

# Path to Dharma

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45



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### Editorial

'Path to Dharma', the monthly publication by Kshethra Vinayaka Temple, Sri Munneswaram, Philare, Sri Lanka, is presenting the 45<sup>th</sup> number this month.

The key crucial endeavor of this monthly magazine is to convey the vision related to Hindu dharma to the anxious readers.

The comments and analysis of the readers are appreciated.

B. S. Sarma,

Kshethra Vinayaka Temple,

Sri Munneswaram, Philare, Sri Lanka. September, 2011



नासदासीन्ने सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो ब्योमा परोयत्  
किमावरीवः ? क्व कः शर्मन्न ब्रह्म ? किमासीद् गहनं गभीरम्...



### Suggestions from the readers

Dear Mr.B.S.Sarma,

'Path to Dharma'

I am frankly pleased with the subject matter discussed, in the monthly magazine "Path to Dharma" and be grateful for the manner in which the questions are dealt with.

I have sent you some questions for which I anticipate the answers. If you can get some Questions and Answers on Hinduism that is Hindu Catechism for the children or even adults who like to learn the basic facts about our religion it would be very useful.

Thanking you,

With kind regards,

S.N.Yadhava, Canada.

12<sup>th</sup> August, 2011

Dear Mr.Sarma,

I go through the monthly magazine 'Path to Dharma' every month. Most of the clarifications for the questions are very brief and if you can elaborate in detail wherever it is essential it would be very useful for the readers who really needs to know the religious concepts correctly.

N.K. Sundhar, U.K

16<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2011

Dear Mr.B.S.Sarma, 'Path to Dharma'

I have sent a couple of problems regarding the meanings of some aspects connected to Hindu religion to you and awaiting for the correct explanations some doubts in the concepts related to Hinduism

S.n.Moorthy, Australia

22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2011

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## HINDU CATECHISM (Questions and Answers on Hinduism)

**1. What is religion?**

Religion is the path for virtuous life and the concept of its philosophy benefits one to lead a righteous manner of life.

**2. How ancient is Hindu religion?**

Hindu religion is the oldest and existing religion of the world.

**3. Who is the founder of Hindu religion?**

Hindu Dharma was not originated, coined or founded by any prophet.

**4. What is the source and basis of Hindu religion?**

The source and basis of Hindu religion are the four Vedas.

**5. What is the meaning of the term 'Hindu'?**

The expression 'Hindu' was originated from the word 'Sindhu' (Indus). Sindhu is a river in India. The people who had lived along the banks of river Sindhu were called Hindu. Subsequently this religion was acknowledged as the 'Hindu Dharma'.

**6. What was the original name of Hindu Dharma?**

In the beginning this religion was simply termed as 'Dharma'. According to the interpretation that the teachings of this religion are based and established on the concept of the knowledge of Vedas, it is named the 'Vedic Dharma'. As the teachings are eternal, this religion is acknowledged as the 'Sanatan Dharma'.

**7. What is the meaning of the term Vedas?**

The expression Veda means 'Knowledge'. Vedas are divine revelations or disclosures.

**8. What are the four Vedas?**

The four Vedas are the principle scripture of Hindism.

**9. What are the concepts conveyed in Vedas?**

Saints and rishis, at different ages of the era enlightened the knowledge of the Vedas in a simpler manner in various other religious texts.

**10. To whom was the knowledge of the Vedas revealed or first made known?**

The Vedas were revealed to rishis who were in deep meditation. These rishis in turn exposed the knowledge of Vedas to the selected persons who were able to understand.

**11. What is its authority of Hinduism?**

The unique features of Hinduism are that it has no founder. The authority of Hinduism is the Eternal Truth itself. The spiritual experience of an individual is to witness it.

**12. What do the Vedas consist of?**

Each of the four Vedas consists of four parts namely:

- i. the Mantras or hymns;
- ii. the Brahmanas or explanatory treatises on mantras and rituals;
- iii. the Aranyakas or meditations in the forest
- iv. the Upanisads or mystic treatises revealing the most profound spiritual truths and suggesting the ways of realizing them.

