Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism
Śānti Mantras

• �ॐ सह नाववतु ।
  सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
  सह वीर्य करवावहै ।
  तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
  �ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

• Oṃ saha nāvavatu  |
 sa ha nau bhunaktu  |
 sa ha vīryam karavāvahai  |
 tejasvināvadhītamastu mā vidviṣāvahai  |
 Oṃ shāntiḥ shāntiḥ shāntiḥ  ||
Śānti Mantras

• Meaning:
  1: Om, May God Protect us Both (the Teacher and the Student),
  2: May God Nourish us Both,
  3: May we Work Together with Energy and Vigour,
  4: May our Study be Enlightening, not giving rise to Hostility,
  5: Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.
INTRODUCTION

- Sanatana Dharma or “Eternal Way”
- Hinduism was a term conferred (by visitors to India) on Indians practicing Sanatana Dharma
- Sanatana Dharma is rooted in the Vedic tradition is the basis for spirituality, religion and culture in Hinduism
- Dharma is the basis for all actions and is the vehicle that can prepare one for knowledge of the Self
• Sruti (heard)
  • Veda
• Smrti (remembered)
  • Puranas
  • Ramayana
  • Mahabharata
• Vedas
  • Rg (oldest book known to mankind)
  • Sama
  • Yajur
  • Atharva
• Bhagavad Gita (also known as Gita) occupies a special place in the scriptures
• How were the Vedas passed on from one generation to another?
  • Oral tradition
  • Method
  • Still practiced today!

• Study of the four Vedas is accompanied by the study of the ten other disciplines, which help one in understanding the Veda
Vedas as a Means of Knowledge

• Life is full of choices
• Vedas, as a body of knowledge, helps people make these choices intelligently
• The two sections of the Vedas are:
  • Karma Kāṇḍa
  • Jñāna Kāṇḍa
Vedas as a Means of Knowledge

• It is a fact that individuals have desires
  • The Karma Kāṇḍa prescribes methods to fulfill these desires (in accordance with dharma)
  • Actions prescribed by the Karma Kāṇḍa section of the Vedas produce results
  • There are two types of results – *dṛśhta phala* (tangible or verifiable result) and *adṛśhta phala* (unverifiable result)
In Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism, the fundamental tenet is: “All is God”

When understood properly, this creates an understanding of unity with all peoples, creatures, things, and everything in creation.
Worship Practices

• Practicing Hindus worship God present in every form, recognizing that everything is a manifestation of God

• Sometimes we hear that Hindus practice Idol worship - this is incorrect

• Hindus do not worship the idol but God in a particular form

• This is common practice in all religions where some symbol is used to invoke the image of God in the mind
Pursuits of a human being

• The Vedas classify all pursuits of a human being into four categories called “puruṣārthas”
  • Dharma (ethics)
  • Artha (securities)
  • Kāma (pleasures)
  • Mokṣa (liberation)

• Of the four puruṣārthas,
  • Artha is the quest for security
  • Kāma is the quest for experiencing pleasure
The Four Puruṣārthas

• The four puruṣārthas can be classified into two sets
• The set comprising of Artha and Kāma is shared by all living beings
  • How?
• The set comprising of Dharma and Mokṣa is unique to human beings
  • Why?
The Four Puruṣārthas

- Why is Dharma the first of the Puruṣārthas?
  - Because the struggle for security and the search for pleasures must be governed by ethical standards
- What happens if Dharma is violated in achieving security or pursuing pleasure?
  - Breakdown of moral and spiritual standards
  - Destruction of the fabric of society
Ashramas: Stages of Human Life

- Brahmacharya: Education is the primary goal of the person
- Gṛhasta: Life as a householder; very important stage (supporting society); applying karma yoga
- Vanaprastha: Becoming more introspective and engaging is serious self-inquiry
- Sannyasa: Renunciation of attachments to material pleasures and sole dedication to pursuit of self-knowledge
- Each stage brings more maturity in a person
• Human birth is rare
• We can get Self-Realization on in human form
• We see disparity in health, wealth, and so on...
• How do we explain that some suffer while others seem to coast through life?
• The Law of Karma states that an individual is the creator of her/his own destiny
• The results of past actions place us in various circumstances (good or bad); how we act in these circumstances is up to us!
• If we act with our selfish interests in mind, we are bound to create more bindings and eventually to more suffering down the road; if we act selflessly, we can transmute the karma!
Guru or Teacher

• Hinduism places a special emphasis on all our teachers
  – Mother (our first teacher) is equated to God
  – Father (our second teacher) is equated to God
  – “Acharya” or spiritual teacher is equated to God
  – “Atithi” or a guest is also equated to God!

• This is a unique feature of Sanatana Dharma

• Guru is truly that teacher who removes (ru) the darkness (gu) or ignorance from one’s mind
• What is (commonly understood as) Yoga?
• What is “Aṣtanga Yoga”?
• Eightfold path culminating in “samadhi”
Fundamental Problem

• What is the Fundamental Problem?
• Why is the Knowledge of the Self important?
• How can ignorance of the Self be dispelled?
Three Pillars of Hinduism

• What are the major beliefs?
• Satyam
• Brahmacharya
• Ahimsa
Ahimsa

• Ahimsa means “non-aggression”
• Most important value in Sanatana Dharma
• It does not imply passivity
• Hinduism does not advocate conversion – this is against the value of “Ahimsa”
• Every society & every religion has rituals
• In Hinduism these rituals serve to remind us about God every day present in various forms and manifestations
Prayers and Temple

• How many times do you go to a temple each week?

• Most Hindus go to temples sometime during the week

• Nearly all Hindus have a shrine at home – this is a sacred place of worship and meditation
• Are there any restrictions (dietary or otherwise?)

• Eating habits of Hindus range from strictly vegetarian to non-vegetarian

• Discuss Gunas
  – Sattva
  – Rajas
  – Tamas
Varna System or Caste System

• There is widespread misunderstanding about the varna system in Hinduism
• The caste system is present in every society in one form or another – we even see it in our workplace
• Prasad – add here as needed
What are the Major Festivals

• There are more festivals in the Hindu calendar than perhaps in any other religion in the world
• Festivals help us to remember the divine through individual and group prayers
• Some festivals celebrated at the temple:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brahmotsava</th>
<th>Deepavali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ganesh Puja</td>
<td>Maha shiva ratri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janmashtami</td>
<td>Vaikunta ekadasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nava ratri</td>
<td>Guru Poornima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rama navami</td>
<td>Sankranti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions

• What are the major holidays?
• Are there any restrictions (dietary or otherwise)?
• What would be considered the most sacred belief?
• How many times a week do you go to Temple?
• Other questions?
Concluding Śānti Mantra

• ऊँ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
  पूर्णस्य पूर्णमीदाय पूर्णमैवावशिष्यते ।।
Om Pūrṇamadah Pūrṇamidam Pūrṇat-Purṇam-Udacyate
Pūrṇasya Pūrṇamādāya Pūrṇamāvāvaśiśyate ।।
Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ ।।

Meaning:
That (God) is infinite; this (world) is whole;
from the infinite the world becomes manifest.

From the infinite, even if the whole is taken away,
what remains again is the infinite.