

# Path to Dharma

தர்ம நெறி



News Letter 18 செய்தி மடல்

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## News Letter 18 செய்தி மடல்

### Book;

### Introduction to Hinduism -Foreword

Many scholars with a great vision have written books on various dimensions of Hinduism. According to the words of Swami Vivekananda, Hindu does everything in a religious manner. Further he stresses that religion is not just belief in certain dogmas or observing some rituals but realizing the divinity that is already there in every one of us. He adds further that what helps us to manifest this latent divinity is also religion. In this aspect the words of Swami Nikhilananda too noteworthy. While writing on the spirit of Hinduism in his book ; "Hinduism-Its meaning for the liberation of the spirit", follows.

"Hinduism is the dominant religion of the vast Indian Sub-Continent and since the beginning of its history has profoundly influenced the lives and thoughts of countless millions of the Indian people from the cradle to the grave. It has left an indelible impress on the entire culture of India; on her philosophy, art, architecture, literature, politics, and sociology. Religion gives to a Hindu equanimity of mind in prosperity and adversity; courage to face the problems of his life, and a vision of his ultimate spiritual destiny". He further emphasizes that according to Hinduism religion is experience and not mere adhere to nce of certain time-honoured dogmas or creed.

According to my opinion these words of traditional ancestors and religious leaders would have highly influenced, Mr.B.Sivaramakrishna Sarma to design a book on Hinduism to suit the present generation. He has written this book out of hard labour and perseverance. At this juncture I am highly pleased to congratulate him for producing a book of this nature.

The author of this book Mr.B.S.Sarma had the privilege to gain knowledge in religion from his childhood. He has developed a great interest in the field of religion since he hails from a noble priesthood family attached to the famous historical Munneswaram Temple at Chilaw. In this work he tries to introduce the reader to the salient features of Hinduism in various aspects, since he has felt in his mind that religion is the highest need of the mankind.

Today Hinduism flourishes not only in South and South East Asia but also in the Western world too. Since he was eager to enhance his knowledge of Hinduism he never failed to have vital discussions with me regarding Hindu religious beliefs, practices and customs. I appreciated his thirst for knowledge on Hinduism, though he is a science graduate. Mr.Sarma passed out as a science graduate at the University of Ceylon. Being a scientist Mr.Sarma tries to bring about a synthesis between science and religion through this effort. In this context it is appropriate to quote the words of Swami Lokeshwarananda in his book on "Science and Religion". He says at the outset that science has an objective approach whereas religion has a subjective approach. Both are trying to understand the mystery behind man and his environment. But, in their practical application both are concerned with the welfare of man. I presume that these ideas would have induced Mr.Sarma to write a book on religion.

Mr.Sarma has a successful educational career. After his graduation he started his career as a teacher, teaching science subjects at the Advance level at Zahira College, Colombo and later joined the Educational Publications Department as an editor. After that he joined the educational sector as an Education Officer and served in the Central and North Provinces. He gained additional experience at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education while serving as Deputy Director of Education at the School Development branch. Based on the skill gained in the field, he had the opportunity to be appointed as the Principal of the Hindu College at Colombo, which is a National College.

During this period his service to education and religion is noteworthy. He has participated and contributed to many seminars and conferences held locally and abroad at international level, being a member of various religious organizations.

After serving as the Principal he rose to the position of Director of Education (Educational Management Information System) Policy Planning & Review Division at the Ministry of Education & Higher Education, Sri Lanka. He continued in this position until his retirement. At present he is attached to Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Education (SLAAED), as the Executive Director. The main aim of this organization is to promote research in Education in various dimensions.

As Mr.Sarma is fluent in English, Tamil, Sinhala and Sanskrit he had the privilege of wide reading and thereby he had the opportunity to publish books. Further he was fortunate enough to be guided often by late Professor Emeritus K.Kailasanatha Kurukkal, an eminent scholar in Hinduism. Among the books published by Mr.Sarma the book on the History of Sri Munneswaram Temple had a wide circulation among scholars and is being often quoted by them. He has served as the Editor of the Tamil magazine, 'Educational Advancement' sponsored by SLAAED. The experience he has gained in this area has contributed much towards the writing of this book. He has attempted to write this book to honour the repeated requests by his students and friends.

