



INSIGHTS ON SANATAN DHARMA
AND MODERN-DAY HINDUISM

HISTORY OF BHARAT





A SOURCE TO ENLIGHTENMENT

This E book explores Bharat ancient wisdom, starting from the Vedas to Modern India , to guide us toward peace and happiness. It encourages reconnecting with our spiritual roots, practicing dharma, and purifying the mind.

By reflecting on life's purpose and the evolution of our culture, we are sure you will gain insights that answer many of life's profound questions, leading to self-growth and enlightenment.



**MISTAKES CAN HAPPEN AT ANY POINT
WHILE PERFORMING LIFE'S TASKS.**

Disclaimer: Some content below has been translated from Sanskrit. Please note that Sanskrit shlokas and Vedic mantras often contain terms and treaty words that do not have direct translations.

A Translation and Compilation by
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is a translation and compilation of the profound writings of Acharya Veer Bhadra Shastri, who honored his late wife through the book *Sources to Self-Knowledge*. This E Book is a tribute to his enduring love and wisdom, now shared in memory of their lasting legacy.

INTRODUCTION

In this E Book, I present a blend of ancient wisdom and modern insights into Sanatan Dharma and Hinduism, as compiled and translated from the profound writings of my late grandfather, Acharya Veer Bhadra Shastri. This document explores the rich spiritual traditions that have shaped my own life and offers valuable knowledge on living a life in alignment with timeless Vedic teachings.



REALISM IS A BURNING TRUTH

**"MAKE THIS WORLD BETTER;
SPREAD KNOWLEDGE, FOR NOTHING
IS GREATER THAN KNOWLEDGE."**

In today's world, we are increasingly focused on external realities, often neglecting our rich history, literature, and spiritual heritage.

Physical development has taken precedence over spirituality and inner growth—purification of the self, intelligence, mind, and senses—which are essential for true peace and joy.



The Upanishads pose profound questions that, if contemplated, can lead to unparalleled success.

As stated in the Shvetashvatara Upanishad:

- What is the purpose of this world?
- From where have we come?
- How does our existence persist?
- Who governs the happiness we experience?
- Under what rules of justice do we live?

Reflecting deeply on these questions can help us uncover meaningful answers and guide us toward a purposeful life.



We must consciously choose our path—what culture and dharma to embrace, and which foreign influences align with our quest for peace.

Our heritage, rooted in Vedic ethics and ancient history, holds the keys to such understanding.

This sentiment is echoed by the wisdom of Manu Ji, revered as a forefather of humanity and teacher of the world:

"From this land of Bharat (India), the earth learns the philosophy of life."



**It is also ideal that
goodness be embraced
from all sources.**

We are grateful to those from foreign lands who have made significant inventions that have benefited modern humanity.

They are as respectable and worthy of emulation as our own sages and saints.



The path of dharma is profound, akin to walking on the edge of a sword—delicate, precise, and challenging. Yet, it is through this path that one can achieve salvation, provided one understands its meaning and practices it diligently.

Maharishi Vyas, who lived and taught the way of dharma, lamented the fading adherence to his teachings. In his sorrow, he wrote:

"O humanity, I raise my hand and shout—when wealth and pleasure can be attained by following dharma, why does one stray from it?"



In essence, dharma lies in duty. While one may engage in worship, devotion, prayers, rituals, and yagnas, these practices are futile unless the intellect and soul are pure. Behavior is the supreme dharma.

Only when deeds are pure can true happiness and bliss be attained. Liberation from worldly evils and impurities is the ultimate goal of salvation. This is the essence of our ancient knowledge and wisdom.



Self-reliance is deeply ingrained in the Indian ethos.

Despite centuries of invasions, whether by Muslim rulers or others, Indians have always held onto this belief. Then came the English rule, which imposed new norms upon us.

Even after independence, we continue to be governed by many of these old systems, often forgetting the countless sacrifices made for our freedom.

One poet aptly wrote:

"Those who fail to recognize the illusionist as an illusionist will ultimately surrender."



Our Vedic ethos does not teach us to accept defeat but to strive for victory. It emphasizes discipline and inspires us to live with dignity and purpose. This is the essence of true humanity.

The Supreme Father, the Supreme Soul—present in past creations, the present creation, and those yet to come—is omnipresent. He is the embodiment of ultimate bliss and is singular in essence. To Him, we bow with reverence.



A brief introduction to these wisdom-filled texts, which continue to inspire us, is presented here for your reflection.

By observing the present creation, we can glimpse the immense greatness of the Supreme Father. Even the world's greatest scholars, sages, and scientists remain in awe of His extraordinary creation. What can be said about humans, who stand as mere witnesses to this vast and diverse world? The diversity of water and land captivates us, making humanity assume the role of a traveler, constantly seeking to understand and explore this remarkable universe.

For ages, humans have been unraveling the mysteries of creation. While scholars have unveiled many secrets, its infinite layers remain beyond complete comprehension. Even today, there are aspects of creation that elude scientific understanding.



Science, in its pursuit of knowledge, has named the stars, zodiac signs, and planets that decorate this vast expanse. Yet, it acknowledges that countless galaxies exist, each housing innumerable stars. The boundless sky holds these stars in an endless continuum, and even within a single galaxy, the number of stars is beyond estimation.

Humanity has yet to unravel the complete mystery of our precious Earth. Scientists have uncovered countless secrets hidden within the earth and its oceans, identifying natural powers and resources—gold, silver, diamonds, pearls, natural oil—that serve as instruments of human happiness. Even now, mankind remains engaged in uncovering these treasures, striving to understand the balance between nature's blessings and its inherent challenges.



Alongside scientists, spiritual individuals have also been engaged in the exploration of life's mysteries for centuries. People from different faiths and beliefs have sought to understand these mysteries in their own way, influenced by the culture and wisdom of their times. Different eras have shaped distinct beliefs. Yet, despite all this knowledge, humanity has still struggled with fundamental questions: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose? Why did I come to this world?

To truly understand the answers to these questions, we must reflect on the nature of happiness and sorrow. Why do we experience suffering? What does happiness truly feel like? These reflections are critical to our understanding of existence.



