions about Shambo from today's lesson, to your notes.

**EXPLORE**  
**ideas about God in**  
**(2) Hindu**  
**community**  
**practice**

**Teacher's note:** For Hindus, it is perfectly consistent to worship several deities but affirm belief in one Supreme Being, Brahman. 'God is one and the wise call him by many names'. The deities reveal aspects of Brahman. Devout Hindus present themselves before the deities in a temple, to receive their blessing and catch a glimpse of the Supreme Being, who is beyond the deities but does not replace them. They pay respects by bowing the head and folding the hands or by prostrating themselves.

**How do people envisage God? How do Hindus envisage God?**

**Darshan – an audience, sighting or viewing of the divine in the form of a murti, a special image of the deity.**

Some people believe in God and some people do not. What terms do we need for both these groups of people? An atheist says there is no 'god' – but what do they, or anyone, mean by 'god'? What does a dictionary say?

For Hindus, the idea of God is so vast, it makes sense that God can be thought of in many different ways. Use different pictures or models of Hindu gods e.g. from The Little Book of Hindu Deities (see **Resources**).

Hold up the images... What if this was God? Or this? Or this? How can they all be God? (Does referring back to the Elephant story help at all here?)



### How do Hindus explain their ideas of God?

Watch Anuj, a Hindu boy, present his understanding of God:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z6q6sbk> (from Pathways of Belief: Hinduism - Expressing faith through dance and the different Hindu gods / 3.20)

Follow it with a second clip in which Anuj tells the story of the salt in the water and explains why he worships Ganesh the elephant God:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zt7tfq8> (Pathways of Belief: Hinduism – Ganesh the Hindu God / 2.06)

**OR** Watch as Vraj and Simran show worship of the deities and explain their relationship to Brahman.

Learn the words: murti, arti and puja. What do these words mean?

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02n5wvr> What is Hinduism? (03.57)



### What can you find out about a Hindu deity?

Using a variety of resources e.g. pages from The Little Book of Deities, and internet research, ask children to identify key information about one deity e.g. Ganesh.

They could create individual line drawings or use oil pastel or other suitable medium

**An atheist is defined as not believing in 'god' but even they need to be able to explain what they mean by the word.**


**Children may remember Rama, Sita or Krishna.**

**Introduce the word 'deity' if pupils have not met it. It comes from the Latin 'deus' or god.**

**Watch an 'aum' symbol morph into different gods. Follow 'Gods, Gods, Goddesses':**

**<http://www.cleo.net.uk/re-sources/display-frame.php?src=200/consultants-re-sources/re-temple/index.htm>**

**In Islam the idea of giving God a 'form' or image is strictly forbidden.**

	<p><b>OR</b> work in groups to create a larger collage of a deity.</p> <p>Label / write a paragraph about the deity. If this deity is showing an aspect of Brahman, a glimpse of the Supreme Being, what do you think it might be showing?</p>  <p><b>Shambo Newsdesk.</b> Look at 1 or 2 new entries in the Shambo blog. Add new thoughts or questions about Shambo from today's lesson, to your notes.</p> <p><b>Alternative:</b> Use <b>RE Ideas: God</b> (from <u>RE Today Services</u>) p.19-24 – How do Hindus express beliefs about God? Useful activities and background for teacher. See <b>Resources</b>.</p>	<p><i>In Christianity, Jesus is seen as the 'image of the invisible God' - the one who shows what God is like.</i></p>
<p><b>EXPLORE</b>  <b>Brahman / Atman</b>  <b>in relation to</b>  <b>(3) Hindu Living</b></p> <p><i>5b I can use the right religious words to</i></p>	<p><b>Teacher's note:</b> Hindus believe there is a divine spark of Brahman (the Supreme Being) in each individual; this is the Atman, a human's real self.</p> <p><i>The Atman is eternal and indestructible and continues to exist after the body dies. Its goal is to be merged with Brahman as salt dissolves in water or a drop of water merges into the sea, and, at death, either achieves this union (moksha) or is re-incarnated. For Hindus, all life is thus sacred and serving others is like serving Brahman.</i></p> <p><b>Do you know who you are? What is your atman?</b></p> <p>Play a pointing game. Stand in a large circle. Tell children to point to parts of the body e.g. point to your left foot... right knee... nose....left wrist.</p> <p>After 10 to 15 body parts, ask children to point to 'your self'! Why is this so difficult?</p> <p>For Hindus, your 'self' is not a body part but the most real bit of you. What do you think that might mean? What makes you 'you'?</p> <p>Hindus believe this real 'self' is your 'atman' and it is indestructible – a divine spark, part of Brahman. When your body dies, your 'atman' joins up with Brahman or comes back to life in a new body (reincarnation).</p> <p><b>How do people greet each other with respect?</b></p>	<p><b>Some background on 'atman':</b>  <a href="http://www.hinduwebsite.com/atman.asp">http://www.hinduwebsite.com/atman.asp</a></p> <p><b>The Pointing Game (originally from IS-KCON Educational Services)</b></p>

describe how a belief in Brahman / atman might affect a Hindu's diet and their attitude to animals