He has served as the Secretary, to the Advisory Board on Hindu Religion, at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for a long period of time. Further he has served as the Director of Education for Hindu Religion at the same ministry.

This book consists of twelve chapters discussing various aspects of Hinduism. The first chapter deals with Hinduism in its historical perspective, the second, third and fourth chapters examine Hinduism through the ages where the salient features of religious scriptures are discussed. The fifth chapter enriches the knowledge relating to Hindu Gods. The sixth and seventh chapters deal with Temple worship and Puja. Since Hindu philosophy is an important aspect of Hinduism the eighth chapter deals with it in a nutshell and discusses Hindu Dharma, basic beliefs of Hinduism. Hindu way of life, Bhakti Yoga and methods of worship and Darshanas, in a lucid and simple style. The ninth chapter, discusses the different modes of Hindu religious festivals. The tenth chapter explains Hindu marriage and the eleventh chapter discusses the apara rituals and beliefs. The twelfth chapter explains the symbols of Hinduism. In addition to these this book contains a compilation of Astothara, Trisathy and Sahasranama of various Gods in the appendix. The additions of various illustrations are a special feature of this book. This patient work is an attempt by the author to discuss the salient features of Hinduism within a brief compass, since this religion is very extensive.

On the whole this is a comprehensive book on Hinduism written by Mr.B.S.Sarma for the enhancement of knowledge in Hinduism for those who are interested in this field. This book provides the theoretical and practical aspects of Hinduism.

I am pleased to note that this book will serve as a hand book on Hinduism for students and everybody else. I trust that this book will have a wide circulation among readers on religion.

I once again take this opportunity to express my best wishes to the author for this contribution in the field of religion and wish him all the best to continue this effort in future too for the benefit of the Hindu community.

Jaffna  
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## **Knowing Hinduism through Question and Answers**

### **1.~ How to pronounce the pranava mantra 'AUM' correctly?**

According to Hinduism, God is the fundamental fact of the universe; Hence God must be represented by the most natural, and the most comprehensive of all sound vibrations. It is believed that this basic sound is AUM (OM), and it should be appropriately pronounced. To quote Swami Vivekananda, "The first letter, A is the root sound, the key, pronounced without touching any part of the tongue or palate; M represents the last sound in the series, being produced by the closed lips, and the U rolls from the very root to the end of the sounding-broad of the mouth. Thus OM represents the whole phenomena of sound producing."

### **2. What does Vedanta philosophy, say about the covering of Atman, by three layers in man?**

Swami Prabhavanana and Christopher Isherwood in their book titled "How to know God-The yoga aphorisms of Pathanjali" -translated with new commentary published in 1953 say that "According to Vedanta philosophy, the Atman in man is covered by three layers or "sheaths". The outermost of these is the physical sheath, which is the layer of gross matter. Below this is the subtle sheath which is composed of the inner essence of things, and is the stuff of the spirit world. Below this is the causal sheath, so called because it is the web of our karma, the complex of cause and effect which makes our personalities and our lives what they are at any given moment. The causal sheath is the ego-sense which makes us see ourselves and the phenomena of the universe as separate entities. In the waking state, Vedanta tells us, all of these three sheaths come between us and the Athman, but in the dreamless sleep the two outer coverings are removed and only the casual sheath, the ego-sense, remains. It follows, therefore, that we are nearer to the Athman in dreamless sleep than in any other phase of our ordinary unspiritual lives;-yet still so far, for what separates us is the toughest covering of the three, the basic layer of our ignorance, the lie of otherness. And this sheath can never be broken through by mere sleeping" (page 51/52)

### **3. What do you mean by Bhajan with reference to Hinduism?**

Bhajans are religious hymns or songs in significant language convey the emotions of love for God. It is a method of absolute submission or self-surrender by singing religious hymns or songs in praise of God.

The bhajans are observed in the hymns of Sama Veda, (one of the four Vedas in the Hindu scriptures).. These are recited or sung in groups with a guide singer. The set tunes, replication of words and phrases are characteristic of bhajans. The traditional approach of alluring to the divine by singing of Bhajan hymns has an inconceivable impact on the elimination of stress. Bhajan groups are famous during the time of the beginning of the Bhakti era.

