



What is Shree Geeta Bhawan?

Shree means Sir- A mark of respect, Geeta means - The name of the most sacred book The Bhagvat Geeta. Bhawan means place of abode or Temple or Mandir. Its literary meaning is The house of Geeta

Why do we take shoes off before entering Prayer-Hall or Temple (Mandir)?

One brings dirt and germs in with their shoes, It helps to keep place hygienic. The Temple represents the body of God and is a sacred place for all of us. Shoes are made of leather which comes from animals involving violence, cruelty and pain (suffering of animals).

What do you mean by Shaloka, Prarthana and Stotras?

Shaloka means verse. Prayers are in the form of verses to make them musical and also to be set to a standard. Prarthana Shaloka is therefore Prayer Verse. These verses are generally directed towards One God or Goddess. The person who chants these powerful verses invokes the respective God or Goddess referred to in the verse. By doing with absolute faith and concentration, the person concerned will be able to achieve a steady and peaceful mind full of devotion.

Prarthana Shaloka is a combination of two Sanskrit words. Prarth is the root of a verb, which means, "to beg". Prarthana is the noun formation from this root generally meaning "making prayer" Prayers, which include a request, are Prarthanas.

Prarthana can also be made in the form of sentences. The Ashtothara satha Namani meaning One hundred and eight names is Prarthana in prose (sentences). Every God or Goddess has separate Ashtothara satha Namani. There are even Thrisathi Namani (300 names) and also Ashtothara Sahasra Namani (1008 names). Instead of chanting Prarthana Shalokas one can recite Ashtothara Namani and make prayers.

But what is most important is absolute faith and concentration. If one can understand the real meaning of the prayers, it will facilitate concentration.



Stotras are also verses of prayers. The word Stotra comes from the verb Stut. It means, "to praise".

Very similar to Ashtotra satha Namani etc. Stotras also are for a particular God or Goddess. Stotras are directed to a God or Goddess like a stream that flows towards a destination. Stotra is a hymn or composition in praise of a God or Goddess. By chanting the Stotras, the mind of the person is carried away towards the form of the God or Goddess in an attempt to visualize the same.

Prarthana Shalokas have a request to God. Stotra Shalokas are mostly making a description of God. They simply say I salute the God who is described as having certain forms etc.

Vedic Verses or Mantras are more powerful than Prarthanas or Stotras. Vedic Verses (Mantras) have to be chanted according to specified rules of raising or lowering the voice. It is intended to cause certain vibrations which (if correctly recited) could physically produce results. Vedas are taught from Guru (Teacher) to Manava (student) orally. The Manava later with accomplishment of wisdom becomes a Guru and teaches Vedas to his Manavas. Simply reading from books cannot learn Vedas, without directives from a Guru.

What is the meaning of AUM or OM?

"Om" or Aum is the most sacred syllable often spoken during the practice of any Hindu rites.

It is a holy character of the Sanskrit language, the language of God. The character is a composite of three different letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. The English equivalent of those are "a", "u", and "m", and represent the Trinity.

The Trinity is composed of the three Supreme Hindu Gods: Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer. These three letters when pronounced properly in unison create an invigorating effect in the body. Because of its significance this sacred syllable is spoken before any chants to show God we remember him. This sign in The Hinduism also represents the whole universe.

Om is also known to be the sound from which this whole universe is created.



It is called 'Pranavam' in Sanskrit, meaning the beginning of new universe.

Where and when did Hinduism begin?

Hinduism basically started with Shruti "that which is heard". The master of Vedic age called Rishies, heard eternal truths in their heart and they taught their disciples telepathically, by transfer of thoughts. Later Vedas and Upanishads were taught in chanted lyrics and they laid the foundation of Hinduism.

An exact date of when Hinduism actually started cannot be quoted, but there are many theories regarding the birth of Hinduism:

Mythological Stories – Hindu mythological stories say that it is trillions of years old. Some say Hinduism started soon after ice age ended and some even say its origin is 6000-7000 years before Christ [6000-7000 B.C.].

