

The Science of Hindu Spirituality

Hindu/sanaathana dharma has its foundation on scientific spirituality. Ancient Rishies are the authors of the Vedas, puranaas , itihaasaas and smruithies which are known as Hindu religious / spiritual books. Those rishies themselves wrote the books on economics – artha saastra-, music and dance – gaandharva Veda-, science of health and food - ayurveda-, civil engineering and sculpture – sthaapathya veda, etc which are the well known scientific books. In all the ancient Hindu literature one can see that science and spirituality are integrated. It is mentioned in the 40th chapter of the Yajurveda known as Eesaavaasya Upanishad that 'use the scientific knowledge for solving the problems in our life and use the spiritual knowledge for attaining immortality through philosophical outlook. Avidyayaa mruthyum theerthwaa vidyayaa amruthamasnuthe . A detailed description on the scientific and technological heritage of Hindu dharma has been separately given and hence it is not included in this text. Here only the science of spirituality is described for giving a clear understanding on the Hindu way of looking into the different order/level of spiritual science.

At all levels in other religions there exist only one god/ divine power. And that is the one and only one, without even a second on the pathway to attain that one. In Hindu dharma also there exists the ultimate one and only one god. But to attain that one , you can have different pathways and worship of different deities. For reaching New Delhi, the capital of India, there can be many pathways/ roads, but New Delhi remains the (same) one location. Some of these roads may be short cuts, some may be smooth and some other may not have street lights, etc. Thus the roads and nature of roads vary but the ultimate goal remains the same.

The one Hindu god and its scientific explanation : There exists only one god and it is reiterated throughout the Upanishads and Vedas. Ekam sath vipraa: bahudaa vadanthi. The ultimate truth is one and only one, but some scholars may tell that it is many fold . ekam eva na advitheeyam. The only one without the second. Further you can see the words of Rigveda: dyaavaa pruthvi janayan deva eka: the god, who created the celestial bodies and this earth, is one and only one. Eka eva hi bhoothaatmaa bhoothothe vyavasthithaa ekathaa bhahudaa chaiva drusyathe jala chandravath. The ultimate divine power is one and only one which is existing in each and every living being. It may be said by some as one and some others may say it as many, but the truth is like this; there is only one moon and it is reflected in different waters (of river, well, a cup of water, sea or ocean). Just like the reflection of the one moon is seen in all, the same divine power is manifested in all living being. Even the whole philosophy of the advaita is based on the non duality of the divine power (a-dvaita – the one without a second)

The name of 'that one' in Hindu dharma is Brahman or Brahmam. Hindus do have different levels of upaasana/ worship. But the ultimate point where all the pathways arrive at is this point of Brahman (do not pronounce Braahman). The Vedas say Brahma sathyam jagath mithya. The ultimate essence of everything is this Brahman and everything in the universe is the manifestation of that ultimate truth (which is the Brahmam). Jeevo Brahmaiva na aparaa: Even the life force / soul itself is the same Brahaman and nothing else. The Brahmam is present in everything, in the smaller than the smallest (in atoms) and bigger than the biggest (in the universe) and also present as the jeevaathma in all living beings: Anoraneeyaan mahato maheeyaan atma guhaayaam nihithosya jantho: says Mahanaraayana Upanishad. One can see pure science in this explanation: The revolution of electrons and the spinning of the nuclei in atoms, the rotation and revolution of earth, the solar system, the galaxy , and so on are all guided from within the system and this force which gives the energy and guidance for their movement is known as Brahman. It is this same energy manifested as jeevaathma in the living being which controls the heart, lungs, the liver, the blood circulation, the sensory organs, the functional organs, etc. in animals. In the mahaasankalapa , it is thus explained achinthyayaa aparimithayaa sakthyaa briyamaanasya aneka koti brahmandaanaam madhye ; the billions and billions of galaxies which are revolving/ rotating under the torrential force which is beyond the level of imagination and limitless ... this force is from within the system and it is the one which guides the rotation and revolution. Hence the ancient Indian Rishies said that Brahman is the ultimate force/energy. Upanishad says that the Brahman is the one which can not be seen through eyes, heard by ears, analyzed by mind but the energy which is responsible for the proper functioning of the eyes, ears and mind.... Is Brahman. yath chakshushaa na pasyathi yena chakshoomshi pasyathui....., yath srothrena na srunothi yena srothra mitham srutham....., yath manasaa na manuthe yenaahur manomatham..... thadeva Brahmatham vidhi yadidam na idam upaasathe. is the Brahman and worship that Brahman. In other Upanishads it is explained that the fire and air (prathyaksham Brahma), the sound (sabda Brahmam), the Sun, the light (chaakshu Brahmam), and so on are all the manifestation of this Brahmam. This gives a clear definition for Brahmam that it is the energy and manifestation of a power

