

Sanatana (Hindu) Dharma, The Greatest



Sanatana (Hindu) Dharma, the greatest



**By
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Preface

Sanatana Dharma has rich heritage of Indus Valley Civilisation and Vedic civilisation which flourished since ancient times (3300 BC as per historic records) till 12th century AD. The rise of Sanatana Dharma greatly influenced Indian Sub-Continent and other areas world over. However, incessant foreign invasions and change in educational system particularly during British rule and subsequently, the knowledge of Hinduism diminished.

Sanatana Dharma has been called the oldest religion rather a “way of life” of the world. Hindu philosophy provides great insight to people on the way of living life. It is gives great insight for self-development & growth, spiritual & cultural development, holistic development of society etc.

In modern education system in India, Sanatana Dharma is not taught thereby depriving the post-independence generations from rich heritage of India and best of leading life.

An attempt is made here to address the intriguing questions on the ideas of Sanatana Dharma in simple and lucid way particularly for young generation who are keen to know the basic tenets of Sanatana Dharma.

Acknowledgements

I bow before Hanuman ji, all the Hindu deities and my Guruji, Sri M for seeding the idea of this book and giving strength to encapsulate this.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to the following friends who continuously liked my published articles on website and encouraged me to address the burning questions on Sanatana Dharma to the best of ability.

To Madhuri, my wife, Vaibhav and Alaukik, my sons and Ashmita and Astha, my daughter-in-laws who inspired me to write articles on Sanatana Dharma. Without their support and guidance, it was not possible to produce this.

And to my dear friends, who have always shown great interest in my 335 articles published in six years. Special thanks to unknown masses who felt the need of scientific explanations on various customs and Hindu traditions.

Thank you one and all.

Rajiv Aggarwal

Section- 1

Questions on Sanatana Dharma



1. What is Sanatana Dharma?

Meaning - Sanatana means eternal; Dharma is from Dhru which means to maintain. Dharma is the religious and moral law governing individual conduct.

Explanation - Sanatana Dharma is anadi (without beginning) and also a-paurusheya (without a human founder) rather founded by almighty himself.

Sanatana Dharma is –

- Almighty-based rather than prophet-cantered;
- Experience-based rather than faith-based;

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- Inclusive;
- In the world, while above the world.
- Both inherent and transcendent.
- Loving of all and excluding of none.



2. Why are so many gods in Sanatana Dharma?

Reason - As per Sanatana Dharma, Absolute God created dual forces viz. Matter (Prakriti) and the Vital Force or Atman (material desire & non-matter). These two form the universe. As explained by the Vedic sage, Yajnavalkya (c. 700 BCE), many forms of gods' manifest the man's desires which all emanate from the vital force.

Explanation –

Human Being needs earth, fire, air, water, sky, various parts of human body, wealth, education, intelligence, prosperity, love, success, power, knowledge, good luck, auspiciousness, profit etc. the various Hindu Gods exemplify these basic human needs or desires.

Symbolism of various deities is motive for their worship – Ganesha – symbol of Buddhi (intelligence), Siddhi (spiritual power), Riddhi (prosperity), Obstacle remover (good luck), Subha (auspiciousness) and Labha (profit); Durga – Symbol of protection, strength,

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motherhood, destruction, and wars; Saraswati – Symbol of education & knowledge; Lakshmi – Symbol of Wealth & prosperity; Vishnu - God who maintains human life filled with justice and peace; Shiva - Supreme Lord who creates, protects and transforms the universe; Hanuman - He symbolizes the human excellences of inner self-control, faith, and service to a cause; Sun - sun represents life energy, power, positivity, and clarity.

It does not matter whether a person worships Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, Rama, Krishna, Ganesh or any other of the Vedic gods or goddesses, because they all represent the same Absolute Truth or God in various form to satisfy human desires.



3. Why Hindus have 33 Crores Gods?

Reason – It is misnomer, it is not 33 crores but 33 koti (types) Gods. These are various universal powers which are ultimately classified into 33 gods – 8 Vasus (Fire, earth, air, sky, sun, heaven, the moon and stars); 11 Rudras (five sense organs, five organ of actions & mind); 12 Adityas (12 months); cloud (Indra) and Sacrifice (Brahma or Prajapati).



4. What is so great about Sanatana Dharma?

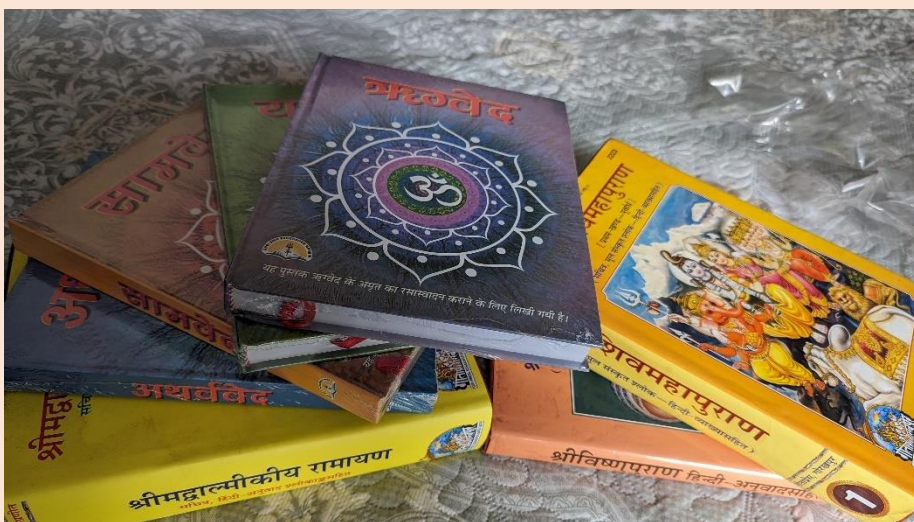
Reason – Sanatana Dharma is the only dharma or duties originated time immemorable and is scientific, holistic and organic. This is the precise reason, it is prevailing for thousands of years and attracting people.

Explanation –

- a. Organic in growth – Sanatana Dharma, the mother of so many religions, is not only beautiful but bountiful. Unlike other religions, Sanatana Dharma has a series of prophets and a bouquet of incarnations of God. It has so many acclaimed religious books, so many holy places to visit and a large number of realized saints; as against other religions which have limited options. This is because, Hinduism has pretty long organic growth and provided solutions to different life problems and challenges faced by different civilizations.
- b. Holistic - The Hindus are associated with the idea of holiness, purity, truth, non-violence, omnipresence of God, rebirth and many forms of God to realize different desires. Hindu system does not consist

struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma but is centered in realizing the divine. Idols or temples or books are only the support.

- c. Scientific - Hindu Dharma is a Science not a faith, developed over the centuries, contributed by ancient scientists (rishis and sages) for giving right direction to the society. Sanatana Dharma is not simply a philosophy but host of great people laid foundation of Sanatana Dharma over thousands of years. Sanatana Dharma has hundreds of books based on researches done by rishis. Hence, this is the only religion which is not in contravention with science unlike other religions. Sanskrit syllable, social system, goals of life, Astronomy, Astrology, Mathematics, rituals, creation of universe and other branches of science are not in contravention of modern scientific principles.



5. Why Hindus have so many holy books?

Reason – Sanatan Dharma is collective wisdom of a large number rishis based on their scientific researches done from various dimensions. Sanatan Dharma is the only religion which has enormous amount of spiritual literature viz. Vedas, Up Vedas, Upanishads, Vedangas, Agamas, Nigamas, Smritis, Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, etc. Rather thousands of Hindu's literatures lost due to lack of preservation and invasions.

Explanation - According to Vedic Mathematics, the age of Vedic Sanatana Dharma is estimated to be 155.52 trillion Years. As per estimates, Vedas, the oldest scriptures were composed during 1750-500 BCE, i.e., 3972 years ago. Rock paintings of Bhimbetka rock shelters are about 10,000 years old (c. 8,000 BCE), as well as neolithic times. Since the advent of modern science, so many books are written based on researches done by scientists in about one thousand years. Hence, it is quite natural so many Hindu scriptures were written by a large number of rishis (scientists) over thousands of years.



6. Why there are so many castes and religious groups in Hinduism?

Reason – Sanatan Dharma is so ancient that it has a series of incarnations, rishis, realized saints and Hindu philosophies & practices. They gave rise to various sects, sampradayas, castes & sub-castes. The origin of caste system trace back in Manu Smriti. The caste originally depended not on a man's birth but on his natural capacities.

Explanation –

Origin of Castes - The most revered Hindu scripture, in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita (BG, chapter 15, verse 1 & 2 of Purushottam Yoga), Shree Krishna advised that all human beings are created by Brahma. Hence, there is no distinction of Varnas. This whole universe is Brahman. The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita thereafter recites a behavioural model for Varna based on attributes (Gunas) of the persons. There are three attributes viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The pre-dominance of the particular attribute say sattvika is to be of category Brahmins

irrespective of birth. The work or duties should be adopted according to in-born Gunas of the persons and the categories of work are described as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras.

Origin of Sects - Further, various sects originate due to bhakti movements led by the philosophers such as Ramanujacharya, Nimbakacharya, Madhvacharya, Vallabhacharya, Ramananda and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Section- 2

Questions on Hindu Deities



7. Why Shree Rama is called as incarnation of almighty?

Reason - Maryada Purshottam Bhagwan Ram – Bhagwan Rama is a role model for modern youth, as a team builder, a team leader, the Sanatana (Hindu) Dharma, the greatest

dharmā, one who exemplified various relationships. He lived always within the prescribed limits (Maryada) such as kept the vow of one wife, stick to what he has said. His life reflects an ideal way of living as a student, a householder, a king, a father, a son, a husband, a disciple. He always followed orders of parents, Guru and saints.

