



## Unit U2.7 Why do Hindus want to be good?

### Enquiry Questions

- What is Brahman?
- What is atman? What can be learned about atman through a Hindu story?
- Samsara: why is atman important? What else is important?
- How does dharma affect the way that someone might live their life?
- What example does Gandhi set about how to live?

### What will I know by the end of the unit?

Many Hindus believe that there is only one God – Brahman, and that the deities each symbolise an aspect of Brahman. They believe that Brahman is in every single living thing. The universe was not created by Brahman, it actually is Brahman.

In Hindu belief, all animals and humans have a spark of Brahman inside of them. This spark of Brahman inside each living creature is called 'atman'. The 'atman' is pure, eternal and unchanging. This is someone's true self but it is tangled up with a creature's physical body.

Many Hindus believe that death means the physical body dies but atman remains and is reborn into another physical body. Actions that have been carried out in past lives (and the intention of these) determine the new physical body that the atman is born into. This cycle of birth, death and rebirth is called samsara. The idea that actions have long-term consequences, even into the next life, is called karma.

Dharma in Hinduism can mean duty. For many Hindus, it is important to work out what their dharma/duty is. One way of doing this is to read the holy scriptures, try to understand what they are teaching about how to live, then live by these teachings.

Many Hindus believe that eventually, if someone truly understands about the atman, does their duty and lives a good life, they will achieve moksha, which means release from samsara. They will not be born again and their atman is released to merge back into Brahman.

### Key Vocabulary

Hinduism, Hindu, god, deity, Brahman, atman, samsara, karma, dharma, duty, moksha