

# Is Humanity the Greatest Religion?



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# Is Humanity the Greatest Religion?

Namaste Divine Atmans,

In recent times and since a few decades, there has been an opinion and a narrative, that Religion and spirituality are two separate things. While Religion is seen as an orthodox and rigid ritual practice, spirituality is seen as universal practice which allows anyone to practice to the extend they wish to. This idea became more prominent after the popularity of new-age ideologies like The Theosophical Society and emergence and popularization of some energy based healing and meditation techniques.

There is another opinion which stresses on high morality and ethics. According to this opinion, Humanity is the greatest religion or a better way of living as humanitarian work does not involve biased or hidden agenda behind good looking actions.

Noble acts of helping others, donating money to the needy, supporting poor children by paying for their education, etc are all noble acts. They fill one with contentment and happiness. Such acts are indeed praiseworthy and inspirational. However, does the feeling of happiness, contentment and gratitude remain constantly within us? No, we soon get engrossed in other activities and are filled with stress and responsibility. What if the feeling of happiness and peace stays with us continuously throughout the day. To add to it, what if in order to feel happy, one does not need to help others? What if the love is unconditional and keeps radiating and influencing all those in vicinity without any prejudice or bias. It not only affects humans, but plants and animals too. Such a person is indeed a living moving temple of peace and happiness. Such a blissful state is indeed rare and the person whose heart is overfilled with happiness, joy and peace and constantly radiates them is indeed divine. This state can be achieved in this life in this physical body, if one properly follows the highest teachings of Sanatana Dharma as mentioned in the Upanishads. Such a human being has transformed from being 'human' to being 'divine'.

But before we understand how this blissful state can be achieved, let us understand a few things and concepts. This article revolves around the words Morality, Humanity, Dharma, Religion and Spirituality and Secularism.

In this article we will understand

- ✓ Why western world felt the need for a secular approach towards life
- ✓ Why Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) does not need Secularism
  - o How Sanatana Dharma is different from Abrahamic Religions
  - o Understand universal principles of Sanatana Dharma applicable to all mankind
- ✓ Why Humanity is not the greatest of all religions and
- ✓ How Sanatan Dharma is different and takes you beyond human values by cultivating divinity within us which radiates from our heart in this life time in this physical body.

Finally, we will also have a brief summary of this article.

## Need for Secularism

This opinion of having a compassionate humane approach towards life and separating religion and spirituality arose due to many factors. Some of them are

- Claim of Exclusivity
- Active conversion
- Church Crimes
- Superiority Complex of Europeans and Narrowminded of religious people.
- Crimes committed by powerful colonisers on their colonies
- Infighting amongst different Christian denominations

Christians claim that their religion is the only true religion and that one cannot enter into heaven if they do not accept Jesus Christ as their saviour. Non-Christians will burn in eternal hell. This concept led to the feeling of superiority amongst Christians. Active conversion was instrumental in committing the crimes committed by clergy, Government, Army and by all those actively involved in converting non-Christians to Christianity.

Church had a lot of influence and control over masses. Often their powers were unchecked. The sole aim of Christian Missionary was to retain the power and extend it to the farthest land possible. In doing so they often adopted immoral practices. If anyone dared questioning them, such an individual or a group would face the wrath of the Clergy. Such tight control over the masses did not allowed one to think freely as one cannot go against the concepts established by the Church. Due to superiority complex and not being allowed to think freely, often narrowminded crept into masses. The pious men were morally and ethically corrupted. We will call the crimes committed by them as Church Crimes as the crimes were not just an isolated incidents, but the Clergy, senior members of Church and even Pope had knowledge of these crimes and they tried their best to cover them. Kings and local governments too had the knowledge of these crimes. This coverup of crimes and the political, financial and religious backing resulted in the increase of such crimes.

## The Church Crimes

The Crimes committed by the Pious men whom people trusted for the interpretation of Bible and confessed their sins, are unpardonable. Recently, even Pope had to issue an apology for the Church crimes.