Explanation -

- a. As a perfect son - To keep the respect of vows of his father, he sacrificed throne of Ajodhya & all luxuries and gracefully accepted the exile of 14 years in forest.
- b. As team builder – He build team by befriending with Sugriva, the vanaras king who was living at Rishyamukha Mountains, and Sri Hanuman, Jambavan, etc. in rescuing Sita.
- c. As a perfect disciple - He broke the bow to comply the order of guru Vishwamitra and guru Vasishtha.
- d. As a perfect husband - To fulfil the wish of his wife to get the golden deer, he went out, when Ravana came and abducted Sita. He always trusted Sita and she lived in his heart lifelong though she was left to forest due to public opinion after Sri Rama was crowned as king.
- e. As an ideal king – There was not even a single incident of theft, robbery, starvation, etc. when he had become the king of Ajodhya after completing his period of exile.
- f. As ideal brother – He showered love and affection on his brothers and never doubted them.
- g. As best friend – He proved his friendship with Sugriva, Kevat, Nishadraj and Vibhushan.
- h. As God – by eating the false plum of Shabari, Lord Shri Ram set an example of the relationship of God and his devotee.



8. Why Shree Krishna is called as incarnation of almighty?

Reason - Bhagwan Sri Krishna displayed sixteen attributes viz. compassion, patience, forgiveness, impartiality, justice, detachment, meditation & spiritual powers, invincibility, beneficence, beauty incarnate, best of dancer, best of singer, honesty, truthfulness, Perfect master of all arts, such as poetry, drama, painting etc. and controller of all & controller of self. Moreover, he displayed fearlessness, freedom from anger; renunciation, tranquility, steady determination, vigor, etc. Bhagwan Shri Krishna displayed control over senses and took decisions in larger public interest.

Explanation -

- a. Positive attitude in both favorable as well as adverse circumstances – he faced adverse circumstance since childhood but always maintained

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calm and happiness. At age six days, Putna attacked him and later on a large number of attacks were made on him in Gokul as well as Mathura.

- b. No greed of Power & Kingdom – Though he killed Kansa, Shishupal, Jarasandha (through Bhima), Narakasur etc., he gave away the kingdoms to Ugrasena, Shishupal's son, Jarasandha's son, Sahadeva, Narakasur's son respectively.
- c. No egoism, humbleness – Jarasandha attacked Mathura seventeen times and got defeated by Shri Krishna. Thereafter, Shri Krishna decided to leave Mathura in the interest of Mathura habitants as repeated battles was gravely harming them. He preferred to be called as Rannchord means that ran from battlefield. He left for Okha, Gujarat and set up a new city named as Dwarka. Despite being king of a large kingdom, Shri Krishna served as the charioteer of the Arjuna during the war of Mahabharata.
- d. Patience - He tried his best to avoid killing Kansa, Shishupal, Narakasur and war between Kauravas & Pandavas.

Throughout his life, Shri Krishna played whatever role; He perfected that role and became role model.

- a. Ideal Student - He was a very fast learner. He mastered sixty-four arts by Sandipani Muni in a brief period. After completing his study, Shri Krishna spoke of giving Guru Dakshina to Gurumata. On this, Gurumata considered Krishna as unique and asked for his son back in Guru Dakshina, who died by drowning in the ocean during Prabhas tour. Obeying Gurumata, Krishna ripped the stomach of a demon named Shankachakunda in the sea and pulled out son of Guru and a conch, which was called "Panchajanya".
- b. Ideal Friend - Shri Krishna met Sudama in Gurukul (School). Sudama was a poor Brahmin from Saurashtra, Gujarat. When poor Sudama reached Dwarka to meet his friend, Shri Krishna cleaned his feet with his tears and plucked the thorn with his teeth. Shri Krishna ate the coarse rice brought by Sudama and in exchange bestowed entire prosperity of Dwarka. As a friend, Shri Krishna became charioteer of Arjuna and showed him his universal form.

- c. Ideal Son –When Balkrishna was leaving for Mathura, Ma Yasodha was much agitated and she said to him that people have been telling that she is his foster mother. She begged pardon for binding him and said, “She loved him much”. Balkrishna saluted her and assured that she is his mother and would remain as mother. In Mathura, Shri Krishna killed Kansa and freed his parents from prison.
- d. Ideal Brother – The relationship of Shri Krishna with sister Subhadra and Balarama was ideal. At Jagannath Puri temple, all the three are worshipped together. Balarama also killed many demons. He along with Shri Krishna killed Kansa. He was constant companion of Shri Krishna.
- e. Ideal Husband - Once, Narada ji desired to see the married life of Shri Krishna and his conduct with 16108 wives. He reached Dwarka. He visited all the houses of Shri Krishna’s wives and found him engaged with each one in family affairs.
- f. Ideal Disciple – The relationship of Draupadi and Shri Krishna was more like a devotee and God. Shri Krishna saved the modesty of Draupadi at a time when all left her alone.



9. Why did Rama test Sita?

Reason – It is a myth, as claimed and later insertions in the Ramayana that Rama tested purity of Sita.

Explanation - In fact, while in Lanka, Ma Sita continued in meditation without taking food and water. Moment the battle was over, she began to emerge from meditation, the heat was generated and a great fire engulfed her body. The fire consumed all the impurities of the place and the effects of the war. This fire was the heat of her Tapasya.

Others explain that the Sita which was kidnapped by Ravan was actually a shadow of Sita and actual Sita was hiding inside fire. So, when shadow Sita went inside the fire, actual Sita came out.



10. Why Krishna had so many wives?

Reason – Bhagwan Shri Krishna had 16108 wives. Shri Krishna marriages were incidental and due to circumstances of protecting honours to the girls.

Explanation – There is lot of talks about thousands of wives of Shri Krishna. But very few people know the real stories behind Shri Krishna's wedding with 16,108 girls. All the weddings of Shri Krishna were at the behest of the girls as they wanted to marry with him. Shri Krishna had eight principal wives viz. Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Kalindi, Mitravinda, Bhadra, and Lakshmana. Rukmini was in deep love with Krishna from childhood. But her father and brother wanted her to marry Shishupala. Krishna rescued her with her consent and got married to her. Shri Krishna had also rescued Mitravinda as per her request from her forceful marriage by her

brother. Shri Krishna married Satya and Lakshmana by winning them in their swayamavar but with their family's consent. Satyabhama, Bhadra & Jambavati were offered by their fathers as bride to Krishna. Kalindi did severe meditation to get Krishna as her husband.

Naraka asura defeated kings of all the Kingdoms on the earth & Swarga Loka and captured 16,100 women after defeating the respective kings. On hearing the plight of these women, Satyabhama, wife of Shri Krishna approached him to kill Naraka. After defeating Naraka, the 16,100 women were released by Krishna. To protect the honour of the 16,100 women and preventing them from being committed suicide, Shri Krishna married them.

The character of Shri Krishna was impeccable and his personality was so charming that girls themselves were enchanted by him.

Section- 3

Questions on Hindu Worship System



11. Why murti puja (Idol worship) is done?

Reason - Sri Ramakrishna has beautifully explained that God is with form, without form and beyond form. Ordinary mind can conceive only finite things. So, one uses the form to go beyond the form. Idols or temples or churches or books are supportive tools to help the people for spiritual progress. The Hindus have associated the idea of holiness, purity, truth, omnipresence, and such other ideas with different images and forms.

Explanation – There are four paths of liberation viz. Karma yoga, the selfless actions; Bhakti yoga, the path of devotion; Gyana yoga, the path of knowledge; and Raja yoga, the royal path of meditation. Intense feeling of affection, warmth, fondness and devotion towards a person or deity is developed by its living form. The path of devotion gave big impetus to the idol worshipping or murti puja in India.

Sanatana Dharma is so ancient that over period of time, it evolved various types of worshipping modes. There was no idol worship during Vedic period. Agnihotra or Yajna was performed. Later, there were more than sixty-eight sects. They had adopted different ways of worship. In 8th century, Adi Shankaracharya, who was a founder of Advaita Vedanta (Non-dualism) and was exponent of formless Supreme Being, the Brahman, even he gave boost to idol worship. He instituted the Panchayatana-Puja or worship of five deities' viz. Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, Aditya (Sun) and Ganesha. Subsequently, different sects were set up by various acharyas who gave boost to idol worshipping viz. worship of Lakshmi-Narayana by Ramanujacharya; worship of Radha-Krishna by Nimbakacharya & Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu; worship of Bal-Krishna by Vallabhacharya; worship of Sri Rama, Sita, Laxman & Hanuman by Ramananda and Tulsidas ji; worship of Devi by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa etc.



12. Why Hindus take a dip in Ganga and how it cleanses the sins?

Reason - Since the Ganga had descended from heaven to earth, she is considered sacred and the vehicle of ascent, from earth to heaven.

Explanation - The holy river, Ganga had its origin from the foot of Vishnu during His incarnation as Vamana. Hindus worship Ganga as the goddess of purification and forgiveness. Scientific studies of Ganga water have revealed the presence of 143 types of bacteriophages. Ganga water has specific bactericidal activity against pathogens like Mycobacterium, Streptococcus, etc. It has been proved scientifically that Ganga water is better than other rivers water at the initial source. It has a quality that it does not allow bacteria to grow.



13. Why Hindus treat Cow as holy?

Reason – Hindus consider the cow as holy which symbolizes wealth, strength, and motherly love. Cows of Indian breed have highly beneficial five products, Cows' urine contains ammonia which is antiseptic, its milk is nearest to mother's milk, cow dung contains phosphorous which prevent harmful bacteria and cows' ghee to be most agreeable to the human system & its emission protects the earth from atomic radiations. Ayurvedic medical system has researched & produced a large number of medicines from cow products which prevent and cure various diseases.

Explanation -

The cow has also been associated with various deities, notably Shiva (whose steed is Nandi, a bull), Indra (closely associated with Kamadhenu, the wish-granting cow), Krishna (a cowherd in his youth), etc.