**13. What is Veda?**

The term Veda denotes knowledge. The Vedas are the authoritative fundamental scriptures of the Hinduism. The Veda is alienated into four great scriptures, which are namely;

- i. The Rig-Veda
- ii. The Yajur-Veda
- iii. The Sama-Veda
- iv. The Atharva-Veda

**14. What are the components of Vedas?**

Each of these Vedas consists of four components, namely:

- i. The Mantra-Samhitas ( hymns).
- ii. The Brahmanas ( explanations of Mantras or rituals).
- iii. The Aranyakas (philosophical interpretations of the rituals).
- iv. The Upanishads (The essence or the knowledge portion of the Vedas).

**15. What are the Upa-Vedas mentioned in Hinduism?**

There are four Upa-Vedas or supplementary Vedas are as follows;

- i. The Ayurvedha (science of life and health)
- ii. The Dhanurvedha (science of war)
- iii. The Gandharva Vedha (science of music)
- iv. The Arthasasthra (science of political principles)

**16. Who or what is God?**

God is that Conscious Supreme Being Who controls the whole universe. He is ONE however is given many names to describe his qualities and activities.

**17. What are the main qualities of God?**

The main qualities of God are namely;

- i. Omnipresent (present everywhere)
- ii. Omniscient (all-knowing)
- iii. Omnipotence (all-powerful)

**18. What are the main Beliefs of Hinduism?**

The main beliefs of Hindus determine the thoughts and attitudes about life, which in turn direct the actions.

- i. Hindus believe in a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being who is both immanent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest Reality.
- ii. Hindus believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution.
- iii. Hindus believe in karma, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds.
- iv. Hindus believe that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all karmas have been resolved, and moksha, liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Not a single soul will be deprived of this destiny.
- v. Hindus believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice ahimsa, no injury, in thought, word and deed.

**19. What are the essential requirements (purushartha) for life mentioned in Hinduism?**

The essential requirements (purushartha) for life mentioned in Hinduism are the following;

- i. Dharma (ethics and duties)
- ii. Samsara (rebirth)
- iii. Karma (right action)
- iv. Moksha (liberation from the cycle of Samsara)

**20. What is the significance of a Hindu temple?**

The architecture of a Vedic Hindu temple is a divine and yogic representation of a human being.

- i. The feet represent the spire (rajagopura).
- ii. The hands represent the walkway (prakaara) encompassing all around the temple.
- iii. The abdomen represents the main hall (mandapa).
- iv. The heart entrance represents the porch (antaraala).
- v. The head represents the sanctum sanctorum (garbha griha).

The deity is consecrated with religious rites in the sanctum sanctorum. There is proportionate between the size of the deity in the sanctum sanctorum and the sizes of the temple.

**21. What are the paths to achieve Moksha?**

The paths to achieve Moksha are;

- i. The path of knowledge - Jnana-Yoga  
Spiritual knowledge -leading to the knowledge of the relationship between the soul (atman) and God (Brahman)
- ii. The path of meditation - Dhyana-yoga  
The aim is to reach the real self within you and become one with Brahman
- iii. The Path of Devotion - Bhakti-yoga  
worshipping a particular god in full faith during the life in actions, words and deeds.
- iv. The path of good works - Karma-yoga

**22.**

**What is Pranayama?**

Pranayama (rhythmic breathing) is respiratory exercise to hygienically maintain freshness of the lungs. Pranayama keeps the heart beat steady, purify the blood components and strengthen the whole nervous system. The performance of Pranayama is extremely beneficial to the health of a person. According to the yoga practice Pranayama is a technique, to concentrate the mind. The concept of Pranayama is to maintain the physical body in a healthy condition, in addition the mind and the spirit. Pranayama is performed with a traditional religious manner with pranva and Gayathri manthras.