Theologians View – Theologists like Max Muller of Germany traces Hinduism to have begun in 3rd Millennium B.C. He says nomadic tribes called Aryans came from Europe and settled on banks of rivers like Indus, Ganges Brahmaputra in India and started a "Thinking Process" later known as Hinduism. Other Hindu Theologians say that the early settlers of North India exchanged knowledge with dark colored people of South India called Dravidians and thus laid the foundation of Hinduism in India.

Archeological Evidence – Evidence found at Indus valley civilization at Mohanjodaro and Harappa dates. Hinduism to have started 6000-7000 years before Christ and the discoveries raise the question that is Hinduism Pre Aryan or Non Aryan or Post Aryan?

Thus the origin of Hinduism is a mixture of contradictory ideas and thoughts. But we can say that whatever may be the origin of Hinduism it was a blend of Aryan, Dravidian, Mayan, Egyptian and Greek civilization. Major events in the development of the history of Hinduism are:

The original name of **Hinduism was Santana Dharma** meaning "righteousness forever" that which has no beginning or end". This name was given by Persians when they invaded India in 6th B.C. For long periods of time there was no written Hindu scripture. It was just in the forms of Shruti [that which is heard] and was narrated by Rishies to their disciples with careful sound of words. Later with coming of various



civilizations in India, Hinduism became a blend of various ideas and thoughts and thus came to be known as "The thinking process". In the development process of Hinduism the Hindu scriptures play a very vital role. The scriptures are written in Sanskrit and are:

Vedas

1. Rig Veda [Vedas of Hymns] consists of 1028 hymns to gods like Indra & Agni.
2. Yajur Veda [Vedas of Liturgy] concerns the knowledge of how to perform all rites and rituals.
3. Sama Veda [Vedas of Music] concerns the knowledge of chants.
4. Atharva Veda – This Veda contains the knowledge given by Sage Atharvana. It contains many magical charms and incantations.

Upanishads

The word Upanishad is composed of Upa [Near], Ni [Down] and Shad[To sit].

Upanishad is a teaching given by Guru [teacher] to his disciples and it is a rule that no one except the disciple could hear his guru's teachings.

Dharma Sutras

These are the backbones of Hinduism ethics and morality. They are basically the first lawgiver code books to Hinduism written by sages like Manus, Yatnavalka, Parasara and Gautama. The earliest Dharma sutra is called "Code of Manu" and is popularly known as Manusmriti.

Panchatantra

It is a collection of stories told by Vishnusharman to princes to teach them worldly affairs. Each story has a moral and is like a fable book in which human characters are replaced by animal characters. It teaches what exactly should be the course of action of a wise man.

Arthashastra



It is the code of ethics for kings written by Kautilya of Maurya Dynasty. It consists of methods of spy system, how to deal with the enemy and various political and social subjects.

Brahma sutra

These describes the nature of Brahman in depth and is written by Sage Badarayana [Veda Vyasa].

Agamas

These are a group of literature which deals with worship of God in many forms and they have their own set of rules and regulations for their devotee. These Agamas gave rise to three branches of Hinduism:

1. Vaishnavism
2. Saivism
3. Saktism

Famous Indian Epics

The Two Famous Epics are **The Ramayana and The Mahabharata** written by Sage Valmiki and Sage Veda Vyasa respectively. **The Bhagwat Gita** is the form of conversation between warrior Prince Arjuna and Lord Krishna at the outset of Mahabharata war.

Puranas

These are called Vedas of common folk and are written in question & answer form. They consist of religious stories which make common people understand the higher truths of life. The major puranas called Mahapurana. Thus all the above Hindu scriptures played a key role in the development of Hinduism and paved a way for a religion which is appreciated by the entire world.

What are the main ideas this religion professes?



Hinduism is more a way of life than a specific religion. In Hinduism one can find all religions of the world.