Without education, knowledge remains elusive. A child or an animal may be born in similar conditions, entering the world in much the same way, yet the journey afterward is vastly different. While animals are born into instinctual existence, humans are born with the potential for education, which allows us to develop our intellect and refine our communication.

Animals grow physically, but their development is limited to instinct and strength. They do not cultivate discretion, intelligence, or conscious power. Humans, on the other hand, evolve through education, learning from their surroundings and from one another. Humans have the unique ability to shape their own destiny, creating the potential for both selfish actions and virtuous ones.



It is often said that animals exist for enjoyment, while humans are capable of both pleasure and sin. Every action a person takes brings consequences, and through their deeds, they experience both immediate and long-term results. This cycle of cause and effect often carries over into future lives, according to the principle of karma.

There are countless ways to seek the truth, and while truth may appear in many forms, ultimately, there is only one truth—the supreme force that governs the universe. We, as Indians, are a people with theistic beliefs, deeply rooted in the conviction of a divine presence we call God. However, God is not merely an object or entity; He is the universal soul, present in every atom, manifesting through virtuous deeds. Only those who have recognized themselves are able to recognize Him. Many sages, maharishis, scholars, and pandits have attempted to comprehend Him, yet His true nature remains beyond full understanding. Even today, many saints and mahatmas continue their pursuit to grasp this supreme power.



India is home to vast stores of knowledge, which serve as the means to explore the divine. However, due to widespread ignorance of our country's culture and religion, many still struggle with suffering and aimlessly wander through the web of life's complexities.

So, the question arises:
What are the source texts of knowledge?

**The primary source of our knowledge is the Vedas.
The word Veda translates to knowledge.**



The Vedas encompass physical, spiritual, and scientific knowledge—all contained within these sacred texts. We, as Indians, regard the Vedas as divine words. While the language of the Vedas may seem difficult due to its ancient nature, it is not inherently complex. Just as modern languages like Sanskrit, Hindi, and English have their own grammatical rules, the language of the Vedas operates with a unique structure.

Much like we deviate from strict grammatical norms in casual speech or dialects, the Vedic language allows flexibility in the use of numbers, genders, and verbs.

The challenge in understanding the Vedas stems from the fact that their study has not been actively practiced for many years, and the general public has distanced itself from these teachings.

Thus, it is natural for the language of the Vedas to appear difficult. Nevertheless, our ancestors, sages, and learned scholars composed commentaries and interpretations of the Vedas to aid in their understanding, which have been preserved and shared throughout the generations.



The four Vedas

Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda, and Atharvaveda—were revealed to the souls of four sacred sages. The Rigveda emerged from Agni Rishi, the Yajurveda from Vayu Rishi, the Samveda from Aditya Rishi, and the Atharvaveda from Angira Rishi. Some may question the origin of Vedic knowledge, as it is often said to have been revealed to Brahma Ji. However, the answer lies in the fact that these four sages imparted the knowledge of the Vedas to Brahma Ji, who in turn transmitted it to humanity, as mentioned in the Manu Smriti.



The Vedas also have various branches, each of which has evolved over time. Some of these branches have disappeared or were destroyed during periods of foreign invasions. One of the most significant losses occurred during the rule of the Muslim emperors in India. In the past, Vedic language was common, and the general public could understand the Vedic scriptures. However, as time passed, languages naturally evolved, and the Vedic language also underwent changes. Sanskrit, which once was a language accessible to the masses, evolved into different forms. Over time, languages like Pali emerged, leading to the development of Jain and Buddhist literature. Pali-natured and other regional languages coexisted with Sanskrit literature for centuries.

This evolution continued and gave rise to modern Indian languages and dialects. Among these, the Dravidian dialect is the oldest, likely originating during the Vedic period. Hindi, as a language, emerged from these various dialects. By the end of the Muslim rule, Hindi had evolved into Khariboli, which became the foundation of modern Hindi.

The English colonial era significantly contributed to the growth and development of Hindi literature. The language of the Indian freedom struggle was also Hindi, and it played a crucial role in the fight for independence.

To understand Indian literature, it is often categorized into different Kaal (times or eras), as follows:

1. **Vedic Yug (Adi Yug / Vedic Kaal)** - The ancient period
2. **Brahman Kaal** - The time when Brahmin literature was developed
3. **Upanishadic Kaal** - Around 5000 years ago
4. **Ramayana and Mahabharata Kaal** - Approximately 5000 years ago
5. **Gupta Kaal** - A period of political instability, 300 yrs before Christ
6. **Muslim Influence** - After 1050
7. **English Rule** - From the 1700s
8. **Modern Age** - Post-independence until today

Vedic Kaal

Q: What are the parts and branches of the Vedas?

A: The Vedas have **four Upvedas**, which are considered the branches of the Vedas.

These are:

1. **Ayurveda** – the knowledge of life and health
2. **Dhanurveda** – the knowledge of archery and warfare
3. **Gandharvaveda** – the knowledge of music, arts, and performance
4. **Shilpaveda** – the knowledge of crafts and sculpture

These branches are also referred to as Vedangas. In addition to these, there are six famous parts of the Vedas, known as **Vedangas**:

1. **Shiksha** – Education, focusing on pronunciation and phonetics
2. **Kalpa** – Rituals and procedures for religious ceremonies
3. **Vyakaran** – Grammar, or the structure of the language
4. **Chand** – Verses and meter in poetry
5. **Jyotish** – Astrology, the study of celestial bodies and their influence
6. **Nirukta** – Etymology and the interpretation of words

These parts help explain the meanings and themes of the Vedic texts.

Due to the antiquity and complexity of the Vedas, they might seem difficult to understand, but our ancestors, including sages and learned scholars, composed these texts to clarify their meanings.

Over the years, many scholars, saints, and monks have also contributed to explaining the Vedas, offering insights that can be further explored.

Q: What are the other names used for the Vedas, and why is there a difference in their names?

A: The Vedas are also referred to by various names such as **Shruti**, **Nigamagama**, and **Chandas**.

Hindus, or Aryans, believe that the Vedas are unique and were not written by any human.