### **4. Can we assume that the concept of the philosophy of yoga as "self-centred" (egocentric) for the reason that they imagine yoga intentionally ignore everything for the sake of the salvation of the yoga?**

It is said, in the Yoga Sutras that, when, by the knowledge of the atman, by the of proper performances yogic meditation one ceases to desire any manifestation of Nature, then that is the highest kind of non-attachment.

Non-attachment does not mean indifference. The fact is precisely the opposite. Human love is the highest form of emotion. It liberates us from our egotism in relation to one or more individuals to a certain extent. However human love is still possessive and exclusive. Love for the Atman is neither. It is better to love people "for what they really are" rather than merely for their external characters as beauty, their intelligence, their strength, their sense of humour etc. Actually speaking what people "really are" is the Atman, and nothing else.

To love the Atman universally is to go beyond any manifestation of Nature to the Reality within Nature. This type of a love is too vast to be grasped by normal minds. It is simply an infinite deepening and expansion of the little limited love we all experience.

### **5. What is Prana the vital energy?**

The word Prana refers to the vital energy with which we live. With the help of this, energy is renewed continuously by breathing. This vital energy (prana) regenerates all the power of the body and thereby activates all the functions of the senses and the mind. The action of the senses and the mind are considered as expressions of the strength of prana.

In Prasna Upanishad it is given as follows; Bhargava came close to his guru and enquired:

"Holy sir, how many several powers hold together this body? Which of them are most manifest in it? Out of which is the greatest?"

The sage thus replied, "the powers, are ether, air, fire, water, earth: these five principle elements compose the body; and, besides these, speech, mind, eye, ear, and the rest of the sense organs. Once these powers made the boastful assertion; 'We hold the body together and support it', whereupon Prana, the primal energy, and supreme over them all, told them: 'Do not deceive yourselves. It is I alone, dividing myself fivefold, who hold together this body and support it.' But they would not believe him.

"Prana, to justify himself made as if he intended to leave the body. But as he rose and appeared to be going, all the rest realized that if he went they also would have to depart with him; and as Prana again seated himself, the rest found their respective places. As bees go out when their queen goes out, and return when she returns so was it with speech, mind, vision, hearing and the rest. Convinced of their error, the powers now praised Prana, saying:

As fire, Prana burns: as the sun, he shines; as cloud, he rains; as Indra he rules the gods; as wind he blows; as the moon, he nourishes all. He is that which is visible and also that which is invisible. He is immortal life.

## **Religions of the world**

A **religion** is a defined approach to human spirituality. Religion usually encompasses a set of beliefs and practices with supernatural or transcendent qualities, narratives, symbols. These give meaning to the practitioner's experiences of life through reference to a higher power, God, or ultimate truth. The experiences may be achieved and expressed through ritual, prayer, meditation, bajans, and by other means. This could be focused on, precise and specific supernatural, metaphysical, and moral claims about reality (the cosmos and human nature). This ultimately acquiesces defined religious laws, ethics, and lifestyle.

The term religion comes from two Latin words, re (back) and ligare (to bind or bring). The religion causes the existence of the life in the accepted manner of a man.

A single definition which applies to all religions is rather impossible due to the complexity of the concepts of different religions. The earliest definition of religion is from Johnson's *Dictionary*, which simply calls it "a system of faith and worship".

Lindbeck's *Nature of Doctrine*, shows that religion does not refer to belief in "God" or a transcendent Absolute. Instead, defines religion as, "a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought... it is similar to an idiom that makes possible the description of realities, the formulation of beliefs, and the experiencing of inner attitudes, feelings, and sentiments." Anthropologists and sociologists view religion as an abstract set of ideas, values, or experiences developed as part of a cultural matrix.

"a feeling of absolute dependence" Friedrich Schleiermacher

"The Divine Spirit becoming conscious of Himself through the finite spirit." -Hegel

"Cultural system" -Clifford Geertz

### **Hinduism - 4000 to 2500 BC**

The existence of Hinduism can be traced to between 4000 and 2500 BCE. in the the Indus Valley civilization. The ultimate aim of life is to recognize that we are part of God and by doing so we can depart this plane of existence and rejoin with God.

This enlightenment can be attained only by going through the cycles of birth, life and death (samsara). The advancement towards enlightenment of a person is inferred by his karma. Karma is the accumulation of all good and bad deeds of an individual and this decides the next reincarnation of that person. Selfless deeds and absolute devotion to God help a person to be reborn at a privileged level. Awful performances and thoughts will cause a person to be born at an inferior level.