Various religions like Buddhism, Sikhism emerged from it. The most important aspect of Hinduism is being truthful to oneself. Hinduism has no monopoly on ideas. It is open to all. Hindus believe in one God expressed in different forms. For them, God is timeless and formless entity. Hindus believe in eternal truths and these truths are opened to anyone who seeks them, even if he or she is ignorant of Hindu scripture or ideas. This religion also professes Non-violence - "Ahimsa ParamoDharma" - Non-violence is the highest duty True Ahimsa implies curtesy, kindness, hospitality, humanity and love.

How do Hindus worship?

The place where Hindus worship is called a Temple. Most of the ancient Indian Temples were constructed by Hindu Kings. The Temples were constructed on auspicious sites and the whole process was very elaborate. Two rituals associated with temple construction were

- a) Pratishta [installation of icons] and
- b) Kumbha – Abhishekam [temple dedication].

The idols of Gods are either made of special stone or wood and the artisan whomakes them are called Shilpikar. The process by which worship of Gods & Goddess is done is called Pooja. It is the most common form of ritual. In the process of Pooja, Upacaras [offerings of many articles like food,perfumed water,sandal wood paste etc with honor to deity] play a vital role.

The person who performs the Pooja is called Pujari or Hindu Priest.

Generally, all Hindu houses have a small corner reserved for God and is called Mandir or Pooja Ghar where The Hindu Family worships together.

An individual family can have their own Pujari doing the Pooja or the head of the family does the Pooja. This tradition is considered a good practice in Hindu houses. It is a time when all the family members come together and pray together.



What are the important rituals, ceremonies etc practiced by Hindus?

Rituals are basically an art of worshipping the God. Rituals may vary from home to home in some way or other but their basic concept remains the same. The rituals of Hinduism are:

Poojas

Yajnas

Vedic Rituals called **Samskaras** [means refinement] – these are carried out throughout the whole life cycle and are 16 in all as under:

1. Garbhadhana - Ritual to guarantee conception
2. Pumsavana - Ritual to protect fetus and to have a boy
3. Simantonnayana - Ritual at the last month of pregnancy
4. Jatakarana - Preparation of astrological chart of child
5. Namakarana – Naming the child
6. Nishkaramana – Taking the child out of the house for the first time
7. Annaprasana – First feeding of rice to the child
8. Chudakarana – First cutting of hair of the child
9. Karnavedha – Boring ear lobes of the child
10. Vidyarambha – Beginning of child learning alphabets
11. Upanayana – Wearing of holy threads by boys
12. Vedarambha – Commencement of the Vedic studies
13. Keshante – First shaving of the child's head



14. Samavartana – Home coming after completion of Vedic Studies

15. Vivaha – Marriage Rituals

16. Anthyesthi – Funeral rituals

Shraddha – Rituals at the time of death, these lasts for 12 days and is carried out to ensure that the departed soul is at ease and it goes to heaven where there are lesser difficulties.

Tirtha Yatra – Ritual of going to holy places for purification and redemption from sin. Important places for tirtha yatra are as follows:

1. Badrinath [North]
2. Puri [East]
3. Rameshwara [south]
4. Dwarka [West]

These are also called as Four Dhams.

Major Important Festivals

There are many Hindu festivals and their importance differs from place to place:

Deepavali or Diwali – It is called as the Festival of Light and comes in the month of Kartik [Oct./Nov.]. This day signifies two major events: the first being the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after killing Ravana and the second being the Death of Titan of Hell, Narakasura by Lord Krishna. Both the events signify winning of good over evil, people light candles, diyas in their houses, worship **Goddess Lakshmi [Goddess of Wealth]** and visit near dear ones, distribute sweets and wear new clothes etc.



Holi – Also called as Festival of Colors; it is celebrated in the month of March. The event represented behind Holi is of Prahlada, Holika and Hiranayakshyup which signifies Holika burning to ashes and Prahlada emerging as great worshipper of Lord Vishnu and defeater of demon Hiranayakshyup. People celebrate Holi by throwing colored water and bright powders on each other and enjoying themselves.

