

Jai Maa
Sanatana Dharma

A HUMBLE INTRODUCTION

All the opinions expressed in this paper
are the personal opinions of the author.
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Hinduism: A Humble Introduction

The Name

- ❖ Hinduism is the only religion whose name itself is “incorrect”. The actual name should be *Sanatana Dharma*, *Vaidika Dharma*, or *Vedanta Dharma*.

Specialties

- ❖ **History:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has a very long history or, rather, ‘no history’ at all, since it has no beginning and no end—it is eternal. This is not an emotional statement, but a statement of fact, because [*see next point*]...
- ❖ **No Prophet:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has not been founded by any one prophet. About its antiquity, please read this: ‘Scant justice is done to India’s position in the world by those European histories which recount the exploits of her invaders and leave the impression that her own people were a feeble dreamy folk, sundered from the rest of mankind by their seas and mountain frontiers. Such a picture takes no account of the intellectual conquests of the Hindus [Sir Charles Elliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, vol. 1, p.xii].’ And this: ‘No nation on earth can vie with the Hindus in respect of the antiquity of their civilization and the antiquity of their religion [Count Bjornstjerna in *Theology of the Hindus*, p. 5]’.
- ❖ **No Book:** ³ Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which does not depend upon any particular book. In fact, Hinduism has no “book”. [‘Hindus received their religion from the revelation of these Vedas. They were told that the Vedas were without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous ... how a book can be without beginning or end; but by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times.’ -- Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol. 8, p. 232].
- ❖ **The Aryans:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has been so misinterpreted and mis-read by historians and others. Just because someone found a coin in the desert of Arabia, it was decided once and for all that ‘Aryans were invaders who came into India’. Fortunately, such theories of ‘Divide and Rule’rs have fallen. The Aryans were Indians, living by the River Saraswati, who developed the Hindu faith. Read this: ‘The Aryans of India were the framers of the most wonderful language, the Sanskrit, the fellow workers in the construction of our fundamental concepts, the fathers of the most natural of natural religions, the makers of the most transparent of mythologies, the inventors of the most subtle philosophy, and the givers of the most elaborate laws’ [Prof. Max Muller, *What India can Teach Us*, p. 23].
- ❖ **Way of Life:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which is not a religion alone, in the sense that the adherent should pay a Sunday visit to some temple or religious place. Hinduism is a way of life. Hinduism touches all aspects of life— this life, next life, and afterlife.
- ❖ **Karma and Rebirth:** *Sanatana Dharma* is the only religion which gives meaning to life and death, and birth and disease. This is not an emotional statement, but a fact. This is because, the theory of Karma, which

originated in the Vedas long before any other religion could adopt it, gives the correct meaning, link and significance to all the phases of life. That link is karma. A child is born blind not because God is angry, or because He is not merciful, but the child had bad karma. This is not fatalism, but the positive thing is that the child can be better in the future. Read this: ‘The debt which the world owes to our Motherland is immense. Taking country with country, there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much as to the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu’ [Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol.3, p. 105].

- ❖ **Creation:** *Sanatana Dharma* is the only religion which gives the correct, scientific explanation of creation. Creation is not something coming out of zero, or creating a pot out of clay. It is manifestation, expiration. Expiring and inspiring [big bang and big crunch] is what is creation.
- ❖ **Creation Theories:** *Sanatana Dharma* is the only religion which gives several theories of creation—making way for openness and scientific spirit. Of such theories, the Advaita theory of illusory manifestation, the Samkhya theory of expiration and inspiration by the changes in Prakriti, the Vishishtadvaita theory of transformation of Brahman [*Brahma-parinama*], the bhakti explanation of the manifestation of God’s Will, and the Vaisheshika explanation of the combination of atoms to form molecules and so on, are important. Please read this: ‘The concept of the world as deduced from the Vedas, and chiefly from the Upanishads, is indeed astounding. It could hardly have been arrived at by sudden intuition or inspiration, but presupposes a long preparation of metaphysical thought, undisturbed by foreign influences...’ [Max Muller, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. xv].
- ❖ **Illusion:** *Sanatana Dharma* is the only religion which gives the boldest idea ever, of Advaita, of the illusoriness of ego and also of the illusoriness of manifestation.
- ❖ **The Three Bodies:** *Sanatana Dharma* is the only religion which explains correctly the three bodies: physical, subtle, and causal, and also the Atman behind these three bodies as the real I.
- ❖ **The Five Sheaths:** *Sanatana Dharma* is the only religion which gives us the exact information about the five sheaths we ‘wear’. We are not the body, the *annamaya kosha*. We are not the vital forces, the *pranamaya kosha*. We are not the mind, the *manomaya kosha*. We are not the intellect, the *vijanamaya kosha*. We are not the causal body even, the *anandamaya kosha*.

We are only wearing these “clothes”. We are the Atman. We are Infinite—and there cannot be many infinities, so we are One.

- ❖ **Oneness:** *Sanatana dharma* or Hinduism is thus the only religion which gives us the idea of the Oneness or Unity of all existence, and the divinity of the Soul.
- ❖ **Holistic:** *Sanatana Dharma* is the only religion which is holistic in as much as it includes the philosophical ideas of all the religions of the world. Thus, this is the only religion which gives us the idea of the harmony of faiths. Read this: ‘Neo-Platonism and Christian Gnosticism owe much to India. The Gnostic idea in regard to the plurality of heavens and spiritual worlds go back directly to Hindu sources. Soul and light are one in the Sankhya system, before they came to Greece, and when they appear united in Greece it is by means of the

thought which is borrowed from India. The famous three qualities of the Sankhya reappear as the Gnostic “three classes” [Edward Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 25].

❖ ***The Three Universes:*** Sanatana dharma

or Hinduism is the only religion which explains correctly the three universes: gross, subtle and causal. But these are only manifestations. Beyond these three is the Supreme Reality, Brahman. Brahman is Infinite. There cannot be two infinities, so Brahman = Atman. This is the most fundamental and final discovery of Sanatana dharma.