### **Judaism - 2000 BC**

The religion Judaism which derived with a divine convention between the God of the primitive Israelites and Abraham was around 2000 BCE.

Moses the subsequent leader of the Israelites, led his people out of captivity in Egypt and said to have received the Law from God. Afterward Joshua led them into the promised land where Samuel established the Israelite kingdom with Saul as its first ruler. Later on king David founded Jerusalem and it was the king Solomon who constructed the first temple of Judaism at Jerusalem. During the era 70 CE this temple of Judaism at Jerusalem was ruined and the Jews were strewn throughout the world upto 1948, whilst the state of Israel was formed.

Judaism believes in a single creator who alone is to be worshipped as absolute head of the universe. He monitors the activities of the peoples and rewards for good endeavors and punishes for evil deeds. Judaism accepts only the prophets of the Torah, but also relies on the authority of rabbis. The Torah was revealed to Moses by God and can not be changed though God does communicate with the Jews through prophets. Jewish people believe in the intrinsic goodness of the world and its inhabitants as creations of God and do not require a savior to save them from original sin. Jews believe that they are God's chosen people and that the Messiah will arrive in the future, gather them into Israel, there will be a general resurgence of the dead, and the Jerusalem Temple destroyed in 70 CE will be rebuilt.

### **Zoroastrianism - 1000 BC**

The religion Zoroastrianism was founded by Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) in Persia. He preached the idea of monotheism with a single supreme god, Ahura Mazda. The religion Zoroastrianism trust in the dualism of good and evil as either a cosmic one between Ahura Mazda and an evil spirit of violence and death, Angra Mainyu, or as an ethical dualism within the human consciousness.

The holy script of the religion Zoroastrianism is called the Avesta which includes the teachings of Zarathushtra written in a series of five hymns called the Gathas. They are abstract sacred poetry aimed at the worship of the One God, understanding of righteousness and cosmic order, promotion of social justice, and personal selection between good and evil. The rest of the Avesta was written lately and this illustrates the different types of rituals, practice of worship, and other traditions of the faith. Zoroastrians worship by prayers and ceremonies of symbolic values that are conducted in front of a sacred fire which symbolizes their God. They dedicate their lives to a three-fold path represented by their motto: "Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds." The faith does not generally accept converts but this is disputed by some members.

### **Buddhism - 560 to 490 BC**

Buddhism developed as a religion from the preachings of Siddhartha Gauthama. He, attained enlightenment in 535 BCE and assumed the title Buddha. He showed the path to the enlightenment.

Siddartha (Gauthama Buddha) was born in the sixth century BC in Nepal. Siddartha's father, Suddodana, was the ruler of the Sakya region. Siddartha submitted himself to rigorous ascetic practices for six long years. Initially he studied under various religious teachers. He was not satisfied about their aims in life. Siddartha set out to perform extreme physical austerities on his own. Yet even through the ultimate in self-denial, he did not reach his final goal.

The path to true happiness required balance (the middle way) rather than extremes of indulgence or self-denial. One night, Siddartha sat under the Bo -Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and meditated until dawn. In the first watch night he remembered his past lives; in the second watch, around midnight, he saw how beings die and are reborn through the power of their karma, which in turn was shaped by the skillfulness of their intentions; in the third watch, towards dawn, he purified his mind of all cravings, attachments, and finally of all intentions, both skillful and not. With that, he attained awakening at the age of thirty, thus earning the title Buddha, or "Awakened One."

For the remainder of his life, the Buddha taught the dharma to people from all walks of life and all levels of society. He established a sangha, or community of monks and nuns, to maintain his teachings after his death. On full moon night in May when he had reached the age of eighty, he lying under a tree gave his last teachings to the assembled followers, counseling them to be heedful in completing their practice of dharma. With that, he entered total nirvana. He died in 487 BC.

According to the Buddha, there are Four Noble Truths and they are of vital importance in life.