The crimes include

- Sex scandals, sexual exploitation of nuns, young boys & girls
- Forced stay of Children of indigenous tribes in hostels run by Catholic Churches and forcing them to pray Christian prayers (refer to Canada's First Nation People)
- Burying the malnourished kids of Indigenous tribes, also known as the people of first nation, on Church land as recently found in mass graves children in Canada's Catholic. (refer to Canada's First Nation People)
- Mass murders of non-Christians and Indigenous people, the original inhabitants of the land in colonies like America, Canada, Australia, etc. This history is written in 'red' ink.
- Killing on Religious grounds, the genocide of Jews. Germany's council of Catholic bishops has admitted to the church's secret involvement and support to the Nazis, giving them spiritual guidance and were together with the Nazis on the front line of the war, who under leadership of Adolf Hitler massed murdered Jews. Apart from Jewish Apartheid indigenous people living in colonies of British, Portuguese, Spain, French, etc were also killed by pious clergy with the help of Government and Army.
- Conversion of Indigenous people by force, use of army, and misusing powers by the colonists to their Government Officers. Goa Inquisition is an infamous History
- Conversion by Greed or deceit or by offering money – The Rice Bag Christians. Church has a budget per person to lure them to Christianity.
- Conversion by exhibiting (fake) miraculous healing and denigrating Gods and practices of other religions
- Superiority complex and racism resulted in slavery and treating them as Second class citizens, depriving basic human rights to indigenous people.

## The caste System of Christianity – Different Denominations

Not only did Christians differentiated themselves from Non-Christians, but from Christians of other Denominations too. One Christian denomination competed with other Christian denomination. Some say that the Christians of One Denomination see Christians of Other Denomination as inferior and treated them as heathens and so they try to convert them to their sect. In India, it is heard that some Christians do not even marry their daughters to Christians of other sects. If someone did so he has to face opposition and even ex-communication from fellow Christians if the family has a member who is a clergy. One denomination doesn't like another one. Such radicalization is seen more in remote villages and in tribal converts.

Even though there is no caste system in Christianity, there is 'Class System'. Europeans, who consider them as superior race, did not allowed Indian Christians to bury their dead in their Christian graves. Some Churches even didn't allowed Indian Christians to attend sermons and daily prayers.

**Active conversion in the name of One True God is one of the main reasons for this crime along with the superiority complex of the Europeans. When Clergy, Government/Kingdom and Army join hands to dominate the world and convert people, they have blood in their hands.**

There is also caste system within Islam in the way similar to Christianity. There are different denominations in Islam, Sunni and Shia being the main. Then there are sub-divisions, and further divisions of multiple layers. Their denominations are known in Urdu as 'Firkas'. The Deobandi, Barelvi, Tabliqi, Ahle Hadis, Kadiaynis, Quranists, Sufis, Hanafis, Wahabbis, etc to name a few do not inter marry. They do not even perform Namaz in each other's mosques. If a family members changes from Tabliqi to Ahle Hadis or if a Deobandi would start following Barelvi or Kadiayni then other members would boycott the family members. They ex-communicate him or her. Islam is so strict that Apostacy is punishable by death. No one is allowed to change the religion. No one is allowed to question any of the sayings mentioned in the holy book Quran, nor can one tolerate anything said against their prophet. It invites death. In other words, that person has already signed a suicide note in advance. Everything has to be interpreted in the straight forward way. Anyways, let us continue with how with the passing of time, as the world opened up, the old sectarian beliefs of Christianity and crimes committed in the name of religion of love affected them.

## The Awakening ...

Such crimes did not go unnoticed to the common mass. They saw that Devout Christians closer to Clergy were more corrupt than an agnostic or a dis-believer or an average Christian living a simple life. They saw narrow mindedness of the religious people. They saw no advantage of practicing religion as it would no more focus on making them good men. So people who were Christians by birth began to accept the fact that there can be holy saints outside Christianity. They discarded many such notions and practices which, according to them, were morally not acceptable like slavery and stoning to death, etc. Still, they consider themselves as Christians.

As time passed, Church began to lose its control over masses. With Advent of technology, world got more connected. People began to realise that there are good people everywhere outside their Christian world and they too deserve respect. People began to question Christian concepts and even started losing the faith in the religion. They were not as devout as their ancestors were.

**Western world has to be credited for their research innovations and bold initiatives critical study of their religion.** After French Industrial revolution the world opened up. There were lots of inventions and the way of life began to change. Independent critical studies into the religion were done. Christian scholars who were neutral, Historians and Archeologists began to challenge even the existence of Jesus Christ and began to question the concepts of Christianity.