Speech, or Vāk, came into existence at the time of creation and contained all knowledge.

This knowledge was born in the pure souls of sages and great beings, and it was expressed through speech, much like poetry emerging from the mouth of a poet.

The thoughts expressed were full of truth and purity, which is why it is called **Mantra**.

Q: What are the subjects of the six Vedangas?

A: 1. **Education:** Education is the first part and forms the basis of a child's primary learning, particularly the knowledge of letters. The definition of letters is as follows: Panini Muni composed it, describing letters as Akshara. The element of God is also called **Akshara**, meaning indestructible, as it never perishes. Similarly, the letters or sounds that emerge from our mouth also never disappear, which is why they are called Akshara—meaning imperishable. This is also referred to as **Varna**, which means character or sound.

In ancient times, society was divided into four varnas: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. However, in modern times, this social system has become disorganized and less significant. A letter is the smallest sound produced by our mouth, which cannot be divided. Words are formed by combining these letters, sentences by combining words, and language by combining sentences.

A word is also referred to as sound, and sound is of two kinds: meaningful and meaningless.

Meaningful words convey a subject, emotion, or meaning, while meaningless words do not convey a specific meaning but can serve as signals.

Q: How do words and sounds appear?

A: Words are composed of letters and are shaped by the mouth. This process is described in the study of education (Shiksha). In our body, from the belly to the mouth, there is space (Akasha). Air exists in this space, and the force that propels the air is fire, represented by the mind. The intellect inspires the mind, and the soul converses with the intellect.

Here's the process that occurs within our body: When the conscious soul residing in the body desires something, it consults the intellect and stimulates the mind. The fire, or the mother fire, ignites this inspiration. Air moves slowly from our internal region, passing through our heart, and creates a space or wealth in the mouth. This swar (musical tone) wealth, refined in different parts of the mouth, generates various letters. These letters then combine to form words, which reveal meanings.

The process can be understood from the following description:

The soul inspires the intellect, which then stimulates the mind. The fire inspires the air, and the air emits the sound, originating from our mouth.

This is described in early teachings, where it is said that words reside in the sky, meaning they are composed of letters.

How do we hear, understand, and internalize the word? Through the intellect, we process and popularize the word via usage. The origin of this word is the sky. The understanding that the word does not perish but remains eternally in the sky was the foundation for the modern communication system.

This knowledge allows us to communicate effectively, as words are eternal and indestructible in the cosmic space.

Thus, the Vedic teachings present the first knowledge related to numbers and alphabets.

Q: What is the second part of the Vedas, and how does it relate to grammar?

A: The second part of the Vedas is **Vyakaran** Shastra (Grammar).

The study of Vedas and other Vedic texts continued over time, but for those who could not complete their education, it became challenging to understand the Vedic language. To address this, many texts were written to explain the meanings of the Vedic words. One such text is Nirukta, which offers explanations of words. Over time, numerous grammatical texts were composed to better understand the usage of Vedic words, with Ashtadhyayi by Panini Muni being one of the most famous and widely accepted.

By the time of Muni Panini, the Vedic language had evolved into Sanskrit. While the Vedic language may have originally been a practical form of communication, significant changes over time led to its transformation into Sanskrit, an improved and purified language. Panini systematized this language by formulating rules that preserved its form for centuries. The word Sanskrit itself means 'purified' or 'refined,' reflecting the improvements made to the original language.

Grammar, therefore, is essential for the preservation and correct understanding of the Vedas. By studying grammar, we ensure the integrity of Vedic knowledge and protect it from misinterpretation.

3. **Nirukta: The Third Vedanga**

The book Nirukta was written by Yaska (also known as Vyasa Acharya). It holds greater significance than Panini's Ashtadhyayi because it plays a crucial role in understanding the meaning and the words of the Vedas. In Nirukta, Vedic words are explained, helping us uncover the true meanings behind the Vedic texts. This work is highly revered among scholars.

Friends, without proper knowledge of vowels and letters, pronunciation errors can occur, which lead to misinterpretation. Incorrect usage prevents the real meaning of the Vedas from being revealed, causing confusion and distorting the message for the audience.

4. Chand: Verse - The Fourth Vedanga

The Vedas are expressed through verses. In the Vedic texts, you will find the name of the sage who perceived the mantra, the name of the deity (the subject), and the verses themselves. Chand Shastra deals with the study of verses. Sanskrit verses have been used extensively in Vedic literature, and as time progressed, new verses emerged during the Hindi era.

The details of verses are found in the Yajurveda and the Brahmanas. Other scholars, such as Katyayana, have also contributed to the study of verses. The first comprehensive and authoritative text on Chand Shastra is Pingala's work.

5. Jyotish: Astrology

Jyotish, or Astrology, is the fifth Vedanga. The word "Jyotish" means light, symbolizing how astrology illuminates the past, present, and future of human life. Astrology is regarded as the "eye" of the Vedas because it provides insight into the cycles of life and the cosmos. It is divided into two main branches: mathematical astrology and predictive astrology.

In Vedic times, yajnas (rituals) played a vital role, and the knowledge of mathematical astrology was essential for their proper execution. As a result, mathematical astrology saw significant development.

Astrological principles are described in various Vedic texts, including the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads. The application of mathematics was integral in the construction of the Yagya Vedi (sacred altar), marking the beginning of geometry. Mathematics, along with astrology, forms the foundation for much of the work done since the beginning of creation, and continues to be essential today.

Time Calculation According to Surya Siddhanta

Understanding the divine time cycle is a complex endeavor because it is extremely difficult to ascertain the exact origin, not only of human creation but also of everything else in the universe. Modern science has made significant strides in estimating the origin of objects and phenomena. Scientific methods help determine the antiquity of things, and modern scientists have speculated about the age of the universe, often suggesting millions of years.

However, time calculation is also deeply embedded in our Indian scriptures. The Vedas, along with texts like Manusmriti, Mahabharata, Purana, and Jyotish, provide frameworks for understanding time. All these scriptures are based on similar principles. The renowned scholar Bal Gangadhar Tilak, in his book *Geeta Rahasya*, presents an in-depth analysis of time calculation, grounded in the Surya Siddhanta (an astrological text). He also incorporates the ideas of modern scientists in his analysis.