Brahman is also present as jeevathma/ soul in me hence I say aham Brahma asmi (I am the divine power) It is present in you hence that thwam asi (you are also the same divine power) It is present as life force hence ayam athma Brahma (this life force/ energy is the Brahmam) and it is manifested as the inherent intrinsic consciousness and awareness, hence prajnaanam Brahma (that glorious knowledge is Brahman). These four sets of words corresponds to Yajurveda, Saama veda, Atharvaveda and Rigveda respectively, are known as four Mahaavaakyas . The yogi who could get the experience of the realization of the Brhaman is known as Brahma jnaani and the process of realization is known as Brahma saakshaathkaaram. That state of Brahma jnaani is also known as kaivalya state, the state in which one knows that only one is existing (kevalam means only one). Aksharam Brahma paramam means the Brahman is non destructible for ever. Brahmakshra samudbhavam Brahmam arose from the non destructible. There are few vedic and puranic words connected with Brahman, they are Brahmaandam (the universal egg – a state before the big bang) Lord Brahma (the creator of this universe and everything present here from energy) Brahma vaivartham (the manipulation and manifestation of the universal force/ energy).... Now the word Brahmam may be clearly defined based on the above explanations using modern science as follows: the intrinsic, inherent, self guiding, self motivating, self awareness and self conscious present from each and every atom to the universe itself, is the Brahmam, the ultimate god of Hindu !

It is said that there are two states of Brahmam . The extremely active state in observation known as saguna Brahmam and the inactive state in observation known as nirguna Brahmam. These two states are complementary and never contradictory (as few scholars may say). (saguna and nirguna may be opposite words just like lower and upper are opposite words. But lower primary and upper primary are not opposites, they are complimentary). In an atom, the electrons are revolving at a fantastic speed/ velocity (sagunathwam) but the materials which are composed by the atoms are seen in nirguna state (without rotating and spinning). The earth rotates and revolves at high speed (saguna state) but the people living on the globe earth do not feel the speed (nirguna state in observation). Our heart/liver/ lungs/ each and every tissue functions / works for all the 24 hrs (in saguna state), but the body does not feel that (particularly when sleeping) such a series of biochemical processes are going on inside (nirguna state). Thus there are observationally two states for the Brahmam one saguna state and other nirguna state. Sometimes saguna upaasana/ worship also means the worship in forms and images and nirguna upaasana/ worship means worship without keeping the images.

From the upanishadic explanation that the universe is filled with the Brahma chaithanyam (the intrinsic... awareness and consciousness) it may be difficult for a common man to understand this concept. For the understanding at a lower level and for giving a better perception for common man, the Brahmam has been symbolically presented as a personified form of prapancha purusha or viswa roopa (prapancha – unvers; purusha – human form viswa – unvers, roopa – size and shape) . This is a concept and symbolically presented, hence it is well defined as prapancha purusha sankalpa (sankalpa – concept). It is narrated as viswaakaraam gagana sadrusam megha varnam... having the size and shape of the universe, similar in area to the sky itself and colour that of clouds... It is described in Vedas as viswathaschakshurutha vishwatho mukho viswatho baahurutha viswathaspaath... its face, brain, hands and legs have spread over the universe and everything in the universe works under his guidance and control. Bhagavath geetha gives the power of viswa roopam like divi soorya sahasrasya bhaveth yuga pathuthithaa...it looks as though thousands of Suns are blazing. The size of the prapancha purusha has been explained na ntham na madhyam na punasthavaadim : there are no beginning, middle and end for that viswa roopa. Lord Krishna himself tells in Bhagavath geetha for seeing the universal person/ viswa roopa, one needs the divine eyes (divya chakshu). Vedas describe it through purusha sooktha.