❖ ***Supreme Oneness:*** Sanatana dharma or Vedanta dharma or Hinduism is the only religion which teaches that the macrocosm [Brahman] and the microcosm [Atman] or the universal and the specific, are one and the same. An atom contains the whole universe. This is the most wonderful revelation human mind has ever accomplished. In recent times, this vision was again experienced by Swami Vivekananda. After his experience of the macrocosm within the microcosm while absorbed in meditation under the peepul tree at Kakrighat, Uttaranchal State, in 1890, Swami Vivekananda jotted down in Bengali fragments of his realization in his notebook. ‘The microcosm and the macrocosm are built on the same plan. Just as the individual soul is encased in the living body, so is the universal Soul in the Living Prakriti [Nature] — the objective universe. Shivâ [i.e. Kâli] is embracing Shiva: this is not a fancy’ [*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 1, p. 250].

❖ ***Ample Scope:*** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which gives supreme scope for all to practice any path they want. You may worship Krishna or Rama or a tree or a plant or a shivalinga or a mountain, or nothing. Since the One and the many are the same Reality, to worship a tree, a stone, is as the same as worshipping the Virat, Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna says: ‘Some people indulge in quarrels, saying, “One cannot attain anything unless one worships our Krishna”, or “Nothing can be gained without the worship of Kali, our Divine Mother,” or “One cannot be saved without accepting the Christian religion.” This is pure dogmatism. ... God can be reached by different paths’ [*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, tr. Swami Nikhilananda, p. 191].

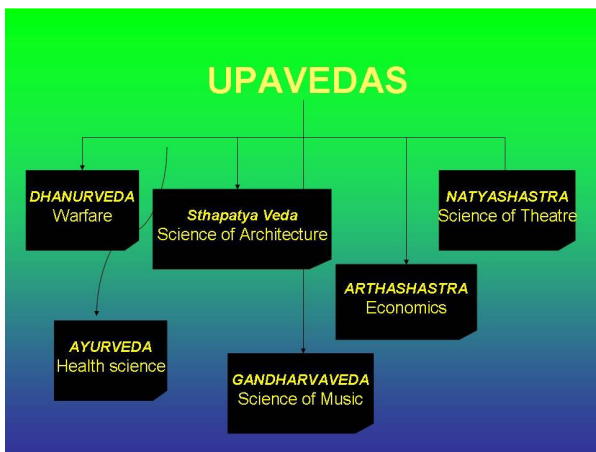
❖ **About God:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which teaches that God can be formless, or with form, or beyond form and formlessness. Nobody can limit Him. Sri Ramakrishna declared: ‘God has form and He is formless too. Further, He is beyond both form and formlessness. No one can limit Him’ [*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p.192].

❖ ***Vastness of Literature:*** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has such an enormous amount of spiritual literature: thousands of great works were lost due to lack of techniques of preservation.

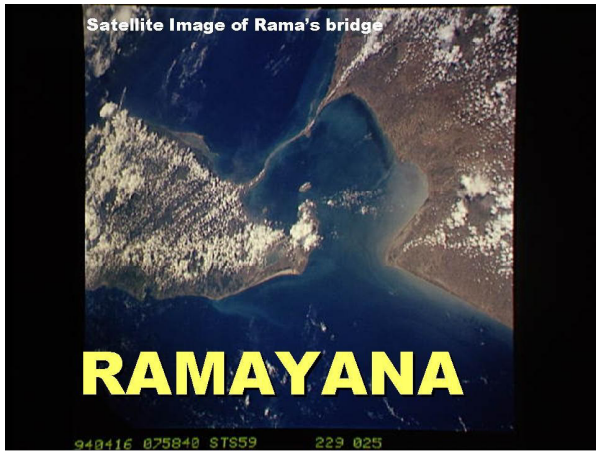
○ Vedas [Rg, Yajur, Sama, Atharva with four parts each: mantra, brahmana, aranyaka and Upanishad]. ‘The Vedas are still learnt by heart as they were long before the invasion of Alexander, and could now be restored from the lips of religious teachers if every manuscript or printed copy of them were destroyed,’ [A. A. MacDonnell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 8].

Rg Veda Samhita 10 mandalas 1028 suktas 10.552 mantras	Yajur Veda Samhita Shukla [40] Krishna [44]	Sama Veda Samhita 20 kandas	Atharva Veda Samhita 20 kandas
Rg Veda Brahmana Aitareya & Kaushituki	Yajur Veda Brahmana Shatapatha Taittiriya	Sama Veda Brahmana 20 kandas	Atharva Veda Brahmana Gopatha
Rg Veda Aranyaka Aitareya & Kaushituki	Yajur Veda Aranyaka Shatapatha Taittiriya	Sama Veda Aranyaka 20 kandas	Atharva Veda Aranyaka Nao existe
Rg Veda Upanishads 10	Yajur Veda Upanishads 51	Sama Veda Upanishads 16	Atharva Veda Upanishads 31

- **Upavedas** [Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharva-veda, Arthashastra, Natyashastra].



- **Vedangas** [Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chandas, Jyotisha]
- **Smritis** [Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parashara, Apastamba, Gautama, Vishnu, Daksha, Samvarta, Vyasa, Harita, Satatapa, Vasishtha, Yama, Devala, Sankha-Likhita, Usana, Atri and Saunaka]
- **Itihasas** – Ramayana and Mahabharata [in it, the *Bhagavadgita*].



- About *Bhagavadgita*, Wilhelm von Humboldt writes: ‘I read the Indian poem for the first time when I was in my country estate in Silesia and, while doing so, I felt a sense of overwhelming gratitude to God for having let me live to be acquainted with this work. It must be the most profound and sublime thing to be found in the world’
- **Puranas** [108 Puranas, but 10 important Puranas: Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Vamana, Vishnu, Bhagavata, Agni, Garuda, Markandeya, etc]
- **Āgamas** [Shaiva, Sakta, Vaishnava -- the list of each is big]
- **Nigamas** 7



- **Sutras** [Samkhya Sutras, Yoga Sutras, Nyaya Sutras, Vaishesika Sutras, Dharma Sutras, Brahma Sutras] and others.
- **Commentaries** (*bhashya, tika, tippani, vartika*) –this is an enormous fund of literature in itself.
- Independent philosophical literature like *Advaita Siddhi, Vedanta Paribhasha, Vedantasara*
- **Other literature**: Bharata’s *Natya sastra*, *Vyakarana Sastra*, *Vimana sastra*, *yantra sastra*, *Mantra sastra*, *manas-sastra*, and so on, drama, metalurgy, health sciences, and a host of other subjects.
- **Later Scriptures**: *Bhaktirasamritasindhu, Ujjavalanilamani*, and a host of other works.