According to Tilak, the key points are:

Uttarayan and Dakshinayan: In the human year, there are six months of Uttarayan and six months of Dakshinayan. Uttarayan is considered one day for the gods, while Dakshinayan is their night.

The North Pole, described as Mount Meru, is where the gods reside, and it experiences a 6-month day and night cycle.

Human Year and Divine Time:

1. 360 days for humans is considered one day and night for the gods.
2. 360 human years are equivalent to 360 days and nights of the gods.

The Four Yugas:

1. Satyayuga: 4000 years
2. Tretayuga: 3000 years
3. Dwaparyuga: 2000 years
4. Kaliyuga: 1000 years

The transitional periods between these yugas are also important.

Each transition period between two yugas lasts a few hundred years:

5. Transition of Satyayuga to Tretayuga: 400 years
6. Transition of Tretayuga to Dwaparyuga: 300 years
7. Transition of Dwaparyuga to Kaliyuga: 200 years
8. Transition of Kaliyuga to the next cycle: 200 years

Thus, the total transition period amounts to 2000 years as per the Sakhya Shastra. Therefore, the complete cycle of the four yugas, including transition periods, is 12,000 years.

Conversion to Human Time: The 12,000 years of the gods' time, when multiplied by 360 (the number of days in a human year), equals 43,200 years in human time. This calculation is consistent with the Indian Panchang (calendar system).

Mahayuga: A Mahayuga consists of 12,000 years of humans. This is considered one full Yuga for the gods. 71 Yugas of the gods make one Manvantara, and there are 14 Manvantaras in total.

Day of Brahma: The total duration of 1000 Yugas of all gods and goddesses combined makes up one day of Brahma, the creator. According to this calculation, one day of Brahma is equivalent to 4.32 billion years of human time, and this is referred to as a Kalp.

Brahma's Life: In the Geeta, it is explained that when Brahma's day begins, beings with different names are born from Brahma, and when night falls, they merge back into Brahma. Brahma's age is said to be 100 years, out of which 50 years have passed. We are currently in the 51st year of Brahma, and we are in the 28th Kaliyuga.



1. Out of 14 Manvantaras, 6 have passed.
2. Out of 71 Chatur Yugas, 27 Mahayugas have passed.
3. The first phase of Kaliyuga is currently ongoing, with 5000 years of Kaliyuga already passed. Even half a day of Brahma has not yet passed.

Yuga Era Time Durations:

- Kaliyuga: 432,000 years
- Tretayuga: 1,296,000 years
- Dwaparyuga: 864,000 years
- Satyayuga: 1,728,000 years
- Brahma's Day: 432,000,000 years
- Brahma's Night: 432,000,000 years



Astrology

First, the astrologer describes the country based on planets, zodiac signs, constellations, yoga, karana, etc. Auspicious and inauspicious planets, zodiac signs, etc. form the basis of this analysis. Astrology is a very complex subject. Some people even question astrology, but most Indians believe in it. Several texts are highly regarded in the study of astrology.

It is said that there is a unique relationship between astrology and Ayurveda, and if medicine is prescribed based on astrology, the benefits are certain.

Varahmihira, an ancient teacher of astrology, has divided Jyotish into three sections:

1. Tantra (Mechanism)

2. Hora

3. Samhita (Code)

Apart from him, modern astrologers such as Narayan Dutt (Ank Jyotish), Gopesh Kumar Ojha (Ank Vidya), and Kamla Kar Dat (Surya Siddhanta) have also contributed to the field.



Sixth Part - Kalpa Sutra

In the Kalpa Sutra, the allocations are considered. During the ancient Vedic period, large yagnas (sacrificial rituals) were organized. According to the meaning of the Yagya, allocations were made for the performers of the yagna. In these yagnas, apart from the Yajaman (the main ritual performer), there were three or four Yagikas (priests). Therefore, in the Kalpa Sutras, the allocations, pronunciations, and other practices are outlined. Special emphasis is placed on the accurate pronunciation of the mantras related to the yagna.



Brahman Kaal

Q: What is meant by Brahman Granth? What is its purpose and number?

A: The word "Brahman" is derived from "Brahma" and is used in various contexts.

Brahma is the name of God, representing an all-pervasive, subtle power. Despite being invisible, like air, Brahma is extremely powerful. Just as the invisible air, though subtle, can carry ocean waters, cross land, and wreak havoc, Brahma's power is evident in its influence over the universe. The Upanishads say that air does not have its own inherent power; rather, it is the all-powerful Brahma that activates it.

The original form of nature is also referred to as Brahma. This distinction is discussed in texts such as the Upanishads and the Gita. Additionally, the word Brahma is used to express the knowledge contained in the Vedas. Thus, the knowledge or the Vedas are referred to as Brahma, depending on the context.

The texts that reveal knowledge related to Brahman are called Brahman texts. These texts focus on the various aspects of yagya (sacrificial rituals) and other Vedic rituals. The Vedic mantras are recited during these rituals, and they include instructions on what actions or work should be performed in different yagyas and rituals. This is referred to as the method and prohibition in Vedic language. These texts are based on the Vedas, with each Veda having its own Brahman text. The primary teachings in these texts revolve around religious methods and prohibitions.

Similarly, there are different Brahmin texts in Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda, and Ayurveda.

Q: How many branches of Vedas are there?

A: There are many branches of the four Vedas. Over time, many of these branches have become extinct. As mentioned earlier, due to various political changes and the decline of the Vedas during the Middle Ages, not only the branches of the Vedas but even some of the texts have been lost.

Maharishi Patanjali, the author of the Mahabhashya, who lived around 2500-3000 years ago, described the branches of the Vedas as follows:

- **Rigveda has 21 branches,**
- **Yajurveda has 100 branches,**
- **Samveda has 1000 branches,**
- **Atharvaveda has 9 branches.**

All the writers of the Vedic texts composed works on spiritual, divine, secondary, and religious subjects, but one common theme in all their writings is the worship of God and the glory of His awakening. The worship of God was always at the forefront of their thoughts, inspiring mankind to never forget the blessings and favors of God.