**23. What is Samsara?**

Samsara is the cycle of births and deaths through which the soul of every creature passes prior to it attainment of the state of Moksa (liberation).Hinduism teaches that all creatures are involved in this cycle. The law of karma is a distinctive and characteristic feature according to Hindu dharma.

**24. What are the main cardinal virtues in Hinduism?**

The cardinal virtues, according to Hinduism, are abundantly shown in the epics and the Puranas.They are;

- i. purity (sattva suddhi),
- ii. self-control (Iama and dama),
- iii. detachment (vairagya),
- iv. truth (satyam)
- v. non-violence (ahimsa)

**25. What are the fundamental concept of Hindu philosophy and doctrine?**

The fundamental concept of Hindu philosophy and doctrine is based on the following beliefs.

- i. The belief in **ahimsa** (non-violence),in all activities (thought, expression , and activities.
- ii. The belief in **sathyam** (ultimate truth)
- iii. The belief in **dharma** ( the divine Law).
- iv. The belief in **Karma**( the law of Cause and Effect).
- v. The belief in **reincarnation**, (life after life).



**26. What are the Brahma-sutras?**

The **Brahma-sutras** are a number of aphorisms which systematize the whole teaching of the Upanishads. Badarayana wrote the Brahma-sutras. They expound the nature of Brahman (the Absolute) and its relation to man and the world.

**27. What is meant by Athman?**

Athman is the fundamental nature or principle of life which is the Supreme (Absolute) Reality present within a human being but not a 'soul' or 'sprit'. 'Inner self' is the most appropriate English term

**28. What is meant by Brahman?**

Brahman is the absolute Reality or Cosmic Self which is an abstract concept of 'the divine'

**29. What is meant by Karma?**

Karma is the total sum of all human action. The law of karma refers to understanding that all human actions have corresponding consequences that affect not only one's present life but future lives, until the state of moksha is achieved.

**30. What is meant by Moksha?**

Moksha is the Liberation or release from 'Samsara' (cycle of births and rebirths of the human being). Different philosophical and religious strands in Hinduism describe Moksha differently. Generally accepted concept is that, the attainment of union with God or knowledge of one's identity with Brahman

**31. What is Maya?**

The term Maya refers to the physical world with which we are familiar with and we see and know it, with all its distractions, desires, pains etc. The physical world is temporary and ever getting changed. The world where we live in is a world of ignorance and falsehood (untruth), called *Asath*, in contrast to *Sath* or the world of Truth that exists beyond it, where neither the mind, nor any of the senses can ever reach. The Hindu philosophers' concept of maya is to try and perceive beyond the physical world to the spiritual which lies behind it and is ultimately considered more "real." "Maya" is, plainly "illusion." The world you ordinarily move in is considered an illusion. But Maya is also the illusion that your atman constitutes a separate "self." When you overcome the illusion of Maya you will realize your oneness with the Brahman.

**32. What are the mahavakyas of Hinduism?**

The ultimate identity of the soul and God (of the individual soul and the universal soul) is established by four mahavakyas or great quotations taken from the four Vedas.

The Aitareya Upanishad of the Rg-Veda says, "Prajiianam Brahma" ("Intelligence is Brahman").

The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad of the Yajur Veda says, "Aham Brahmasmi" ("I am Brahman").

The Chandogya Upanisad of the Sama Veda says, "Tattvamasi" ("Thou art That").

The Atharva Veda says, "Ayam Atma Brahma" ("This self is Brahman").

**33. What are the Lessons that are learnt from the Ramayana**

The Lessons that are learnt from the Ramayana are as follows;

- i. Dharma in the form of Rama, who is the personification of this Hindu concept of duty.
- ii. An ideal son, an ideal king and ideal husband through Rama.
- iii. An ideal wife through Sita.
- iv. An ideal brother through Lakshmana and Bharata.
- v. An ideal unassuming and loving devotee through Hanuman.
- vi. The dangers of lust and ego as seen in Ravana.