- ❖ **Extraordinariness of Literature:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion whose primary literature has some unique specialty: the tiny part contains the Whole! Incredible, but true. Take up a part, and you can, if you strive, know the whole. For instance: take up a sutra of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*: "yogah chitta vritti nirodah": Study "yogah," then "chittah", then "vrittih", then "nirodah". You have studied not only the whole of yoga, but the whole of everything.
- ❖ **Study and Revelation:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which says that just study, reflection, and meditation on any *sutra* or mantra of the Vedas is sufficient for realization. *Mananaat traayate iti mantrah.*
- ❖ **Translators:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has seen an army of translators and interpreters from Europe, Germany, America, and other places working on the Indian literature during the 18th to 20th centuries. Even today, savants like Vamadeva Sastri and others dedicate their lives to the study of Indian sacred literature.
- ❖ **Supreme Utility:** Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism is the only religion whose secondary and auxiliary literature also is capable of giving liberation. In fact, all scriptures end with the same idea: Realization of our true nature. Until we know who we are, we identify ourselves with what we are not, and lead false lives. Sanatana Dharma wants nothing from us. It only tells us: 'My friend, you appear to be identifying yourself with something which you are not. You are not your house. You are not your room. You are not your clothes. You are not your body. But you think you are. So you are suffering. We want you only to know who you are, so that you may be free from suffering.'
- ❖ **Study of Suffering:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has studied suffering to its final stages and has classified all suffering into three categories: *adhibhautika* [suffering caused by enemies, animals, poisonous snakes, etc], *adhidaivika* [suffering caused by natural phenomena], and *adhyatmika* [suffering caused by oneself]. This religion has also found out that no common means—like building the best house—can save us from these sufferings, because *suffering is existential by nature.*
- ❖ **Buddha and Suffering:** Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism is the only religion which has given the right solution to overcoming suffering. Did not the Buddha do that? Of course, but while the Buddha said that all was only *duhkha*, Sanatana Dharma declared that *duhkha* is only superficial, but the essence is *Ananda.*
- ❖ **Methods of Knowledge:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has discovered the six methods of knowledge [epistemology]: *pratyaksha, anumana, shabda, upamana, arthapatti, anupalabधि.*
- ❖ **Authorship:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is the only religion whose great savants and sages, shied away from name and fame. The books which these sages left behind have no definitive authors.
- ❖ **Four Anubandhas:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which boldly discusses, in the very first pages of many scriptures, the *anubandhas*: for whom this book is meant [*adhikari*], why [*vishaya*], what will the person

gain [*prayojana*], and what is the connection between the reader and the subject [*sambandha*].

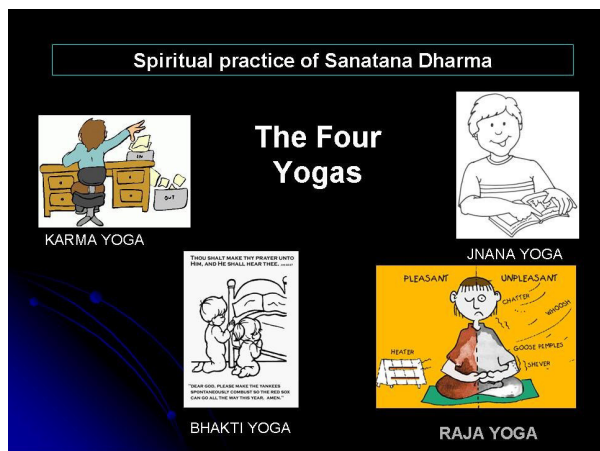
- ❖ **Auto-critical:** Hinduism is the only religion which is auto-critical—its own literature criticizes its own religion. Krishna criticizes the Vedas in the *Gita*: ‘*Trigunya vishayo vedah, nistrigunyo bhavaarjuna.*’ [*Srimad Bhagavadgita*, 2:45].
- ❖ **More Literature:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has given birth to a vast fund of non-religious literature basing on religion. Shakuntala, and other dramas, for instance. Much of the literature has been unfortunately lost. But what remains is stupendous.
- ❖ **Sanskrit:** Hinduism is the only religion which developed used well and revered sanskrit as a *deva bhasha*. Sanskrit is considered to be the mother of all languages.
- ❖ **Regional languages:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma has sacred texts in many other languages like Tamil, Bengali, and so on.
- ❖ **Sanskrit Dictionary:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has something wonderful: an entire dictionary in poem. And students used to keep the whole dictionary in memory until recently! *Amara Kosha* is a Sanskrit lexicon which is in poetic form.
- ❖ **Grammar:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has a language which is divine, and which has a grammar which is divine too. The whole of Sanskrit grammar of Panini is so scientific that it is all arranged in perfect *sutra* form. Any word can be deduced to its original form.

Practice

- ❖ **Ashramas:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which divides all of life into four parts: the student [*brahmachari*], the householder [*grihastha*], the retired individual [*vanaprastha*], the renouncing [*sannyasi*].
- ❖ **Liberation:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which declares that the goal of all life is realization, liberation, self-knowledge, knowledge of God, or any related thing [*mukti, moksha, darshana, jnana*]. This goal of all living beings, in whatever stages they might be in now, is attained through direct perception [*aparoksha anubhuti*].
- ❖ **Purusharthas:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which says that any ordinary person can have four ideals of life, *purusharthas*, but two of the four, desire for legitimate enjoyment [*kama*] and gaining legitimate wealth [*artha*], should be tamed by righteousness [*dharma*] and desire for liberation [*moksha*].
- ❖ **Meaning of Liberation:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which gives the correct meaning of the goal of life, or *moksha* or *mukti*: it is freedom from limitations. The Atman should be freed from its bondages – the ocean should be freed from the tiny cage.