Aranyaka Granth

Yagyas and rituals became widespread during the Vedic period, and the Brahmins discussed them extensively. Yagya was considered a means of salvation, and those desiring to attain heaven were encouraged to perform knowledge-based rituals. Many types of Yagyas started being prescribed, and the process became increasingly complicated. Misconceptions began to spread due to a lack of understanding of Vedanta, and animal sacrifices were introduced in rituals.

In response to these misconceptions, scholars opposed such practices and emphasized the importance of meditation, contemplation, yoga, worship, and prayer. Based on this shift in focus, new texts began to be composed.

In the early Vedic period, sages and saints lived in forests and performed Yagya rituals in the ashrams of kings and Maharajas. Over time, the thinking of many learned sages evolved, and they adopted a new way of contemplating God. The ascetics of that time played a key role in this shift, as they lived in forests, embracing a life of renunciation. This shift in thinking was an ideological revolution, emphasizing prayer and worship over Yagya and rituals.

Upanishad Granth

After the Brahman and Aranyaka Granth, the Upanishads were composed. Due to their simple expression and clear communication of profound thoughts, the Upanishads occupy the highest place in society. Even today, they are highly revered. Their simple language and method of contemplation on God make them highly popular and respected.

Q: What is the meaning of the word Upanishad, what is its purpose, and how many are there?

A: The simple meaning of Upanishad is "**to sit near.**" In ancient times, sages would live in ashrams for contemplation. Many inquisitive students and young scholars would go to these sages and stay with them to discuss religion, knowledge, the soul, and the divine. The discussions that took place while sitting near the Guru were collected in the form of texts, which came to be known as the Upanishads.



Another meaning of Upanishad is that sitting near God means meditating on God and worshiping the Lord with devotion.

In the Upanishads, the soul and the divine are contemplated through dialogues between the Guru and the disciple. Through these dialogues and stories, God and His unique creation are explored.

Questions such as "How was creation made?", "Who created it?", "What is the form of the soul?", "What is the form of God?", and "How is salvation attained?" are also discussed, providing deep insights for understanding.

The exact number of Upanishads is uncertain. While many have been recorded, some scholars state there are 108 Upanishads, but the most famous and widely known are the 11 Upanishads.

The Upanishads contain diverse thoughts, delving into the mystery of the soul and nature. They also inspire renunciation and are the source of devotion. Following the Vedas, the Upanishads, and after them the Puranas, are key sources of devotion. This stream of devotion has flowed through various sects and languages across different regions of India. The devotees of Hindi have always drawn inspiration from them.

Ishopanishad:



This Upanishad is essentially the 40th chapter of the Yajurveda. It describes the form of God and His glory while promoting devotion. For example:

"This entire scene is His house. Enjoy what is given by the Almighty. Do not be greedy for the wealth earned through the hard work of others. Consider the wealth of others as a mere clay idol."

"By living a life of devotion for 100 years while performing one's duties, a man does not get trapped in the bondage of deeds and attains salvation."

"A person who sees all living beings present within himself and recognizes himself in all living beings is never harmed by the world's traditions, and he remains eternally happy."

Kenopanishad:



The Upanishads are often referred to as Brahma Vidya – the knowledge of Brahma. Brahma is mysterious, and no one can perceive it through the senses. It is the object of the soul's experience. For example, in a dialogue between teacher and disciple:

- The disciple asks, "By whose inspiration does this human body move? By whose inspiration does the soul work with the body? By whose inspiration do the human beings speak with their tongue, and which divine power causes the eyes and ears to function?"

- The teacher responds: "This soul is the motivator of all. It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, and the life of life; it is your eye as well. Those who realize this Brahma knowledge at the end of their life attain immortality."

- The motivating power of all senses is Brahma. It is said that one who knows Brahma Vidya can rid themselves of sins and attain heaven.

Kathopanishad:



In this Upanishad, there is a story of Nachiketa and Yama, where Nachiketa asks Yama about the nature of the soul as his third wish. Some say the soul is immortal, while others say it is not. Nachiketa requests to be enlightened with the truth. Yama initially insists that Nachiketa ask another question but finally explains that the soul is immortal and there are two paths to understanding it:

- One path is through devotion and worship, leading to salvation.

The other is through the pursuit of desires and material pleasures, which cannot lead to the soul's realization.

- The patient person chooses the first path, while the dim-witted person chooses the second.



Prashnopanishad:

This Upanishad is related to the Atharvaveda. It includes a series of questions and answers, attempting to understand Brahma through a brief story. For example:

· Q: Which is the greatest among these—God, Devas, or divine power?

· A: Sky, air, fire, water, earth, mind, speech, eyes, ears, etc. are all divine powers (Devas). When all of them left the body, nothing happened to the body. But when the Pran (life force) left, everyone became scared and said, "Pran, you are the greatest."

· Q: How does the Pran live by dividing itself in the body? From which part does it come out? How does it hold the inner and outer functions of the body?

· A: The soul enters the body through the mind's power. Just like a shadow moves with the body, the soul also moves with it. This is like a supreme king who instructs other souls to govern different parts of the body.



Mundakopanishad:

This Upanishad is also related to the Atharvaveda. "Munda" means brain. It describes the highest level of knowledge, dividing it into Para Vidya (supreme knowledge) and Apra Vidya (inferior knowledge). In Para Vidya, the knowledge of the soul, God, mind, intellect, senses, etc., is discussed, while in Apra Vidya, knowledge related to physical objects or worldly concerns like Dharma, Artha, and Kama is covered. This Upanishad is divided into six sections, which include discussions on Brahma Vidya.

For example:

· · 1st Section: Brahma is the primal God among all gods. He imparted Brahma Vidya to His son Angira, who passed it on to Sage Bharadwaj, and Bharadwaj shared this knowledge with Humanity.



· 2nd Section: The Vedas prescribe various deeds, but none lead to salvation. It is described that performing Yajnas (sacrifices) at the right time yields benefits. The flames from these Yajnas merge with the sun rays to bring fruits, but salvation can only be achieved through devotion.