**34. What are the Agamas in Hinduism?**

The Agamas are theological expositions and manuals for practical aspects of divine worship in Hinduism. The Agamas include the Mantras, Tantras and Yantras. These treatises explain the peripheral (external) worship of God, in idols, temples etc. Agamas consist of the following aspects of adoration:

- i. Knowledge (Gnana )
- ii. Concentration (Yoga)
- iii. Esoteric Ritual (Kriya )
- iv. Exoteric Worship (Charya)

All the Agamas provide sophisticated facts about ontology, cosmology, liberation, devotion, meditation, philosophy of different hymns (Mantras), mystic spiritual illustration of diagram, charms and spells, method of construction of temples and divine building, varied image of idol creation, domestic observances, social rites and rules, organizing various public religious festivals etc.

**35. What are the divisions of Agamas**

The Agamas are divided into three divisions:

1. The Saiva Agamas(Saiva-Siddhanta)
2. The Vaishnava (Pancharatra) Agamas
3. The Sakta (Tantra)Agamas

Saivism ,Vaishnavism and Saktism are the three main cults of Hinduism where their doctrines and code of beliefs are based on their respective Agamas. Though these Agamas do not originate their authority from the Vedas, they do not oppose to them. All the Agamas are all Vedic in spirit and nature. Hence they are considered as authoritative and convincing.

**36. What are the Saiva Agamas?**

The Saiva Agamas are twenty-eight in number out of which the most important is Kamika – Agama.Kashmir Saivism is based on the Pratyabhijna system of the Agamas.This illustrates the philosophy of Advaitism (non-dualistic viewpoint). Saiva Siddhanta, and the Kashmir Saivism, regard these Agamas as their source, as well the Vedas.

**37. What are the Vaishnava Agamas?**

The Vaishnava Agamas are of four in number.

- i. Prathishthasara
- ii. Vaikhanasa
- iii. Pancharathra
- iv. Vijnana-lalitha

The Brahma, Saiva, Kaumara, Vasishtha, Kapila, Gauthamiya and Naradhiya are the seven groups of the Pancharatras.The Naradiya division of the Santi Parva of the Mahabharata is the first source with reference to the Pancharatras.

The Vaishnavas regard the Pancharatra Agamas to be the most authoritative.

**38. What are the Saktha Agamas?**

The Saktha (Tanthras )Agamas are seventy-seven in number.These Agamas glorify Sakthi(kinetic energy) aspect of God.Mahanirvana, Kularnava, Kulasara, Prapanchasara, Tantraraja, Rudra-Yamala, Brahma-Yamala, Vishnu-Yamala and Todala Tantra are the important Tanthra scripts.Sakti is the creative power of Lord Siva. Sakthism is in fact a supplement to Saivism.

**39. What are the principal duties of God?**

The principal duties of God are namely;

- i. Creation
- ii. Preservation
- iii. Dissolution



**40. What are the Sad-darsanas (six systems of philosophy)?**

The Sad-darsanas (six systems of philosophy) are as follows;

- i. Nyaya, the philosophy of logic, maintains that the atom is the cause of the cosmic manifestation Nyaya propounded by Gautama.
- ii. Vaisesika, philosophy of specialised logic, maintains that the combination of atoms is the cause of the cosmic manifestation propounded by Kanada.
- iii. Sankhya, philosophy of analytical study, maintains that the material nature is the cause of the cosmic manifestation propounded by Kapila.
- iv. Yoga, philosophy of mystic perfections, maintains that universal consciousness is the cause of the cosmic manifestation propounded by Patanjali.
- v. Purva (karma) mimamsa, philosophy of actions and reactions, maintains that fruitive activities are the cause of the cosmic manifestation propounded by Jaimini.
- vi. Uttara (brahma) mimamsa propounded by Vyasa has two different categories: The impersonalists maintain that the impersonal Brahman effulgence is the cause of the cosmic manifestation.

**41. What is soul?**

Soul is a conscious being. It enters a body to perform worldly actions.