All these factors led to the opinion that Humanity is the greatest religion and that religion is not for scientists or for rational minded people. It is heard that scientific community would laugh at their co-workers and colleagues if they came to know that a person is a devout Christian. Unscientific concepts like existence of Heaven and Hell, After life, and Judgement day, birth of Jesus from Virgin Mary, The concept of Original Sin, the Christian Good News i.e. accepting Jesus as their only saviour, etc were all rejected by the educated elite class. Religious practices were seen as an outdated and rigid having little meaning and not focusing on making a better human being. People either started losing faith in religion or they simply were not devoutly practicing their religion. These days, most people do not even believe in the existence of God or do not care to think about the existence of God.

Western world realized that they need a philosophy, a way of life, that has to be broadminded, embracing all mankind and at the same time giving freedom to practice what an individual wants to and to the extent one wants to. One should be tolerant to the views of other people and to the people of other faiths. Thus, there was a need for secular approach towards life. It is the western world that coined the word 'Secularism'. France adopted the secular model in their constitution and so banned any religious symbol in Government Buildings.

## Hinduism Viewed from Abrahamic Lens will always give incorrect picture

The western scholars were also hired by the Britishers to translate Hindu Scriptures into English and other European Language. However they were hired the maligned intention to discredit the Hinduism. They wanted to rule India and spread Christianity. In order to rule India, they realized that the entire education system and the way of thinking of Hindus had to be changed. The entire system had to be replaced by Western education so that the Indians will think and work like the westerners. To do so they interpreted Hindu scriptures in convoluted way often denigrating it and began to spread their work. This made Hindus to feel inferior to the Europeans. Inferiority complex made easy for both Britishers and Church to carry out their agenda. This also resulted into biased views by common westerners for Hindus and Hinduism in general.

Islam on the other hand had already done a lot of damage since centuries to the once flourishing Buddhism and also to Hinduism. They attacked the defenders of dharma i.e. Buddhist monks and scholars and also Hindu Brahmins and Purohits. They attacked Buddha Vihars which are similar to Gurukuls. Since Buddhism does not believe in Varna, only those interested in religious study and meditation had knowledge about Buddhist Philosophy. However, in case of Hindus, the tradition and the knowledge was passed down from father to son and so every son was a future Purohit as said by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar ji. In this way, Hinduism survived the Islamic onslaught. In case of Buddhism, if the scholars who generally stayed at Vihars, their gurukuls and mathas, were killed Buddhism would suffer a fatal blow and this is what happened.

White men believed 'it is the burden of white men to civilise the whole world', and Missionaries joined hands with British empire to 'transform' Hindus and Indian Culture. While prior to 1813,

British East India Company would send the missionaries who had landed in Calcutta port back to Britain in next outgoing ship, after successful lobbying of Missionaries for years they got permission to 'civilise' the already civilised Hindus and spread the glories of Jesus Christ. When the British East Indian Company was a purely a trading company doing well in India, they didn't found any need for Hindus to be civilised as the Hindus are already civilised, polite and very respectful. However things changed once Missionaries were allowed entry in India to do their work after their false propaganda, giving false information, factually incorrect information and translating and spreading scriptures in a demeaning way and spreading them in common masses to gain public support to convert Hindus and push the British Parliament to pass the law to allow missionaries to convert Hindus. This permission could only be granted if it was proved that there is dire need to civilise Hindus and for this to happen, Hinduism had to be interpreted in a demeaning way. This negative perception of Hinduism still exist in the west even today after 200 years. Such is the damage caused by the combined effort of Britishers and Missionaries.

Understanding Sanatana Dharma from Abrahamic lens is indeed a big mistake. Dharmic philosophies are so different and the ways of interpretation of texts is so different then the Islamic or Christian way that it is very difficult to understand it correctly. The Yogic interpretation, symbolic interpretation is quite different from the word-to-word literal interpretation. Sanatana dharma is very different from the Abrahamic religions.

## Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) is different

Though there are sects and sub-sects within Hinduism, and there is also caste system (varna vyavastha), the people of Bharat practiced many other dharmic traditions which co-existed with Sanatana Dharma and were practiced since more than 2500 years. Jain Dharma, Baudha Dharma (Buddhism) and Sikha Dharma existed peacefully with Sanatana Dharma. We will call these four traditions (including Sanatana dharma) of Bharat simply as 'Dharmic Traditions' or 'Bhartiya Traditions'. Though there were conversions within different Dharmic Traditions, they were not done in a cruel way, the way Church did.