Onam – Celebrated in Kerala to mark the end of summer monsoons. This represents welcoming demon King Mahabali to his lost kingdom.

Pongal – Celebrated in Tamil Naidu during the months of January /February. It is celebrated at the time of rice harvest.

Baisakhi - This is another festival rejoicing after taking the crops out of the fields. This is mainly celebrated in the North of India. Brotherhood feelings and cooperative sentiments are at the heart of this festival. Families come closer leaving out their sorrows and differences.

Raksha Bhandhan – Celebrated in the months of July/August; a sister ties a Rakhi [sacred thread] to the wrist of her brother/s who in turn give her some presents and become responsible for her safety.

Rama Navami – Celebrated as the Birthday of Lord Rama.

Ganesh Chaturthi - Celebrated as the Birthday of Lord Ganesh.

Navratri – Festival of Nights; lasts for 9 days with 3 days each devoted to worship of **Goddess Durga [Goddess of Valor], Lakshmi [Goddess of Wealth] and Saraswati [Goddess of Knowledge]**.

Saraswati Puja – A Festival honoring Goddess of Knowledge.

Shivaratri - Celebrated as the Birthday of Lord Shiva.

Krishna Janamashtami - Celebrated as the Birthday of Lord Krishna.



Vijya Dashmi or Dussehra - The celebration of this day has a special significance as it is related to many events which resulted in brilliant successes in the past. On this day Lord Rama killed Ravana.

How many Gods do Hindus worship? What are the main Gods & Goddess?

According to Hinduism all gods are the various representation of one true God. Hinduism states that there is only one God and the Vedas call him Brahm. The vibratory aspect of Brahman is called **AUM or OM**. From AUM came

The Three Godheads:

- a. Bramha [creator]
- b. Vishnu [preservor]
- c. Shiva [destroyer]

These gods when take a human form are called Avatars.

The three main Goddesses are:

- Saraswati [Wife of Lord Brahma; Goddess of Knowledge]
- Lakshmi [Wife of Lord Vishnu; Goddess of Wealth]
- Parvati [Wife of Lord Shiva; Goddess of Power]

Hindus also believe in Powers of Nature and have gods of nature like Varuna [water], Agni [fire], Vayu [air] etc.

It is believed that there are 33 crores Gods in Hinduism. A Hindu can worship as many Gods and Goddesses as he wants because Hindus believe that all forms of Gods and Goddesses are manifestations of one god or power who is Shree Krishna. A Hindu temple can have a blend of various Gods. There is a famous Verse:



Akashat patitam toyam, Yatha gachati sagaram.

Sarva deva namaskaram, Keshavam pratigachati."

which means:" Just like as the rain water falls on various parts of the earth, but, of it's own accord, in its own way, it always makes its way to the ocean.

Similarly, worship offered to any God / Goddess will eventually end up at the feet of Shree Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

How many times do Hindus pray everyday?

It is considered a good practice to pray 2 times a day. The Indian temples generally follow a practice of performing Aarti [lighting lights] at dawn and dusk and it is believed that Gods or Goddesses rest during afternoon and night, so prayers should be offered at dawn and dusk.

Who is the most important God in this religion? Why?

It is believed that everything came from Brahman, which is the impersonal form of God.

Another name of God is Shree Krishna, who, though an Avtaar of Vishnu, is the Purna Avtaar (i.e. one who is not manifest)Krishnastu Bhagvan Swayam, i.e. Krishna is God Himself.

How do Hindus pray?

Hindus pray generally at a temple or at home with pure heart and mind.

What is the final destination of all souls in Hinduism?

At the time of death, the body dies but the soul never dies. The soul passes from one body to another after the death, like a body changes clothes, the soul goes on taking endless number of bodies; until it gets liberates. The path the soul takes is decided by the past actions which as popularly known as "Karmas". After death the soul seeks an ideal



body to be born again. So if you are born rich or poor - it is because of your actions in your previous life.

Thus the should continues the journey of life and death with karmas attached to it from one life to another by undergoing pain or pleasure. The different methods of god realization provide an easy way to put an end to the drama.