· 3rd Section:

A: On the world tree, two birds sit—one representing the supreme soul and the other the divine soul. The divine soul tastes the sweet fruits of the tree, while the supreme soul observes neutrally. God can only be found by following the path of truth.

B: Just as rivers merge with the ocean by changing their form, a learned devotee merges their soul with the Supreme Soul, transforming themselves. Hence, we say **Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman)**.



Mandukya Upanishad: This Upanishad is related to the Atharvaveda and is concise. It teaches that the all-pervasive divine is the creator of the world, referred to as Om. Om is the form of the word Om, which is indestructible (Akshara). Om encompasses past, present, and future, governing all three time periods. Therefore, Om is the ultimate reality.

Taittiriya Upanishad: This Upanishad, part of the Yajurveda, explores the nature of ultimate reality (Brahman) and the self through three sections:

Siksha Valli: Emphasizes ethical conduct, discipline, and gratitude.

Brahmananda Valli: Introduces the Pancha Kosha doctrine, which describes five layers of human existence: physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and blissful.



Bhrigu Valli: Narrates a seeker's journey to realize Brahman as the source of all existence. It teaches self-realization, the interconnectedness of life, and the unity of individual and cosmic consciousness, offering timeless guidance for peace and spiritual fulfillment.

Aitareya Upanishad: This Upanishad is associated with the Rigveda and was composed by Sage Mahidas Aitareya. Like other major Upanishads, it explores divine powers. Initially, there was only the supreme soul. Everything was lacking. Then, God decided to create the universe to allow living beings to experience the fruits of their actions. For example:

The first birth of a person occurs in the womb, and the second birth happens when the child is born. In scriptures, adopting new sanskars (good habits) is considered a second birth. The father leaves his essence in the son, and after leaving the world, the soul in the form of the son takes a third birth to experience lesser fruits.



Rishi's Prayer: "May my mind be established in my speech, and my speech in my mind. There should be harmony between the two. O Lord, may I have the great light of knowledge within me. May I assimilate the knowledge of the Vedas. May I acquire knowledge day and night.
May I always speak the truth. Lord, protect me."

Chandogya Upanishad: This Upanishad describes the worship of Brahma in various forms. It beautifully explains the nature of the soul and the Supreme Soul. The concepts of Yagya (sacrifice), Tap (penance), and Daan (charity) are also discussed in this Upanishad, emphasizing their importance in the spiritual journey.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad:

This Upanishad, part of the Yajurveda, covers a range of teachings:

· A: In ancient times, Vedic Yajnas were prominent, and worship of Brahma was performed through Yajnas. However, due to misconceptions, animal sacrifices became part of the rituals, such as in the Ashvamedha Yajna. This led to a distortion of the original meanings, causing faith in Yajnas to wane. As a reaction, opposing religions like Jainism and Buddhism became popular. In reality, Yajnas like Ashvamedha symbolized power. Sages and saints used to offer prayers to God through Yajna, and kings organized such Yajnas to assert their authority. Those who rejected the Yajnas were attacked, and horse used to lead the army in front.

Brahma is present in all arts and said, "I am Brahma," from whom the entire world was created. Initially, all beings were Brahmins (spiritual teachers), but later, they evolved into Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (merchants), and Shudras (servants), forming the caste system. However, character is shaped by actions, not by birth.

- B: The Upanishad also highlights that both male and female sages have attained Brahma. One such dialogue with a female sage discusses the knowledge of Brahma.
- C: The Upanishad explains that when good wishes leave the heart, a person becomes immortal, i.e., liberated and attains Brahma.
- D: It warns that those who worship ignorance and focus only on material wealth are misled. Similarly, those who only pursue scriptural knowledge without understanding the true essence of life are also misguided. The true path lies in understanding both worldly knowledge and Brahma Vidya (knowledge of Brahma).
- E: Self-realization or the realization of one God is not possible through the mind alone. There is only one God in the world, and those who see this one God in many forms, without true understanding, die in ignorance. Ignorance is akin to death. The entire universe is Brahma and has emerged from this supreme Brahma.



Shvetashvatara Upanishad:

This Upanishad, part of the Yajurveda, encapsulates the essence of the Yajurveda through verses that resemble sweet songs. These mantras purify the mind, intellect, and soul. The Upanishad delves into the nature of the supreme Brahma, presenting it in the form of questions and answers:

· Q: What is the cause of creation? From where do we come? What sustains us? Where do we live? What brings us happiness? How does Brahma Vidya (knowledge of Brahma) function?

· A: Time, nature, destiny, the five elements, the cause of birth, and the soul—all of these exist because of Brahma. Brahma is both the great god and the soul of nature. With the cooperation of all, Brahma manifests, pervading everything. The soul experiences joy and sorrow, but God, being Nirguna (without attributes), does not experience either. He is the ruler of all, the cause of creation, and the reason for the sustenance and destruction of the universe.

In these 11 Upanishads, the knowledge concealed in the Vedas and Brahmanas is explained in simple language. The Bhakti era and modern poets have also attempted to understand this divine mystery. This mystery is reflected in the works of saint poets like Kabir and Nanak, and even in the sentimental language of modern Hindi poets. One prominent poet who expressed this mystery beautifully is the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore.

Dear Readers,

We would like to thoughtfully share a profound truth with those who are inquisitive: Nowhere in our Vedic social system is there any mention of discrimination among living beings, especially in human society, based on hierarchy or caste. Our core principle is to treat all beings equally, as much as possible. Manu Maharaj humbly states that whatever harms or causes pain to you, do not be bitter about it. Similarly, do not cause harm or pain to others. This is the essence of humanity that the Vedas and Upanishads advocate.



Sutra Granth

Sutra texts hold a significant place in Indian society even today. From the Vedic period to the Upanishadic era, Indian intellectual thought reached its zenith. Many kingdoms and states, as described in the Mahabharata, rose and fell. During this time, the Vedic literature continuously developed rules, regulations, and customs to govern individuals, society, and states. However, from the period before the Mahabharata war to the end, Shastra Granths were created, among which Sutra Granths occupy an important position.