- ❖ **Devotion not necessary:** Sanatana *Dharma is the only religion which does not insist that to be you must be devoted to God in order to be religious. The general idea about religion is that a person should be devoted to God to be religious.*
- ❖ **Athiest:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which equally accepts the atheist as well as the perfect devotee of God to its fold. It seems that some educated intellectuals are writing articles or books decrying God and some adherents of religion are worried. But they should only laugh at the stupidity of these ignorant intellectuals. Because what they are criticizing is only their own ignorance of sanatana dharma. What do they know? Do they think that just worshipping a cow or a tree or an image is called Sanatana Dharma?
- ❖ **Who is an Atheist? :** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which gives a different meaning to ‘atheist’. An atheist is a person who does not believe in himself.
- ❖ **Equal:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which regards the one who never believes in God with forms, images, etc, and the one who is an ardent believer, in the same light.
- ❖ **Worldly Philosophy:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which goes to such an extent as recognizing completely materialistic thought also as a part of the whole. Thus, *charvaka* philosophy was given its place.
- ❖ **All are One:** Hinduism is the only religion which regards everyone—a worshipper of some stone, tree, plant, some image, light, star, or anything—as a religious person, and in equal light.
- ❖ **Hindu Morality:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which stresses morality as supreme virtue.
- ❖ **Truthfulness:** Sanatana Dharma is the one religion which stresses on truthfulness [*satya*], non-injury [*ahimsa*], and such other qualities are fundamental to the formation of character. ‘No Indian was ever known to tell an untruth.’ Without morality, no spiritual perfection.
- ❖ **Vegetarianism:** Hinduism is the only religion which gives the CORRECT meaning of food, vegetarianism, non-vegetarianism, etc. People often confuse Hinduism and vegetarianism. Many constantly harp on the idea that only vegetarians will be saved from hell. What exactly is *ahimsa*? ‘The test of Ahimsa is absence of jealousy.’ [*Complete Works*, Vol. 3, p. 67]. Sri Krishna divides food into three classes—*satvika*, *rajasika*, and *tamasika*. Your *satvika* food may be *tamasika* for my constitution, and my *satvika* food may be *tamasika* for your system. So we should find out which food is best suited for our constitution, which brings happiness, health, lightness of body, interest in activity and meditation.
- ❖ **All are Hindus:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which accepts a person, who has never visited a single temple all his life, who has not revered a deity, who has faith in God, as Hindu.
- ❖ **All are liberated:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which does not recognize sin. It, however, recognizes error. No one is condemned. All will attain liberation. It is a perfectly positive religion.
- ❖ **All are the Same:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which gives equal status to all—human beings, animals, birds, and so on. God can incarnate even as a tortoise or a half-lion only in Hinduism. Thus, every God or Goddess has an animal or bird and are venerated. There are dogs with Dattareya, which are venerated.
- ❖ **Sacred:** Hinduism is the only religion which considers everything –life, non- life—as sacred.

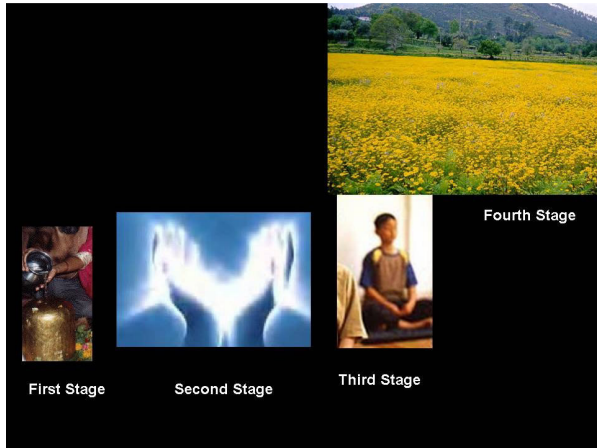
- ❖ **Many Paths, Same Goal:** Hinduism is the only religion which shows multiple paths to reach the same Goal.



For example, the four yogas: *karma* [selfless work], *jnana* [knowledge], *yoga* [meditation], and *bhakti* [devotion to God].

- ❖ **God as Mother:** Hinduism is the only religion which accepts God as both Father and Mother, leading to a wonderful science of Mother worship. And does not stop there: as Friend, Son, everything.
- ❖ **Selection:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which gives ample opportunity to select from millions of forms of the Same One God. Those who say that Hindus worship millions of gods and goddesses do not know—a Hindu NEVER worships millions of Gods and Goddesses. He worships only One God, that One Supreme Absolute, in millions of forms.
- ❖ **Forms:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which teaches that the millions of forms of the same God are but diversity in Unity. Nowhere has it been said in our scriptures that God is not One. No 10 persons can fit into the same coat.
- ❖ **Positivistic:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which is absolutely positive. There is no negativity in this religion at all. People who think that the wonderful theory of Karma is fatalistic are ignorant. Karma tells us that we can change our future, and make it better, that is all.
- ❖ **All Within:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has discovered that everything—all knowledge, all power, all capacity, is within.
- ❖ **Simple Religion:** Sanatana dharma is the only religion which is so easy and simple: 'patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati | tad aham bhakty-upahrtam ashnāmi prayatātmanah— Offering with love a flower, a little water, even a leaf is enough for Me. [*Bhagavadgita* chapter 9: 26].' Then there is the story of a rishi who told a king to repeat the name of Rama thrice because he had committed a heinous sin. The king repeated thrice, and was liberated from sin. The rishi's father [*rishi* is not a *sannyasi*] told his son: 'My son, just once was sufficient. The efficacy of the name of God should not be lowered thus.'
- ❖ **Four Stages:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which teaches us that the first stage in spiritual life is worship of images, the next higher stage is worshipping god in heaven. The third stage is to see God within the heart. The final stage is to

see God everywhere. But the higher the evolution, the more sympathetic the person becomes of the ones in the lower stages of spiritual evolution.



- ❖ **All Aspects of Life:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which enhances all aspects of life—economic (*artha sastra*), social (*nyaya sastra*), cultural (*natya sastra*), ethical (*niti sastra*), spiritual (*adhyatma vidya*).
- ❖ **Complete Faith:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which begins before the birth of an individual, and does not end after his death.
- ❖ **Yajnas:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which teaches that every sanatana dharmi should practice 5 yajnas daily: worshipping gods [*deva yajna*], respecting the ancestors for the knowledge that they have given us [*pitr yajna*], studying and propagating sacred knowledge [*brahma yajna*], serving family, neighbours, friends and everyone [*nri-yajna*] and serving animals [*bhuta yajna*].
- ❖ **Cosmic Perspective:** Sanatana Dharma or Vedanta Dharma is the only religion which opens our minds to a cosmic perspective. Yajna is a marvelous concept which teaches that we are an integral part of the Whole. The little ant is as important as the cosmos.
- ❖ **Work as Spiritual Practice:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which teaches that doing one's own duty well, without self-interest, one attains the highest.
- ❖ **Different Path Altogether:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which goes to the extent of permitting those who take the path of even hating God to attain him—the path of Ravana, Kamsa and others.
- ❖ **Microcosm and Macrocosm:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has discovered that Atman is Brahman—the microcosm equals the macrocosm, that the amoeba is the involved saint while the saint is the evolved amoeba.
- ❖ **Education:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which had developed the ancient wonderful system of gurukula, where students used to form their characters living under the shelter of their gurus.
- ❖ **All Knowledge is Within:** Sanatana dharma is the only religion which teaches us that all knowledge is within. The teacher only suggests to us, and we remember.
- ❖ **Unconscious:** Sanatana dharma is the only religion which, long before the advent of the modern centuries,

had developed the wonderful system of psychology, and had discovered the subconscious, the collective unconscious, the system of memory, and so on.