**42. What is yagna or Havan?**

The offering of ghee (butter) and other prescribed substances on to the fire during prayer to God is called yagna or havan. It purifies the polluted air and helps in spiritual upliftment or God realisation of the performer.

**43. What are the main religious ceremonies to be performed by a Hindu?**

The sixteen ceremonies and they are performed for the physical, mental and spiritual development of a person.

**44. What is Rebirth?**

The Punarjanma or Rebirth is the re-entry of the soul into another body. The soul of a person does not cease to exist after a person's death. It is immortal.

**45. What is Purushartha?**

Purushartha is the Law of Action. A person receives the fruit (punishment or reward) of his reactions according to his deeds.

**46. What is Yoga?**

Yoga is establishing contact with God the performance of meditation. The word yoga means to join or to bring together.

**47. What is Vedanta?**

The knowledge of Brahma (God) is called Vedanta. The section dealing with the knowledge of God - Brahma is called the Vedanta.

**48. What are Ashrams?**

Ashrams are the four stages in life of a person. They are:

- 1) Brahmacharya: The stage of education and preparation for future life
- 2) Grahastha: Householder's life
- 3) Vanaprastha: Old age when one retires from family life and serves the people
- 4) Sannyastha: In this stage, one spends one's time in meditation and imparts knowledge for the good of all.



**49. Are these varnas regarded as high or low or superior or inferior?**

No, because one varna is dependent on another. Just as the head, the chest the arms, etc help to make up the whole body, similarly, these four varnas make up the human society.

**50. What is Sruti?**

Sruti is unswerving experience of great holy Rishis. These Great Rishis experienced the eternal truths of Hindu philosophy and left an evidence of them for the advantage of posterity. These accounts comprise the Vedas. Hence, Sruti is the chief authoritative.

**51. What is Smriti?**

The Smritis (Dharma Sastra) Smriti are the reminiscence of the experiences of the great holy Rishis. Thus, Smriti is the secondary authoritative. The Smritis are the secondary scriptures which are the earliest sacred law of codes of the Hindu religion related with the Sanatana-Varnasrama-Dharma. The Smritis enhance and give explanation to the ritualistic orders called Vidhis of the Vedas. The Smriti is established and based on the Srutis of the Vedas. The Smritis supplement the authority of the Srutis. It lays down the laws which regulate Hindu traditions and commitments.

**52. What are Dharma Sastras ?**

Dharma Sastras are the law books of Hindu traditions while Smriti, as whole covers all Hindu Sastras (scriptures) serve as the custodian of the Vedas. The Smriti consists of set down rules, regulations and laws to guide the public to regulate the manners and customs of the community. The duties of Varnasramas (the four stages of life) are undoubtedly specified in these manuscripts. The aim and objective of the Smritis are to guide the public and to make them perfect and free.

**53. What are the names of Smritis available?**

There are eighteen Smritis (Dharma Sastras) and the names are as follows;

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| i. Manu Smriti         | x. Vasishtha Smriti       |
| ii. Yajnavalkya Smriti | xi. Yama Smriti           |
| iii. Parasara Smriti   | xii. Apastamba Smriti     |
| iv. Vishnu Smriti      | xiii. Gautama Smriti      |
| v. Daksha Smriti       | xiv. Devala Smriti        |
| vi. Samvarta Smriti    | xv. Sankha-Likhita Smriti |
| vii. Vyasa Smriti      | xvi. Usana Smriti         |
| viii. Harita Smriti    | xvii. Atri Smriti         |
| ix. Satatapa Smriti    | xviii. Saunaka. Smriti    |

**54. What are the eight vasus?**

There are eight vasus in Vedas which are non-alive matters.

