**Worship of Idol VS Worship through idol**

**in Hinduism**

* Sri Sri Vedananda

**God** – The Supreme power which created the entire cosmos cannot be contained in a shape or idol. This entire universe is his shape. But, our eyes are not capable of seeing him in his actual shape.

            That is why Eastern thinking gave out idols and shapes. Once a foreignor told Swami Vivekananda that he believe in One God. Swamiji replied with a smile,”We believe in only God". For a Hindu, everything – animate or inanimate – is GOD.

            To be very strict, in Hinduism God is not the creator of this universe. It is God who himself has manipulated as various forms and names. For a Hindu, God is Energy – power – Vibration. He is not a super human. This is the major difference between Eastern and Western Religions.

            Today, Science too accepts that vibration alone exists beyond time and space.

**If so, what about the idols in Hindu Temples?**

            The legacy behind the shapes and names of Hindu deities are dealt in pages titled 'Creation of Universe' and  ‘Gods and godesses’. So, let us not repeat it here once again. If you can closely observe the pooja ritual, you will appreciate its wonderful effect on one’s own personality development.

            Now-a-days, psychologists around the globe advocates auto suggestion for personality development. Hindu pooja ritual is fitting correctly.

            What is that ritual?

            First, the devotee will have an image or idol of his favourite deity. He pledges to do the ritual. This is called ‘Sankalp’. Then, the almighty and Guru were meditated upon. The next step is ‘prana pratishta’ which means giving life force to the idol/image. The devotee now does everything as if an honourable guest has come there. He greets, offers some water to drink, hand wash and feet wash. Then Bathing which is known as Abhishek.

           Now the image/idol has been given sanctity. Then, Archana or flower offering will be done. This will be done with some Mantra or Names. Those names are with positive vibrations. Moreover, it will be in an order ie., from head to toe or toe to head. In the process of chanting, the devotee’s mind will think of his own body which will energise his body parts. The positive notes of the Mantra will upkeep his mental health.

            The next stage will be food offering. Offering some eatables, the devotee prays, “O God, I am going to eat these. Give me power and mental stability through this.” Normally, Hindu prayers are not limited to that devotee alone. Even though he does the ritual for his well being, the prayer will be for the well being of the whole universe. Flowers offered, along with incense sticks and sandal paste offered earlier, shall create necessary aroma.

            This will be followed by camphor light. When camphor burns, the devotee sees the image. When the light goes off slowly, he closes his eyes. The image will be printed on his mind. Then, the ritual ends with some songs and Mantra to pacify the mind.

            Now think of it. Is this pooja for the God or for the devotee?

            Human mind cannot believe anything written or heard. It always accept images readily. This is the main reason for worship through idols in Hinduism.

**Yes, it is not idol worship. It is worship through idol.**

            Hinduism has left no stone unturned for the well being of the mankind.

            Each and every ritual has its own scientific reason behind it. It may be hidden, misunderstood, misinterpreted or even forgotten. But, the results are there to see.

**Role of Temples in Hinduism.**

            There are broadly two types of temples in Hinduism. One type is for Gods like Shiva, Vishnu etc. The other type is for local deities. These are built in honour of persons who had once done some great things for the advancement of that area, a great sacrifice or heroes of war.

            The first type of temples are as per vedic codes and the second type are guided by local customs.

            Temples of the first type are centers of cosmic energy. Here too, to sustain the energy level, a ceremonial energisation should be made every 12 years. The idol will be kept under water with vedic chanting for some days. You may be aware of the recent researches conducted by Dr.Muraso Orato on the effects of words and thoughts over water.

            His findings prove that prayers offered to water changes it. So, Hinduism suggests that idol shall be kept in water with vedic chanting to energise it.

            Any devotee visiting the temple and worshipping through such idol will receive the positive vibrations of the Vedic Chanting.

             Let us explore the Science in Hinduism more in some other article.

Be Blissful