



## Indian Culture: The Most Misunderstood Culture

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Indian Culture: The Most Misunderstood Culture Abstract This paper aims to study Ancient Indian Culture, which is highly misunderstood in the world. It is seen as inferior, non-scientific and full of superstition. This paper explains that Ancient Indian Culture is one of the most oldest and scientific culture with great focus on self, mind and humanitarian values.

### ABSTRACT

*This paper aims to study Ancient Indian Culture, which is highly misunderstood in the world. It is seen as inferior, non-scientific and full of superstition. This paper explains that Ancient Indian Culture is one of the most oldest and scientific culture with great focus on self, mind and humanitarian values. This paper tells about different teachings of Indian Culture. This paper tells that, the meaning of Indian culture is that it is a logical interaction towards human freedom and prosperity. No other culture has an individual with as much profundity and understanding as this culture has. No other culture has viewed at it as a science and made techniques to advance an individual into his definitive nature.*

### KEY WORDS

Ancient Indian Culture, Atman, Self, Mind.

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian Culture is the most ancient culture, but its origin cannot be traced back. A specific time period cannot be given. This culture has been manipulated by different section of society in different time periods. Therefore, people misunderstood this culture. The biggest misunderstanding is that this culture is a religion. Dharma and Religion have now become synonyms. According to Oxford, Dharma is:

- “the eternal and inherent nature of reality, regarded in Hinduism as a cosmic law underlying right behavior and social order.”
- “(in Buddhism) the nature of reality regarded as a universal truth taught by the Buddha; the teaching of Buddhism.”
- “an aspect of truth or reality.”

And Religion according to Oxford is:

“the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.”

There is a huge difference between the meanings of these two words: Dharma and Religion.

Indian culture exclusively focuses on the study of ‘atman’ (self) or Indian culture and its elements help an individual to understand the elements of mind. The purpose of life explained is to merge ‘atman’ (self) with ‘Brahman’ (universal self). The existence of life is to be enlightened, and the fact is that human being is already enlightened. There is need to realize it. It is stated that individual and the universe is never been different. It is only separated in one’s imagination.

Joan Shivarpita Harrigan explained that, “Although there is only one God, but the world appears to be dualistic and dualistic mind sets that incorporates evolution towards God. When the realization occurs, it is realized that true self is never separated and “finally” merge and recognize true self, a self that is not and has never been separate.

Osho Rajneesh explained that, “Enlightenment is the ultimate truth- the seeker disappears but the truth is found. The pilgrim disappears but God is found. It is important to understand the differences ...from enlightenment there is no possibility of falling back, because you are no longer there to fall back. As long as you are, there is a possibility.”

Sadhguru said that, “Self-realization means to realize that everything has been right here within the self and not seen by human being.

These different definitions of self-realization or enlightenment explain that definitions can be different but the end result is not. There are different aims for attaining self-realization but only one goal. According to my understanding, this is basis of the Indian culture.

## **Background**

The aim of writing is to make people understand Indian Culture and to distinguish between ‘Dharma’ and ‘Religion’.

The Supreme Court of India over half a century ago tried to explain the meaning of the Hindu Religion. Justice Gajendragadkar has said, “Hindu religion is not easily understood but can be described possibility to define. Unlike other religions in the world, the Hindu religion does not claim any one prophet, it does not worship any one God, it does not subscribe to any one dogma, it does not believe in any one philosophic concept, it does not follow any one set of religious rites or performances, in fact, it does not appear to satisfy the narrow traditional features of any religion or creed. It may broadly be described as a way of life and nothing more.”

Therefore, Hindu Religion (or Hindutva) is not a religion but a way of life as stated by the Supreme Court of India.

Sadhguru said, “Hindu religion is seekers of liberation and also seekers of truth. Because only by knowing the laws that govern life, you can break them and go beyond that. The Gods behave as common people who walked in this geography. Krishna walked in this geography, Rama walked in this geography, Shiva walked in this geography. These are people who lived their lives here, solved some problems, and failed some. Gods had their wives, troubles and were not angels floating in the clouds and had trials and tribulations of everyday that every man and woman here undergoes.”

## **Understanding Indian culture**

Indian Culture must be understood by observing the life of people who lived and followed this way of life.

Vedic life has been described in four different stages:

- **Student:** To train the mind and the body by rigorous discipline and education.
- **Householder:** Life with family and to be a productive asset for the society.
- **Retirement:** Leaving the responsibilities of family and society, detaching from all worldly bonds.
- **Renunciation:** Moving ahead of the social order for liberation and self-realization.

