

2.6 Hinduism Practices and Rituals



Practices and Rituals

- Hindus worship in many different ways and there is no standard form
- Daily worship



Practices and Rituals

- Going to the temple is not necessary



- Children learn about Hindu festivals and the religion by observation and taking part in rituals at home

Practices and Rituals

- Many Hindus



or



Practices and Rituals

- Most Hindus purify themselves with water before participating in a religious ritual
- Usually by



Practices and Rituals

- The syllable “om”, represents the supremacy of the Brahman
- Chanted at the beginning and end of all Hindu prayers and readings of scripture



Practices and Rituals

Japa

- In a practice called “**japa**”, worshipers chant the names of deities repeatedly as well as sacred phrases called **mantras**
- **Japa** means continuous repetition of God’s name either silently or aloud in a group

Practices and Rituals

Japa

- Continuous repetition is supposed to purify the mind of the devotee and fill his consciousness with divine thoughts
- Rules of Japa
 - One's own welfare, or welfare of others
 - Never to harm or injure others

Practices and Rituals

Japa

Rules of Japa

- To be done out of pure love for God rather than for any selfish purposes
- Has to begin with the sacred syllable “Om or Aum”

Practice and Rituals

Mantras

- Sacred phrases in Hindu Religion
- Most important mantra is to be done every morning “ I meditate on the brilliance of the sun, may it illuminate my intellect

Home Worship

- A peak in a Hindu home reveals an elaborately decorated shrine that serves as an altar for worship
- Images of deities, in the form of framed pictures or statues made of copper or marble

Home Worship

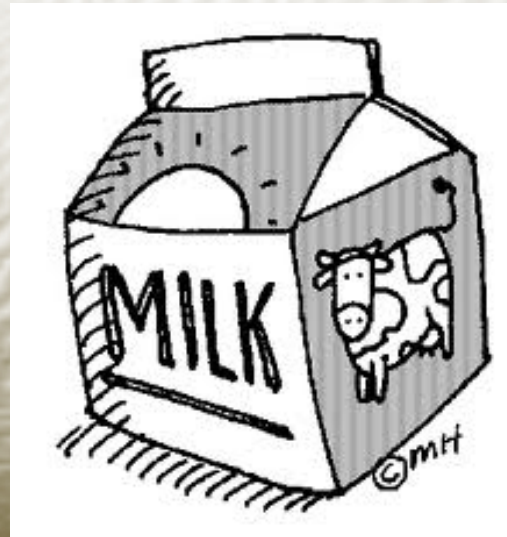


Home Worship

- The most common form of home worship is called **Puja**.
- Puja is a form of thanksgiving in which offerings are made to the deities
- Place offerings on a tray and present them to the deities during the worship

Home Worship

- Offerings include



Home Worship

- Puja is performed by worshipers on all festival days and special occasions
- Worshipers also sing hymns and verses of praise
- After the final prayers are said the food that has been offered to the deities is now considered to be blessed

Home Worship

- The gift of this blessed food that is given to worshippers at this feast is called **prasad**.

Worship in Temples



Temple Worship

- Not a requirement
- Visit temples during festivals or for special functions
- Worship in a temple is conducted by a priest and his helpers

Temple Worship

- In the morning he rings the temple bells
- Prepares the deities and offers fresh flowers, fruits and incense on behalf of the devotees
- In the evening devotees sing different hymns and share in parasad

Temple Worship

- Portrayals of the deities are treated like royalty
- They are given regular baths, and taken on procession on special occasions

The Significance of the Cow

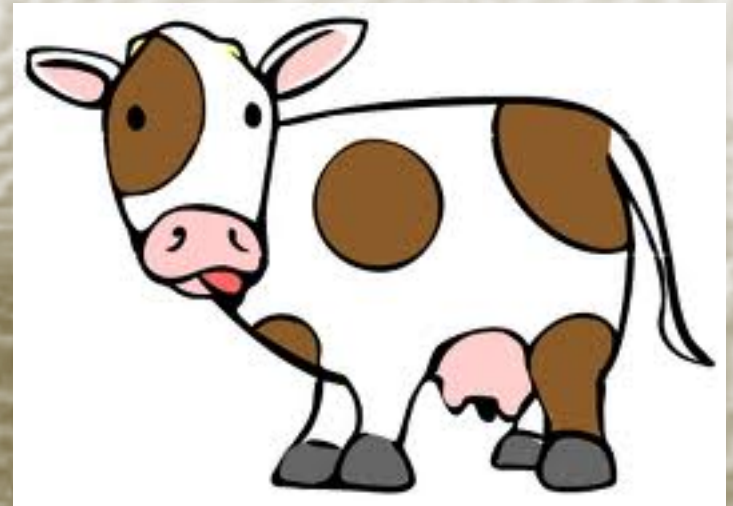
A symbol of the earth

Cow provides an abundance of important things to the people such as:

Milk

Browned butter

And fuel from dried dung



The Significance of the Cow

Hindus stopped eating beef for practical and spiritual reasons

Practical reasons because it was expensive to slaughter a cow for guests or religious rituals

Spiritual because cows were seen as a gift for the Brahmins

To kill a cow was like killing a Brahmin



Yoga and Meditation

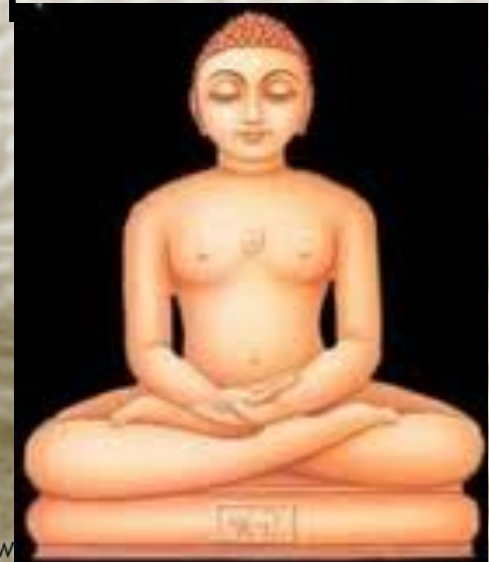


Spiritual disciplines

Yoga” means the atman in union with the Brahman

To achieve this union with God meditation is necessary

Meditators control their breathing to get themselves into a deep state of concentration



Pilgrimages

Journey to a holy place

Hindus must try to visit
Varanasi, once in their lifetime

Located on the Ganges River

Believed that the Ganges fell from the heavens

Giving people water and watering the plains that
produce much needed food



Pilgrimages

Bathing in the river is the first thing that people do when they arrive

Hindus believe that bathing in the Ganges cleanses them of their sins