**Dharmic Traditions lay great emphasis on logic.** In fact, in Sanatana Dharma there is a separate school of thought known as 'Nyaya' and 'Vaisheshikha' which focus only on Logic. Nyaya is the school of Logic and one of the six main schools of Sanatana Dharma. There is a well known work on Grammar known as Panini's Astadhyayi which has a commentary by Maharshi Patanjali. Everything that is said in Sanatan Dharma can be challenged, every school of thought can be challenged, and the objections can be attempted to be refuted in polemical debate and not by force or by the way of sword. Sanatana, Baudha (Buddhist) and Jain Dharma extensively use Grammar and Logic in their philosophy.

**Dharmic Traditions lay more emphasis on Practice then mere believing or in dry theory.** So Yoga and Sadhana (meditation) or Abhyasa (spiritual practices like reading and contemplating on shastras is prescribed) are an integral part of the culture. Yoga Sutras of Patanjali lays great emphasis on the control of mind and so does Bhagavad Gita. **Both shastras lay importance on high moral and ethical values.** Adhyaya 16 (Chapter 16) is dedicated to the divine and demonic qualities. Gita also lays



emphasis of developing unconditional surrender, disassociation with worldly objects and living a detached and peaceful life.

Rather than the commandments or direct orders, shastras are the collection of innumerable experiences of infinite saints since time immemorial. Through examples, logic, stories, hymns and poetry, Saints have conveyed their experiences and state of realization of their true nature and the path to achieve this blissful state. The essence of shastras were divinely revealed by the supreme Godhead to the saints. Saints explained them in the way they experienced truth and, in a way palatable to the masses. The teachings are to be embedded in our life too in order to excel on the path to seek our true nature and be one with Ishvara. Sanatana Dharma is more of an experiential nature than being just belief based.

### Passing on the Knowledge – The Tradition

These teachings are passed on from one generation to the next. Guru would teach his disciples (shishyas) and the worthy one who has realized his true self and the essence of shastras along with good grip on scriptures and who is a good orator is chosen as the spiritual successor to the tradition. The shishya, who is now a Guru, would then teach this knowledge to his disciples and then chose a worthy, Self Realized Disciple as his successor. Thus, the knowledge would be transmitted from generation to generation in an unbroken succession. In this way the knowledge is retained with the Guru who are the living examples of the blissful state of Self Realization, the essence of shastras. So the Guru is not only well versed in tradition and in knowledge of a shastras, but has realized the Ultimate truth that the shastras teach. In other words a true guru is not a mere scholar of scriptures, but a living example the essence of scriptures. It has to be noted that though the successor can be just one, there can be many disciples who are Self Realised and are free to spread the teachings or open another ashram or a matha.

### Corruption Exits in Sanatana Dharma too

This is not to say that there is no corruption in Sanatana Dharma. Corruption exits when in astrays from the path of dharma. A sloka from a popular text, Guru Gita, a part of Skanda Purana, says, **“There are ever so many Gurus in the world who rob the wealth of their disciples. But I consider that Guru a rare one among Gurus who removes the afflictions of the disciple’s heart. (162)”**. This indicates that our great forefathers, the composers of Shastras, knew that such a thing could happen and so they have warned us against them. They knew that saints are held in high esteem and reverence and so Guru Gita goes on to say that it is not a sin if a person does not bow in front of such corrupted, immoral Gurus, rather it is better to stay away from them. In other words, such corrupted men in garb of saint deserve no respect from society. (ref slokas 104-109 - [link](#)) These slokas were not edited and removed indicates that there is every attempt to protect shastras and give correct direction to the seekers of truth. The reason for corruption is the deterioration of dharma in due course of time.

We can say is that fundamentally, Sanatana Dharma is of experiential nature and that one must be careful before devoutly believing in any saint. Sanatana Dharma is unorganized and so one can easily leave such a guru and search for another saint. One still fundamentally remains a Hindu and is right in doing so. Saints have to earn faith of common men for society to be devoutly respectful to them.