- ❖ **Saints:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has produced thousands of true, genuine saints down the ages, who did not become saints by performing miracles, but by attaining God. And these saints sailed into oblivion, many of them.
- ❖ **Sanctity of Life:** Sanatana Dharma or Vedanta dharma is the only religion which has, long, long ago, felt the need of saving nature, and protecting our environment, and saving life. Hinduism therefore teaches that the waters are sacred and holy, the air is sacred, the trees are sacred, all are sacred. Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Narmada, Sindhu—all the rivers are mothers.
- ❖ **Not a Negative Faith:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which declared at least ten thousand years ago [in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*] that we should (a) grow more food [*annam bahu kurvita*]; (b) food is to be respected [*annam na nindyat*]; and (c) nobody who comes to the house during lunch should return hungry [*na kanchana vasatou pratyachakshita*]. These laws are for the benefit of society.
- ❖ **Meditation:** Hinduism is the only religion which discovered the art of dhyana, meditation, and this was adapted by several other religions.
- ❖ **Mother of Religions:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has given birth to several other religions: Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zen, Shaivism, and so forth. It is interesting to see how ancient Mesopotamia was Hindu in its culture, as Hindu culture had spread all over the ancient intelligent world. Abram [*Genesis, 15:1,2 onwards* – brahma, *haha*] had a wife called Sarai [*Genesis, 16:1, saras-vati, haha*]. The name a-bram was changed to Abraham [*Genesis 17:5*] and Sarai was changed to Sarah [*Genesis, 17:10*]. Old Abraham had a son, Isaac....[please don't take this part seriously].
- ❖ **Miracles:** Hinduism or Sanatana dharma is the only religion which shows the true meaning of miracles. People are fond of miracle-mongering, naturally. People want cures, removal of suffering, good husbands for their daughters, good jobs, and so on. Many seek religion because of this. Now, can miracles happen? Of course yes: prayer can do anything. Pray to God, and He will do anything. For us they appear to be miracles, but for God, natural. But what about “miracles” themselves. Are miracles true? Or, are *all* miracle-makers fraudulent? You can see television dialogues, movie dialogues, people commenting, and newspapers writing that all sadhus are fake, all religious people are stupid fools [because these people who say *sao* are so honest!]. It is a common practice amongst numerous adherents of Hinduism to condemn sadhus. Is everyone holy man fake then? Are only those who criticize, and run after others for solace, true ones? Perhaps not: Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* [Vibhuti-pada, chapter 3] explain how to acquire powers—principally eight, but many more. Anybody can have these powers by the power of concentration. All of us, critics of sadhus, and others, have these powers within all right. The only thing needed is to give time to practice and But, Patanjali, Sri Ramakrishna, and all wise masters warn us—powers lead straight to downfall.

- ❖ **Philosophies:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has six systems of philosophies, each one different from the other. Of them, interestingly, at least four don't give much attention to God. One other, yoga, gives an option about God. The philosophies are: Samkhya [Sage Kapila], Yoga [Sage Patanjali], Nyaya [Sage Gautama], Vaishesika [Sage Kanada], Purva Mimamsa [Sage Jaimini], Uttara Mimamsa [Sage Vyasa]
 - ❖ **Six Systems:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion one of whose 6 systems of philosophy are perfectly scientific. Some speak about atoms, molecules, and their combinations.
 - ❖ **Universality:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion, with its Vedantic ramifications, which can be universal truly. What is to be universal? To accept all paths are equally true.
 - ❖ **Advaita:** Hinduism is the only religion which gave to the world the greatest philosophy ever, Advaita Vedanta.
 - ❖ **Accolades:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has discovered solutions to all problems of life, according to Max Muller [*India: What can it Teach Us?*]. 'If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power, and beauty that nature can bestow, in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe –we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of the Greeks and the Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish – may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our own inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this only, but a transfigured and eternal life, again I should point to India.'
 - ❖ **The Greatness:** Hinduism or Sanatana dharma is the only religion which has received such words: 'Where can we look for sages like those whose systems of philosophy were the prototypes of those of Greece, to whose works Plato, Thales, Pythagoras were disciples? Where shall we find astronomers whose knowledge of the planetary system yet excites wonder in Europe, as well as the architects and sculptors whose works claim our admiration, and the musicians who could make the mind oscillate from joy and sorrow, from tears and smiles, with the change of modes and varied intonation?'
- Colonel Todd *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. And Annie Besant: 'After a study of some forty years and more of the great religions of the world, I find none so perfect, none so scientific, none so philosophical and no so spiritual that the great religion known by the name of Hinduism. Make no mistake, without Hinduism, India has no future. Hinduism is the soil in to which India's roots are stuck and torn out of that she will inevitably wither as a tree torn out from its place. And if Hindus do not maintain Hinduism who shall save it? If India's own children do not cling to her faith who shall guard it? India alone can save India and India and Hinduism are one.'
- ❖ **A Christian Missionary Wrote Thus:** Swami Vivekananda copied an entire passage from a book [*India and Its Native Princes*] by Louis Rousselet about India. This Louis Rousselet was a missionary working in India during that period. This was what Louis Rousselet had to say: 'Is there a people in the world more

tolerant than this good gentle Hindoo people, who have been so often described to us as cunning, cruel and even bloodthirsty? And in what country could such a spectacle be witnessed as that which met my eyes that day in this square of Benares? There, at ten paces from all that the Hindoo holds to be most sacred in religion, between the Source of Wisdom and the idol of Siva a Protestant missionary has taken his stand beneath a tree. Mounted on a chair, he was preaching in the Hindostani language, on the Christian religion and the errors of paganism. I heard his shrill voice, issuing from the depths of a formidable shirt - collar, eject these words at the crowd, which respectfully and attentively surrounded him - "You are idolaters! That block of stone which you worship has been taken from a quarry, it is no better than the stone of my house."