Panchgavya viz. curd, cow dung, ghee, cow urine and milk. These have miraculous effects.

- Curd is a rich source of probiotics (beneficial living micro-organisms) and has several nutrients and micronutrients, including water, proteins, vitamins like A, B, D, and E; minerals like calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, zinc, etc.
- Cow dung is rich in several beneficial microbes like Saccharomyces, Lactobacillus, Bacillus, Streptococcus, Candida, etc. It also contains various nutritional components, including minerals, vitamins, potassium, nitrogen, oxygen, carbon, cellulose, hemicellulose, mucus, lignin. Cow dung is used to degrade waste generated from the city and hospitals due to the abundance of different micro-organisms beneficial for waste degradation. In rural areas of India, a dried cow dung cake is used as a source of energy.
- Cow ghee prepared by traditional method possesses high nutritional value, medicinal benefits, and helps to promote good health.
- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India, and other scientists in India demonstrated antineoplastic, anti-fungal, antibiotic, and bio-enhancing effects of cow urine distillate. In the Ayurvedic system of medicine, cow urine is used for the preparation of several formulations.
- Indian breed of cows delivers A2 type of milk, whereas A1 type of milk is given by crossbreed or exotic cow species. Consumption of A1 milk also causes asthma, heart diseases, and allergic reactions. A2 type of milk has numerous benefits on human health and various medicinal activities.

Physio-chemical properties of Panchagavya revealed that they possess almost all the major nutrients, micro nutrients and growth hormones. Panchgavya therapy is recommended for a variety of diseases viz., asthma, flu, allergies, cardiovascular diseases, renal disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, leukoderma, wound healing, leucorrhoea, hepatitis, dietary and gastrointestinal tract disorders, obesity, tuberculosis, ulcer, chemical intoxication, other bacterial, fungal and viral infections. The therapy has also demonstrated its

therapeutic potential against severe pathological conditions like cancer, AIDS, and diabetes. Panchgavya plays a crucial role in organic farming practices.



14. Why Hindus worship Tulsi plant (Indian Basil)?

Reason - Tulsi has great medicinal properties. It is a remarkable antibiotic. As per Ayurveda medicine system, plant's extracts can be used to prevent and cure many illnesses and common ailments like common cold, headaches, stomach disorders, inflammation, heart disease, various forms of poisoning and malaria.

Explanation -

Modern scientific research offers impressive evidence that the tulsi reduces stress, enhances stamina, relieves inflammation, lowers cholesterol, eliminates toxins, protects against radiation, prevents gastric ulcers, lowers fevers, improves digestion, and provides a rich supply of antioxidants and other nutrients.

Tulsi (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) Herbal Mosquito Repellent not only keeps home free from mosquitoes but also kills bacteria, purifies air & spread a natural aroma. Tulsi has demonstrated effective antimicrobial

property against *A. actinomycetemcomitans*. A methanol-based tulsi leaves extract is proved most effective in inhibiting the growth of four bacteria — *Bacillus subtilis*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* — and two fungi — *Aspergillus niger* and *Penicillium sp.*

Tulsi is very sacred plant in Hindu religion and offered to deities during worship particularly Vishnu and His Avatars. As per the Hindu tradition, people plant Tulsi in their homes, take its proper care and worship it. It is regarded as Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and the consort of Lord Vishnu.



15. Why do Hindus worship Peepal Tree (Ficus Religiosa)?

Reason - In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna said: 'Among trees, I am the ashwattha (peepal). According to Atharva Veda and Chandogya Upanishad, Peepal Tree is the paradise of Gods. It believed Goddess Lakshmi resides under the tree every Saturday. It is also said that Lord Hanuman sat on peepal tree and witnesses the hardships faced by Sita in Lanka. The peepal is associated with the Sanatan trinity: Brahma, Vishnu & Shiva. Women usually pray the tree and tie a red thread or cloth to fulfil their wishes.

Explanation - As per Ayurveda system of medicine, the leaves of Peepal cure Asthma and the milk derived out of the leaves helps relieve eye pain. This tree can cure as much as 50 disorders, including diarrhoea, epilepsy and gastric troubles.

Peepal Tree is different from other plants (which release carbon dioxide at night) as it releases Oxygen even during the night due to a special photosynthesis process called Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM). As per article published on 1st May, 2014, in International Journal of Pharmaceutical Science & Research, different parts of the peepal, is useful in treatment of diabetes, urinary disorders, burns, Sanatana (Hindu) Dharma, the greatest

gastrohelcosis, TB, fever, paralysis, oxidative stress, mumps, jaundice, heart diseases, constipation, skin diseases, etc. due to the presence of various Phyto-constituents (phenolics, sterols, flavonoids etc). Why Puja is done daily?



16. Why is daily puja done by Hindus?

Reason – Daily Puja is not mere a ritual but important step in realising materialistic desires and progress of spiritual journey, if done regularly & as per prescribed process. Immediate gains of daily puja are calming of mind; facilitating surrender of ego; positive impact on body, mind & soul by mantra Japa, Havan, Bhajans, and upvas; reduction of stress; alignment of body, mind & soul; activation of endocrine system etc.; and easy to establish connection with the God.

Explanation - Shiva Purana has explained the process and fruits of daily puja. The worship of idols is conducive to attainment of all cherished desires. The five deities Ganesh, Sun, Vishnu, Devi (Parvati) and Shiva shall be usually worshipped (chapter 16). Worship of Bhagwan Ganesh is done to attain his wish in this world itself; of Devi for prosperity; of Bhagwan Vishnu for good progeny; of Shiv Linga for realisation and of Sun for fame & health.



17. Why yajna is done?

Reason – The Yajna is based on deep science of fire and its impact. When Oblations are made with unique syllables (mantras) in fire, these expand into gases and spread into higher realms to realise material, environmental, social, psychological and spiritual benefits.

Explanation – In yajnas, pieces of wood, pure cow ghee, herbs, grains, haven Kund, mantras and other articles are used to offer into the fire. There are certain rules and restrictions for both, the priest conducting the yajna and the person performing it.

- Material gain - Fulfilment of specific desires such as to gain wealth, power, prosperity, offspring, intelligence, rainfall, food grains etc.
- Psychological gain - Inspiration to follow the path of purity and righteousness
- Environmental - Purification of air which benefits to a large number of people
- Social - Welfare of living beings, in general. The mantra of oblation and many other mantras recited while offering oblations end with

words “Idam Na Mama” i.e., it is not for me or belongs to me (alone) but is dedicated to God (for the benefit of all).

- e. Spiritual gain - Yajna as Nishkaam karma, helps in getting rid of all pains and attaining liberation.
- f. Worldly desires – Yajnas can help to cure diseases, destroy enemies, control turmoil, seeking divine help for solving problems that defy mundane solutions, peace to the departed souls.

Thousands of tested methods of yajnas have been given in Yajurveda and Rig Veda for different purposes that have proved to be correct. These are to be performed with devotion, dedication, determination, regularity and patience for a considerably long time to accomplish the desired goals. Mantras and yajna and meditation deliver results only after constant practice, true faith, devotion, dedication, determination and patience. Persons from all nationalities, religions, caste or creed may seek help of these yagnas and mantras for their benefit.



18. Why Kalash is installed in puja?

Reason - The kalash is considered auspicious, and symbolizes holy water of sacred rivers. While worshipping the kalash, the blessings of all the sacred rivers and deities, including those of Lord Vishnu, are invoked.

Explanation - The water in the kalash symbolizes the primordial water from which Lord Brahma and the entire creation came into existence. The coconut fruit placed at its mouth represents the head of the devotee. The mango leaves arranged around the coconut are meant to attract divine vibrations from the astral world to bless the devotee and to divinize the water or the akshat or unbroken rice filled in the kalash. The akshat—that which will not exhaust—rice has the unique quality of being able to absorb the negativity that is in the environs. After the puja, its water is used for all the rituals, including the abhisheka or divine bath.



19. Why lamp is lighted in puja?

Reason – Lighting of lamp dispels darkness externally and ignorance internally. It brings positive energy and removes negative energy around us. A lit lamp has a spiritual message. The ghee in it denotes human desires and negative tendencies whereas the wick in it symbolizes man's ego. When it is outwardly lit—when a man mentally concentrates on the Supreme Lord—it is an inward action, but when he lights a lamp outside, it becomes an outward action; it removes negativity and attracts divinity. When it is lit within, through knowledge, it destroys the desires from their very root and gradually, the ego is decimated. The flame of a lamp always burns upwards and that inspires us to acquire such knowledge that will take us towards higher goals, ideals and noble deeds.

Explanation – In universe, sun, moon, stars etc. brings light to remove darkness. Sun light is a source nourishment, prosperity and health. Lighting of lamp symbolizes sun and brings auspiciousness, health and prosperity. It instils devotion and brings our focus on almighty in our prayers. Lighting a lamp creates a perfect ambience for meditation and prayers. Lighting of a lamp with mustard oil, coconut oil, sesame oil, castor oil or ghee (clarified butter), exudes positivity. It has its own field of energy. In Rigveda, Agni is called ‘Pavakka’ which means pure. Therefore, lighting a lamp helps create great pure ambience and ensure that everything is good, right, and pious. Lighting of lamp is done by chanting of a mantra – मंत्र- शुभम् करोति कल्याणं, आरोग्यं धन संपदाम्, शत्रु बुद्धि विनाशाय, दीपं ज्योति नमोस्तुते। (Salutations to the light of the lamp, which brings auspiciousness, health and prosperity, which destroys inimical feelings).



20. Why flowers are offered in puja?

Reason – Flowers brings positivity and establishes connection between the devotee and deity.

