



Unit L2.8 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today?

Enquiry Questions

- How do Hindus show their faith at home?
- How do Hindus show their faith when they're together?
- How do Hindus celebrate Diwali today?
- What is it like to be a Hindu in Britain today?

What will I know by the end of the unit?

The word 'Hinduism' is a European word for describing a diverse religious tradition that developed in what is now northern India. People within the tradition itself often call Hinduism 'Sanatan Dharma', which means 'Eternal Way' and describes a complete way of life rather than a set of beliefs. The word 'dharma' describes a Hindu's whole way of life, there is no separation between their religious, social and moral duties.

Hindus believe there are millions of gods, representing aspects of the one God, designed to help humans focus in worship. They show their faith in God through puja, Hindu worship.

A puja tray has the following items:

Bell: to wake the deity up for worship – to announce the presence of the worshipper

Flowers: represents the beauty and fragrance of the created world

Diya lamp: for aarti (Aarti- symbolises that worship removes darkness)

Water in a pot: represents life

Spoon: used to give water to worshippers after it has been blessed

Murti: an image, usually representing a deity, and used as a focus for worship

Sweets or sugar: an offering of food for the deity

Hinduism has a rich musical tradition. There are many 'bhajans', worship songs, devoted to different deities, some fast and upbeat, some peaceful and meditative. They have developed to help worship.

According to the 2011 Census there are 16,324 Hindus in the South West of England including 2,713 Hindus in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Key Vocabulary

Hinduism, Hindu, Sanatan Dharma, dharma, deities, murtis, puja, mandir, diya lamp, aarti, bhajan, belief, customs, traditions, practices, ritual, signify, represent, festival, Diwali, celebrate