- ❖ The reproaches called forth no murmur; the missionary was listened to immovably, but his dissertation was attended to, for every now and then one of the audience would put a question, to which the brave apostle replied as best he could. Perhaps we should be disposed to admire the courage of the missionary if the well-known toleration of the Hindoos did not defraud him of all his merit; and it is this tolerance that most disheartens the missionary one of whom said to me "Our labours are in vain; you can never convert a man who has sufficient conviction in his own religion to listen, without moving a muscle, to all the attacks you can make against it." [Marie Louis Burke, *Swami Vivekananda: New Discoveries*, Vol.1, p. 224, 225]. This was written when the missionaries were making very adverse propaganda in the West about India.

Art and Science

- ❖ **Scientific Religion:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has always been absolutely scientific and rational, and has supported science and scientific studies consistently. Unfortunately, all its scientific advancements remained in Sanskrit books for want of translations. FURTHERMORE, What is a scientific religion? Is that a religion which builds telescopes or microscopes? That religion which is open-minded, rational, accepts new ideas, and shows ways of knowing the Truth to all, is scientific. Please read Will Durant: 'Let us remember that India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit is the mother of Europe's languages. That she was the mother of our philosophy. Mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all' [*A Case for India*, p. 4].

Truths Discovered by Hinduism:

Hinduism is the only religion which had, long, long ago, discovered many truths which are being re-discovered today in the name of science. Relativity, for instance. Gravitational field, for instance. Prosthesis is mentioned in the Vedas (*Rig Veda*, 1.116.15). Ocean travel, ship-making, etc (*Rig Veda*: 3.36.6). *Atharva Veda* (Chapters 30, 31, 32 etc) speak so much about medicines. *Shukla Yajur Veda* for various details about warfare. *Rig Veda* (1.117.22) says how the ancient doctors knew how to fix a horse's head to a dying man. During ancient warfare, the techniques were so advanced that cities were destroyed. See *Rig Veda* (1.107.8).

- ❖ **Astronomy:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which discovered, long long before Gregory discovered the present-day calendar, that the year can be divided into 365 days. In a wonderful mantra of the *Rig Veda* (1.164.48), Sage Dirghatama says: 'I shall place a puzzle before you. Can you solve it? There is a wheel with 12 layers. It has three centres. It has 360 spokes....' This puzzle is easily solved: the 12 layers are 12 months. The 360 spokes are the 360 days. The three centres are the heat, cold and rainy seasons. Much of the scientific statements of the Vedas need proper study.
- ❖ **Carl Sagan on Hindu Concept of Time:** Sanatana Dharma is the only

religion which gave the world the correct concept of Time, and divided time into the minutest part ever possible. Says Carl Sagan in an interview to *The Rediff Special*, about a particular episode of COSMOS: ‘The reason that we oriented this episode of *COSMOS* towards India is because of that wonderful aspect of Hindu cosmology which first of all gives a time-scale for the Earth and the universe

-- a time-scale which is consonant with that of modern scientific cosmology. We know that the Earth is about 4.6 billion years old, and the cosmos, or at least its present incarnation, is something like 10 or 20 billion years old. The Hindu tradition has a day and night of Brahma in this range, somewhere in the region of 8.4 billion years. As far as I know. It is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the right time-scale. We want to get across the concept of the right time-scale, and to show that it is not unnatural. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that billions is indwelling, and no one can understand it. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years. Finally, the many billion year time-scale of Hindu cosmology is not the entire history of the universe, but just the day and night of Brahma, and there is the idea of an infinite cycle of births and deaths and an infinite number of universes, each with its own gods.’

Imá me agne ishtaká dhenavah santvekaa cha dasha cha dasha-shatam cha shatam cha sahasram cha sahasram chaayutam chaayutam ca niyutam cha niyutamcha prayutam cha charbudam cha nyarbudam cha samudrascha madhyam chaantascha parárdhascha etá me agna ishtaká dhenavah santu-amutra-amushmin- loke
16
|| *Shukla-yajur-veda-samhitá*, 17:3 Here we see the mathematical idea of the Vedic seer who counts from 1 to beyond trillion or more.



- ❖ **Nataraja, the Symbol of Cosmos:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which conceived the symbol of the dance of Nataraja. The renowned scientist, Carl Sagan, explains why this symbol is so important: ‘The traditional explanation of the Nataraja is that it symbolizes the creation of the universe in one hand and the death of the universe in the other - the drum and the flame - and after all, that is what cosmology is all about. So in addition to being artistically exquisite, the Nataraja provides exactly the kind of symbolism that we wanted. The Nataraja that is photographed in the book *COSMOS* is in a museum in Pasadena, California, but it will be returned to India at some specified time within the next decade.’
[reference:<http://www.rediff.com/news/jan/29sagan.htm>]

- ❖ **Hundreds:** Hinduism or sanatana dharma is the only religion which has discovered a hundred other things, but it is not possible to continue here with the discoveries. Please read the Vedas to see how many

remedies have been mentioned, how many scientific truths have been discussed, and how many problems have been solved.

- ❖ **Science of Sphota:** Hinduism is the only religion which has highly advanced scientific knowledge of the meaning, significance, and importance of the origin of sound. The sphota theory of *shabda* is an important contribution to world thought.
- ❖ **Science of Warfare:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which had developed highly advanced methods of protecting people from enemy attacks. There was a women's army, and a queen led the army during the Vedic times (see *Rig Veda*, 1.116.15).
- ❖ **Medicine:** Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has perfected the art of medicine so well. We had the Ayurveda. There was more: there was perhaps remedy for many diseases, as the Atharva Veda shows. The ancient doctors could even rejuvenate a person cut into three pieces. See *Rig Veda* (1. 117. 24).
- ❖ **Temple Architecture:** Hinduism is the only religion which could build such grand temples like the Brihadishwara temple in Tamilnadu, the Chenna Keshava temple in Belur, Karnataka and a host of other marvelous temples, feats in engineering. A tall stone pillar in the temple courtyard of Channa Keshava Temple, Belur, Karnataka, is balanced only by its center of gravity. Temples were built in such remote places, using such advanced technology that even the Greek copied much of Hindu art. Swami Vivekananda had spoken about this, and this has been proved by Ernest Binfield Havell (1861- 1934). Swami Vivekananda said: 'Secondly, when the germ of every Aryan science is found in the Vedas and every step of any of those sciences can be traced with exactness from the Vedic to the present day, what is the necessity for forcing the far-fetched suggestion of the Greek influence on them?' [Complete Works, Vol. 4, p. 427].
- ❖ **Paintings:** Hinduism is the only religion which has given birth to innumerable extraordinary paintings which excel renaissance art.
- ❖ **Music and Dance:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has given birth to so many forms of classical and non-classical music, musical instruments, the science of musical cure, and so on.. Music was born in the Vedas. The seven notes of music, the 72 *mela-karta-rāgas*, and the hundreds of melodies, all are the contribution of sanatana dharma. The primordial sound, OM, is the basis of all creation. This primordial sound is the source of all other sounds. (Ref for this section: A. L. Basham, *The Wonder That was India* and Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*). The number of dance systems of India is another big story in itself.
- ❖ **Further discoveries:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which gave birth a unique prophet of modern times, Swami Vivekananda, who discovered something special. Scientists are philosophers, aren't they? 10 years before Albert Einstein spoke that Mass and Energy are inter-convertible, Swami Vivekananda had said and discussed the same thing. Only, for want of proper technical terms, he had used 'mind' for 'energy'.

