How do Hindus understand the divine? – Year 7 R&W Knowledge Organiser 2

What is a Dharmic Religion?

- In R&W we study religious worldviews alongside **non-religious worldviews**.
- **Dharma** is defined differently for each of the Dharmic religions:
  - **Hindu Dharma: Dharma for Hindus is what governs the universe *and* the duty that rules human life**
  - Buddhisms: For Buddhists, Dharma is one of the three jewels (three main parts). It is a word often used for their religious teachings
  - Sikhi: For Sikhs, Dharma means following religious rules and behaving as well as you can

Key words:

Dharma: Defined differently in the different Dharmic religions, but often used to refer to a sense of belonging or duty
Parvarti: Mother of the natural world in charge of growth and change.

Puja: Hindu act of worship.

Reincarnation: Cycle of life, the body dies but the atman passes into a different being.
Shiva: Destroyer of evil and protector of the universe.

Brahman: The one Hindu God, who is represented by many different forms of the divine (various gods and goddesses).

Hindu Dharma: The oldest of the Dharmic religions, which originated in the area now called India
Moksha: Being freed from the cycle of life and realising oneness with Brahman.
Atman: Immortal, eternal, divine self, or soul.

Monotheism: Belief in one God.

How is Hindu Dharma a monotheistic religion?

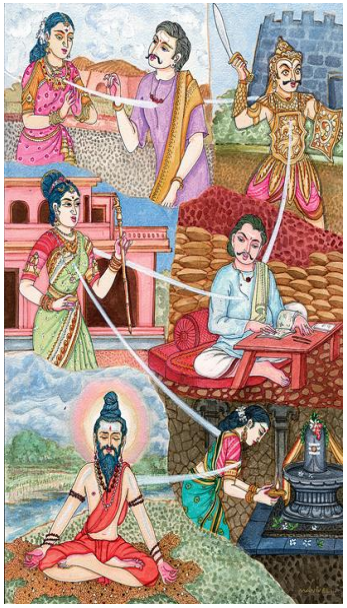
- Hindus believe that God is one, known as **Brahman**.
- He has many functions and he is called many different names. This is why you'll hear about different gods/goddesses
- Hindu Dharma is **not** a **polytheistic** religion: one that believes in multiple gods. It is instead a **monotheistic** religion that sees the one God represented in many forms.

What do Hindu stories teach us about the divine?

- Stories are always important to teach us about different morals and important messages in religions and worldviews.
- The **story of Annapurna** tells us about a few Hindu gods and what they are like, mainly: **Shiva** (the destroyer), **Parvarti** (mother of Earth) and **Annapurna** (who Parvarti becomes!)
- From this story, we are able to understand that the Hindu God/Brahman plays an important role in maintaining Earth and looking after creation. This God is a loving one!

How are humans connected to the divine?

- Hindus believe in **reincarnation**: depending on how good/bad our actions are in this life, we will be reincarnated after our deaths into a new being
- This is an endless cycle which humans try to escape by achieving **moksha**
- Moksha can be reached by coming to a true understanding of life! For Hindus, this true understanding is all about realising that **we are all part of the divine**. This is what connects us to everything and everyone.

Beyond caste,
race or family,
Beyond good
and bad,
Beyond space,
time and
sense-objects,
You are God
himself;
Meditate this
within
yourself.

Adi Shankra (8th century CE) about **moksha**