**5c** I can show how Hindus express their religious beliefs and feelings about the value of life in different ways, suggesting why

**5d** I can ask questions about groups people choose to belong to, including religious groups who believe people have a spirit or soul

**6b** I can use a wide religious vocabulary to compare different Hindu views on worship e.g. with reference to Sanjay's Super Team, and the film's creator

**6d** I can ask about the diverse groups people belong to in society, and about the challenge of being a Hindu in Britain who believes all things

So now we know who you are, who is everyone else? Imagine you haven't met all these people. Think of different ways of greeting! Which do you think are most respectful?

Shake hands, bow, give hugs, peck on the cheek, rub noses! Allow children to discuss quickly and see what you come up with. What do different ways of greeting 'say'? Why do we greet people in different ways? Culture, relationship, status etc.



Look at the symbol for this unit. For Hindus, and many Indians, it has special meaning, and is accompanied by the word 'namaste'. It does not involve 'touching' and is suitable for all ages and cultures.

### How is the custom of Namaste connected to the idea of atman?

**Teacher's note:** Namaste is a reverential greeting, made with bowed head and folded hands, before something, or someone, deeply respected e.g. grandparents, parents or teachers. The action is also used in prayer at a shrine or temple, before a deity. Roughly translated, Namaste means "I bow to the God within you", or "The Divine Spirit in me salutes the Divine Spirit in you".

Watch for this respectful form of greeting in a short film: Sanjay's Super Team. Show the clip where Sanjay is pulled away from his computer game to join his father at the shrine.

Where did you see hands in the Namaste greeting? i.e. Sanjay's father, the gods in the shrine. It is actually a simple form of bowing.

Who might people bow to in this country? Why? Why do Sanjay and his father fold their hands in front of their shrine? Why are the deities standing with folded hands too?

As a greeting, namaste is also used between people because Hindus believe that there is a divine spark within every living thing, especially within every human: the Atman.

### How does belief in Brahman / Atman affect the way Hindus live?

Show children 3 or 4 stand-up cardboard cutouts – a bird, an animal, some people – with holes





**'Namaste' - na-mass-tay - is a reverential greeting used in India, common also in Buddhist culture, and in the practice of Yoga in the West.**

**Some children may recognise the similarity with hands held in Christian prayer.**

**Sanjay's Super Team was nominated for a best 'short' Oscar in 2016. Lots of clips on internet and DVD available.**

**Find out more about the reasons behind the creation of this film on the internet.**



<p>are 'pervaded' by Brahman</p>	<p>punched in them. Ask children what these might represent.</p> <p>Then light a large central candle. From this, light a tea-light behind each cut-out so that you can see the light shining through. Again ask children what this could represent i.e. atman shining out of every living thing.</p> <p>Children can create their own card cut out which will stand up (a simple ring of card, like a 'crown', would do). Decorate the outside with key words / phrases / pictures to show what they found out about the 4 areas above, or more generally what they have learnt in this unit.</p> <p>Punch holes in the card and display with tea-lights behind it to show the idea of Brahman / atman shining through. This could be completed as part of <b>EXPRESS</b>.</p> <p>Develop questions about how this idea of Brahman would affect everyday life for a Hindu.</p> <p>Here are some areas to talk about briefly or for children to investigate. Each is related to Hindu respect for the divine in living things, and the belief that all life is connected as a result. Which of these things could cause a challenge in modern Britain, as with the Shambo case?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Being vegetarian</b> – many Hindus do not eat meat, some believe people can be reborn as animals. Cows are especially sacred and not killed for meat.</li> <li>• <b>Respect for others</b>, especially the elderly – there is the divine in everyone.</li> <li>• <b>Serving other people</b> as 'manifestations' of the divine /God, helping others helps you.</li> <li>• <b>Non-violence (ahimsa)</b> – refraining from harming living things, harming others harms you.</li> </ul>   <p><b>Shambo News desk.</b> Look at 1 or 2 new entries in the Shambo blog. Add new thoughts or questions about Shambo from today's lesson, to your notes.</p>	<p><b>Create your own simple silhouettes to cut out. They need to be able to stand up. Punch holes with a hole-punch.</b></p> <p><b>Candle should be stood in a pot of sand for safety reasons.</b></p>
<p><b>EVALUATE</b> what pupils have learnt about Hindu belief and practice in relation to Brahman / Atman</p>	<p><b>Teacher's note:</b> Decisions about assessment should be made before starting the unit but this is a good point to stop and think! The following may help:</p> <p><b>What have we learnt? How well have we learnt?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try a mind map – together as a class or in groups.</li> <li>• Encourage children to record/ share what they have learnt as individuals.</li> <li>• Use the Quick Quiz on p.18.</li> <li>• Use the class RE scrapbook to discuss your learning journey together.</li> <li>• Consider how to answer any remaining questions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>See 'Assessing RE in your school' below for decisions on how /what to assess.</b></p> <p><b>NB Different schools have different requirements. Check with your RE Subject Leader.</b></p>