Then the individual soul, which is called "Jeevatman", will go back to theabode of "Paramatman". This meeting process is called Salvation or Enlighten.

In order to reach enlightenment a human being should adopt different methods of God realization which are as follows:

Karma Yoga – It is a system of attaining freedom through selfless actions. The word "Karma" means "to do", thus Karma means work. The Karmas which we do dictate our past, present and future. An individual should engage himself in good karmas but should not expect any results.

Jnana Yoga – It is a system of reaching enlightenment by adopting the path of knowledge or Hindu Philosophy.

Bhakti Yoga – Bhakti Yoga comes from the word "Bhaj" which means, "to be attached to". Through this the devotee goes for total surrender to God and in this process a total dissolution of "I" or "Ego" takes place.

Raja Yoga – It is a very scientific path of God Realization. In this the individual practices self control and thought control of his body and mind.

What methods do Hindus use to teach the morality and values of Hinduism?

The main methods are as follows-

1. Reading of Ancient Scriptures
2. Hearing preaching from some renowned saints
3. Visiting Holy places
4. Having group discussions with fellow followers

How do you become a member of Hinduism?

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Hinduism does not believe in religion conversion. You have to be born a Hindu.

Why is the Goddess worshipped?

As Sanatana Dharma or a Universal Tradition, Hinduism recognizes that the Divine contains both masculine and feminine attributes. Without giving proper honor to the feminine qualities, a religion must be incomplete and one sided . The worship of God in the form of Mother is a unique feature in Hinduism. Today Hindus worship the Divine mother in many popular forms such as Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ambika and Uma. To a Hindu, the motherly aspect of God in nature is full of beauty, gentleness, kindness and tenderness. The natural love between a Mother and her child is the best expression of the Lord's unconditional love for us as children of God. Through the worship of God in the form of Mother, Hinduism offers a unique reverence to womanhood.

What is the significance of MUHURATA – sanctified time?

Muhurta is nothing but the fixing of a particular time for an-event to be performed in the future. We understand that making a judgement about the future has to be based either on forecasting techniques or on astrology. During performance of any important function whether it is a naming ceremony (namakaran vidhi or barasa), thread ceremony (janeu sanskar or munja) marriage, etc., an essential part is to ask a pandit to work out the auspicious moment or 'muhurat' when the ceremony should be performed. Astrology is a gift of its close sister discipline astronomy. There could be no astrology without astronomy, as astrology predicts the turn of events in the future with the real or imaginary changes in planetary and star positions. We know that the firmament i.e. the observable universe, has a mechanics of its own. The earth and sun being part of the firmament go about their own movement as per the mechanics. The rotation of the earth on its axis causes day and night and its revolution round the sun causes weather changes. This co-relation between a change in star patterns and a change in weather which repeated itself year after year, germinated ideas that star patterns decide weather changes. This interpretation gave birth to ideas that appearance of a particular star spelt prosperity while that of another spelt doom. In



India the appearance of a comet (Dhumketu) was looked upon as portending doom. Following this it was not a difficult step to believe that changes in an individual's fortune are also decided - by changes in star patterns. Thus the development of astronomy lead to astrology and to beliefs in the auspicious or inauspicious. Henceforth the practice of consulting learned pundits for derivation of auspicious dates or time in the future could evolve naturally.

How did YAGNA come into practice?

The Yagna was central to life in Vedic times. It had not yet become a ritual then. The Yagna was the central fireplace of the Aryan Gana (tribe). Fire has since then played a central part in Hindu religious ritual. Even the Hindu (and Sikh, and Buddhist) flag seen above has the colour of fire. This is so as initially, it was the actual fire that was carried from one place to another as a sacred object. The ancient Vedic Aryans had some people from the Gana (tribe) who had the specific task of preserving the fire. They were called 'Agnihotra'. According to Sanskrit philology this term is an amalgam of the two terms Agni and Troo. 'Agni' means 'fire' and 'Troo' means 'to preserve'. The Central Fireplace of the Aryan tribe became a ritual to be performed at any important occasion as in a marriage.