- 1) The world is full of misery and sorrow.
- 2) The main cause of misery is desire.
- 3) Misery and sorrow can be ended by killing desire and
- 4) Desire can be suppressed by following the Eight-fold Path

This is achieved by correct Action, Belief, Effort, Speech, Thought, Meditation, Living and Recollection. Teachings of Buddha were written down long after his death. This collection is called the Tripitaka. Buddhists believe in reincarnation. That is any one has go through cycles of birth, life, and death. After several such cycles, if one releases their attachment to desire and the self, they can attain Nirvana.

Gauthama Buddha aimed to help sentient beings end their suffering by understanding the true nature of phenomena, thereby escaping the cycle of suffering and rebirth (*saṃsāra*), which is, achieving Nirvana. Theravada Buddhism, mainly practiced in Southeast Asia alongside folk religion, shows some characteristics of Indian religions. Vajrayana Buddhism, (a form of Mahayana) was developed in Tibet.

### **Shinto - 500 BC**

Shinto religion which existed in Japan at the early era was closely connected to the nature. This religion identifies the existence of various "**Kami**", which are known as nature deities. According to Shinto religion, the first two deities namely, **Izanagi** and **Izanami**, gave birth to the Japanese islands and their children became the deities of the various Japanese clans. One of their daughters, **Amaterasu** (Sun Goddess), is the ancestress of the Imperial Family and is regarded as the chief deity.

All the Kami are kind and their main services are to maintain and protect humanity. They are not seen as separate from humanity due to sin because humanity is "Kami's Child." Followers of Shinto desire peace and believe all human life is sacred. They revere "musuhi", the Kami's innovative and corresponding powers, and aspire to have "makoto", genuineness or sincere heart. Morality is dependent upon that which is of benefit to the group. There are "Four Affirmations" in Shinto:

1. Tradition and family: the family is the main mechanism by which traditions are preserved.
2. Love of nature: nature is sacred and natural objects are to be worshipped as sacred spirits.
3. Physical cleanliness: they must take baths, wash their hands, and rinse their mouth often.
4. "Matsuri": festival which honors the spirits.

### **Confucianism - 500 BC**

Confucius ( K'ung Fu Tzu ) was born in 551 BCE in China in the state of Lu. He traveled far and wide throughout China advising and teaching. His preachings and writings were concerned with morality and ethics of the individual and the proper implementation of political power. Confucius advocated the following values which he thought were very important:

- Li - ritual, propriety, etiquette
- Hsiao - love among family members
- Yi - righteousness
- Xin - honesty and trustworthiness
- Jen - benevolence towards others; the highest Confucian virtue
- Chung - loyalty to the state

Confucianism is chiefly an ethical system where the rituals are considered as important at the times during the lifetime of an individual. According to Confucianism the most important periods are birth, reaching maturity, marriage, and death.

### **Jainism - 420 BC**

The religion Jainism has several similarities to Hinduism and Buddhism which developed in the same part of the world. Jainism believes in karma and reincarnation as do Hindus but they believe that enlightenment and liberation from this cycle can only be achieved through asceticism as in Buddhism.

Vardhamana was the founder of the Jainism. He was the last Jina in a series of twenty four Jinas who lived in East India. Jina Vardhamana attained enlightenment in 420 BCE after 13 years of deprivation and committed the act of salekhana, fasting to death. Jainism prescribes a path of non-violence for all forms of living beings in this world.

Jains practice fruititarianism. They live by eating merely that which will not kill the plant or animal from which it is taken. This is the form of observance ahimsa, non-violence. Since the of any act of violence against a living thing beings causes negative karma effect which will adversely affect the person's next life.

### **Taoism - 440 BC**

Lao-Tse founded Taoism who was a contemporary of Confucius in China. Taoism commenced as an amalgamation of psychology and philosophy. Lao-Tse initially estimated Taoism would help to stop the constant feudal warfare and various other conflicts of his time.

Lao-Tse's philosophy, of Taoism describes the nature of life, the means to peace and how a ruler should guide his life. Taoism was accepted as a religion in 440 CE when it was adopted as a state religion. Tao understood that as *path*, is a force which flows through all life and is the first cause of everything. The objective of everyone is to become one with the Tao. Tai Chi, a technique of exercise using slow premeditated movements, is used to balance the flow of energy or "chi" within the body.