*6e I can compare my own ideas about what is really important in life / what I feel ready to stand up for, with those of others, including those of a Hindu*

**Can we answer the big question at the start of the unit? How well?**

- Encourage discussion to construct an answer together.
- Ask children to self-assess e.g. using traffic light colours, and explain their progress
- Use the KS2 SOLO taxonomy hexagons in groups or individually.

**Are we making progress in RE as a subject? How much?**

- If working towards end of year expectations, check tasks were set and completed, using the grid on p.19 **OR** an Assessment framework in use in your school.
- Use any opportunity to link learning between units of work and across subjects.



**Using the symbols:** Look at the Namaste picture on the front of the unit. Is this a good symbol for Hindu beliefs about Brahman and Atman – how could it help you remember this unit of work? Is there a better symbol?

What will you remember about this unit and the Hindu beliefs we have been learning about?

**Solo Taxonomy hexagons for this unit can be printed from the Emmanuel Project Flash drive, along with ideas for use.**

**A4 symbols on flash drive. Children can use symbols from each unit to remind them of key beliefs in each religion.**

**EXPRESS**  
your RE learning  
so it can be shared  
with others

**Teacher's note:** You will have done a variety of different kinds of work during the unit which may already have been shared with others. In the 'expressing' be sure to encourage the use of key words from the unit.

**Here are some more ways you might share your learning with others:**

**SHAMBO DEBATE (see below)** – invite another class or the headteacher to come and hear your debate. At the end of the debate. All children should have a vote, as themselves. If they still do not know the result of the case, this should be given.

**BRAHMAN WORD PICTURES** – Create a display of Brahman trees and animals, created or infilled with the word 'Brahman' and label them carefully so others can understand some Hindu beliefs about Brahman / atman.

**'I AM THE ....'** poetry- based on the passage from the Bhagavad Gita

**NAMASTE HANDS** – make hands out of card or a modelling clay. Display with explanation.

**CARDBOARD Cut-outs** with tea-lights to show atman shining through living things. If LED lights can be used, a proper display may be made and left out.



**These activities often provide the chance to gather evidence needed for the end of year expectations or to judge what has been learnt and how well.**

**Holding your SHAMBO debate:**

***How do questions about Brahman and atman influence the way a Hindu lives?***

Review the situation at Skanda Vale and explain that we are going to use what we now know about Hinduism to help unpick the situation, and prepare our witnesses.



*Invite visitors to come and hear your debate and help make decisions based on what you say.*

Draw together some paragraphs and quotes from different viewpoints so that pupils have to work together to find the meaning of the whole. These can be sourced from a variety of places e.g. the Skanda Vale Blog: <http://www.skandavale.org/shambo-sanctity-of-life/>

If children have had an ongoing debate about the case, now is the time to draw their ideas and comments together. If not, give small groups a particular point of view to research, and find at least one piece of evidence of what they might want to say about the case, for example:

<b>European Court of Human Rights</b>	<b>DEFRA</b>	<b>The Welsh Assembly</b>
<b>The Skanda Vale Monks</b>	<b>Jay Lakhani</b>	<b>Local vets</b>
<b>The Hindu Forum of Britain</b>	<b>Farmers' Unions</b>	<b>The Court of Appeal</b>
<b>Govardhan Charitable Trust, India</b>	<b>Michael Morpurgo</b>	<b>The Welsh Assembly</b>

Set up a court scenario to review the case and debate whether the right decision was made.

Children should prepare their own two minute statements to give in 'court'. Make sure you call several Hindu witnesses to give at least two Hindu views. Those not in court could be members of the public giving their views but these must be balanced and include an element which shows some understanding of a Hindu viewpoint.