**Now let us move towards the universal principles of Sanatana Dharma which are applicable to all mankind.**

## Law of Karma is applicable to all irrespective of belief

Abrahamic religions are faith based. Once you pledge your belief in the saviour, then your actions does matter much. The instructions are for the people who accept the religion and not outside it. Similarly the rewards of their actions are dependent upon their faith in their book and saviour. Unlike Abrahamic religions, the law of karma is applicable to each and every individual whether one is a believer or a non-believer. As per Sanatana Dharma it is possible that an atheist can secure a place in heaven for his good deeds. In Sanatana Dharma, stay at Heaven and Hell are temporary and one has to return to the earthly plane and continue the spiritual journey after enjoying the fruits of merits and suffering the fruits of sins in heaven (svarga) and hell (narka) respectively. Heaven is not the final resting place. Infact, moksha is achieved by one who does not have any desire to enjoy fruits of heaven and wish to transcend the kingdom of heaven. In Hinduism, Heaven is not the topmost realm or kingdom or loka. The topmost loka is Brahma loka. All Jivas in this loka are initiated by the Creator of Universe, Brahma dev ji himself and attain Brahma jnana i.e. attain Self Realisation. Even during their stay in this loka, they experience constant bliss.

There is also a place for atheists in Sanatana Dharma. Karma is central to one's fruits and spiritual progress in Dharmic traditions. **Believing in any Ideology does not make one bypass any karma which one is supposed to do for spiritual progress and to live a responsible life accepting both Rights and Duties, Freedom and Responsibility.** The path expects a disciplined approach to be finally free of all rituals, all customs, move beyond varna and ashrama vyavastha, and finally rise beyond dharma and attain moksha. **In other words, we do not get any concession or a reward for following any philosophy or getting initiated into any mantra.**

## We are responsible for what we are suffering and we are responsible for our future

What we are now suffering or enjoying are the fruits of past karma that has ripened now. The way we perceive situation now and the decision we take will decide our future as the karma that we are now doing will bear fruits in the future.

## The Path of Karma and Character Building – Cultivating Divinity within oneself

The path of Karma aims to inwardly purify oneself. Each one of us has positive and negative qualities or gunas. Our shastras divide the qualities in each individual into 3 – tamasic, rajasic and sattvic. Our journey is to increase the sattva guna in us.

A person with predominant Tamas guna has revengeful attitude, sleeps late at night, wakes up late, is lazy and self centered. A rajasika person wants to have glory, name and fame. He or she is a dynamic person eager to work hard. A sattvika person has kind heart. Such a person has divine qualities like forgive and forget, let go of issues of the past, compassion, and peaceful heart. Such a person likes to stay alone and work quietly without getting noticed. The path includes Character Building too as first, one has to be a good human being, that of helping nature in order to cultivate satva guna. **Good character is the foundation of spirituality.**

**The path of karma is to purify ourselves inwardly so that the predominant quality is sattva guna. A sattvika mind is capable of chanting mantra. It is capable to renounce worldly issues from mind and stay detached.**

## Transformation and not Conversion

**We have to understand that an initiation into any mantra or any kriya or any sect does not make one pure. Each person has all three gunas. A person who is initiated may get grace of guru and accelerate his or her spiritual progress, but he / she has other gunas too. Bhakti is just one guna that anyone can have. Even a criminal can have faith and devotion towards Ishvara. So faith in Ishvara or any philosophy does not indicate purity of mind. Seeker of truth has to take care of other emotions like anger, jealousy, fear, greed, etc and get rid of ego.** With practice and proper character building, gradually Tamasika and Rajasika gunas decrease and have less impact on mind and in decision making. Satvika guna becomes predominant guna influencing our most decisions and so the direction of our life. It is the intention behind the action which decides if a karma is good or bad. An outwardly looking good karma like helping other is done with hidden intention of getting rewarded in future, then it is not a good karma.

**It has to be noted that each and every karma and not just karma done for spiritual purposes shapes our character and is responsible for inner purity.** So if someone gets converted to any religion by greed or by force, then such a conversion cannot be justified. It is a bad karma and both the one converting and the one getting converted are said to be doomed. The simple reason is the person is not accepting new religion on the basis of truth but by greed or fear or any other immoral reason. So technically such a person has no interest in the new religion.

**God is said to be the truth. In order to find truth and walk on the spiritual path that leads to the ultimate truth, the foundation has to be built upon truth and not on greed, deceit or fear.** There can be no hatred too. For this reason, Hindus have a natural tendency not to disrespect or hate any religion. If one argues that though they lure you into their religion it is for their greater good, then

this argument is false, as **even after the conversion there is no transformation. A person with the hope of getting cured of a disease will not get cured after conversion, nor one's mind will get pure after conversion. The person remains the same with all good and bad qualities still intact his in heart and mind. As said earlier, having belief in God and the saviour does not make one good person, our own deeds do. Sanatana Dharma believes and stresses on the inner transformation and not conversion.**