The Sutra system is a unique feature in Indian literature. Just as mathematical and scientific formulas are explained in elaborate detail, Sutras in Sanskrit are concise phrases that carry deep meanings, even though they are short. This system is not found in other contemporary languages of the world, and it is evident in the works of Hindi poet Vihari.

The Sutras are classified into four main categories:

1. **Grammar Sutras** – Created by scholars like Panini, Varruchi, and Katyayan.
2. **Dharma Sutras** – These consist of four distinct Sutras.
3. **Ank (Number) Sutras** – Dealing with numerical concepts.
4. **Darshan Sutras** – Focusing on philosophy and metaphysics.

In addition to these, we have specialized Sutras like the Kalpa Sutra, which covers the pronunciation of Mantras, and the Shulka Sutra, which addresses Vedic architecture. Some famous Sutras include Bodhyan Sutra, Katyayan Sutra, Parashkar Grah Sutra, Sankhyayan Sutra, and Gemini Sutra, all of which are related to the Vedas.

Furthermore, philosophical texts are also referred to as Sutras, such as those on Yoga, Nyaya (Justice), and Vedanta, each representing different aspects of Indian philosophy.

Ramayan - Mahabharat Kaal

After the creation of the Upanishads, a new era began, marked by changes in social, cultural, religious, and political conditions. Language itself underwent a transformation. The tradition of Vedic Yajnas (sacrificial rituals) began to decline, and the Brahmin dharma, as guided by Brahminical texts, saw a shift. This period also witnessed the rise of new philosophies, with Jainism and Buddhism making significant contributions.

As time passed, there was a change in the Vedic language. The knowledge of Vedic language began to diminish among the common people. The ancient language evolved, and Pali started to emerge as a natural, unprocessed form. Although the Vedic mantras and Brahminical language remained unchanged, the language of the Upanishads became simpler and more accessible.



In the realm of language, Muni Panini made a remarkable contribution by composing the Ashtadhyayi Granth, a work that has been celebrated for ages. This work helped establish a permanent structure for the secular language, Sanskrit. While the Vedic language and secular Sanskrit were distinct, both remained stable over time. Though language evolves naturally, Panini's work provided a lasting form for Sanskrit, which was purified and regularized.

The term Sanskrit comes from the fact that this language was corrected and refined, and it became so beautiful, sweet, and refined that many significant texts and epics began to be composed in it. Notable among these epics are texts like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.



Ramayan (Valmiki)

The Ramayana holds the highest place in Indian literature and culture. This epic has a profound impact on the lives of the people, inspiring them to lead an ideal life. It narrates the story of Rama, offering insights into his character and life. The Ramayana answers key questions: Who is Rama, and where does he live?

According to the great poet Valmiki, Rama was the son of King Dasharatha of Ayodhya, embodying the ideals of an exemplary son, husband, brother, and king.

In later versions, Rama evolved into a divine figure, not just the son of Dasharatha, but also the incarnation of Vishnu, a universal symbol of righteousness.



Some scholars believe that the first and seventh chapters of the Ramayana were added later. However, regardless of these variations, the Ramayana became an essential part of the common man's life, influencing countless generations. Numerous poetic dramas and adaptations have been written based on its narrative. The Ram Katha, rooted in the Ramayana, eventually evolved into the modern tradition of Ramlila.

From the Vedic era to the Ramayana and Mahabharata, it was considered an ideal age. The reign of Rama was considered the epitome of good governance, known as Rama Rajya. In fact, even Dasharatha Rajya (King Dasharatha's reign) was also viewed as an ideal kingdom. Under the leadership of the king of Ayodhya, there were no illiterate or atheistic individuals, no one neglected yajnas (sacrificial rites) or good deeds, and everyone followed the path of dharma (righteousness).

Two verses from the Ramayana are especially memorable:

Ideal Character: In one instance, when Rama notices Sita's ornaments and asks Lakshmana if he recognizes them, Lakshmana responds that he doesn't know about the earrings but certainly recognizes the anklets, as he sees them daily while worshipping her feet. Lakshmana, in his devotion, never once looked at Sita, exemplifying his respect for her.

Love for the Motherland: After defeating Ravana, when Rama began his journey back to Ayodhya, Lakshmana suggested, "Brother, this prosperous Lanka offers us great happiness. Let us settle here." Rama, in response, expressed a heartfelt and emotional reply, conveying his deep love for his homeland, emphasizing that his loyalty and duty lay with his country, rather than the allure of wealth or comfort.



Mahabharat (Vyasa)

The Mahabharata is an unparalleled text in India. It is not just a treasure trove of knowledge on Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha, but also an account of the historical events of ancient India. Its author, Maharishi Vyasa, has left no aspect of life untouched, covering a wide range of topics and offering profound insights.

The teachings of the Mahabharata on matters of dharma are consistent with those found in all other scriptures. Any knowledge or subject absent from this text is also absent from other sacred writings. The Mahabharata is like an ocean of knowledge, with invaluable pearls scattered throughout.

Q: What were the circumstances of that era?



A: The era in which the Mahabharata took place was one of enlightenment, where knowledge, dharma, and spiritual wisdom reached their peak. It was a time of Vedic rituals and the mysteries of the Upanishads. Many great sages contributed to the creation of profound scriptures during this period. The Upanishads were composed during this time, and the development of earlier scriptures also began just before this era. This was a period of remarkable progress and growth.

Political Conditions: Politically, this era marked the decline of kings and kingdoms. While it gave birth to many ideal kings who brought prosperity to their kingdoms and subjects, the downfall of kings began with King Shantanu. During this time, Bhishma, a great figure in Indian history, was compelled to abduct the daughters of the King of Kashi for the heirs of his own father. Such incidents signal the onset of a moral decline.

Due to his love for Dhritarashtra's son, Duryodhana chose the path of wrongdoing. Shakuni fueled a rift between the Kauravas and Pandavas, leading to a series of unfortunate events. Draupadi was insulted in the court, and even wise figures like Drona and Bhishma could not oppose the injustice. The attempt to kill the Pandavas and the tragic death of the five sons of Draupadi, all took place during a state of intoxication. These events symbolize the culmination of the downfall.