## Appendix 1 - The Stories of Svetaketu

Svetaketu had studied long and hard but his father, Uddalaka, was bothered. It seemed that his son was very conceited and, although he knew many things, he did not seem to have grasped the true knowledge of how things were in the universe and these were surely the most important things. He decided to teach him. The conversations and lessons he had with Svetaketu are written in detail in the Hindu scriptures called the UPANISHADS.

Uddalaka asked his son to bring some salt and put it in a cup of water and bring the cup next morning. Svetaketu did so.

Uddalaka: "You put the salt into the water in this cup. Can you take the salt out?"

Svetaketu: "I cannot find the salt; it has dissolved."

Uddalaka: "Taste a drop from the surface of the water."

Svetaketu: "It is salty."

Uddalaka: "Now taste a drop from the middle of the cup."

Svetaketu: "It tastes the same, salty."

Uddalaka: "Now taste a drop from the bottom."

Svetaketu: "It is salty there too."

Uddalaka: "Now my son, you do not see the salt, although it is certainly in the water. In the same way, the True Being, Brahman, is present everywhere in this universe, although you do not see Him. He is the essence of all, and you, you are this essence too"

Svetaketu became a humble and great rishi in the course of time.



Svetaketu asked, "Sir, please teach me more."

Uddalaka said, "The bees, my child, collect the honey from different flowers and mix them in the hive. Now, honeys of different flowers cannot know one from the other."



Uddalaka then asked his son to bring a fig. When he did so, Uddalaka asked him to break it. Svetaketu broke it open.



Uddalaka: "What do you see in it?"

Svetaketu: "I see small seeds."

Uddalaka: "Break one of the seeds and say what you see."

Svetaketu: "Nothing, Sir."

Uddalaka: "You are unable to see the minute particles of the seed after breaking it. Yet, the big fig tree is born out of that essence of that particle. Like that, the True Being (Brahman) is the essence of all creation."

# Assessing RE in your school

There are many ways to assess RE..... and also to assess the Emmanuel Project units. You may want to know how pupils are doing in this particular unit. You may want to assess their overall progress in RE at the end of the year.

Your RE subject leader should advise you on how to assess in line with school policy and any statutory requirements e.g. from the locally agreed (or diocesan) syllabus. However, the following guidance is offered:

## If you want to check progress in this unit, you could:

- Mind map the key question as a class / in a group / individually – at the start and end of the unit.
- Offer coloured definitions for pupils to self-assess their start / end point, explaining how they have progressed.

I know a little about the words but I can't answer the question yet.	I know what the question is asking. I can give a possible answer.	I can answer the question with several examples.	I could coach someone to answer the question, making links with other learning.
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- Use **Solo Taxonomy** (Biggs and Collis), in which pupils demonstrate their learning by linking labelled hexagons together, annotating the results with reasons for the links. Deeper learning is evident as pupils justify more and more appropriate links. *There are 'ready to go' versions for all KS1 and KS2 units on the Emmanuel Project flash drive with ideas for how to use.*
- Use quick quizzes based on **Bloom's Taxonomy**. Below is a possible quiz for this unit. It should take about ten minutes, although more extended time could be offered. Any teacher who has taught the unit should be able to work out appropriate answers. *All the quizzes are on the Emmanuel Project flash drive with ideas for how to use.*



<b>Beginning:</b> Discusses concept in own life	Q1 What did the story of the blind men and the elephant mean?
<b>Developing:</b> Draws on the lesson material	Q2 How did Svetaketu learn about brahman and atman?
<b>Expected:</b> Applies concept / answers key question	<b>Q3 How do questions about Brahman and Atman influence the way a Hindu lives?</b>
<b>Greater Depth:</b> Offers wider links to this or other faiths / personal views	Q4 How do different people's ideas about God influence them e.g. Christian, Muslim, Atheist?

**If you want to assess pupils against end of year expectations for RE, you could:**

**Set tasks to help pupils demonstrate the 'I can's' below. *SELECT* a year group. *CHOOSE 2 strands* to assess e.g. one from each Attainment Target, which means each strand is covered twice in a year providing good evidence for end of year reporting. *LOOK* down the left column of the lessons for the best place to do the assessment. *SET your task* adapting the lesson as necessary. *RECORD* how pupils do.**

The grid is based on generic end of year expectations (see flash drive), loosely tied to the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus, but adapted to this specific unit. Other RE syllabuses have different assessment structures but the grid may still be helpful.