A] **Bending of Light:** Einstein, in 1905, for the first time, said that due to gravitational field light also bends. Everything is circular. Even rays of light (which are weightless) bend in the presence of a gravitational field. Vivekananda said in 1895: “Is there any motion in a straight line? A straight line, infinitely projected, becomes a circle. [Complete Works, vol. 4, p. 215].” **Wave and particle:** ‘Through the work of Albert Einstein, Louis de Broglie, and many others, current scientific theory holds that all particles also have a wave nature,’ said Walter Greiner (2001), in *Quantum Mechanics: An Introduction*. All these were after 1902. Swami Vivekananda passed away in 1902, and in 1895, he said: ‘One party says thought is caused by matter, and the other says matter is caused by thought. Both statements are wrong; matter and thought are coexistent. There is a third something of which both matter and thought are products. ... As particles of matter combine in space, so mind - waves combine in time.’ [Complete Works, vol. 5, p. 409].

B] **Light As Wave and Particle:** Albert Einstein in 1905 drew the conclusion that light [which is of a wave form] sometimes behaves as particles. Swami Vivekananda added in on 5 November 1896: ‘There were Buddhistic sects who held the same view and illustrated it by this example: If you take a torch and whirl it round rapidly, there will be a circle of light. That circle does not really exist, because the torch is changing place every moment. We are but bundles of little particles, which in their rapid whirling produce the delusion of a permanent soul.’ [Complete Works, Vol. 2, p.197]

Sacrifices 18

- ❖ **Sacrifices:** Hinduism or Vedanta Dharma is the religion whose adherents had to face the ‘holocaust’ several times down the centuries. (Ref: Romesh Chandra Mazumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People* in 13 volumes, preferably the first edition).
- ❖ **Individuals:** Hinduism or Vaidika Dharma is the only religion whose numerous adherents have given up their lives for the sake of the religion. Heroes of war, women to save their modesty, artists to save their art, monks to save their religion.. the list is endless. The minimum the present adherents would do to all these is, study the religion correctly.
- ❖ **Open to all:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has opened its doors to every faith, every sect, and every group. It has never dipped its hand in any blood.
- ❖ **Sacrifice for Honor and Truth:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion where you can see such extraordinary stories as that of Princess Padmini, who committed *jouhar*. A young man was condemned to be hanged because he had murdered someone. But he was the best player in the local team. So he was released and told to come back for hanging. And that man promptly returned—this story happened about 3 centuries ago in India.

- ❖ **Ignorance:** Sanatana dharma is the only religion whose countless adherents are ignorant of the fundamental principles of their own faith. Most are superficial without correct knowledge of the fund of their faith. This is affecting the ancient religion very much.
- ❖ **Inferiority Complex:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion whose educated elite, since ages perhaps, has neglected, insulted, even hated, its own religion because of inferiority feelings. This inferiority feeling is born of ignorance, no doubt.
- ❖ **False Imitation:** Sanatana dharma is the only religion whose numerous adherents ardently desired always to give up their own ideals and imitate the others. It was common amongst the so-called 'elite' hindus to criticize, condemn and look down upon Sanatana dharma, and go for 'elegant', modern practices. Read a long quote from Swami Vivekananda:

On one side, new India is saying, "If we only adopt Western ideas, Western language, Western food, Western dress, and Western manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western nations"; on the other, old India is saying, "Fools! By imitation, other's ideas never become one's own; nothing, unless earned, is your own. Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?"

On one side, new India is saying, "What the Western nations do is surely good, otherwise how did they become so great?" On the other side, old India is saying, "The flash of lightning is intensely bright, but only for a moment; look out, boys, it is dazzling your eyes. Beware!"

Have we not then to learn anything from the West? Must we not needs try and exert ourselves for better things? Are we perfect? Is our society entirely spotless, without any flaw? There are many things to learn, we must struggle for new and higher things till we die -- struggle is the end of human life. Shri Ramakrishna used to say, "As long as I live, so long do I learn." That man or that society which has nothing to learn is already in the jaws of death. Yes, learn we must many things from the West: but there are fears as well. certain young man of little understanding used always to blame the Hindu Shastras before Shri Ramakrishna. One day he praised the Bhagavad-gita, on which Shri Ramakrishna said, "Methinks, some European Pandit has praised the Gita, and so he has also followed suit."

O India, this is your terrible danger. The spell of imitating the West is getting such a strong hold upon you that what is good or what is bad is no longer decided by reason, judgment, discrimination, or reference to the Shastras. Whatever ideas, whatever manners the white men praise or like are good; whatever things they dislike or censure are bad. Alas! what can be a more tangible proof of foolishness than this?

The Western ladies move freely everywhere, therefore that is good; they choose for themselves their husbands, therefore that is the highest step of advancement; the Westerners disapprove of our dress, decorations, food, and ways of living, therefore they must be very bad; the Westerners condemn image - worship as sinful, surely then, image - worship is the greatest sin, there is no doubt of it!

The Westerners say that worshipping a single Deity is fruitful of the highest spiritual good, therefore let us throw our gods and goddesses into the river Ganga! The Westerners hold caste distinctions to be obnoxious, therefore let all the different castes be jumbled into one! The Westerners say that child - marriage is the root of all evils therefore that is also very bad, of a certainty it is!