## Inner purification is Important, Rituals and Customs are important for inner purification

**Dharmik traditions emphasize more on dealing with mind. They teach one to purify one's mind and become a sattvika person.** Since the working of mind is universal and the law of karma too is universal, Hindus cannot accept that just pledging a belief in One God, One Prophet and One Book is enough to deliver one from sin and have a permanent stay in heaven. As said earlier, **faith is not the only emotion that a person has. Each one of us has tamasika, rajasika and satvika qualities. Each one of us have to strive hard to purify our mind and make it satvika.**

**Rituals and customs are designed in such a way that they bring disciple in our life and progress spiritually.** Inner purification happens when they are conducted properly with proper understanding faith. The mantras of karma kand are designed in such a way that if chanted properly, they purify the nadis and pranamaya kosha and manomaya kosha. This helps in to progress spiritually and lay foundation for japa or nididhyasana.

## Rituals help in Character Building and bring harmony with nature.

Rituals help one become disciplined in life. Other qualities like compassion, humility, gratitude, loving kindness, etc. It induces positive divine qualities within us like respecting nature and well wishing for the entire world including plants, animals, birds and all living beings. Nature likes to be in harmony. It wants to retain balance. For example, if low pressure is developed in atmosphere, air from higher pressure with rush towards lower pressure until an equilibrium is established. In the same way, rituals and chanting of mantras help retain this balance by inculcating respect and love for nature and other living beings. Rituals also help our ancestors helping them to progress on their spiritual path. Mantras dedicated to Gods and Goddesses have an effect on our pranamaya and manomaya kosha too.

Contrary to the belief that Rituals make one rigid minded, they help one to become disciplined, increases faith, increases humility, creates a sense of duty and responsibility towards nature and makes one live in harmony with nature. Rituals purifies one's mind and make way for the road to freedom. In order to understand that Rituals and Spirituality are interwoven, a proper study of Upanishads, Puranas and texts belonging to Rituals has to be done. There is no ready reckoner or a troubleshooting guide. Rituals are complementary to spiritual progress. **Rituals are not for the**

**lifetime. After achieving sufficient inner purity, they may be dropped as the purpose of rituals is fulfilled.** Sri Ramakrishna has said that Sandhya Vandana ends in Gayatri, Gayatri ends in OM and OM ends in Samadhi.

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*Sandhya Vandana is the daily ritual which has to be done 5 times a day. However, it is popular that it has to be done 3 times a day. If not three times, then doing 2 times is enough. In today's scenario, many do this ritual once in the morning. Sandhya means sandhi kala or the time joining two kala. Night and day are kala here. The transition from night to day i.e. early morning is one time for Sandhya. Another is the transition from day to night i.e. evening is another Sandhya. So Morning and Evening are two times sandhya Vandana has to be done. Noon time is the third time for Sandhya as the day begins to transit into night after noon. The Fourth time is in early morning before Sunrise and the fifth one is in the afternoon. In case of five times the interval between two sandhyas is 2 hours 24 minutes (ref: <https://www.kamakoti.org/hindudharma/part17/chap12.htm>)*

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**Inner purification is what transforms a person. Inner purity helps one progress spiritually.** It is the satva guna that brings inner peace and steadiness as the mind no longer craves for worldly objects nor does it have worldly ambitions and wishes. Such a mind is capable for doing japa (chanting mantra). Chanting mantra leads one to have divine vision of beloved Ishta devata (chosen deity) and / or it leads one to know one's true nature.

## From Humanity to Divinity

As explained earlier, our journey is to keep a check on negative qualities and increase positive qualities. The journey is from Tamas to Rajas to Satva Guna. More the percentage of satva guna in a person, more his or her actions are selfless and triggered with divine qualities like love, compassion, forgiveness, let go and devotion. The mind is purified as one practices dharma and becomes self contented for worldly objects. Desires reduce, likes and dislikes get neutralized. Basic requirement to a live life reduce too. Life becomes simple and less demanding.