Explanation – God and human being alike are attracted to the flowers which symbolizes beauty, colour and tenderness. Universally, on all occasions – birth, wedding, sickness or death, flowers are offered. Flowers symbolize selflessness, self-sacrifice, detachment, surrender, faith and positive emotions. By offering them to God, a devotee declares the purity and sincerity of his devotion and the tenderness of his feelings, and earns his reciprocal love. Different deities are offered different colours of flowers supposed to be of their liking such as Ganesha – Red, Devi – Mogra, Shiva – white, Vishnu – pink lotus, etc.



21. Why fruits are offered in Puja?

Reason – Fruits are symbolically our actions, achievements and belongings which are surrendered before the deity.

Explanation – Offering of fruits or our belongings to deity liberates us from ego of achievements. Samarpan or surrender vanishes difference between person and God.

During Archana (invocation), mantras are chanted, and these set the air inside the sanctum-sanctorum in vibration with maximum energy.

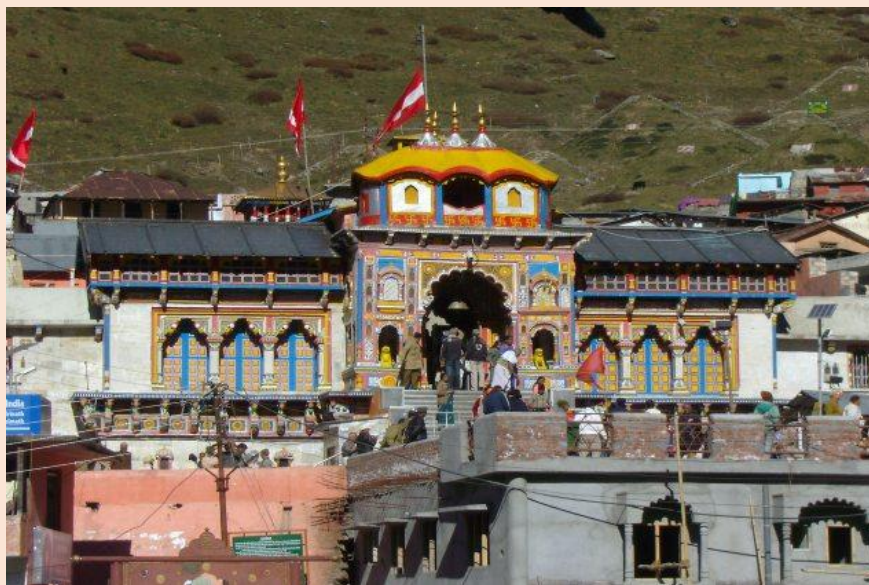


22. Why mango and Tulsi leaves are used in Puja? Why is camphor lighted during Puja?

Reason - The mango and Tulsi leaves have electrical charge and so is a good conductor which creates negative ions. Lighting of camphor produce negative ions.

Explanation - Negative ions help to purify air by attaching to the positively charged electrons in bacteria, viruses, dust, pollen, Mold spores, pet dander, cigarette smoke, etc. These improve overall well-being by increasing serotonin release, which alleviates depression, stress and energy; these increase the flow of oxygen to the brain; resulting in higher alertness, decreased drowsiness, and more mental energy. Negative ions help to revitalize cell metabolism. Negative ions help to improve the function of our respiratory tract therefore decreasing respiratory borne illness such as asthma, hay fever, colds, flus, etc.

Worshipper inhale the air with the negative ions, and their O2 being good gets a favourable condition for fixing oxygen with haemoglobin. In general, the sanctum-sanatorium acts as a volume resonator, the idol with its Peedarn as an energy reservoir, worshippers as receivers, and the air inside as a medium for the transfer of energy.



23. Why are ancient temples more on the seashore, near waterfalls and on hill tops?

Reason – The negative ions are found more on the seashore, near waterfalls and on hill tops.

Explanation – Temples of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Vaishno devi, Tirupati etc. are on hill-tops; Dwarka, Tiruchendur, Rameswaram, Kanyakumari etc. are on the seashore, and Courtallam is a temple near waterfalls. Concentration of negative ions is more there which help in well-being of health.

The highest concentrations of negative ions are in nature, mountains, forests, waterfalls, beaches, oceans and are most prevalent around bodies of moving water. “The action of the pounding surf creates negative air ions and we also see it immediately after spring thunderstorms when people report lightened moods,” says ion researcher Michael Terman, PhD, of Columbia University in New York.

Sanatana (Hindu) Dharma, the greatest

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24. Why water is offered to Sun?

Reason – Sun rays passing through water create rainbow effect. This is splitting of light into seven colours. These colours have positive impact on health of different organs in body.

Explanation – Different colours of sun rays bring positive impact on several parts of the human body which have different colours. Our nerves are blue, the heart is red, kidneys and pancreas are brownish, the bones are white, and the brain nerves are in rainbow colour. Morning blue light hits pituitary gland and sets the circadian rhythm for the day.



25. Why is Sanctum-Sanctorum (Garbha Greh) is made in Temples?

Reason – Sanctum-sanctorum (Garbagriha or Moolasthan) of a Hindu temple which is built as per the agama texts of the Hindu religion. There is always a relation between the size of the idol and the size of the sanctum-sanctorum. Because of this the air column inside the sanctum-sanctorum resonates to the sound “OM” (Pranava Mantra). When this “OM” is chanted inside the sanctum-sanctorum, resonance occurs. Each air molecule inside the sanctum-sanctorum vibrates with maximum amplitude, thereby producing intense sound.



26. Why is Kumbh so sacred?

Reason – As per a legend that after churning of ocean by demons & deities, nectar of immortality fell at the four locations where the Kumbh Mela is observed today. It has belief in the beneficial qualities of bathing in the holy Ganga at the Sangam.

Explanation – There are three types of Kumbh mela viz. Ardh Kumbh, Poorna Kumbh and Maha Kumbh held every six years, twelve years and one hundred forty-four years respectively. Kumbh mela are organised at four holy sites – Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik and Ujjain. All the kumbh mela take place on the banks of a sacred river, deeply connected as they are to the rites of bathing. It takes place during predetermined, unique, and auspicious astrological arrangements, which involve the Sun, the Moon or Jupiter in different constellations. Astrologically, the phenomenon that the Sun is behind the Moon in this phase; its heat and energy results in the release of the 'nectar'

generated in the Moon. The belief is that taking dip in the sacred waters during the Kumbh brings the blessings of the nectar.



27. Why aarti done?

Reason – Aarti perfects the ritualistic worship and expands divine aura. This charges the total environment with enhanced positivity and one receives divine vibrations and spiritual strength.

Explanation – Aarti is the process of total surrender before the deity with lighted diya, camphor, ringing of bell, sound of conch, cloth, water, flower etc. done in spirit of humility, gratitude and surrender of soul. It is believed that ringing of bells and sound of conch removes evil spirit and alleviates ear problems. Camphor increases positivity. All the items used in puja represent panchbhoot – agni (fire), Jal (water), vayu (wind), Prithvi (earth) and akash (ether), the constituents of universe.



28. Why betel leaves or Paan & areca nuts or Supari are offered in puja?

Reason – Betel leaves and areca nuts are the offerings made to deities to draw both celestial and earthly vibrations.

Explanation - Betel leaves are odour sensitive and it draws both celestial and earthly vibrations. Paan is selected which are intact and with its stem. The stem of the leaves acts as antenna in this function. Paan is digestive and stimulant. The areca nut or supari symbolizes the ego. For rituals, the oval type of supari is suited because this is able to attract divine vibrations.



29. Why tilak, Kumkum, Sandal paste, Kumkum etc. are applied on the forehead?

Reason - Tilak is applied on forehead of deity and to the participants in puja. Tilak is normally made up of Kumkum (red lead), Haldi (turmeric), Chandan (sandalwood paste) or ash from burnt haven. Tilak activates Ajna chakra also called as third eye. It is believed that activation of Ajna chakra improves intuition and communication ability.

Explanation – It has been found that sandalwood, turmeric, Kumkum & saffron, when applied between two eyebrows, it activates pineal gland which controls endocrine glands. Further, Ajna chakra lies between two eye brows which controls intuition, inspiration, imagination and spiritual progress. Unadulterated Sandalwood paste is Satvik, Kumkum, Turmeric & saffron are Rajasic and Ash is Tamasic in nature. Satvik is for spiritual progress and Rajasic is for worldly progress.



30. Why coconut is offered in puja?

Reason – When we offer coconut in the puja, symbolically we are offering our own head. It means total surrender before the deity.

Explanation – Coconut is like shape of head with eyes. Offering of coconut is deemed as surrender of self symbolically before the divine. The surrender of self is merging of the ego with divine. The coconut water is sacred. Medically, coconut water is good source of several nutrients, have antioxidant properties, help to lower blood sugar & prevent kidney stones.



31. Why do Hindus Circumambulate a Deity?

Reason – Deity constantly emanates energy from all directions. By doing circumambulation or pradakshina, we receive energy from the deity worshipped daily.

Explanation - Pranav is in the form of japa and circumambulation is physical rite. There was a competition between Ganesha and his brother Kartikaya. As per competition, both were to circumambulate of universe and whoever come first, will be married first. Ganesha did circumambulation around his parents i.e., Shiva & Parvati, treating them as universe. Hence, the deity is entire universe and circumambulation of deity is like that.



32. Why Vibhuti is applied on the body parts?

Reason – Applying holy ash is said to regulate all the 7 chakras in the body which is the basis for good health. Illness is said to be mainly due to the imbalance of our seven glands (chakras).

Explanation - Vibhuti is a word in Sanskrit which means greatness, wealth, prosperity, super human power, splendour, holy ashes etc. Vibhuti is also called Bhasma (ash). The word 'bhasma' means 'that by which our sins are destroyed. After performing the sacred rites of Siva in the fire, the devotee who has realised the Self shall smear the forehead with the ashes repeating the prescribed mantra.



33. Why Hindu wears janeyu?

Reason – Wearing of janeyu or sacred thread during Yagyopaveet or Upanayana is done to bring child closer to the teacher and reminds commencement of study of Vedas.