The student life is the most important stage. Some of the qualifications of the students are as follows:

- **Discrimination:** Realizing that happiness comes from within. Becoming a seeker. Knowing the truth from untruth.
- **Dispassion:** Liberation from the six foes; anger, lust, pride, greed, attachment and jealous.
- Six values and virtues:
  - ❖ Ability to view thoughts as objects and dismiss them at will
  - ❖ Ability of internal sensing
  - ❖ Living righteously
  - ❖ Ability of tolerance
  - ❖ Self Confidence
  - ❖ Mind in a still and constant state
- **Working for liberation:** Constant practice for liberation

### Qualities of Nature (GUNAS)

Human mind have three Gunas. Following qualities constitute us and it determines our nature:

- Active and ambitious: **Rajas**  
The Rajas quality is and can be driven, restless, intense, stressed and greedy. When in balance, it is dynamic and useful in getting things done.
- Inert and dull or dark: **Tamas**  
The Tamas quality is and can be inactive, dense, attached to miscomprehension and stubborn. When in balance, it is a fount of stability and works in a way that hold things together often in a restful and inactive state.
- Peaceful and balanced: **Sattva**  
The Sattva is and can be filled with light, happiness, wisdom, and a stability of mind, is subtle and blissful.

Anyone can have any nature of these three. It depends upon the situations and response on a particular human. Spiritual practices in Indian culture works on making one's mind in the state of Sattva.

### Four aims of Life

- Pleasure/Affection/Desire
- Livelihood/Wealth
- Righteous Duty/Responsibility
- Spiritual Freedom/Union

Indian Culture is also called 'Sanatan Dharma'. The question is often raised as to why Hinduism is called Sanatan? What is the real meaning of this eternal?

During the commentaries of most of the religious episodes, it is also said to explain the meaning of Sanatan and there is a strong effort to understand its themes. But prejudices often stop giving the right answer. We will try to understand this question a little more deeply.

The literal meaning of Sanatan is well known. It generally means 'one who has always existed', that is, no one has any concern with the origin and birth and is an object or person or principle. You cannot name any one deity who is the originator of Hindu Sanatan tradition. No such person can claim that he has created Sanatan Dharma through his efforts.

All religions of the world originated from the ideology of some person. The beliefs of religions like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Zarathustrian, Parsik, etc. basically depend on the messages of some Prophet or divine messengers. The principles associated with him irrefutably are influenced by the procedure of that particular messenger, his lifestyle is the basis for them.

But the same thing does not apply to the Sanatan tradition at all. It is a flowy ideology, simple way of life, as vast and deep as the head of the continent. Neither the beginning nor the end, indestructible, is invincible and constant like that almighty. Sanatan Dharma is the oldest religion of all religions in the world. The traditional Vedic religion in which God is worshiped in both real and formless form. It is a religion based on the Vedas, which contains many different worship practices, beliefs, sects, and philosophies. It is the third largest religion in the world by number of followers, most of its worshipers are in India by number and Nepal by percentage. Though it is worshiped by many Gods and Goddesses, it is in fact a monotheistic religion. This religion is so vast in itself that from time to time various religions continue to come out, some old traditions continue to break and some new ones are added, some old beliefs remain as they are and some beliefs are included in it. Something was found, some old was left, some old remained just like this, some new ones were added.

The Supreme Father, the Supreme Soul, illuminated the Vedas at the beginning of the universe for the welfare of all human beings. Just like when we bring a new mobile, we get a guide along with it, that it should be kept here, be used in such a way, do not move it to such a place, do not keep it with something, etc. Similarly, when that Father gave us these human bodies, and this entire creation created us, did he leave us wandering without any knowledge and without any instructions? No, he gave us a guide together, how to distribute this creation, what to do, what to do with the body, where to take it, what to think with the mind, what to see with the eyes, what to hear with the ears, what to do with the hands etc. Its name is Veda.

Hinduism is the only religion based on knowledge in the world, everything else has been propounded by one person. Therefore Hinduism is the best and cannot be compared to anyone, Hinduism is the only religion which has been reviewing and reforming its rules from time to time. Hinduism is an open religion which has developed not from thought but from conscience. Conversely, other religions, be it Islam, whether Christian or any other, are all closed religions, which are based on the views of a mere individual and who believe that time remains unchanged and the conscience of the person as well. There is no importance of development of ideas in these religions. This is the reason that there is a special urge or ideological fanaticism in these religions.

## **VEDAS**

Veda means knowledge. What's in the Vedas? There is no narrative story in the Vedas. From the straw to the God, all the basic knowledge is present in the Veda, which is necessary in the life of human beings. Who am I? What is it in me that has the feeling of "I"? My hands, my feet, my head, my body, but who am I? Where do I come from? My body will remain here. So where will I go, what does God do? What do I do here? What is my goal? Why was I sent here? The answer to all this will be found only in the Vedas. Ramayana and Bhagwat and Mahabharata etc. are historical events, from which we

should learn and should follow the path shown by great men like these.