**So the spiritual Transformation is rising from having lower animal qualities to having human qualities then to radiate divine qualities from our heart. Finally one's consciousness rises beyond gunas, beyond maya into infinite bliss and deep peace.**

## The Hindu Fundamentalist is very peaceful

We have now understood the basics spiritual path in brief. Those who meditate i.e. do japa or nididhyasana know that one has to detach oneself from thoughts and emotions by being a witness to the inner (mental world). As minded gets more and more detached, likes and dislikes are neutralized and the ever demanding mind calms down. Peace and bliss begins to flow through us. As one progresses on the Sanatana Path, mind becomes cheerful, happy and peaceful. It becomes contented with worldly objects and no longer craves for them. So a student of Vedanta, who practices according to the directions of Upanishads with all his heart and soul becomes peaceful and filled with bliss. It would not be an exaggeration to say that a Fundamentalist Hindu is the most peaceful one. Our Acharyas like Sri Adi Shankara, Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, Sri Abhinavgupta, et al are living examples of scriptures put in practice. Acharyas of other dharmic traditions like Sri Mahavir Swami and other Tirthankars, and Lord Buddha are another examples of living and preaching a dharmic life. They all taught us to live a life of peace and harmony, accept what our prarabdha offers and practice Nishkarma karma.

## Nishkama Karma – Karma done without any expectations

Humane actions like helping strangers in difficult situation, working hard to protect our environment, plants and animals is considered as noble action. Donating money to orphanages, paying school and college fees of poor children or orphans, etc are indeed noble actions. Helping families in need, raising donations for them, etc are shows that we, as humans, value life and are social in nature. Helping our community is considered as noble act.

## Why Nishkama Seva is important – The emotional nourishment and contentment

These Selfless actions have a unique in their own way. **The donation is indeed a donation without any expectation to get a good return. In other words, donation is not an investment. Donate and forget.** The outwardly looking good action is done with good intention. Second, For such noble acts, there is emotional nourishment of both giver and receiver. **The one donating or helping feels contentment in their heart and the one receiving the help feels gratitude and trust in humanity.** They no more feel isolated from community. **Third, there is no binding on the part of receiver to do something for the person who helped.** No pressure to convert or change the belief, no obligation whatsoever. Such noble acts do not produce stress in the mind of receiver. There is goodness everywhere. Hence such karma are bound to influence the onlookers who appreciate the actions.

Same happens when working for welfare of animals. You do not expect any returning favour from them. With plants and environment, it is the same feeling. Such donations give freedom and let people continue their life journey freely.

This type of karma is known as Nishkama Seva. Here seva means service and not help. The word seva increases value of karma, as it is done with humility and with the intention that service to mankind is

service to God. The word 'help' is not appropriate as both the giver and receiver are benefitted, the both are emotionally nourished and filled with positivity.

**But does our heart constantly feels contended or is filled with gratitude? Does it continue to be filled with and radiate unconditional love? No it doesn't.** Soon it gets occupied with other emotions and the happiness fades away quickly. What if this happiness stays in our heart and radiates throughout the day everyday. **Karma of helping the needy is has an 'a priori'.** Someone has to be poor, someone has to be in need or in a position to be in helpless state or in dire need of help for our heart to be filled with compassion and loving kindness. **What if our heart continuously radiates this happiness without such a pre condition? If a short lived positive emotion of helping others or simply watching such videos and hearing stories of random acts of kindness inspires us and fills us with joy, imagine our mental state when our heart is constantly filled with happiness and peace.** When one progresses on spiritual path by practicing intense sadhana (meditation), one gets purified to such an extend that our heart overflows with happiness, with divine joy and experiences deep peace. The path of Sanatana Dharma is such that such a change of heart is natural. By meditation, one's heart becomes divine and radiates divinity. This is the reason why Saints and Ascetics are highly respected in the Dharmic Society, no matter they be a Hindu, Jain, Baudha or Sikh saints. **Dharmik Traditions guide us from being 'human' to being 'divine'.** Renunciation and Practice (sadhana, study of scriptures) are the two wings necessary to fly into the infinite sky of eternal freedom.

**Journey of Sanatana Dharma is from to transformation from humanity to divinity. We are essentially divine and our final destination is to be established in our own Self resulting in the constant state of bliss and deep peace.**

We will now summarize the contents in brief

## Summary

Secularism is the word coined by Westerners. Since centuries, Western world experienced the immoral acts of the Clergy and the Church. The control of the Church was so strong that they didn't allow men to think freely. Anything that contradicts the bible and their interpretation was not seen in good light. When Church, Government and Army joins hands, there is blood in their hands. Church crimes range from forced conversions, to converting people by greed and deceit. It also includes sexual exploitation of women, and children and also mass murders of indigenous people who were not following Christianity. With passing of time, there were different denominations within Christianity who now started competing with each other. As time passed, with the advent of technology, the world opened up as Church began to loosen up the grip from the masses. The core principles of Christianity and the concept of heathen began to be challenged. The crimes of Church and Clergy didn't go unnoticed. The revolution happened and the world found a need for a broadminded all-encompassing way of life that didn't discriminate amongst religion, race and ethnicity. Thus there was need for secularism approach towards life.

