

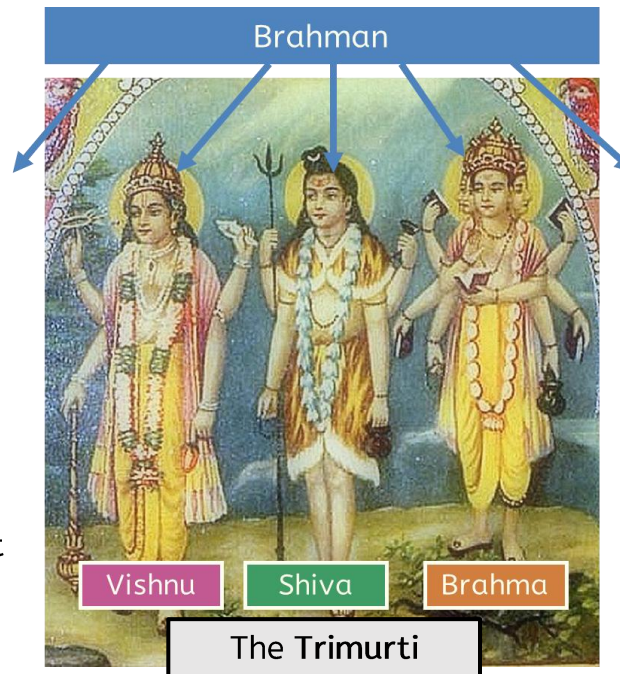
How are Hindu beliefs expressed in artefacts and worship?

Brahman – ultimate reality – (God?)

- Hindu Dharma has a different conceptual understanding of 'God' than the Abrahamic faiths.
- Hindu Dharma is a **pantheistic** religion. This is a belief that 'God' exists in, and is the same as, everything – an ultimate reality – known as **Brahman**.

The Trimurti

- Sage Yajnavalka said that the many gods (deities) are all ways of showing Brahman.
- **Murtis** are representations of the deities. They are symbolic and represent what the deity - and that aspect of Brahman - is like. They help Hindus focus their worship.
- Different Hindu communities place importance on different deities.
- **Trimurti** means 'three forms' and includes Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver) and Shiva (the Destroyer). They each show some of the aspects of the Brahman.



Forms of Hindu worship

- Hindus all over the world practise their faith in lots of different ways at home, at work or in community mandirs.
- Worship is a way to connect with the reality of Brahman within themselves.
- Many Hindus find symbolic meaning in the objects, words and actions used in worship.
- Worship at home takes many forms. Different people may focus on different deities and may have a **shrine** in their home.



Aum - the symbol has a special meaning to many Hindus. It, and the "om" sound used in meditation, represent the universe and a higher reality (Brahman).

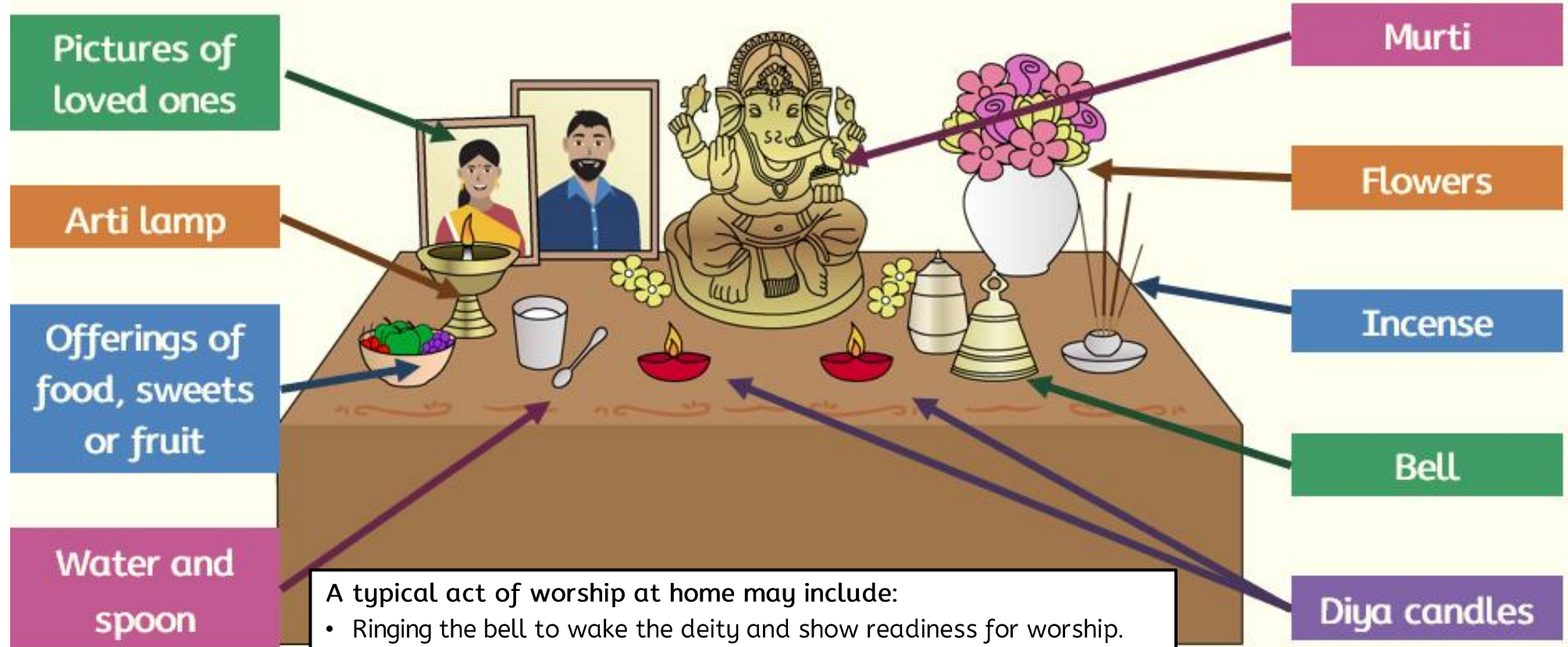
Key vocabulary

- **artefact**: an object made by a human, often with cultural, historical or religious significance
- **Brahman**: Hindu concept of one ultimate reality or supreme being
- **Brahma**: the creator deity, one of the Trimurti, a way of expressing aspects of Brahman
- **deity/deities**: preferred term including God, gods and goddesses
- **Hindu**: a follower of Hindu Dharma
- **Hindu Dharma**: belief system (religion) meaning eternal duty
- **mandir (or temple)**: a Hindu place of worship
- **murti**: sacred images or statues used to represent the deities
- **pantheism**: a belief that God exist in, and is the same as, everything
- **puja**: ceremony used in Hindu worship
- **Shiva**: the destroyer deity, one of the Trimurti, a way of expressing aspects of Brahman
- **shrine**: a place set aside for worship
- **The Trimurti**: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the three most important aspects of Brahman expressed as deities
- **Vishnu**: the preserver deity, one of the Trimurti, a way of expressing aspects of Brahman



How are Hindu beliefs expressed in artefacts and worship?

Example of a home shrine



- A typical act of worship at home may include:
- Ringing the bell to wake the deity and show readiness for worship.
 - Lighting incense and washing the **murti** with water or milk.
 - Placing offerings of fruit, flowers or food on the shrine.
 - Lighting arti or Diya lamps. The arti is waved or circled in front of the murti and the light is wafted before the worshippers.
 - Singing hymns or saying mantras.
 - Marking worshippers' foreheads with Kumkum powder.

