

Title: Conversations

Subtitle: Hinduism

Second Subtitle: Hinduism

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Hinduism is the most ancient religion known to the world as Sanatana Dharma. It is the oldest religion in the world which is also a way of life for all to follow, specially in India. It gets its guidance from the Vedas Upanishads Sutras Epics Granthas and Puranas. Shastra is one of them.

The Bhagavat Gita preached by Lord Krishna to Arjuna, on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, is one of the various parts to reach the ultimate aim that God is one. Sanathana Dharma, based on the Vedas, faced many upheavals for several centuries, and could withstand them due to its innate strength. The Vedas proclaim that God is one. The Bhakthi movement and the Saints "Nam Smaran" (chanting God's name) is the easiest way of reaching God in the form the devotee likes most.

The temples were and are places where man learnt about himself, learnt about the world, dance, religion, etc. The temples reveal the various manifestations of the divine therein.

An important factor almost universally accepted is that faith in a divine power is common to mankind. Sanathana Dharma had famous Saints who had expounded their views on the divine.

Sankhya is another religion-great and ancient of our land. This religion is based on the Vedas and Gnanis than Buddhism or Jainism. But we do not find any images in the form of gods and gnanis or any literature in the form of songs or stories. We find more in the form of Buddhism or Jainism in philosophical works.

Shri. Madhavacharya expounded Dwaita philosophy where the emphasis is on devotion. He insisted that one should perform one's duties as an offering to God. Some of the principles of Dwaita philosophy said, "God is the continuing cause of all activities and the creation by the Lord is to enable individual souls to work out their salvation as the supreme method to attain God. He pleaded to lead a life of purity and devotion to the Supreme Being. Devotion and duty impart meaning into human life.

Adi Shankaracharya expounded Advaita philosophy. From time immemorial, Hinduism has passed through severe tests on account of attacks by other religions. As a result, people have lost the path laid by the Vedas. Whenever there was religious degeneration, God sent a great personality appeared amidst mankind, to revitalize Hinduism and establish it. He Himself manifested as Adi Shankara to reinforce the declining religion. Advaita philosophy propounds of only one Supreme Being, Lord Shiva - the philosophy of non-duality - he stressed that spiritual knowledge, deep devotion and detachments are the goal.

Vasishtadwaita was expounded by Shri Ramanujacharya which lays emphasis on the worship of Lord Vishnu, signifying the cult of Vaishnavism. To propagate the Truth, God deputed Alvars who established the Truth and Reality through their "Prabandhams". There are thousands of temples - sanctified kshetras of power is manifested. Every temple has a Sthala Purana, through which the truth of the temple can be learnt.

Though God is the ultimate authority to grant salvation to a devotee the Moksha (salvation) can be obtained by an Acharya or Guru, the intermediary. The Almighty, a learned intellectual, dispels the disciples spiritual ignorance and leads the disciple into spiritual bliss is the link between the individual and the chosen representatives of God.