Explanation – Janeyu has three strands which stand for ida, pingala and sushumna nadis, through which the kundalini shakti or hidden energy operates in a human body.



34. Why Conch or Shankh is sacred in Sanatana Dharma?

Reason – Blowing of conch emanates sound of Aum. Aum or Om is sound of Almighty. Om is also called as Pranava which means the sound that praises the almighty. The sound of the conch elevates people's minds to a piety.

Explanation – Sound of a conch shell has healing and calming effect. Its presence in house brings prosperity, fame, longevity and the dispeller of sins. A person who regularly blows a conch never develops any respiratory problem. The well-known scientist, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, proved that by regularly blowing the conch and ringing bells, the immediate surroundings become pure and peaceful as its sound removes negativity. Blowing of conch destroys bacteria present in the surroundings area.



35. Why Hindu use Swastika?

Reason – Swastika is a great symbol of well-being or auspicious. It is a symbol of wealth and intelligence

Explanation – In Sanskrit, Swastika is made of two words – Su means good, Asti means to be. The clockwise symbol is called swastika symbolizing Surya (sun) and prosperity, while the counterclockwise symbol is called sauvastika symbolizing night or tantric aspects of Kali. It represents honesty, truth, purity and stability; four angles; four directions; four Vedas; four purusharthas (Dharm, Arth, Kama & Moksha); four ashrams or stages of life; four elements (Agni, Vayu, Prithvi & Akash); four types of moksha (uniformity, proximity, merge & liberation); four internal organs (mind, intellect, consciousness and ego); four pillars of bhakti (reverence, belief, dharma & love) etc.

तदहं वजीयथा... अथ तौ चक्रुः स्तोत्रं पृथोर्हैत्यस्य धीमतः । भविष्यैः कर्मभिः सम्यक् सुखतो सूतमागाधौ ॥ ६० सत्यवाग्वानशीलोऽयं सत्यसन्धो नरेश्वरः । हिमाम्बैः क्षमाशीलो विकानो दुष्टशासनः ॥ ६१ धर्मशत्रुश्च कृतज्ञश्च दयावान् प्रियभाषकः । मायाभ्यामनयित्वा यन्त्रा ब्रह्मण्यः साधुसम्मतः ॥ ६२ समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च व्यवहारिस्थितौ नृपः ॥ ६३ सूतेनोक्तान् गुणानि त्वं स तदा मागधेन च । चकार हृदि तादृक् च कर्मणा कृतवानसौ ॥ ६४ ततस्तु पृथिवीपालः पालयन्पृथिवीमिमाम् । इयान् तं प्रजाः पृथिवीनाथमुपतस्थुः क्षुधादिताः ॥ ६५ ओषधीषु प्रणष्टान् तस्मिन्काले ह्यराजके । तमृचुस्ते नताः पृष्टास्तत्रागमनकारणम् ॥ ६६ प्रजा ऊचुः अराजके नृपश्रेष्ठ धरित्र्या सकलौषधीः । ग्रस्तास्ततः क्ष्वयं यान्ति प्रजाः सर्वाः प्रजेश्वर ॥ ६७ त्वानो वृत्तिप्रदो धात्रा प्रजापालो निरूपितः । देहि नः क्षुत्परीतानां प्रजानां जीवनौषधीः ॥ ६८ श्रीपराशर उवाच	उनके भावी कर्मोंके आश्रयसे स्वसंहति पालन स्त्वन किया ॥ ६० ॥ [उन्होंने कहा—] मैं सत्यवादी, दानशील, सत्य मर्यादावाले, तत्कालीन क्षमाशील, पराक्रमी और दुष्टोंका दमन करनेवाला ये धर्मज्ञ, कृतज्ञ, दयावान्, प्रियभाषी, मायावीर्यवान् देनेवाले, यज्ञपरायण, ब्रह्मण्य, साधुसमाजसे सम्मत और शत्रु तथा मित्रके साथ समान व्यवहार करने हूँ ॥ ६२-६३ ॥ इस प्रकार सूत और मागधेन ने गुणोंको उन्होंने अपने चित्तमें धारण किया और प्रकारके कार्य किये ॥ ६४ ॥ तब उन दुष्ट पृथिवीका पालन करते हुए बड़ी-बड़ी योगशक्तियों अनेकों महान् यज्ञ किये ॥ ६५ ॥ अराजकके ओषधीयोंके नाश हो जानेसे भूखसे व्याकुल हो पृथिवीनाथ पृथुके पास आयी और उनके पुत्रके करके उनसे अपने आनेका कारण निवेदन किया ॥ प्रजाने कहा—हे प्रजापति नृपश्रेष्ठ! अजान समय पृथिवीने समस्त ओषधीयों अनेमें नाश हूँ, अतः आपकी सम्पूर्ण प्रजा क्षीण हो रही है विधाताने आपकी हमारा जीवनदायक प्रजापति है; अतः क्षुधारूप महारोगसे पीड़ित हम प्रजा आप जीवनरूप ओषधि दीजिये ॥ ६८ ॥ श्रीपराशरजी बोले—यह सुनकर मागध सूत और दिये	एकस्मिन् यत्र... बहुत भवति क्षेत्रं तस्य पुण्यप्रदो वधः ॥ ७४ पृथिव्युवाच प्रजानामुपकाराय यदि मां त्वं हनिष्यसि । अधरः कः प्रजानां ते नृपश्रेष्ठ भविष्यति ॥ ७५ पृथिव्युवाच त्वां हत्वा वसुधे द्यौर्गर्भच्छासनपाङ्गमुक्षीम् । आस्योगवलेनेमा धारयिष्याम्यहं प्रजाः ॥ ७६ श्रीपराशर उवाच ततः प्रणय्य वसुधा तं भूयः प्राह पाथिवम् । प्रवेदिताङ्गी परमं साध्वसं समुपागता ॥ ७७ पृथिव्युवाच उपायतः समारब्धाः सर्वे सिद्धयन्त्युपक्रमाः । तस्माद्दाम्युपायं ते तं कुरुष्व यदीच्छसि ॥ ७८ समस्ता या मया जीर्णा नरनाथ महौषधीः । यदीच्छसि प्रदास्यामि ताः क्षीरपरिणायिनीः ॥ ७९ तस्मात्प्राजाहितायां मम धर्मभूतां वर । ते तु वसन्ते कुरुष्व त्वं क्षेप्यं येन वत्सला ॥ ८० समां च कुरु सर्वत्र येन क्षीरं समन्ततः । वरोषधीबीजभूतं बीजं सर्वत्र भावये ॥ ८१ श्रीपराशर उवाच तत उत्तारयामास शैलान् शतसहस्रशः । पृथिवी बोली—हे नृपश्रेष्ठ! यदि हिनके लिये हो मुझे मारना चाहते हैं जानिये] आपकी प्रजाका आधार क पृथु कह—अरी वसुधे! उत्सर्जन करनेवाली तुझे मारकर मैं ही इस प्रजाको धारण करूँगा ॥ ७५ श्रीपराशरजी बोले—तब उ कोपति हुई पृथिवीने उन पृथिवी करके कहा ॥ ७७ ॥ पृथिवी बोली—हे राजन् किये हुए सभी कार्य सही हो आपको एक उपाय बताती हूँ हो तो वैसा ही करें ॥ ७८ ॥ समस्त ओषधीयोंको पचा लिये इच्छा हो तो दुग्धरूपसे मैं दे हे परमात्मजोमैं श्रेष्ठ महाराज लिये कोई ऐसा वस्त्र (उ वासस्त्वयैव मैं उन्हें दुग्धर और मुक्तको आप सर्वत्र स मैं उद्योगम ओषधीयोंके उत्पन्न कर सकूँ ॥ ८१ ॥ श्रीपराशरजी बोले धनुषकी कीटिसे सैकड़ों और उन्हें एक स्थान पर
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36. Why Sanskrit is called divine language?

Reason – Sanskrit is known as Devanaagari or that “spoken by the Gods. The divinity of each syllable of Sanskrit lies in its origin. Syllables of Sanskrit are called as “Akshara” which means imperishable. Akshara is characterized by Aksha i.e. Shakti and Ra i.e. Shiva. The sounds and thoughts of certain Sanskrit Syllables called as Bijaksharas manifest huge potential powers.

Explanation – There are fifty distinct mother vibrations in this universe called the matrika, which were revealed to celebrated yogis and rishis of the past during their state of deep contemplation. These rishis, on the basis of phonetic principle, formulated a language with the basic fifty mother vibrations and named it Sanskrit. Since Sanskrit letters are closest to mother vibrations, the language is rightly claimed to be the most scientific, and it is spiritual in character as well. Sanskrit is the only language that makes effective use of the throat, teeth, palate, tongue and lips to produce a wide range of sounds that its alphabet demands.



37. Why temples have bells?

Reason – The ringing of bells produces rhythmic sounds which cleanse the negativity and bacteria from the surrounding areas.



38. Why food is offered to the deities before eating?

Reason – Everything in this universe is provided by the deities – light, water, earth, wind and space. By offering the food to them, we offer our gratitude to them. Eating after that food becomes prasad.

ॐ सह नाववतु। सह नौ भुनक्तु।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै। तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु।
मा विद्विषावहै॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥



इस मंत्र का जाप भोजन करने से पहला चाहिए। मंत्र जाप करते समय
खाने के लिए भगवान का आभार मानना चाहिए।

39. Why bhojan mantra done?

Reason – Chanting of mantras produce different forms of sound waves which are a form of energy. Chanting of Bhojan Mantra before eating of food fills the body with a kind of energy which increases digestive juices. Hence, it helps in well-being of the person.