The Saptapadi (Seven Steps) was a ritual to be performed around a central fireplace called agni-kund. The sacred fire was Vedi. The couple to be married had to go around the Vedi seven times, representing seven days of the week. Dana and Dakshina are given in Cash and Kind, but never as free Physical Labour.

How did the custom of HAVANA begin?

The way of life both during peacetime and war was based on collective activity. In the tribal way of life even during peacetime the share (Havi) of every member of the tribe was distributed in a function called the Havana. Whatever was gathered, hunted or cooked was shared among all members of the tribe. The same principle was applied to the distribution of the booty of war. This distribution which was carried out in festive atmosphere after a successful campaign is perhaps the progenitor of our custom of offering daan especially on festival days and other auspicious occasions.



What are the symbols of SAUBHAGYAVATI - The Blessed One?

This term is used to refer to a married Hindu woman. The symbols associated with a woman being married are the Lakshmi padas (Goddess Lakshmi's Footsteps). The Goddess Lakshmi is believed to have entered the house of a married woman who performs puja after drawing the Lakshmi Padas. Other symbols of a woman being a Saubhagyavati (Married) are a vermilion powder pot, bangles, a comb, and a looking glass.

Why do we greet people with NAMASTE?

Namaste could be an amalgam of Namasya (or Namaha) meaning obeisance and 'Te' which means you or to you. Thus Namaste as an amalgam of Namasyate could be translated as obeisance to you. Namaste involves the joining together of both palms at the level of the breast. If the person being greeted is a senior or if it is addressed to God, the Namaste is accompanied with a slight bow. The meaning implies a submission of one person to another. Thus, submission or surrender of one person to another. Hence, it would not be erroneous to infer that Namaste was in fact a declaration of submission. The fact that both hands have to be displayed to the person being greeted could have its origin in the practice that when a person submits to another or when two strangers hail each other they have to prove that they are unarmed and that their intentions are peaceful.

They all are the same *Namaskar, Namaste, Nameste, or Pranam* - meaning Reverent Salutations.

There exists a system of spiritual energy, which flows through one's body. Some of the energy dissipates into the atmosphere from one's fingertips. In the gesture accompanying 'Namaste' one's palms and fingertips are brought together. Due to this joining of the fingertips, the energy that normally goes out (into the atmosphere) through the fingertips remains within oneself.

The conserved energy helps generate spiritual emotion (bhav). Thus, the gesture is a tool to generate spiritual emotion, love (prembhav) and respect for the other person, acknowledging the divinity in the other person.



Over time the significance of the gesture has been forgotten and it has become a mere formality.

As compared to this, during a handshake, discordant frequencies from the other person's body can enter one's body. Since about 30% of the population is troubled by negative energies, their negative energy may affect one through a handshake. Hence, using the gesture of the 'Namaste' greeting instead of a handshake to greet others will definitely help in conserving the energy as well as reduce the chances of getting affected by the negative energies through a handshake.

What is the significance of the TILAK?

The Tilak is normally a vermilion mark applied on the forehead. This mark has a religious significance and is a visible sign of a person as belonging to the Hindu religion. The Tilak is of more than one colour although normally it is vermilion. It also does not have any standard shape and form and is applied differently by members of different Hindu sects and sub-sects. It is applied as a 'U' by worshippers of Lord Vishnu and is red, yellow or saffron in colour. It is made up of red ochre powder (Sindhura) and sandalwood paste (Gandha). Worshippers of Lord Shiva apply it as three horizontal lines and it consists of ash (Bhasma). Soot (Abhira) is also used as a pigment for applying a Tilak.

Why do Hindu women apply KUMKUM OR BINDIYA on their forehead?