- i. Agni (fire)
- ii. Prithivi(earth)
- iii. Vaayu(air)
- iv. Antriksh (space)
- v. Dyuhu ( light emitting heavenly bodies)
- vi. jala (water)
- vii. Nakshtra ( planetary world)
- viii. Chandrma.(moon)

**55. What are the Ashta siddhis and where is it mentioned?**

According to Patanjali Yoga Darshan Sutra 3/45, the Ashta siddhis are namely;

- |             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| i. Annima   | v. Prakamya          |
| ii. Laghima | vi. Vashitva         |
| iii. Mahima | vii. Ishitatva       |
| iv. Praapti | viii. Satya Sankalpa |

**56. What are the sixteen sanskars mentioned in the Vedas?**

There are sixteen sanskars mentioned in the Vedas ,namely;

- i. Garbhdhan Sanskar - performed just after marriage and before pregnancy to have a good baby.
- ii. Punsvan sanskar - performed just after pregnancy of second or third month.
- iii. Seemantonnayan sanskar -in 4th, 6th or in 8th month of pregnancy.
- iv. Jaatkaram Sanskar -just after birth of a baby i.e., the same day.
- v. Naamkaran sanskar -after 101 days of birth, the name of the baby is announced.
- vi. Nishkraman sanskar - In the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, mother and baby comes out of the house.
- vii. Annprasahn sanskar - The baby is given solid food in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the baby.
- viii. Churakaram sanskar - (Mundan sanskar) in the first or third year.
- ix. Karanvedh sanskar - ear piercing ceremony.
- x. Upnayan sanskar -allowing baby to go school first time.
- xi. Vedaarambh sanskar - to start study of Vedas in 6 to 8 years.
- xii. Samavartan sanskar - the baby has attained the knowledge of Vedas. It is performed in the age of fourteen years.
- xiii. Vivah sanskar - marriage ceremony.
- xiv. Vanprasth sanskar -At the age of 51 and above.
- xv. Sanyas sanskar - in the age of 75 and above when anyone becomes ascetic.
- xvi. Anteshti sanskar - when death occurs the dead body is cremated.

**57. hat are eight emotions (bbvas) mentioned in Natya sashtra in Hinduism?**

The natya sashtra referes to eight different kinds of rasa (emotions), and to 108 varieties of hand poses used while dancing.

The rasa is itself divided in the Natyasastra into eight sentiment or tastes namely;

- i. reotic (srngara )
- ii. comic (hasya)
- iii. pathetic karuna )
- iv. furiou (raudra)
- v. heroic (vira)
- vi. terrible (bhayankara)
- vii. odious (bibhatsa)
- viii. marvellous (adbhuta)

**58. What is meant by the terms Yama ?**

- i. Satya (honesty) -to adopt and practise genuineness in mind, in speech and through deeds.
- ii. Ahinsa (non-violence)- to leave violence, at all times, in all places and to all living beings. So how a person would even think to kill or to harm, cow or any living being.
- iii. Asteya (abstaining from stealing)
- iv. Brahamcharya (celibacy)
- v. Aprigrah (not to accumulate the wealth, any other articles more than requisite amount, self- abnegation)

**59. What is meant by the terms Niyama?**

- i. shauch (purity, cleanliness),
- ii. snatosh (contentment ,satisfaction),
- iii. Tap (austerity, asceticism),
- iv. Swadhyaya (study of Vedas and sacred granths, performing-jaap )
- v. Ishwara prannidhanani (complete faith in God and dedication of all pious deeds to Him that is to do activities without deserving the result).

**60. What is Moksha, Mukti, or salvation?**

It is a condition in which the soul gets its highest stage of development or evolution. Then it is released from birth cycle.

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**61. What are aspects of each religion?**

There are three aspects in each religion namely; mythology, philosophy and ritual.

- i. Mythology elucidates and demonstrates philosophy by the accounts of legendary lives of great men or of supernatural beings.
- ii. Philosophy is the fundamental nature of religion. It explains the fundamental doctrines or tenets, the goal and the means to achieve them.
- iii. Ritual gives a more concrete form to philosophy by means of which everyone may understand it. Ritual consists of ceremonies, festivals, fasts etc.

