We Each Have a Choice
Category : October/November/December 2003
Published by Anonymous on Oct. 01, 2003

IN MY OPINION

We Each Have a Choice

Take responsibility for your own unfoldment

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Someone once asked a guru who worshiped Lord Sadasiva to describe Sanatana Dharma as it compares with other religious theologies of the world.

"Imagine a great big tree that has its roots very deeply implanted in the earth, " he said. "These roots are so deep that they do not require any nurturing from an outside source, because they receive everything that is necessary for their survival from mother Earth Herself. Think of this giant tree as Sanatana Dharma. All of its branches and leaves are its many different religions. All of these different religions draw life from the same trunk of the same tree. The branches may break; the leaves may fall. But with time they will only reappear on the same tree in a slightly different form."

In my opinion, this is a very appropriate analogy. All of the man-made paths to God will come and go with time, but the Sanatana Dharma will always be there, and it will always be the same.

Unlike other religions, the Sanatana Dharma is eternal. No one can declare when it started. However, we do know from our Vedas and other scriptures that it is from a time before this universe existed.

The paths toward the attainment of God are many, and the choice of a path is left up to the individual. Each person makes his or her own decision according to personal perception and understanding.

In the broad view, our scriptures have defined five basic paths to God. Each of these paths is characterized by the worship of a particular Deity. Those Deities are: 1. Lord Ganesha, the first son of Siva with an elephant head. 2. The Divine Mother Sakti, understood as the active life force of Siva and also worshiped as Durga, Kali and Saraswathi. 3. Lord Sadasiva, worshiped on Earth as the satguru. 4. Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe, and 5. Surya, the Sun God, one of the principal Divinities of the Vedas. Later, a sixth God became popular. His name is Lord Karttikeya, and He is the second son of Lord Siva. Besides these six Deities, there are millions of other Gods and Goddesses, each of whom has a special purpose in this universe.

I think that it is very important for all of us to understand that we are each unique in our approach to and understanding of the Supreme Being. No two individuals think alike. Therefore, we all interpret things differently. For this reason, each of us is responsible to decide on our own which Deity and path we must follow on this Earth.

The beauty of Sanatana Dharma, in my opinion, is that it never imposes a particular mode of thought upon an individual. Regardless of our background, we are allowed to decide for ourselves how we should relate to God and how we should approach Him. And regardless of the path that we choose, we move toward the one source, which the Vedas regard as Sadasiva.

Paths are many, but the final destination is one, just as millions upon millions of rivers all take their own routes toward the one ocean. Choose whatever path pleases you. Be honest with yourself in pursuing that path. Do not let others distract you from your spiritual objectives. And above all, take faith in the fact that all these paths will lead to the same place and that place is the same Ultimate Supreme. It is through the grace of Sadasiva, from whom all things originated, that all things will find their final resting place in Him.

Look deep within yourself and ask the question: What is it that I need to accomplish in this lifetime? Then strive to attain that goal. May the blessings of Lord Sadasiva

be with you.

Rajesh K.R. Bali was born and raised in the Fiji Islands in a strongly religious family. He currently works for Lacent Technologies Inc. in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, as Director of Manufacturing and Service. He is a follower of Hinduism's liberal Smarta Sampradaya. See article this issue Insight: Hinduism.