Tao, suggested that the people should develop virtue and search for compassion, moderation and humility. Anyone must plan any activity or achievement in advance and attain it through minimal deed or activity. Yang (light side) and Yin (dark side) symbolize pairs of contradictories which are seen through the universe, such as good and evil, light and dark, high and low male and female and so on.

The impact of human civilizations upset the equilibrium of Yang (light side) and Yin (dark side). Taoism insists that citizens are by nature, good. People ought to be kind to others since such treatment will probably be reciprocated.

### **Christianity - 30 CE**

The religion Christianity originated as a faction of Judaism just about 2000 years back. In view of the fact that Christianity and Judaism share the same history up to the time of Jesus Christ, both of them are incredibly alike in several of their core beliefs.

Jesus, was born as the son of the Virgin Mary conceived through the Holy Spirit. Jesus was worried by a number of the practices within the indigenous Jewish faith hence he started on preaching a different message of God and religion.

While he was preaching twelve disciples joined him. All of them followed Jesus in his journeys and learned the messages of God. Jesus performed numerous miracles during his journeys. He narrated many of his teachings in the form of allegories. At one incident Jesus revealed that he was the Son of God sent to Earth to save humanity from sins. Jesus did this by being crucified himself on the cross for his teachings. He then rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples and told them to go forward and spread his message.

Christians believe in original sin and that Jesus died in the place to save true Christians from that sin. Christians believe that Jesus was fully human and fully God and as the Son of God is part of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christians believe in heaven and that those who sincerely repent their sins before God will be saved and join Him in heaven. There are a multitude of forms of Christianity which have developed because of disagreements on dogma, adaptation to different cultures etc.

Hence there are great differences between the various forms of Christianity. Some of the different sects of Christianity are as follows:

Anglican	Lutheran	Quaker
Baptist	Methodist	Salvation Army
Catholic	Oriental Christian	Seventh Day Adventist
Churches of Christ	Orthodox/Greek Catholic	Unitarian
Congregational	OTHER Protestant	Uniting Church
Jehovah's Witnesses	Pentecostal	Other Christian
Latter-day Saints	Presbyterian/Reformed	

### **Islam - 622 CE**

The Prophet Muhammad founded Islam in 622 CE at Mecca. The role of Prophet Muhammad as the last spiritualist was to sanctify and clarify the faith by getting rid of thoughts which were added by mistake. Muslims believe that the faith of Islam is the same belief taught by the prophets Abraham, David, Moses and Jesus. The two major sacred texts of Islam are the Qur'an, and the Hadith.

There are two main sects of Islam namely; Sunni and Shia. Wahhabi Islam is the established religion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Muslims accept as true in one creator who is, omnipotent and merciful. Muslims believe in Satan who drives people to sin. They trust that all unbelievers and sinners will spend eternity in Hell. Muslims who genuinely regret and submit to God will return to a state of sinless condition and depart to Paradise after death.

The duties of all Muslims are known as the Five Pillars of Islam. These duties are as follows:

1. Recite the shahadah at least once.
2. Perform the salat (prayer) five times a daily, facing the Kaaba at Mecca.
3. Contribute regularly to charity via the zakat, a 2.5% charity tax, and through additional donations to the needy people.
4. Fast during the month of Ramazan, the month that Muhammad received the Qur'an from Allah.
5. Pay a visit to pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in life time, if economically and physically possible.

### **Sikhism - 1500 CE**

Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji founded the religion Sikhism in the Punjab area, which is now Pakistan. Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji who after receiving a vision began preaching the way to enlightenment. After the death of Guru Nanak Dev Ji a succession of nine Gurus (regarded as reincarnations of Guru Nanak) led the religion Sikhism progress until 1708.

Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru compiled the text of the religion Sikhism, The Shri Guru Granth Sahib. This Shri Guru Granth Sahib contains the hymns and writings of the ten Gurus of Sikhism. This holy Shri Guru Granth text is considered the eleventh and final Guru. Sikhism accepts as true in a single formless God with numerous names. Sikhs pray several times daily. Sikhism forbids idols or icons worship. Sikhism also trust in samsara, karma, and reincarnation as Hindus. The Reht Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct and conventions) contains 27 articles. Article 1 identify who is a Sikh:

"Any human being who faithfully believes in:

- 1) One Immortal Being,
- 2) Ten Gurus, commencing from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh,
- 3) The Guru Granth Sahib,
- 4) The expression and teachings of the ten Gurus and
- 5) The baptism bestowed by the tenth Guru, and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion, is a Sikh."