40. Why mantra done? Some mantras have no meaning.

Reason - The repetition of word or group of words called mantra with feeling and in a particular manner, a definite number of times, with right observances, bring substantial benefits. Seed Sanskrit syllables (bijakṣara) have apparently no meaning. They are the quintessence of mantra, containing infinite meaning in a single syllable. Regular chanting of beej mantra in the prescribed way can help to enhance the spiritual powers of people and enable them see the true light in front of them leading their journeys.



41. Why Gayatri Mantra is treated as most sacred?

Reason – Gayatri Mantra is the root of Vedas and inspiration and activation of the powers of the eternal Trinity viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Chanting of Gayatri mantra seeks to inspire the mind & intellect for doing right actions. It bestows longevity, power, fame, wealth, vitality, Ojas, destroyer of sin etc. Nine words of the Gayatri Mantra inspire nine principles / duties / virtues viz. industriousness, humility, austerity, orderliness, cooperation, wisdom, integrity of character, sense of responsibility and courage.



42. What is Om?

Meaning – It is divine sound of universe. The sacred syllable represents the ultimate reality, consciousness or soul.



43. Why do some Hindu Gods (Hanuman, Ganesha etc.) have animal features?

Reason – In Sanatana Dharma, animals are associated with various deities which controls wild energy associated with the respective animals and help the person in spiritual upliftment. Further, it also indicates respectable status of animals in society.

Explanation – Different deities are associated with the animals and their symbolism.

- Ganesh – Mouse – Mouse symbolizes egoistic mind.
- Shiva – Bull – Bull symbolizes ignorance & unbridled sexual energy.
- Vishnu – Eagle – Eagle symbolizes uncontrolled thoughts and five Vayus.
- Surya – Horses – seven white horses symbolize seven chakras.
- Brahma & Saraswati – Swan – Swan is said to possess a unique discriminating faculty, which enables it to distinguish pure milk from a mixture of milk and water is symbol of intelligence.
- Durga – Lion – it symbolizes taming of Lion thereby controlling of the instincts of lust, anger, arrogance, selfishness, jealousy, fear, desire to harm others etc. to rise to a spiritual height.
- Lakshmi – Owl – Owl symbolizes darkness of ignorance.

Section - 4

Questions on Hindu Festivals



44. Why Laxmi pooja done instead of Ramji on Diwali festival?

Reasons & Explanations – Diwali festival is celebrated for more than one reason. As per Hindu texts, the following are the reasons –

- a. Laxmi is always worshipped along with Ganesha on Diwali. Gaining wealth without intellect will only result in misusing the wealth. So, one must first acquire the intelligence to spend the wealth in the right manner. Therefore, Lakshmi and Ganesha are worshipped together.
- b. Diwali is the new year time for Marwaris and Gujaratis. They worship Laxmi, the goddess of wealth on that day.

- c. As per puranic story, Goddess Lakshmi was in this pain for not becoming mother. She went to her friend Goddess Parvati. After listening the problem of Goddess Lakshmi, Goddess Parvati gave Lord Ganesha to Goddess Lakshmi as her adopted son. Goddess Parvati said, "From today onwards I'm giving my all accomplishments, luxury and prosperity to my son Ganesha. Whenever my worship will be performed, Lord Ganesha's worship will be a must. As such at Deepawali Poojan or Lakshmi Poojan, Ganesh Poojan is a must.
- d. Ma Lakshmi appeared during churning of ocean done by deities & demons. It is believed that Ma Lakshmi on day of Diwali take round of the world along with her adopted son Sri Ganesha. As such Lakshmi Ganesh puja is done on the day of Diwali.



45. Why Makar Sankranti is celebrated?

Reason - On this day, Sun travels from Tropic of Cancer to Tropic of Capricorn (Makar). The movement is called Uttarayana. The festival is an occasion of sharing and goodwill. In many states, it is harvesting season.

Explanation – When sun enters from one zodiac sign to another, it is called Sankranti. On Makar Sankranti Sun enters Capricorn from Sagittarius and become Uttarayana. The Makara Sankranti is one of the festivals celebrated in honour of the Sun all over Bharat in different names. The festival is celebrated by praying to the sun, taking dip in Ganga or any sacred river and keep fast.



46. Why Holi is celebrated?

Reason – Celebration of Holi is eco-friendly, socially sound and has medicinal values, apart has religious reasons.

Explanation – Holi festival is celebrated at the approach of vernal equinox (when daylight and night time are equal). It marks the end of winter and onset of spring. The playful throwing of natural-coloured powders on each other had a medical significance. The colours were traditionally made of neem and bilva leaves, 76paraj and haldi, and with the flowers of palash, also called taysu or the flame of the forest, 76parajita and marigold.

When the Holika or bonfire is torched, it destroys the bacteria present in the atmosphere. The smoke of the cow dung emitting from the bonfire was not only non-poisonous and eco-friendly, it also killed the bacteria in the air, owing to the high phosphorus content in it. Circumnutations around the Holi bonfire kills the bacteria in the body.

The festival of Holi has cultural and social significance too. It is a festival to end and rid oneself of past errors and mutual conflicts by meeting, greeting and embracing others.



47. Why gold is purchased on the day of Akshaya Tritiya?

Reason – Nature's positive energies are hyperactive on this day, making this day auspicious. It is hence a full mahurat day and if Akshaya Tritiya falls on Rohini nakshatra, on a Monday, it becomes even more auspicious.

Explanation – In Sanskrit, the word Akshaya means imperishable or eternal or that which never diminishes. As per Hindu beliefs, Akshaya Tritiya is the day of birth of Parasurama, the sixth avatar of the god Vishnu; on the day, Akshaya Patra was given to Draupadi by the god Krishna during the visit of numerous sages, including the sage Durvasa; Kubera was appointed the god of wealth; Sudama came over to Krishna's palace in Dwarka on this day to request him to redeem his poverty. The festival of Akshaya Tritiya is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. Worshipping Lord Vishnu on this day eradicates and removes sins, and makes one free from all sorrows. Hence, the day is auspicious.



48. Why Hindus pour milk on Shivalinga?

Reason – Abhisheka is done with milk, Kumkum, turmeric, sandal water etc., which have a high pH value and hence a high negative ion concentration. These negative ions help to purify air and overall well-being of the person.

Explanation – Abhisheka of Shivalinga and other idols is done with water, milk, honey, curd, shakkar, rosewater, sandalwood paste etc. This is performed simply to strengthen internal devotional thought process. Furthermore, scientifically, negative ions help to purify air by attaching to the positively charged electrons in bacteria, viruses, dust, pollen, Mold spores, pet dander, cigarette smoke, etc. These negative ions are essential to fix the oxygen with haemoglobin. It has been proved that animals die in an atmosphere deprived of negative ions. The fact that the dry stone has high electrical resistance and very little conductivity, shows that repeated abhisheka, Aradhana, etc., are essential to maintain the electrical charges in the sanctum-sanctorum.

The yantras or Sri-chakras kept under the idol act as capacitors of Sanatana (Hindu) Dharma, the greatest

electrical charges. The negative ions are created inside the sanctum-sanctorum during abhisheka. Then the idol is decorated with sandal paste, silken cloth and fresh flowers. All these helps to retain the moisture content of the air.



49. Why many Hindu festivals are celebrated at night?

Reason – The Navaratri for Shakti puja, Diwali for Lakshmi puja, Holi for mantra siddhis, Shivaratri for Shiva puja etc. are auspicious because a certain astronomical configuration occurs annually at this time of the year.

Explanation – Scientifically the nights are regarded better than days because during the day, the sun's rays cause resistance to earthly vibrations to rise higher into the outer space. This is the reason why yogis prefer to do their sadhana during the night hours so that the vibrations emanating from their sadhana mantras can drift upward to the desired higher planes of the astral world. It is commonly experienced that radio signals are received and heard better during nights because of the absence of sun's rays. On account of the distinct astronomical occurrence, certain favourable divine vibes, obviously invisible but in abundance, descend on earth.

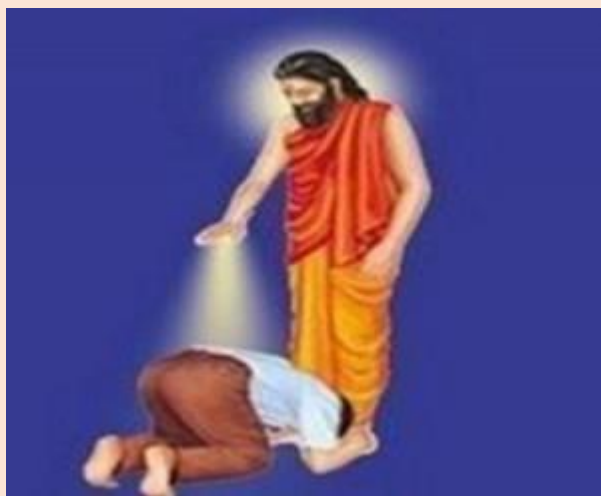


50. Why are Some People Against Holi?

Reason – Holi is festival of colours and it revives friendships among people who developed animosity. But, the use of synthetic colours instead of natural colours, the use of balloons and under the guise of festival, harassment to the young women by the miscreants have vitiated the festivity of Holi.

Section - 5

Questions on Hindu Beliefs & Customs



51. Why Hindus are touching the Feet of elders?

Reason - The Hindus greet elders, wise, pious or revered persons of society, by touching their feet. The physical effort involved provides useful exercise and promotes vigour, enthusiasm and concern for others, rids tension and is motivating. Positive thoughts and energy are emitted by the person whose feet are touched which bring positivity in minds and hearts. This promotes humility & respect for others and reduces ego of the person touching the feet.

Explanations: The nerves that start from our brain spread across all your body. These nerves or wires end in the fingertips of your hand and feet. When you join the fingertips of your hand to those of their opposite feet, a circuit is immediately formed and the energies of two bodies are connected. Your fingers and palms become the 'receptor' of energy and the feet of other person become the 'giver' of energy.



