



Sanatana Dharma Background Information

This summary is not intended to cover all the aspects of the religion in question. It is impossible to reflect the different perspectives even within one religion. The summary here is a guide, offering background knowledge to point the teacher in the right direction as to the beliefs underpinning the particular enquiry. The summaries must not be taken as the beliefs of ALL members of the particular religion.

Age 5-7 Sanatana Dharma – Who is god to Sanatani?

This enquiry examines what Sanatani believe about God including key terms like Brahman, Trimurti, Ganesha and Lakshmi.

It is vitally important that Sanatana Dharma is depicted as monotheistic. It has one supreme being (Brahman) in many forms. The deities are aspects of Brahman's role and personality.

Brahman

Sanatani believe in a universal soul or God called Brahman. Brahman takes on many forms that some Sanatani worship as deities in their own right. Brahman, the supreme spirit, basically underpins everything.

Sanatani believe that there is a part of Brahman in everyone and this is called the Atman.

Sanatani are comfortable with using images and objects (often called murtis) to portray God. Sanatani do not worship these but worship Brahman through them. Sanatani are free to worship God in a variety of colourful forms.

Trimurti

Trimurti, a term meaning “having three forms,” refers to the three main aspects of Brahman: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Brahma is the creator; Vishnu is the preserver and Shiva is the destroyer or transformer. These three forms together represent the highest Sanatani deity, the Supreme Divine.

Ganesha

Ganesha is one of the most easily identifiable deities due to his large elephant head. He is known as the remover of obstacles and is very popular. When about to face a new or challenging time, for example launching a new business, a Sanatani might ask Ganesha to bless this attempt.

Lakshmi

Lakshmi is one of the most popular deities and is known as the goddess of wealth and purity. Sanatani believe that anybody who worships Lakshmi sincerely, and not in greed, will be blessed with fortune and success. It is said that Lakshmi is present wherever there is hard work, honesty and bravery, but leaves whenever these qualities are not apparent anymore and greed takes over.

Optional Additional Texts which could be utilised:

Mundaka Upanishad 2.2-“In truth Brahman is all” Isa Upanishad -“He moves, and he moves not. He is far, and he is near. He is within all, and he is outside all” The Bhagavad Gita –“He who sees Me everywhere, and sees everything in Me, I am not lost to him, nor is he lost to me.”