

### The Manifestation of Divinity

Hinduism is one of the oldest extant religions. Although Hinduism is thought to be only a religion, it is actually a cluster of religious, philosophical, and cultural beliefs. Many may say Hinduism is a religion of 330 million gods, but they do not fully understand the Hindu pantheon. The monotheistic polytheism and manifestation of divinity of Hindus explains the various aspects that are put into basic philosophy for Hinduism.

“The Supreme Being” is conceived by Hindus for various reasons. The Supreme Being is different among each traditional view of Hinduism. Shiva is the Supreme Being for the Shaiva tradition and Vishnu or Krishna are said to be the Supreme Being in the Vaishnavite tradition. Hinduism is a monotheistic polytheism religion because of the thought of having the Supreme Being. For example, if one is trying to overcome obstacles faced in life, one may pray to Ganesha because He represents the power of the Supreme Being that is able to remove obstacles and ensure success in life. Another example is if one is seeking help in learning and knowledge, one may pray to Saraswati because She represents learning and knowledge under the belief of the Supreme Being. Supreme Being contains three tasks: creation, preservation, and dissolution and recreation, also known as the Hindu Trinity.

The Hindu Trinity is composed of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Brahma represents creation, Vishnu represents preservation, and Shiva represents dissolution and recreation. Each of the three Gods have consorts that are associated with them in prayer. People pray to Brahma and Saraswati, Brahma’s consort, for creativity and knowledge. Many that pray to Vishnu and Lakshmi, Vishnu’s consort, simply ask for an ordinary life style and resources that can help better the world. Shiva and Parvati, Shiva’s consort, are represented with the principle of destruction of evil. Praying to each one of these gods or goddesses falls back into the category of the Supreme Being. Hinduism makes an emphasis on prayer and meditation.

Idolatry is one of the many ways of prayer in the Hindu religion. Hindus use idol worship to pray for various reasons. One of the main reasons Hindus pray to idols is

because it is way to help concentrate one's mind and body to God. It is proven if one cannot fully concentrate on an object unless one fully understands it or sees it. The idol helps provide the devotee concentrate fully and meditate properly. Being able to see what god looks like does not only help one's concentration but also self-development, Swa Adhya. Another reason Hindus worship idols is because of omnipresence. As one prays to the god, he feels the energy of God because He lives in each and everything in various forms. The devotee take the energy from God as a pure and clean mindset to get through his struggles.

Pure and clean prayer is a must in Hinduism. Before going to the temple Hindus cleanse themselves with a shower, clean clothes, and more. Once arrived at the temple one takes off one's shoes before entering. Why do Hindus' do that? Hindus want to be clean before stepping into God's residence. Another reason it is necessary to be clean is because if one is cleaned physically then one has started to also clean his mind. Prayer is also looked upon as cleansing the mind and fully committing to the communication with God. This communication with God will help develop oneself, one's soul, and ultimately help one attain moksha, liberation. Therefore cleansing oneself essential.

Hinduism is not just a belief it is a way of living. The religion, philosophy, and culture behind Hinduism is extravagant. Since Hinduism is a monotheistic polytheistic religion, the Supreme Being is an important concept to understand to completely understand Hinduism. Idolatry is also significant because it helps devotees concentrate on praying. As a whole, Hinduism may have many aspects to it but it is just one simple way of living.

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