Sindhura which is also used to describe a Tilaka means red and Gandha which is also a term for Tilaka means pleasant odour. Hence, Tilaka normally connotes, a red mark with a pleasant odour. Some scholars have seen the red colour as a symbolism for blood. We are told that in ancient times, in Aryan society, a groom used to apply his blood, on his bride's forehead as a recognition of wedlock. The existing practice among Indian women of applying a round shaped red Tilaka called Bindiya or Kumkum could be a survival of this. The third eye of Lord Shiva stands for omniscience or wisdom. When Hindus wear kumkum or sandalpaste on their forehead, it is to remind themselves of their latent power of wisdom which they should awaken.

What do we understand about SWASTIK?



This is also revered by Hindu and ranks second only to OM

Did the Swastika originate as blueprint for a fort called Su Vastu?

In the conventional type of a fort, the fall of one of the gates to the attacking army would lead to the Enemy's pouring into the fort and lead to massacre or capture of all or most of its inhabitants. But under the Swastika grids fall of one of the four gates could still keep, at least three-fourths of the fort safe. The understanding of the Swastika as a blueprint for a fort can also be etymologically corroborated. In Sanskrit, Vasa means to inhabit and Vastu means habitation. While Su means good. The word Swastika might be an amalgam of the terms 'Su' and 'Vastu' pronounced as as 'Swastu') meaning 'a good habitation'.

What is the symbolic importance of PURNAKUMBHA?

Purnakumbha literally means a "full pitcher" (Purna = full, Kumbha = pitcher). The Purnakumbha is a pitcher full of water, with fresh leaves of the mango tree and a coconut (Sriphala) placed on the top. The Purnakumbha is an object symbolizing God and is regularly used during different religious rites. One instance of the Purnakumbha itself used as an object of worship is the Satyanarayana Puja or the worship of Lord Satyanarayana. The water in the jar is said to be the divine essence. Water has been an object of worship since a very early age among the Hindus. Water plays an important role even today in Hindu religious rites. During all purificatory rites, water is sprinkled on the object to be purified. Before starting his meal a Hindu sprinkles water around the the banana leaf from which a meal is traditionally eaten. In ancient times before coronation a king was sprinkled with water so as to ensure an auspicious beginning to his reign.

Why Hindu believe in more than one God?

If they believe in only one God, so then why do they worship idols, even though idols cannot do anything, they cannot move cannot see and just cannot do anything.

DO HINDUS BELIEVE IN MORE THAN ONE GOD?

NO! We do not believe in more than one God. The Hindu texts Upanishads say that 'God is one'. His forms are infinite. We believe



in various forms of God and in His incarnations. That doesn't mean that every god is different than the other. Rather each form of God is a part of the whole. This whole is the One God that Hinduism worships.

DO WE WORSHIP IDOLS?

NO! We do not worship idols. We use idols for worshipping God. God is an abstract concept.

For a person to worship, it helps if there is some physical entity that is in front of you to concentrate on.

This physical entity is the idol. The scriptures say that the best way of worshipping is by doing good works and by meditation but some people find it difficult to meditate on an abstract quantity. Hence we use idols.

Please note that idols themselves aren't worshipped. Rather they are the too old with which some people like to worship. After we use the idols, we immerse them in water (sometimes permanently).

Otherwise Why would we do that if we thought that the idols were themselves Gods?

Every morning First Devotee worships Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Ganapati and Lord Shiva, Goddess Lakshmi Mata, Goddess Durga and Goddess Santoshi Maa . The Second Devotee worships only one deity, Shree Satya Narayan Bhagwan Ji.

Who is right? Who is doing the correct spiritual practice and why?

Both are right in their own way. One is at higher level than the other.

1. The first Devotee is doing the correct spiritual, because the Devotee is pleasing more deities with the worship. Hence, the Devotee will get blessings for the spiritual progress from all of them.
2. The Second devotee is doing the correct spiritual practice, as the second Devotee is doing it according to the 'Many to one' basic principle of Spirituality. According to this principle, instead of trying to focus on many Deities one should focus on one Deity (for example,



One Deity). When we do spiritual practice according to the basic principles of Spirituality, we make rapid spiritual progress.