This viswa roopa / prapancha purusha is known in puranas and other literature (some times in Vedas too) as Mahavishnu / Vishnu and Naraayana. Puranas give detailed narration for Naraayana

At further lower level there exists a trinity concept in Hindu dharma. The trinity concept of Hindus is different from that of other religions. Here the 'controllers' of birth, existence / growth and death are symbolically presented in human forms as Brahma Vishnu Maheswara – trimoorthy sankalpa in which the universal laws of life cycle are symbolically presented. Mahavishnu is the base for the trinity concept.

Explanation for Mahavishnu: The blue colour of Vishnu denotes the colour of the sky and ocean which means the infinity/ limitless. The serpent on which Vishnu is lying denotes the coiled structure of a galaxy. The name of the serpent anantha means limitless (infinity) the ksheera saagar (ocean of milk) on which Vishnu is pictured shows milky way galaxy. Anantha sayana represent the silent universe/ galaxies. Symbolically Mahalakshmi (meaning of this word is prosperity) has been attributed the position of the wife of Mahavishnu showing that any system can smoothly exist only with prosperity.

From Mahavishnu comes out through a Lotus (symbolically) the creator Lord Brahma. This symbolically presents a connection of Lord Brahma with the prapancha pursha similar to the connection of the baby in the womb of the mother. The baby takes the energy and nutrition for growing/ cell production from the mother. Similarly Lord Brahma takes energy and material from for creation in the world. The four heads of Lord Brahma represent the four axes required for any creation: x, y, z and time axes. The Vedas (the word itself means knowledge) in the hands of Lord Brahma and the position of Saraswathy (deity of knowledge) as the wife of the creator symbolically present that for every creation knowledge/ vidya is required. The knowledge and creation (knowledge for creation) are inseparable components.

Lord Siva is the deity symbolically presents the controller of death/ destruction (the destruction is for further construction). Mahavishnu and Lord Siva are said to be connected through hearts (which only means inseparable) Vishnoasya hrudayam siva: Sivosya hrudayam vishno – says Upanishads and Yajurveda. Symbolically Lord Siva has powerful fire in the third eye, powerful water and torrential air symbolically tied in the tuft and the snake around the neck (symbol of international medical association) and thri sool in hand. All the five respectively present destruction through fire, water (flood, etc) air (cyclone/ tempest, etc) diseases and using weapons. Parvathy (means energy/force/sakti) is symbolically presented as the wife of Lord Siva. Through this combination of Lord Siva and Parvathy, it is shown that the destruction for construction can take place with powerful application of any one or more of the above five. (powerful fire, air, water, diseases and weapon only have the destruction capacity). Thus they become inseparable hence the concept of Ardhanareeswara comes up. In fact the Brahma Vishnu Maheswara sankalpa and the Lakshmi Parvathy Sarswathy sankalpa are the symbolic presentation of the life cycle spiritual- social and physical level when scientifically explained. Always the Hindus consider the knowledge, prosperity and sakthi/power in feminine gender. These explanations (of the gods) are the connecting layers of Vedic and puranic concepts of gods.

Further going at common mans level, the above six deities can be seen in different roles of puranic stories to convey the message of what they represent symbolically in. However these stories are mainly for conveying the values and universal truths in our life. And they are meant for the understanding for less educated common man who may not be in a position to understand the Brahman or prapancha purusha concept, or the symbolic message of Hindu trinity concept, etc.