**62. What are the qualities of God according to Hinduism?**

God is one and indivisible, indescribable, inexhaustible, incorporeal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, original, first, eternal, both transcendent and immanent, of absolute infinite existence, and the ultimate principle who is without a beginning, or an end. He is the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss who is hidden in all and which is the cause, source, material and effect of all creation known, unknown and yet to happen in the entire universe. The Vedas depict Brahman as the Ultimate Reality

**63. Why should one worship God?**

His worship creates an appreciation for His qualities and a love for Him. Prayer purifies our mind of all the undesirable passions and helps us in our spiritual advancements.

**64. If we worship God, will He forgive our past or future sins?**

No, God's laws are immutable. Even He cannot override them. Nor we ought to persuade Him to do so. Prayer will prevent us from committing sins. But a true devotee will gladly submit to the punishment for the sins committed.

**65. What is Heaven? What is Hell?**

Heaven and Hell are not geographical or spacial places. They are conditions of a soul. If the soul is in a good and prosperous life, it is in Heaven, otherwise in Hell.

**66. What are the Pancha Mahayajnas ?**

There are five daily sacrifices which are to be carried out by everyone. They are namely:

- i. Brahma Yajna, called also Veda Yajna, sacrifice to Brahman or the Vedas or the sages;
- ii. Deva Yajna, sacrifice to the celestials;
- iii. Pitri Yajna, sacrifice to the manes;
- iv. Bhuta Yajna, sacrifice to all the creatures;
- v. Manushya Yajna, sacrifice to men.

**67. What is ment by Mythology in Hinduism?**

Every religion has its own religious mythology. Historical events are to some extent mixed up with Mythology. As a result of this it is difficult to make a well defined distinction between myths and history. Great truths are revealed and realized by the study of Hindu religious myths. You can be aware of the delicate philosophical truths through myths in Hinduism.

Mythology stamps the minds of the subtle and abstract teachings of the Vedas through instructive stories and illuminating discourses and paves the way for a person to lead a divine life and attain perfection, freedom and immortality.

**68. What is the Bhagavadgita?**

The Bhagavadgita is from part of book 6 of Mahabharata, and in 18 sections of 700 verses, It explores first Arjuna's crises of consciences; and the philosophical explanations and advice of Lord Krishna.

**69. What are the differences between God and Athma (soul) are the same?**

Only God is omnipresent and Athma is never omnipresent. God is one whereas athma (soul) are many and countless. Every Athma (soul) has his body- like that of man, woman, animal, birds, mosquitoes, flies etc. In Vedas, Athma (soul) is also called "Swayambhu" which means that, it is neither created nor destroyed. Actually there are three matters which are called swayambhu- *Almighty God, Souls and Prakriti* and each matter is separate from other.

**70. What are the names of the 14 worlds mentioned in Epic and Puraanic narrations?**

There are the seven heavens (including the earth, Bhoo) and seven hells mentioned in Epic and Puraanic narrations are as follows;

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| i.Sathyaloka   | viii.Athala     |
| ii.Tapoloka    | ix.Vithala      |
| iii.Janarloka  | x.Suthala       |
| iv.Maharloka   | xi.Talaathala   |
| v.Suvarloka    | xii.Mahaathala  |
| vi.Bhuvarkloka | xiii.Rasaathala |
| vii.Bhooloka   | xiv.Paathaala   |

**71. What are the names of the three worlds mentioned in Vedas for Vedic Gods?**

The three worlds mentioned in Vedas for Vedic Gods are;

- i. Bhoo or Martya (temporal world) – terrestrial
- ii. Antariksha (in-between world) – atmospheric
- iii. Svarga (heavenly world) – celestial

Vedic Gods are related with all these three levels. As for instance, Agni (god of fire) is linked with the temporal world, Vayu (god of air) with atmosphere and Varuna (Lord of cosmic rhythm of the Universe with the heavens).

