

GENESIS OF HINDU RELIGION

The essence of Hinduism as a religion is about 20,000¹ years old. It is the first religion of human civilization.

Three main prophets² who propounded the *ISHWARA*'s sermons to the world, were *BRAMHA*, who hailed from central India, *BISHNU* (also known as *Narayan* for Lord *Venkateshwara* or Lord *Balaji*) came from South India and *MAHESWARA* (He is also called *Shiva* / *Rudra* / *Sankara*) who hailed from Kashmir i.e. North India.

These *TRIAD* revelations were so powerful and their contribution was so vast that their messages influenced the Indian subcontinent and many other countries. Even in those ancient days when communication in any form was very poor, their message travelled far and wide and was established as *Sanatana Dharma*.

These three messiahs are called *Adi-Devatas* and they are the three main founders of the *Sanatana Dharma* later known as Hindu religion. They revealed Vedas.

Hinduism is not based on a single book; nor is its origin attributed to any human being. The Hindus call the *VEDAS* as *APOURUSHEYAM* - which means not authored by *PURUSHA* or *MAN*, man being merely an instrument of God to spread his words.

Hinduism is a name given by central Asians to describe the civilization on the eastern bank of the river Sindhu. They pronounced 'S' as 'H' and described the residents of the eastern bank of the river Sindhu as Hindus. They invaded India, became its rulers and the name given by them became popular. Around 4500 B.C. to 3500 B.C. north western border was attacked by the horse mounted invaders. Gradually they invaded almost whole of India.

The original name of the Hindu religion was *SANATANA DHARMA* and Vedic religion is its principal philosophy. The people who came to India as invaders and rulers gradually intermingled with the local population and adopted the basics of the Hindu philosophy and lost their foreign identity.

The God of the Hindus is known as *Ishwara*. *Ishwara* is the one supreme entity. He is absolute, all pervasive and eternal. He has no beginning and no end. He has no form, colour or description. He is the creator, the cause of all causes. He is all powerful and does not require any subordinates to carry out his desire.

Ishwara sends messiahs (*Devatas*) to various regions of the earth in human form to benefit His creation as a reflection of His greatness. These messiahs are called *Devatas* in some of the Indian languages.

Devotees pray to *Ishwara* and celebrate the life, deeds and teachings of *Devatas* in temples. *Devatas* are essentially human beings with supernatural power. Their manifestations, however, were bound by their historical period, social settings and geographical location.

Ordinary human beings go to the idol of *Devata* in temples. An idol is not only an object of worship by the devotee but it becomes the centre of concentration through intense prayers to *Ishwara*.

One who has read and grasped the Vedas i.e. one who is knowledgeable in the inner meaning of religious philosophy, has no need to worship an idol. He/she has already realized the true nature of *Ishwara* and the futility of idol worship.

Ishwara alone deserves our prayer. *Ishwara* is omnipresent, omnipotent and not bound by boundaries of the earth or the solar system. All human beings come to Him with their prayers and their rituals.

The Hindus during the early history of *Sanatana Dharma*, were monotheists and believed in one *Ishwara*. Hindus learnt idol worship from the dazzling urban civilization of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. The residents of Mohenjodaro and Harappa were worshippers of the Sun-God, Lord Shivalinga, Mother Goddesses and some animal totems etc.

This idol worship was the resultant influence of Mesopotamian (Egyptian) and Sumerian (Persian) civilizations. During that period "Cuneiform" was used as the script for communication in Harappa and Mohenjodaro as well as in Mesopotamia (Egypt). Cuneiform script was full of pictures of idols. The Harappan and Mohenjodaro civilizations flourished prior to 1475 B.C. Hindu scripture records that in the year 1475 B.C. there was a huge

undersea earthquake which created very high sea waves and the high water level flooded the river Sindhu and its embankments. Harappa, Mohenjodaro etc. were covered with mud. When the water receded men, animals and vegetation perished almost instantly and were buried under thick layers of mud.

The urban civilization of Harappa and Mohenjodaro used plenty of timber for construction and furniture making. Wood was used in a big way for building work and maintaining the civilization. It caused deforestation. Deforestation altering the ecological balance became nature's curse and contributed to the extinction of the Harappan and Mohenjodaro civilizations. Idol worship is actually the hero worship of *Devat*as/Messiahs. *Devat*as were essentially human beings and that is why sometimes the *Devata* of one region is not worshipped in other regions. However, *Ishwara* accepts all the prayer, be it in any manner or in any name.

During the early Rik Vedic period the practice of caste system, child marriage or Sati Dahi were unknown, though division of labour was in vogue. One member of a family may be teaching and preaching, another could be engaged in warfare, at the same time the third from the same family may be an artisan. Inter-marriage and interchange of profession were normally accepted in the society.

Women were equally involved in Vedic learning. Apala, Ghosa, Viswabara, Lopamudra, Bisakha and others were famous erudite ladies of the early Vedic period. Women had their own choice and say in the matter of marriage. Women also learnt the technique of weaponry and took part in warfare. One famous woman General of warfare was Mudgalani. Ladies used to be partners of their husbands in all walks of life.

Primarily the Hindus are monotheist and believe in an all-powerful *Ishwara*. *ISHWARA* is also known as *Devathe*y, *Devadu*, *Ishwaran*, *Kadavul*, *Iraivan*. The *Devat*as are respected as human heroes and heroines with superhuman abilities, as though possessed of some of the qualities of *Ishwara*.

Notes :-

1) The great historian and author Kalkut, in his historical treatise *PRITHA* published by Mandal Book House, 78/1, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Kolkata - 700 009, INDIA, wrote in page 26 that historically when Kaliyug was 3179 years old, Indian year counting Sakabdah, i.e., year counting from the time of King Kaniska started. In the year A.D. 2005 it is 1927 Sakabdah. Thus as on date, age of Kaliyug is approximately 5106 (3179+1927) years, say 5000 years. We know Satyayug commenced when Bramha, Bishnu and Maheswara got revelation and propounded Sanatana Dharma. There are four Yugs which go on cyclically in human evolution. They are Satyayug, Tretayug, Draparyug and Kaliyug. Each yug having an approximate time period of 5000 years. Thus Sanatana Dharma is existing approximately for little over 20,000 years. We are at the end of the Kaliyug and Hindus can reasonably expect the advancement of Satyayug. In Satyayug all human beings are provided with basic necessities of life i.e., food, shelter and clothing. All men and women remain truthful in all their activities, they have positive attitude. All people live in harmony with mutual respect and love for each other.

2) Some Hindu philosopher saint strongly believe that Bramha, Bishnu and Maheswara are three different manifestations of the same formless *Ishwara*.