However, Sanatana Dharma and the other dharmic traditions of India like Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism didn't had this problem. They co-existed Peacefully. The conversions did happen but not by greed, deceit or by way of sword. They happened through polemical debates. Sanatana Dharma and other dharmic traditions extensively use logic and Hinduism has a special branch dedicated to learning of logic known as 'Nyaya'.

**Sanatana Dharma is more of experiential nature. The concepts are universal in nature like the Law of Karma.** The purport of Vedanta can be experienced here itself, in this life, in this physical body. Sanatana Dharma focuses on character building and training our own mind. **The journey of Sanatana Dharma is to transform from lower animal nature to divine qualities.** Each one of us has three gunas or qualities. Tamas, Rajas and Satva. Tamas guna has qualities laziness, revengeful attitude, etc. Rajas guna has qualities like achieving name, fame and glory, etc. Satva Guna has divine qualities like devotion, faith, surrender, let go, forgiveness, compassion, etc. Our journey is to keep a check on Tamas and Rajas guna and cultivate Sattvik qualities within us. Shastras like Bhagavad Gita and Patanjali Yoga Sutras lay great emphasis on character building and for achieving control over mind. **Thus practicing Sanatana Dharma devoutly increases morality, ethics and makes one simple minded and big hearted.**

If one follows the path of Dharma, then one is naturally having high moral and ethical standards. However, if morality and ethics take back seat, then corruption happens and the pious men who are considered as torch bearers of Dharma get corrupted and begin exploiting masses. **Conversion does not change a person. One still has all other emotions that one previously had. Devotion or faith in God does not earn respect in society.** Even a criminal can have faith in God. **Faith in God or pledging a belief in a saviour is not the barometer of 'piousness' or a spiritual achievement.** There are no shortcuts for spiritual progress. **Sanatana Dharma focuses on Transformation and not Conversion.**



We all are essentially divine. We need to know our true nature. In this process, as one progresses spiritually, heart gets filled with bliss and peace and it begins to overflow with these emotions. In advanced meditators bliss and peace constantly radiate from their heart. In order to reach this blissful state, we need to act in a structured and disciplined way which is taught to us by following the procedures of Rites and rituals. Rituals do not make one rigid, but the lay foundation for meditation. They are an important part of our spiritual progress. They induce positive qualities like humility, compassion and teach us to live in harmony with nature. Practicing rituals properly will make us respect all life forms. Mantras when chanted properly purify subtle bodies. Once sufficient inner purification is achieved, rituals have served their purpose and mind begins to turn inwards to find peace and in this process tries to reach the source from where it is gaining the power to function. This source is supreme consciousness known as 'Brahman' and to be aware of this supreme consciousness is known as the state of Self Realisation. The state of Self Realisation is said to be the ultimate state which is beyond the realm of heaven or hell. It grants one eternal freedom and one can experience this blissful state in this life time while staying in this physical body. We all get inspired by noble acts of kindness like helping the needy, feeding the poor, supporting orphans by paying their school and college fees, etc. The donor experiences contentment and happiness while the receiver experiences gratitude and faith in community. But such a state of happiness and gratitude does not last long. Soon we get occupied with our daily routine and are filled with stress and other emotions. Practicing Sanatana Dharma and meditation makes this blissful state permanent that too without any external stimulus. It does not need someone to be poor or in helpless state for our heart to feel compassion. It is without this condition that our heart is filled with bliss and experiences deep peace. With practice one's heart constantly radiates this bliss which is independent of any external stimulus.

We all wish to be happy. We all knowingly or unknowingly search for happiness. But we search it in other people or in external objects. There is nothing wrong in this. However, Sanatana Dharma teaches us that this happiness is out outside, but it is inside us. The person in need of help is outside, but the triggering or motivating force or emotions are inside us. The fact is our very nature is Bliss. Our journey is to constantly abide in this state and be eternally free from the cycle of birth and death and attain moksha. Surely this 'Divine' God-intoxicated state is much more than 'Humanity'. 'Humanity' or 'nishkama seva' are just few steps of ladder to become divine. We are much more capable of than just being human. We are 'divine', then why stop at being just a human?

Hari OM Tat Sat