About other deities: In puranas one can read the stories of Vigneswara having the shape of the cross section of human brain, worshipped as the Lord who removes/ protects from the hurdles in the life. Hurdles can be as huge as elephants and it can come from anywhere just like a rat (mooshika vaahana) comes. Students who learn the six branches of Vedic subjects Siksha- nirukta- vyaakarana- chandassastra- kalpasastra and Jyothisha, worship Subrahmanya/ Muruka, Subrahmanya is given the Lordship of six subjects. Hence six heads one for each subject. Incidentally, I feel it is worth explaining here that Ravana is said to have ten heads. It is because Ravana has the capacity of ten heads (he has learned the four Vedas and six Vedangas and even he had tried to master the 11th subject, the Ayurveda too). Yamadharmaraja or Kaala is the controller of death Yaama and Kaala (yaamasya apathyam pumaan yama: and kaalasya apathyam puman kaala) both means the controller of time. Hence the names clearly give the scientific truth that the death is connected with the time. Kaala is symbolically presented coming on a he buffalo (he buffalo is said to be the most senseless animal, hence the time of death arrives to us senselessly – and takes our breath- without looking the age, religion, sex or any other parameters of the individual- we say people die just like that)

Lord Krishna and Lord Rama and many heroes of the puranas and epics give us the message for elevating ourselves from the ordinary human level to the level of incarnation/ avathara level. Their message enrich our life. They stand as role models in our life. Hence they are worshipped and celebrated as avatharas. In Hindu dharma none is a sinner. Hence everyone has the opportunity to elevate/ rise himself to the level of god. We say krinvantho viswamaaryam; (God will not get jealous of you if you are getting the level of god himself, in Hinduism). Let us convert the world into a great men's abode. Human being is considered as the children of immortal ..amruthasya putraa: Every deity in Hindu dharma has a connected animal, bird, tree, flower, celestial body or planet (as adhidevatha or pathyadhidevatha), colour, metal, medicine, manthra, gayanthri, letter, dhyana manthra, moola manthra, ...etc. This gives an excellent message that these are to be protected. In Hindu dharma there are 33 crore (koti) devaas! The meaning of this statement is very simple but wrongly understood. Koti means part (not ten million) and here 33 parts devaas (people with divine qualities) 33 parts asuraas (people with demonic qualities) and 33 parts maanavas (people with ordinary human qualities)- it is just like we say 1/3 of the human beings have divine, demonic and ordinary human qualities each. It is said that Hindus worship everything! True in everything we can see the divine power and that divinity could be felt when we elevate ourselves into that level. Even a stone / wood / photo/ image becomes an idol archakasya prabhavena sila bhavathi sankara (by the proper method of worship by a priest/ devotee even a stone can be converted into Lord Siva /Sankara/vigraha/ idol. Archakasya aprabhavena siva bhavati sila, by the improper outlook/ method of worship even the god itself will become a stone.

Hindus worship in temples. The temples are not merely prayer halls for Hindus, they are the quantum healing centers (kshayaath thraaythe iti kshetra). In temples the light, heat, sound and chemical energies are filled through lighting the lamp, camphor, keeping mirrors, etc. The sound energy through manthra, ringing of the bells, musical instruments, bhajans etc. The chemical energy is from bathies, aromatic flowers and leaves etc. Thus the temples are energization centres in Hindu way of worship. A devotee has to stand for few minutes in the temple environment in front of the vigraha/ idol with sareera (body), mana (mind), aahaara (food), vaak (words/ talking) and karma (deeds) suddhee (purity) for energisation.

