

## Basics of Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma) *through Q & A*

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**1) How was Hinduism founded ?** Hinduism is the name used for 'Sanatana Dharma' meaning eternal (Sanatana) principles and actions that hold all things and beings together (Dharma). It is founded on the experiences and works of innumerable rishis (seers) in spiritual and intellectual fields. *It is not founded either by one person or a group of people.*

**2) What are the holy scriptures of Hinduism ?** *The core of Hinduism is Vedas, which is infinitely large body of mantras heard by rishis in their deep meditative states.* There is also an infinitely large literature based on Vedas that deal with medicine, arts, science, economics, linguistics, philosophy etc. The Ramayana and Mahabharata (includes Bhagavad-Gita) are well-known epics that illustrate the Vedic principles. Thus the infinitely large collection of sacred scriptures in Hinduism deals with all aspects of life.

**3) What is the purpose of human life according to Hinduism ?** *The natural instinct of humans is to seek happiness both materialistic and spiritual.* Anyone that lives righteous (Dharma) life in this world with rightfully earned wealth (Artha) and enjoys rightful desires (Kama) will eventually reach one's ultimate destination of spiritual freedom and everlasting bliss (Moksha).

**4) Why do Hindus worship idols ?** *The word idols should be replaced with deities. Deities represent yogic vision of rishis of the divine energies in many forms.* In order to help easier focusing of mind a material medium is used to represent deities. Deity worship (Pooja) helps subjective connection with God through mind and five senses.

**5) How many Gods are in Hinduism ?** *The infinitely large literature of Hinduism declares that there is One God (Bramhan) that exists without form and also manifests in various forms.* The various manifestations of One Reality (Bramhan) or Supreme Being are due to the diverse types and levels of seekers.

**6) What is Yoga ?** *Yoga is the Hindu way for anyone to reach the Bramhan that provides everlasting spiritual freedom and bliss.* The eight steps of yoga includes the first two steps to achieve human qualities such as non-violence, truthfulness etc. The next two steps deal with holding firm postures and vital force (breath) regulation. The next two steps deal with control of senses and focusing of mind on Bramhan. The last two steps deal with uninterrupted dwelling of mind (meditation) and spiritual absorption into the Bramhan experiencing Spiritual bliss and freedom. In addition to above eight-step process, the methods of devotion, knowledge, selfless action need to be followed for the spiritual, intellectual and physical development.

**7) What is Karma ?** *Karma is the law of causality that governs all thoughts, speech and actions.* It provides rewards and punishments accordingly. It governs the rebirth and transmigration process of an individual soul till its merger with Bramhan.