We are not discussing here whether these customs deserve continuance or rejection; but if the mere disapproval of the Westerners be the measure of the abominableness of our manners and customs, then it is our duty to raise our emphatic protest against it. [From *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 477-478].

- ❖ **Stupidity:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion whose numerous adherents, in their stupidity, try to imitate others without knowing the significance even: 'O India! With this mere echoing of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence on others, this slavish weakness, this vile detestable cruelty -- wouldst thou, with these provisions only, scale the highest pinnacle of civilization and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic? O India! Forget not that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti; forget not that the God thou worshippest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all - renouncing Shankara, the Lord of Uma; forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense - pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the ²⁰Infinite Universal Motherhood; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian, and proudly proclaim, "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother.' Swami Vivekananda said this.
- ❖ This remark should not be misunderstood that Swami Vivekananda was all for old India with dhotis and shikhas and not for development. No no. What he wanted was something completely different: 'We were discussing the matter of sea-voyage with a Pandit, and I shall always remember his brutal gestures and his *Kadapi na* (never)! They do not know that India is a very small part of the world, and the whole world looks down with contempt upon the three hundred millions of earthworms crawling upon the fair soil of India and trying to oppress each other. This state of things must be removed, not by destroying religion but by following the great teachings of the Hindu faith...' [Complete Works, vol. 5, pp. 14-15].
- ❖ **Made in India:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion whose numerous adherents, in their rush to imitate the others, forgot that it was Indians who taught the world many things: astrology, astronomy, bhakti, clothing, food, meditation, religion, spirituality, yoga, and a host of others. The wearing of the pant instead of *dhoti*, was it not Indian also? Do you think Indians wore dhotis during wars? Please see any image carved on temples 1000 years ago. What was the dress the common masses wore?

- ❖ **Blame Game:** Sanatana dharma is the only religion whose numerous adherents, owing to ignorance, blame their religion for poverty, for suffering, for every problem under the sun. God has become tired of listening to the constant insult of the average Hindu. Vivekananda says: 'Thoughtful people within the last few years have seen it, but unfortunately laid it at the door of the Hindu religion, and to them, the only way of bettering is by crushing this grandest religion of the world. Hear me, my friend, I have discovered the secret through the grace of the Lord. Religion is not in fault. On the other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self multiplied. But it was the want of practical application, the want of sympathy -- the want of heart. [Complete Works, Vol. 5, pp. 13-14].
- ❖ **The Caste Question:** Hinduism is the only religion whose social aspect discovered the idea of *jāti*, which is perfectly misunderstood, mis-utilized, and misrepresented. It was only Vivekananda who explained the deep significance of *jāti*: 'Our ideal of high birth, therefore, is different from that of others. Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture and renunciation. By the Brahmin ideal what do I mean? I mean the ideal Brahmin - ness in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. That is the ideal of the Hindu race. (Complete Works, Vol. 3, p. 197).
- ❖ **Inferior:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion whose numerous followers feel inferior to talk about their faith, even though the treasures of this religion are breathtaking. It is as if, for them, it is a great sin to be born in that religion!
- ❖ **Politics:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion whose own political leaders manipulate religion for gains.
- ❖ **Braving Rough Weather:** Sanatana Dharma is the only religion which has withstood the test of the most terrible times and has ever existed. Today, it is the third largest in the world, and numerous peoples of the world are learning yoga, Sanskrit, ayurveda, meditation, adoration of gods, and other things.
- ❖ **Bargain Religion:** Hinduism is one of those religions which does not teach us bargaining. This is yet another misconception about religion -- the question of business with God. 'I prayed to God 10 days, so He must give me wealth. I went to Puri and offered some donation. So God must give a car to me.' This business religion is a big problem. There is nothing like luck or God's having no mercy. You are not merciful to yourself: your karma is the obstacle. This is not fatalism. You can improve yourself by simple methods: offer a drop of water, a flower, or a leaf to God, daily, and he will remove your karma one by one.
- ❖ **AND FINALLY:** Hinduism alone has got this certificate from the greatest avatars: 'The Hindu religion alone is the Sanatana Dharma. The various creeds you hear of nowadays have come into existence through the will of God and will disappear again through His will. They will not last forever. Therefore I say, 'I bow down to the feet of modern devotees.' The Hindu religion has always existed, and will always exist.' [The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, Chapter 32 : 'Visit to the Sinthi Brahmo Samaj', October 19, 1884, p. 642].

What can be Done ?

A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising - up -- the gospel of equality.

- **Try to Know:** Ignorance is not a noble virtue. The greatest problem is ignorance about something, and this breeds all problems. Hindus from the grassroots level to the top, should know, *correctly*, what the
- FUNDAMENTALS AND ESSENTIALS of their religion is. Let us give up false pride.
- **Please Read:** Many Hindus who are ignorant of their faith should read books about their faith: at least one book, *Essentials of Hinduism*, by Swami Nirvedananda, which is complete, should be read by all. And all Hindus should try to know *Bhagavad Gita*.

The Sanskrit Language: The great texts of the Hindus, many of them, still remain only in Sanskrit only. Please see the comments of Swami Vivekananda: 'My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only, hidden, as it were, in monasteries and in forests -- to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring out these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language -- the glorious language of ours; and this difficulty cannot be removed until -- if it is possible -- the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life, and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never had time to study the language thoroughly! Therefore the ideas must be taught in the language of the people...

- **Sanskrit and Culture:** Swami Vivekananda continues: '...at the same time, Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race. The attempts of the great Ramanuja and of Chaitanya and of Kabir to raise the lower classes of India show that marvelous results were attained during the lifetime of those great prophets; yet the later failures have to be explained, and cause shown why the effect of their teachings stopped almost within a century of the passing away of these great Masters. **The secret is here.** They raised the lower classes; they had all the wish that these should come up, but they did not apply their energies to the spreading of the Sanskrit language among the masses. Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results, and translated and preached in the language of the day,

Pali. That was grand; he spoke in the language of the people, and the people understood him. That was great; it spread the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide. But along with that, Sanskrit ought to have spread.' [*Complete Works*, Vol.3, p. 291]

➤ ***Please Study Sanskrit:*** So Hindus may learn Sanskrit also. Why? 'Knowledge came, but the prestige was not there, culture was not there. It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. You can put a mass of knowledge into the world, but that will not do it much good. There must come culture into the blood. We all know in modern times of nations which have masses of knowledge, but what of them?