Hindus never allow the cremation or burial of human body in the temple premises Hindus always keep the idols or images having smiling faces (Prasanna vadanam dhyayeth- meditate on the god having smiling face). Hindus never place the sad/ crying faces or bleeding bodies for worship. The offerings of the gods, from the temple are taken as shared prasadam not as body or blood of the gods. Hindus never pray for unloading/ transferring their sins to the god or representatives of god or saints. Using the concept, that the sins are transferable to someone who is a representative of god and punishing him for our sins is not existing in Hindu dharma. But Hindus pray for guiding through correct and dharmic pathway so that one can prevent committing the sins (thamaso maa jyothirgmayam,...etc) Hindus never pray to god through intermediate saints, they submit directly their prayer. The people who fought for spreading the religion using swords and bloodshed and denigrated other religions are never elevated to the level of saints. The offering given to temples are not the bribes to gods but for pancha yajna- the offering for gods Deva yajna, Rishi yajna – for sages, Puithru yajna - for forefathers, bhootha yajna - for all other living beings and Manushya yajna for feeding the poor people. The idol and temple are compared with human body (idam sareeram kountheya kshetramithyabhidheeyate) and human dwellings. Hence whatever are required for human body are performed through thanthric way to the idols also. In olden days the temples were the capitals of the villages, through them the food supply, education, help for the society, legal consolation, counseling, marriages, etc were given/ performed. The priest hood of Hindu dharma and that of other religion are entirely different. The role of the priests was not political at all but to advise on dharmic and spiritual way. Hindus are never god fearing, they have only devotion to god not fear (daiva bhakti and not daiva bhaya). There are five bhavas for the bhakti – saantha bhaava, daasya bhaava, sakhya bhaava, vaalsalya bhaava and maadhurya bhava. In all these the question of fear does not arise

Additional points to remember: Hindus worship the fire, air, the Sun, the celestial bodies, etc because they are all the parts of the prapancha purusha. The same reasoning is given for the worship of mountains, earth, rivers, etc. Hindus worship animals and plants and in fact every deity has a plant and animal associated with them, because all of them have jeevaathma / life force in it. Hence they are considered as divine in nature (jeevaathma is a part of paramaathma). The Vedic way of worship is through havans /offering through the fire. The puranic way of worship is the temples and idols and images. Every temple has a specific vastu connected with it and that vastu resembles the yaaga saala/ house of yaagaas and fire altars. Hindus say Vedas are holy because it gives absolutely (no stories) the universal laws and truths. Anyone can learn Vedas and there did not exist a rule that people belonging to only one caste can learn Vedas. For keeping the seriousness and for strictly following the rules, the scholars defined that who has Brahminical qualities only can learn Vedas, which can be acquired and not obtained by birth alone. All the Rishies who composed Vedic manthras were not Brahmins, Sri Krishna or Sri Rama were not Brahmins. Many ancient Rishies and many of those Rishies who are living even now are not Brahmins.

Hindus worship books/letters/ because it is the base for knowledge. Hindus worship the tools and instruments during aayudha pooja, by performing pooja once in an year because tools are the lively hood for human beings. Hindus have given the status of divine power to many phenomena like: the Sun, because it gives light and heat for all living beings; the air, because all living beings are surviving because of it; the water, because without which life is impossible; the earth, because it is where all the life is surviving (not only that they are all parts of prapancha purusha); our parents, because they gave birth for us and they are our creators; plants and trees, because they provide us food, and so on.

The Hindu way of life is different from that of the followers of other religions. Learning and practicing Hindu dharma should be done directly and it is an experience. All the Hindu way of life is through customs and rituals. It is always advised to follow the relevant and scientific customs and rituals which are beneficial psychologically, physiologically, family based relation and social relations strengthening and also for national integration. All this customs and rituals put together is known as sanaathana dharma hence it is said Hinduism is not a religion but a way of life. Hindu dharma get refined continuously by the Rishies , hence any superstition comes into the Hindu dharma, Rishies like Lord Budha, Jain, Sankara, Madhwa, They refine and make it more powerful.....

Thus says Lord Krishna in Bhagavath Geetha: Whenever the dharma comes down and adharm takes an upper hand, the god himself will do the needful for the uplift of Hindu dharma. He will protect the nobles, punish the bad people and protect the dharma. Perhaps that is the reason why even after more than one thousand years of foreign invasion, massacre, destruction, plundering and looting by the foreigners, this dharma did not perish. It is fast spreading through out the world particularly in the developed world. Let us all learn the basic principles and application of those from the Hindu dharma scientifically either for practicing it or for challenging it.