	Attainment Target 1 - Learning about religion and belief			Attainment Target 2 - Learning from religion and belief		
	Strand a) beliefs, teachings and sources	Strand b) practices and ways of life	Strand c) forms of expression	Strand d) identity and belonging	Strand e) meaning, purpose and truth	Strand f) values and commitments
<b>Y3</b>	<b>3a</b> I can describe what a Hindu might learn from the story of Svetaketu	<b>3b</b> I can describe some similar things Hindus do on a visit to a mandir / shrine for worship	<b>3c</b> I can use religious words to describe the Hindu belief shown in the 'Namaste' greeting	<b>3d</b> I can recognise things which influence me, like when something I love is threatened or in danger	<b>3e</b> I can ask questions about life based on the elephant and blind men and give some answers	<b>3f</b> I can link things that are important to me with how I reacted to the Shambo debate
<b>Y4</b>	<b>4a</b> I can describe what Hindus might learn about ideas of God from the story of the blind men and the elephant	<b>4b</b> I can describe how Hindus may choose to worship one or more different deities and why murtis are special	<b>4c</b> I can describe some different ways Hindus, think of God using terms like pantheism, pluralism, monotheism	<b>4d</b> I can compare some things that influence me with how the idea of God in everything might influence Hindus	<b>4e</b> I can ask important questions about the value of an animal's life, comparing my ideas with others e.g. Hindus	<b>4f</b> I can link ideas about how valuable living beings are, with how people choose to treat other humans / animals
<b>Y5</b>	<b>5a</b> I can make links that show how Hindu belief in Brahman is expressed in what Svetaketu's father taught him from the salt, honey and fig	<b>5b</b> I can use the right religious words to describe how a belief in Brahman / atman might affect a Hindu's diet and their attitude to animals	<b>5c</b> I can show how Hindus express their religious beliefs and feelings about the value of life in different ways, suggesting why	<b>5d</b> I can ask questions about groups people choose to belong to, including religious groups who believe people have a spirit or soul	<b>5e</b> I can ask about the meaning and purpose of life as sung about in 'Colours of the Wind' and suggest a range of answers, including my own and a Hindu view	<b>5f</b> I can ask about moral decisions I, and others including Hindus, make as a result of particular values or commitments, referring to the Shambo debate
<b>Y6</b>	<b>6a</b> I can explain some key teachings Hindus hold about Brahman / Atman linking these to religious texts e.g. the Upanishads, Hindu spiritual teachers or traditional stories	<b>6b</b> I can use a wide religious vocabulary to compare different Hindu views on worship e.g. with reference to Sanjay's Super Team, and the film's creator	<b>6c</b> I can attempt to express ideas about Brahman in a similar style to a metaphorical passage from the Bhagavad Gita and explain what I am trying to convey	<b>6d</b> I can ask about the diverse groups people belong to in society, and about the challenge of being a Hindu in Britain who believes all things are 'pervaded' by Brahman	<b>6e</b> I can compare my own ideas about what is really important in life / what I feel ready to stand up for, with those of others, including those of a Hindu	<b>6f</b> I can discuss some of the benefits and problems of holding strong values and commitments, including those held by Hindu communities

# Resources for this enquiry:

Most of the resources are mentioned in the text as well as in this list. Although you do not need all the resources listed, it would be hard to teach the unit without any of them.

## Teacher Resources

- Hinduism: a very short introduction - Kim Knott- Oxford University Press
- Explaining Hindu Dharma: A Guide for Teachers –Nawal K. Prinja
- Useful glossary <http://www.hinduacademy.org/schools/glossary.htm>
- Hinduism for Schools <http://www.hinduacademy.org/schools/ks1-3.htm>
- RE on-line website <http://www.reonline.org.uk/knowning/what-re/hinduism/>

## Books

- RE Ideas: God – Fiona Moss - <http://shop.retoday.org.uk/9781905893768>
- The Little Book of Hindu Deities – Sanjay Patel

## Artefacts / pictures

Individual posters / resin figurines of specific Hindu deities  
e.g. Ganesh - from Amazon, E-bay, etc

- A box of Hindu artefacts to share across all Hinduism units:  
<https://artefactstoorder.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Hinduism.jpg>

## Video / DVD

- Sanjay's Super Team: a 2015 Pixar / Disney short film
- BBC Education clips – bitesize – see details in lessons



The initial ideas for this unit were worked on by Anne Cooper (St Mary's CE Primary), Victoria Bush (Barrow CE Primary) and Wendy Rayner (Kingsfleet Primary, Felixstowe) at the Emmanuel Project days and revised by Helen Matter (Diocesan Schools' Adviser) in 2019. They were completed in consultation with the Hindu representative on Suffolk SACRE. Thank you for your hard work!