What is the scripture of Hindus? According to scholars, the Vedas are the scriptures of Hindus. The Vedas contain everything in the world. In the Vedas there is a detailed mention of religion, yoga, science, life, society and the origin of the universe, observance and destruction. The essence means shord of the Vedas is the Upanishads and the essence of the Upanishads is the Gita.

## Types of Vedas

### Rigveda

The Rigveda was first created in the Vedas. It is poetic. The Yajurveda is lyrical and the Samveda is lyrical. There are 10 circles in the Rigveda, 1028 suktas and 11 thousand mantras. It has 5 branches- Shakalpa, Vaskal, Ashwalayan, Shankhayan, Mandukayan. The medicine in the tenth circle of the Rigveda is sukta. Its founder is Sage Arthashastra. In this, the number of medicines has been specified around 125, which is found in 107 places. There is a special description of Soma in medicine. The story of rejuvenating Chyavan Rishi is also mentioned in the Rig Veda and it is also included to destroy diseases with drugs. This includes water therapy, air therapy, solar medicine, manas medicine and treatment by incense.

### Samveda

The Samaveda contains a plethora of lyrical verses that were sung at the time of the yajnas. In this Veda in 1824 mantras, except for 75 mantras, the rest of the mantras are compiled from the Rigveda itself. This Veda is considered to be the origin of music scripture. It hag the predominance of the Gods of Savita, Agni and Indra. There are musical chants for singing in the yajna, this Veda is mainly for the Gandharva people. It has 3 main branches, 75 verses and especially musicology has been included.

### Yajurveda

In this, there are prose mantras for the actual process of Yajna, this Veda is mainly for the Kshatriyas. The Yajurveda has two parts:

- **Krishna:** The Vaishampayan Rishi is related to Krishna. Krishna has four branches.
- **ShuklaYajnavalkya Rishi is related to Shukla:** Shukla has two branches. It has 40 chapters. The description of 'Brihidhanyas' is found in a mantra of Yajurveda. Apart from this, the subject of divine medicine and agricultural science is also included.

### Atharvaveda

There are chants for magic, miracles, healing and sacrifice, this Veda is mainly for the merchants. It has 20 scandals. There are eight sections in the Atharvaveda, in which the two names of the Vedas and the metal Veda are clearly obtained.

## Purpose of "Sanatan Dharma"

The whole process of Sanatana Dharma is only to raise questions within you. And the biggest thing is that it does not give 'readymade answers' to your questions, rather it brings in you the depth of questioning in such a way that you find the source of the answers to these questions on your own. So to bring that dimension or level of curiosity, it needs to take some important precautions, so that it does not become a second type of spiritual study.

Not only in India, but also outside India, a lot of people are slowly getting anxious to establish some things at home. There is a feeling of being overtaken by other religions. In this endeavor, they are trying to restrict the entire eternal and eternal knowledge to just one holy book or scripture and is expecting all to follow it. This has never been our way. People today are trying to tell that every person should follow the Gita. However, it is not like that. Arjun himself posed millions of questions during

the sermon of the Gita. If you simply follow the Gita directly, then the basic purpose of preaching the Gita will be lost.

Our basic aim should be to bring a sense of searching within every human being in the world instead of imposing our methods on others. There is no 'our way' anyway. We do not need any particular way. We have discovered this and found that if we conduct our lives in this way, there will always be a better result - for the individual as well as for the society at a larger level. But still we are not saying that this is the only way. Questions can be raised on this every day - millions of questions can be asked. If you are afraid of questions then it means that your way, your faith is standing on a very rough ground, which will fall down as soon as I ask two or four questions. If you stand on the truth, then if I ask you millions of questions, what is the problem? Problems with questions are only when you stand on lies. No question is ever wrong. Yes, answers can be wrong.

## CONCLUSION

Sanatan Dharma speaks of the ultimate welfare, which is the only welfare that the whole world can aspire to. If we really want the whole world to practice Sanatan Dharma, then it is very important that its identity should not be established in any way. Only the nature of human intelligence or understanding is to be discovered. This curiosity within the people ceased because they were forced to believe or not. They were told 'Whatever it is, this is it' and if you don't believe it, then you cannot survive. The natural curiosity of human intelligence was overwhelmed by the use of fear, guilt and choice. For the ultimate welfare of humanity, it is extremely important that a deep sense of curiosity be brought into the life of every person. This is the real goal of Sanatan Dharma. And therefore, Indian Culture is the most misunderstood culture of the world.

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