52. While greeting others, why Hindus do Namaste or Namaskar?

Reason - Hindus greet each other by joining their palms termed as Namastae or Namaskar. When both hands are joined, the tips of all the fingers press each other. The tips of hands are the pressure points of eyes, ears, and mind. These get activated by their pressing which helps us remember that person for a long time.

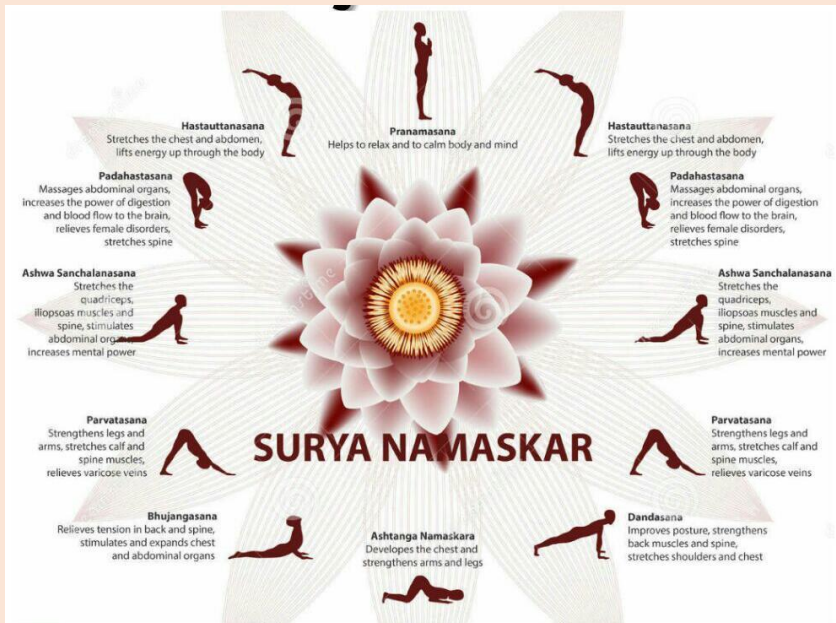
Explanation - Contagious germs are avoided due to absence of any physical contact.



53. Why Hindus keep Shikha or Choti (Peak) on male head?

Reason - Hindu males keep peak on the head as a tradition. It protects from harmful effects and catches positive and spiritual thoughts. The location of peak is just above Sushumna Nadi. This is the place of seventh chakra or nerve plexus, called as Brahmanrandha or centre of wisdom. The knotted shikha helps boost this centre and conserve its subtle energy known as Ojas.

Explanation - According to science, it is the centre of the brain which control body parts, intelligence and mind.



54. What is the purpose of Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) done by Hindus?

Reason - Worshipping the sun by chanting ॐ सूर्याय नमः mantra leads to all pleasures, good health and wealth in life. Hindus offer water to sun at sunrise. As per yoga, Surya Namaskar consists of 12 positions done in succession. When one round ends, another one begins in a perfect circle. Sun rays in the morning directly or through water is good for eyes. Surya Namaskar is a general tonic and complete warm-up for the entire body, which can be done just as is, or as a warm-up before yoga asanas. The Sun Salutations are said to remove bodily and mental tensions, improve circulation, stimulate the nervous system and raise the body heat. All joints are loosened and lubricated.

Explanations: Body parts have different colours viz. heart red, kidney brown, bones white, etc. When the spectrum of sun rays refracts through the water, it breaks down into seven colours. The energy

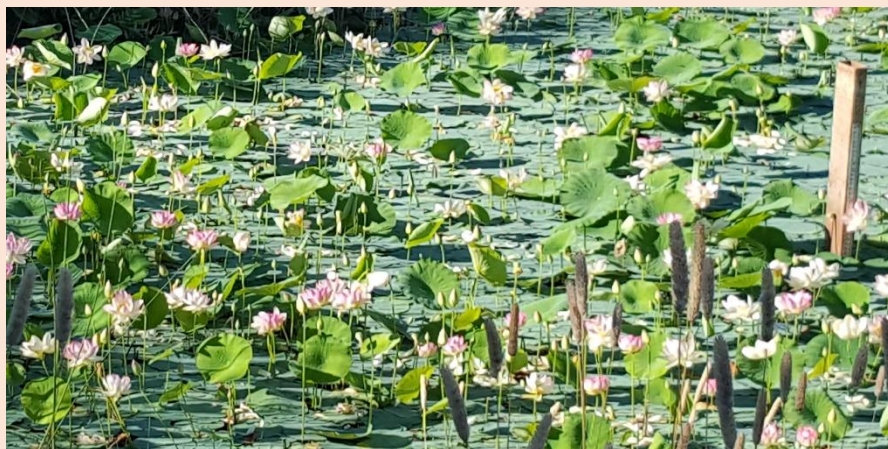
emanating from these rays of different colours is absorbed by the body, and balances the energy level in the body. This also improves eye-sight and mind power. Sun rays are good source of vitamin D. People have high deficiency in vitamin D especially in large cities.



55. Why Hindus apply tilak on their foreheads?

Reasons – Hindus apply tilak on their forehead because major nerve plexus i.e., Ajna-chakra is automatically pressed, facilitating blood supply to the facial muscles.

Explanation - Vedic scriptures say as follows “Lalaata Shoonyam Smashaana Tulyam”, which means that “an empty forehead is comparable to a cemetery”. Tilak is applied with right hand ring finger and thumb. Applying Tilak using this finger brings health and wealth to the person. Ring finger is one of the most sensitive and sacred points of the body.



56. Why lotus is sacred for Hindus?

Reason – The lotus symbolizes divinity, fertility, wealth, knowledge and enlightenment. The auspicious sign of the Swastika is also said to have evolved from the lotus. Lotus flower stands for truth, auspiciousness and beauty—satyam, shivam, sundaram. The Supreme Lord also has the same attributes and, therefore, his various parts are compared to a lotus—lotus-eyes, lotus-feet, lotus-hands, and the lotus of the heart.

Explanation - Despite growing in slushy areas and in murky water, the lotus remains beautiful and untainted. It inspires us to strive to remain pure and noble in all our thoughts and actions under all circumstances. The human body has certain energy centres that have been described in the yoga scriptures as chakras. Each centre is associated with a lotus that has a certain number of petals. According to the Vishnu Purana, a lotus emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu, out of which appeared Lord Brahma to create the world. The lotus thus serves as the link between the Creator and the Supreme Cause. It also signifies Brahmaloaka, the abode of Lord Brahma.



57. Why Hindus pierce their ears?

Reason – Piercing of ear lobe is an important ceremony in Hindu tradition for both male and female. It is usually performed in 6th or seventh month or 3rd or 5th or 7th year.

Explanation - Ayurveda researcher and surgeon on ancient India, Susruta (6th century BC) says, ears of a child should be bored for protection (from diseases in his opinion) and decoration. It is believed that piercing the ears help in the development of intellect, power of thinking and decision-making faculties. Ear piercing in girls to regulate the menstrual cycle and hence reducing menstrual or premenstrual pain. It also prevents diseases like hysteria to occur. Piercing of ear lobe has benefit in eye sight and reduces depression.

The ears are having many acupuncture points. Piercing of the specific area of ear stimulate the reflex area of the point. Acupressure therapy states that earlier the ear piercing is performed to a child, earlier the development of brain takes place by benefiting the meridians connecting the brain to the earlobe.



58. Why do Indian women wear Choori (Bangles)?

Reason - Wearing bangles by Hindu married women has special significance. They wear bangles as per Hindu tradition & customs, not due to ornament. Men also wear metal bangle in many parts of India. The bangles may be made of glass, wood, ivory, plastic, gold or other metals. Constant friction of bangles increases the blood circulation level.

Explanation - According to Hindu scriptures, the bangles clash with each other while hand movements which activate the Surya Nadi (sun channel) of women. Through Surya Nadi, energy is emitted around a woman's body that protects her from the evil energies and negativities of the atmosphere.

In ancient Ayurveda, it is stated that bones of women are weaker than those of men, bangles made of gold and silver absorb the energy, which was transmitted to the body improving psychological and physical functioning.



59. Why do Hindu women wear Bichiya (Toe Rings)?

Reason - Hindu women normally wear toe rings usually made of silver on the second toe of feet. Since gold is portrayal of Goddess Lakshmi, it is not worn below waist. Our body has vital force called prana which runs through our body via different channels, right up to toes. Toe ring is used to keep this force healthy.

Explanation - Toe ring strengthens the uterus, keeping it healthy by regulating the blood flow to it. Moreover, a woman's menstrual cycle is said to be regularized. The nerve from second figure of feet connects the uterus and passes to heart. Toe ring presses this nerve which keep reproductive system healthy and balance.



60. Why do Hindu women apply Sindoor (Vermillion)?

Reason - The Hindu married women apply Sindoor in the parting of hair. Use of Sindoor has also been mentioned in the Puranas, Lalitha Sahasranamam and Soundarya Lahharis. According to Hindu astrology, Mesha Rashi or the House of Aries is on the forehead. The Lord of Mesha is Mars and his colour is red. It is believed to be auspicious.

Explanation - Sindoor is prepared by mixing turmeric, lime and the metal mercury. Due to its intrinsic properties, mercury controls blood pressure and activates sexual drive. Sindoor is to be applied right up to the pituitary gland to activate it.



61. Why do Hindu women apply Mehndi (Henna)?

Reason - Mehndi is typically applied on hands during special Hindu weddings and Hindu festivals like Karva Chauth, Vat Purnima, Diwali, Bhai Dooj and Teej.