### **Bahá'í - 1863 CE**

Baha'u'llah founded the religion in Iran and since then has spread worldwide. The Bahá'í Faith in the 1800s. The followers of Baha'u'llah religion consider that God has sent nine divine prophets to mankind. by whom the Holy Spirit has revealed the "Word of God." Holy Spirit has revealed the "Word of God." through these nine divine prophets.

Bahá'ís believe that every person has an immortal soul which can not die but is freed to travel through the spirit world after death.

## Tales from Panchatantra

“Wit is superior to brute force.”

### The story of the clever rabbit and the foolish lion

A long time ago there lived a cruel lion in a jungle. It was a greedy lion and it killed the animals in the woods haphazardly. Considering this massacre, all the animals got together and decided to appeal to the lion with an offer of one animal of each species volunteering itself to be eaten by the lion daily. Hence every day it was the turn of one animal of a species to sacrifice its life for the sake of the whole community. One day it was turn of the rabbits. The rabbits selected an elderly rabbit amongst them. The old rabbit was intelligent and had a lot of experience. The lion was getting very impatient on not seeing any animal come by and swore he would kill all animals the next day.

The older rabbit took its own time to reach cave of the lion where it was eagerly awaiting for his prey. The rabbit slowly stepped into the cave of the lion by sunset. The lion was very annoyed with him. The clever aged rabbit was calm and slowly told the lion that it was not his fault. The rabbit told the lion that a group of rabbits were coming to him for the day. While coming on the way, another angry lion attacked them all and ate all the rabbits except himself. Somehow he escaped to reach safely, the rabbit said. He further said that the other lion was challenging the supremacy of his lordship the lion. The lion was naturally very infuriated and asked to be taken to the site of the other lion.

The shrewd rabbit agreed and led the lion towards a deep well with full of water. Then he showed the lion his reflection in the water of the well. The lion was fuming and started growling. Actually it was his own image in the water, and the other Lion, was also equally angry. Then the lion jumped into the water at the image of the other lion to attack it and lost its life in the well. Thus the wise rabbit saved the forest and its inhabitants from the pompous lion.

“Do not meddle in things that don't concern you “

### The story of the Monkey

Once upon a time in the courtyard of a Hindu temple a construction work had being conducted. At the site, a massive wooden log had being split lengthwise halfway for the roof structure. The workers fixed a grip in-between the split in the wood at the lunch time and went off for their meals. A monkey had been watching the activities of the employees from the morning. At that time when the workers departed the monkey descended from the tree and began to examine with that log of wood. During that operation the monkey saw the wedge and pulled it out. But he forgot that his tail was hanging between the split ends of the log. The moment the wedge was out, the split ends closed squeezing the tail of the monkey. The monkey tried hard to get himself free but in vain. When the workers returned from their lunch, the monkey had died.

### List of the Puranas (Eighteen)

There are eighteen main Puranas. Of these, six are Sattvic Puranas and glorify Vishnu; Six are Rajasic Puranas and glorify Brahma; six are Tamasic Puranas and glorify Siva. Sage Bhadraryana, ( Vyasa ) is the authour of these Puranas.

#### • Vishnu Puranas

Vishnu Purana, (23 000 verses)	04.	Garuda (Suparna) Purana, (19 000 verses)
Naradiya Purana, (25 000 verses)	05.	Padma Purana, (55 000 verses)
Srimad Bhagavata Purana, (18 000 verses)	06.	Varah Purana, (24 000 verses)

#### • Brahma Puranas

Brahma Purana, (10 000 verses)	10.	Markandeya Purana, (9000 verses)
Brahmanda Purana, (12 000 verses)	11.	Bhavishya Purana, (14 500 verses)
Brahma Vaivarta Purana, (18 000 verses)	12.	Vamana Purana, (10 000 verses)

#### • Shiva Puranas

atsya Purana, (14 000 verses)		Siva Purana, (24 000 verses)
Kurma Purana, (17 000 verses)		Skanda Purana (81 100 verses)
Linga Purana, (11 000 verses)		Agni Purana. (15 400 verses)

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These books are available at the web site; [www.noolaham.net](http://www.noolaham.net)

