

[The Many Joys Of Hinduism](#)

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The Many Joys Of Hinduism

The practicing Hindu offers his every thought, word and deed in a sublime consciousness of the Divine

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Every two months here on our little island of Kauai we have the honor of sitting with community leaders to discuss the future of our Garden Island. One of the themes at each meeting is sharing our gratitude and appreciation. Today I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for our ancient religion which brings forth the wonderful feelings of a belief in the cosmic processes of reincarnation coupled with knowledge of the laws of karma, and the wisdom of dharma, in which everyone has his rightful place and purpose in life. It brings the broadmindedness of total acceptance of all other religions as expressions of the One God's creation, the blessing of a complete devotional path revolving around powerful temples, the fulfillment of a profound mystical teaching founded on yoga and brought forth by the seers and saints and gurus, and so much more.

Each Hindu's belief in reincarnation is so strong that it totally eliminates the fear and dread of death. No Hindu really fears

death; nor does he look forward to it. The word death in the vocabulary of the Hindu holds a different meaning. He does not take death to be the end of existence; nor does he look upon life as a singular opportunity to be followed by eternal heavenly existence for those souls who do well, and by unending hell for those who do not. Death for the Hindu is merely transition, simultaneously an end and a new beginning. In one of the ancient languages of our religion, the physical body had a name which literally meant "that which is always dropping off."

Hinduism is a hopeful religion. Hope for a future life makes this life worthwhile, joyous and happy, because the Hindu can live and deal with current problems, knowing that they are transitory problems, that they will not last forever; nor will they affect us forever. They are problems; we cannot deny that. But they are problems to be worked out with a positive attitude and a high energy and a helping hand from our Gods.

The Hindu also wants to improve conditions in the world, in the physical world. We do not look upon all that happens to us as unreal. That is a misconception. It is real. Life is real, though only relatively real in the deepest sense. It is through life that we progress. Life is the means provided by the Primordial God for finding Reality.

Through our knowledge of reincarnation, we have a great love and understanding for every human being, for they have been our mothers, our fathers, our sons and daughters, our grandparents and companions in many past lives, or perhaps will be in a future incarnation. This expanded knowledge of the

interrelatedness of humanity brings with it a deepened appreciation, helping us to understand why it is that some people seem so close to us though we hardly know them and others are strangers or even enemies after years of close association. All Hindus believe in the law of karma--the ability to earn one's rewards as well as punishments, and then to surrender the one and atone for the other. All this we can do ourselves with the help of our Gods and our personal relationship with our Ishta Devata, the individual God that we have chosen, or rather that God who has chosen to love, guide and protect us through an incarnation.

In Hinduism there is no priest standing between the devotee and God. The priest is a servant of the God, just as is every other devotee. Even the satguru, or spiritual teacher, does not stand between the disciple and God, but seeks instead to strengthen the devotee's direct experiential relationship with the Divine. The Hindu thus finds a great joy in his relationship with God and the Gods. It is his relationship, and he alone is able to perpetuate it. No one can do this work for him or on his behalf. There is a great happiness there between the devotee and the God resident in the Hindu temple, which is the communication point with the God, as is the sacred home shrine.

In our religious life, one of the most fulfilling aspects is pilgrimage. We have a joy in looking forward to a spiritual journey, and we experience a contentment while on our pilgrimage and later bask in the glowing aftermath of the pujas. It is like going to see a great friend, a devotee's most loved friend. We travel to the far-off temple where this great friend lives. At that particular temple, this personal God

performs a certain function, offers a specific type of blessing to pilgrims who make the pilgrimage to that home. In this way, different temples become famous for answering certain types of prayers, such as requests for financial help, or prayers for the right mate in marriage, prayers for healing, prayers to be entrusted with the raising of high-souled children, or help in matters of yoga, or help in inspiring bhakti and love.

The Hindu does not have the feeling of having to take a vacation to "get away from it all." We don't lead a life of mental confusions, religious contradictions and the frustrations that result from modern, hurried living. We lead a moderate life, a religious life. In living a moderate life, we then look at our pilgrimage as a special moment, a cherished time of setting ordinary concerns aside and giving full stage to our religious longings. It is a time to take problems and prayers to our personal God. Unlike the proud persons who deem themselves above the religious life, we Hindus feel that receiving the darshan from the Gods and the help that comes therefrom invigorates our being and inspires us to be even more diligent in our spiritual life. Unlike the so-called rational persons who feel confident that within themselves lie all the resources to meet all needs, and that praying to Gods for help is a weakening process, the Hindu wisely submits to the Divine and thus avoids the abyss of disbelief.

All Hindus have another great joy--the certainty of liberation. Even in difficult times, we are solaced in the knowledge of our religion which tells us that no soul that ever existed or ever will exist in future extrapolations of time and space will ever fail to attain liberation. The Hindu knows that all souls will one day merge into God, and that God, who created all souls, slowly

guides our maturing into His likeness, brings us back to Himself, which is not separate from ourselves.

Then there is the joy of the mysticism of Hinduism. It is the world's most magical religion, offering worlds within worlds of esoteric discovery and perception. The inner worlds are what Hindu mystics tell of in the greatest richness and freedom of expression that exists on the planet.

The Hindu enjoys all the facets of life as transmuted into a religious expression--art. The Hindu's art is a religious art--drawing, painting and sculpture of the Deities, the Gods, the devas and the saints of our religion. The music depicts the tones of the higher chakras, depicts the voices of the Gods, and the dance emulates the movements of the Gods. We are never far away from our religion. It is a daily experience. The Hindu naturally also has a deep appreciation for all other religions, as expressions of dharma. That is another of the great joys of Hinduism: dharma. What is dharma? Dharma is to the individual what its normal development is to a seed--the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature and destiny. Dharma means merit, morality, good conduct, religious duty and the way of life of the wise person.

The Hindu dharma is the clear pattern within the mind, earning the right to see the cumulative patterns of the karmas and the impressions of all past existences molded into a one pattern to be lived out in this life to the benefit of all patterns. Such a life is the fulfillment of all previous efforts and thus erases the uncomplimentary deeds and adds beneficial ones, so a next birth can be most rewardingly great and of use to the whole of

mankind. This is the evolution of the soul and the duty of the great God Ganesha and of the Mahadevas who protect the soul, of the devas who guard and guide the soul and of the rishis and seers, saints and satgurus who guardian mankind in this First World existence.

In looking back on all the wonderful aspects of Hinduism, it is clear that it is the answer for the future generations on this planet. The gracious Sanatana Dharma has all the answers. It has always had all of the answers in every age, for there was never an age when it did not exist. The time is now to express our deep appreciation for the many joys?the big and little ones we hold so dearly in our hearts that our Sanatana Dharma has awakened within us. Visit me often at www.gurudeva.org where daily I answer questions, present a talk and video and share pictures of our ashram activities.