**72. What are the tattvas in relation to Yoga philosophy?**

In relation to Sâmkhya-Yoga philosophical/psychology, there are 24 *tattvas* or principles. These *tattvas* comprise the subtle elements of *prakriti* which are the principle of nature or energy-and-materiality:

- 1) *avyakta*(*mûlaprakriti*,): the unmanifest evolver of all things; root-nature; from this comes...
- 2) *buddhi* (*mahat*): the intellectual faculty, higher mind, the Great One; from this issues, in turn,...
- 3) *ahankâra*: the notion of individuality, the self-sense or ego-sense
- 4) *manas*: lower mind

(Note: *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahankâra* are collectively called the *antarindriya* or "inner organ.")  
the 5 *tanmâtras* are as follows:

- 5) sound (*sabda*),
- 6) touch (*sparsha*),
- 7) sight (*rûpa*),
- 8) taste (*rasa*),
- 9) smell (*gandha*)

the 5 *buddhîndriyas*, or sense organs:

- 10) the ear,
- 11) skin,
- 12) eye,
- 13) tongue,
- 14) nose

the 5 *karmendriyas*, or organs of action:

- 15) the voice,
- 16) hand,



- 17)foot,  
 18)organ of excretion,  
 19)organ of generation
- the 5 *mahâbhûtas* or *pañca bhûta* (“five elements”), which comprise the phenomenal world on subtle and gross/physical levels:
- 20) *âkâsa*--the all-pervading “space” (“ether”), the subtlest element, first of the emanations of Brahman's primordial vibration (“Om,” *pranava*), out of which, in turn, evolves...  
 21) *vâyû*, air, out of which evolves...  
 22) *agni*, fire...  
 23) *ap*, water ...  
 24) *prthivi*, earth, the grossest element
- The 5 *prânas* or “life breaths” that work in our vital and nervous being:
- 1) *prâna*, the basic life-force itself; it governs our breathing;  
 2) *vyâna*, the life-breath which governs circulation in the body;  
 3) *samâna*, the life-breath which controls digestion and assimilation;  
 4) *apâna*, the life-breath which casts out waste material;  
 5) *udâna*, the life-breath which directs the vital currents of the body upward to their sources or higher centers; this is the vital current that brings passing out of the body, spiritual development, etc.

### 73. What are the names of the 12 Adityas?

The Adityas represent a group of deities. They are six in the Rigveda, eight in most of the Brahmanas and twelve in the Sathapatha Brahmana. The Adityas are the personification of laws that rule the universe and the human society. The Adityas are;

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| i. Mitra (the friend),                      | vii. Tvastr (the shaper),     |
| ii. Varuna (one who encompasses and binds), | viii. Savitr(the vivifier)    |
| iii. Aryaman (the destroyer of foes),       | ix. Pusan(the nourisher)      |
| iv. Daksa (the skilful),                    | x. Sakra(the mighty)          |
| v. Bhaga(the giver),                        | xi. Vivasvat (theresplendent) |
| vi. Amsa(the liberal),                      | xii. Visnu (the pervader).    |

### 74. What are the most important Virtues of Hindu religion?

The following are twelve of the most important qualities of Virtues listed in scripture.

- i. *Ahimsa* (non-violence) – based on the concepts of atman and reincarnation.
- ii. Mind and sense control – considered essential for any form of morality.
- iii. Tolerance – necessary in order to deal with inconveniences in the performance of one's *dharma*.
- iv. Hospitality – demonstrating magnanimity, and the value of service (*seva*).
- v. Compassion – based on notions of *atman*, and the ability to feel for others as we feel for ourselves.
- vi. Protection – an essential duty is to give shelter to others, especially those less fortunate.
- vii. Respect – for all living beings and for the sanctity of all life.
- viii. Wisdom – knowledge is contrasted with ignorance, the Hindu equivalent of the "good -evil" paradigm.
- ix. Austerity – essential to gain wisdom in addition to mere theoretical knowledge.
- x. Celibacy – important for spiritual life. Only one of the four *ashrams* is permitted sexual gratification.
- xi. Honesty – essential to build legitimate trust within relationships and to avoid self-deception.
- xii. Cleanliness – includes external hygiene and inner purity; essential for *brahmanas*.