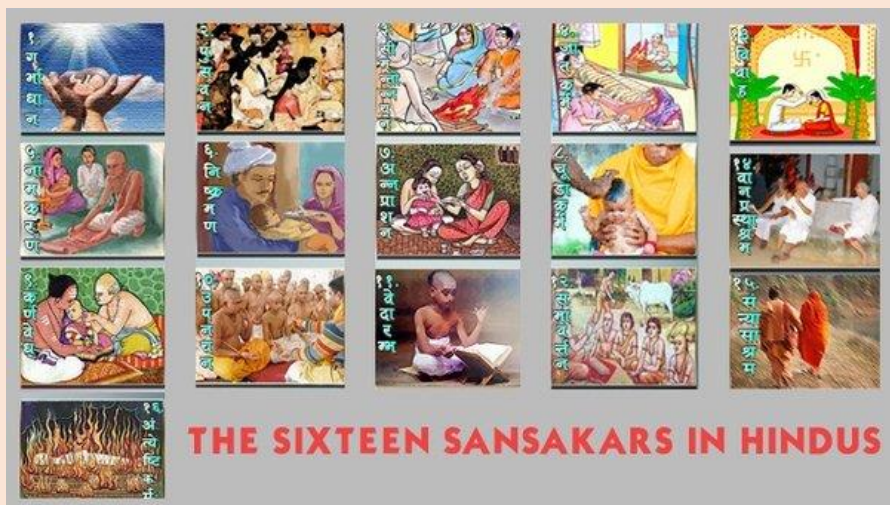
Explanation - Mehndi is a very powerful medicinal herb, and its application on hands and feet can prevent stress during weddings. It cools the body and keeps the nerves from becoming tense.



62. Why Hindus believe that while sleeping, Head should point towards South?

Reason - As per Hinduism, the best position to sleep is with our heads towards east and south. Never sleep with head towards North. Our earth is giant electro-magnet. The core of earth is molten where strong electro-magnetic currents flow. Likewise, human body has its own magnetic field. If one sleeps pointing head towards the north, the magnetic pull will cause pressure on your brain.

Explanation - Magnetic pull creates disturbance in Pineal gland functioning and in turn production of Melatonin. Melatonin is sleeping inducing hormone and its lower level can induce sleep related problems such as chronic fatigue, depression, insomnia and anxiety.



63. Why are the 16 Sanskars done?

Reason –The word ‘Sanskar’ means to improve, to purify, and to remove shortcomings. The 16 Sanskars are done which are offered to God to develop divine consciousness in the individual which help him to lead better life and to orient his sub-conscious mind for moksha.

Explanation – The sixteen Sanskars are done to improve the quality during and after life. These Sanskars are done at every milestone of life viz. conception, formation of foetus, stopping from abortion, child birth, naming child, taking child outdoor, taking of solid food, removal birth hairs, start of formal education, ear piercing, wearing sacred thread for Vedic studies, completion of studies & entering in society, wedding, detachment from material possessions & concentrate on aspects of social service, detachment from worldly affairs & focus on true self, and at the time death.

All Sanskars are done through Vedic mantras. As per Vedic belief, there are 3 bodies viz. Physical body (which is cremated or buried after death), Psychic or subtle body (which is physical enough to interact with the physical body and non-physical enough to interact with the soul) and Causal body (which carries the seeds of Sanskars upon death when it goes with the soul).



64. How the food eaten by the brahmin for Shraddha, tarpan, it reaches to the forefathers.

Reason – During a specified fortnight in a year, Hindus offer food, water, items like barley, black sesame, rice, milk and flowers to brahmin in the reverence of forefathers. Subsequently, the offerings are also made to Brahmin, crow, dog, cow and beggar. This is called as Shradha or tarpan. As a result of performing Tarpan, the ancestors get satisfied and bless us with love, peace, happiness, good health, wealth and success.

Explanation - There are certain Hindu texts which say that they can eat only through the smell of the food. Hence tasty dishes are prepared during Shraddhas. It is also said that when sesame seeds are fried, Pitrus descend from upper worlds and come to the place where sesame seeds are roasted and they have the capacity to satiate their hunger by inhaling this smell. As per Garuda Purana, Sesame seeds can destroy evil spirits and can burn all the sins committed by the deceased. Thirst of the corpse is quenched by offering libation with water and sesame seeds.



65. Whether eating non-veg is restricted in Hindu Dharma?

Reason – In Shrimad Bhagwat Maha purana, Narada has informed that Ahimsa (Non-violence – Not hurt anybody by thoughts, speech and body) is one of the codes of Dharma. Hence, Hindus teach vegetarianism as a way to live with minimum of hurt to other beings. But in today's world not all Hindus are vegetarian.

Explanation – Climatic conditions generally govern food habits. As per Sanatan Dharma, food is classified in three categories viz. sattvic, rajasic and tamas. To purify, one need to take sattvic food and to be vegetarian.



66. Why Atithi devo bhava?

Reason - In Taittiriya Upanishad (11.2) it is stated: atithi devo bhava—
“a guest is as good as God.” Divine souls rarely visit the house. Atithi
are the divine souls who can visit the house where rigorous anushtan
(religious practice) has been performed. These divine souls deserve
hospitality.



67. In today's world, what is the relevance of Hindu philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam?

Reason – Today's world is called one village. The advent of fast telecommunication, internet, digital technology, nuclear technology, space technology, rapid means of transportation, climatic changes due to industrialisation & deforestation etc. are impacting one and all alike in the world. Hence, our actions are not limited to small area.

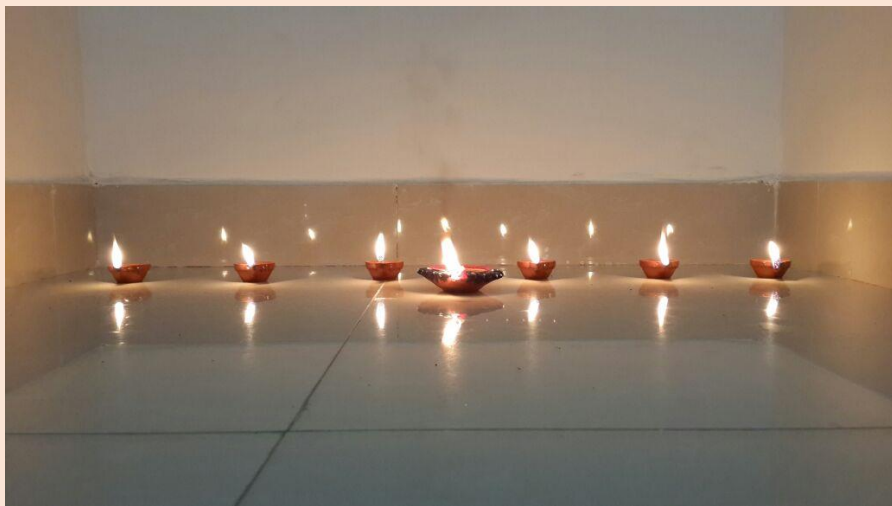
Explanation - In Sanatana Dharma, the philosophy of godliness in all living beings is accepted. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam means "The whole world is one family". In Maha Upanishad (6.71-75), it is stated - अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्। उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

Means - This is mine, that is his, say the small minded, the wise believe that the entire world is a family.



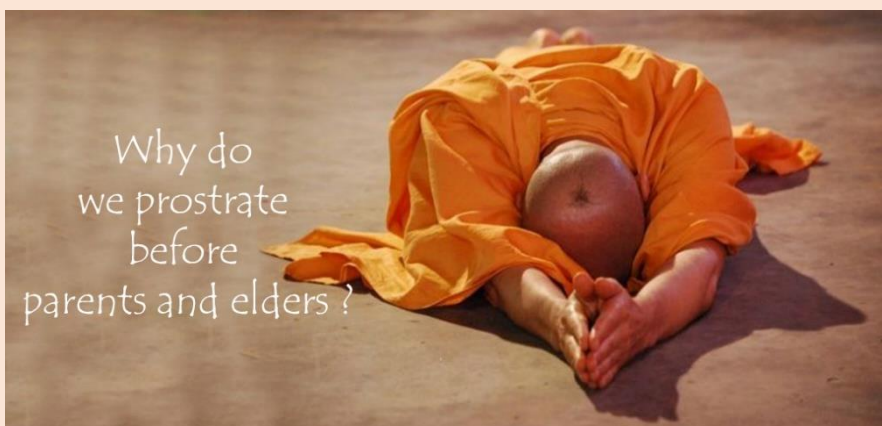
68. Are Hindus forbidden to eat beef?

Reason - Hindus avoids eating beef because cows are traditionally viewed as sacred.



69. Why untouchability?

Reason - Untouchability is a social evil practiced by one section of society against other in one form or other. Untouchables frequently face inhuman treatment. Untouchability is a form of violation of human rights as in racism etc.



70. Why do Hindu prostrate before elders?

Reason – Every person has two fields around him viz. magnetic field around body and aura at head. The intensity of aura depends upon spiritual advancement. While prostrating, younger one touches the toes and the elder touches the head thereby completing the circle of spiritual energy transfer from elder to younger one.



71. Why do Hindu Namaste in salutation?

Reason – While greeting, Hindu join the palms and say Namaste which in Sanskrit language means Namah te i.e., I bow before divinity in you. Namah means “I have no ego”.

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The author is a retired General Manager from a Public Sector Bank in India after vast experience of more than 36 years and hails from a very pious family. During his tenure, he was sent twice abroad (Australia and USA) to represent Bank. He has widely travelled within India and abroad and participated in international conferences.

Post-retirement, he has been associated voluntarily with Ekal Abhiyan; one of the largest social organizations spread world over. Ekal, a transformative movement, tackled educational barriers in rural India. Introducing innovative methods like Joyful Learning and adopting a low-cost model, Ekal ensured schooling aligned with children's needs, overcoming economic hurdles and inaccessibility. Ekal provides cost-effective primary education, health-care education, and vocational training. Empowering rural communities with rights awareness, sanskar education, and urban-rural coordination through vanyatras.

He is keen reader and writer of articles on Sanatana Dharma. Already, 335 articles have been published on his website named as www.dnaofhinduism.com. The site was created in September, 2017 and very popular among masses.