Q: What is the date of composition of the Mahabharata?

A: It is difficult to determine the exact date of the composition of the Mahabharata, but it is certain that it was written after the Upanishads. The characters of the Mahabharata are not mentioned in the Upanishads or the Vedas. The writing of the Mahabharata likely began at the beginning of the fourth century of the Christian era. The names of its characters are not found in the Ramayana either, indicating that it was written after the Ramayana. The Mahabharata introduces new characters whose names are not present in earlier scriptures. Scholars generally agree that the Mahabharata is not the work of a single person, but was composed by multiple authors over time.

Among all the figures in this epic, Lord Krishna holds the highest place. He is considered the incarnation of Vishnu and the true form of God, who protects the world. It is believed that one attains salvation by seeing or experiencing the Lord. The Bhagavad Gita, which is a part of the Mahabharata's war scene, became so significant due to its profound spiritual teachings that it evolved into an independent text. As a result, numerous books have been written to interpret the Gita, sparking interest and curiosity. Thinkers from around the world, both Indian and foreign, have acknowledged its importance. Renowned figures like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, and Lokmanya Tilak considered the Gita to be the nectar of their lives.

The main story of the Mahabharata revolves around the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The conflict arises when two sons, Pandu and Dhritarashtra, are born. Dhritarashtra, being blind, was not able to rule, and thus, Pandu was chosen as the king. Upon Pandu's death, Dhritarashtra assumed the throne. However, when Yudhishtira, the eldest son of Pandu, grew up, he was supposed to inherit the throne. But Shakuni, Yudhishtira's uncle, misled Dhritarashtra's son, encouraging him to claim the kingdom. This deception set the stage for the selfish war that followed.

There are some profound questions and answers in the Mahabharata that reveal the burning truths of life:

Q: What is bigger than the earth? What is higher than the sky? What is faster than the wind? What is greater than fire?

A: Mother is higher than the earth, father is higher than the sky, the human mind is faster than the wind, and worry is more fearful than fire.

Q: Who is a friend abroad? Who is a friend at home? Who is a friend of the sick? Who is a friend of the dying person?

A: In a foreign land, money is the only friend; in one's own home, the wife is the greatest friend; the friend of a patient is the doctor; and the friend of a dying person is charity. Through charity, some good karma is accomplished.

Q: What is stability? What is patience? What is a pure bath? What is charity?

A: In our tradition, stability means remaining steadfast in one's endeavors; patience means keeping the senses under control; a pure bath is the act of removing bad thoughts from the mind; and true charity is saving creatures from hunger.

Q: Who is always happy? What is a surprise? What is the right way? What is reality?

A: A person who enjoys good food at home every 5-6 days, remains free from debt, and stays close to their home truly lives a life of happiness.

Every day, all creatures of the world approach the house of death, yet despite this, man desires to live—this is the greatest surprise.

In debates, there is no stability, no respect, and no single sage whose words can be considered proof. The essence of dharma resides in the cave of our intellect. When we are uncertain, we should follow the path of the educated and wise, for it is the right path of life.

In this world of illusions, the cauldron of time, symbolized by the sun, continuously burns, fueled by the cycles of day and night. With the stirring of months and seasons as its great spoons, it endlessly cooks the creatures of tomorrow. This is the unchanging truth.



The Puranas

The Puranas describe the worship and devotion to deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and others. These stories formed the basis for the emergence of sects like Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism in later periods. They also contain philosophical thoughts on subjects like justice, yoga, and Vedanta.

The Puranas provide detailed descriptions of the journeys of the four varnas (castes)—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra—and the four ashrams (life stages): Brahmacharya (celibacy), Grahastha (household), Vanaprastha (retirement to the jungle or ashram), and Sannyasa (renunciation). They also cover the 16 samskars (rites of passage), sharad rites, and the worship of various deities.



There are **18 major Puranas**,
which include:

- Brahma Purana
- Padma Purana
- Vishnu Purana
- Shiva Purana
- Bhagavata Purana
- Narada Purana
- Markandeya Purana
- Agni Purana
- Bhavishya Purana
- Brahmavaivarta Purana
- Linga Purana
- Varaha Purana
- Skanda Purana
- Vamana Purana
- Kurma Purana
- Matsya Purana
- Garuda Purana
- Brahmanda Purana

The special feature of the Puranas is that they are the source of all devotional feelings, focusing heavily on the worship of the Lord. The Puranas describe 16 incarnations, with Krishna’s incarnation being detailed more extensively than Rama’s. The Bhagavata Purana holds the highest place among them.

Q: Who is the author of the Puranas?

A: Scholars believe that Maharishi Vyasa composed the Puranas. However, in reality, the Puranas were not written during a single period. Their language suggests that they were composed over different times.

Maharishi Vyasa was a patient soul with a long life, and it is believed that he collected and edited the Puranas. This suggests that the Puranas were written by multiple authors over time. The composition of the Puranas began after the Upanishadic period and before the Ramayana and Mahabharata, as we see elements of the Puranas in both of these epics. In addition to the Hindu Puranas, there are also Puranas in Jainism and Buddhism, expressed in Pali, though many Jain thinkers also used Sanskrit as their medium of expression.



The Geeta

The Geeta is a scripture of self-knowledge and knowledge of God. In addition to these two key themes, it also sheds light on conduct, religious principles, law, and policies related to war. The basic elements of the mind, intellect, senses, and nature are also discussed.

The Geeta consists of 18 chapters, corresponding to the 18 days of the great battle described in the epic Mahabharata. In this context, it offers profound insights on how to live a righteous life amidst challenges.



Darshan Granth: Yog Sutra

Samadhi Pada: This section discusses the nature of consciousness and the state of Samadhi.

Q: How are the instincts controlled?

A: By consistently practicing control over the tendencies and abandoning worldly desires with detachment, instincts are restrained.

Q: What happens when instincts are controlled?

A: We attain Samadhi.



Sadhan Pada

This section outlines other methods for achieving Samadhi:

- **Tap** (Tolerance of joys and sorrows)
- **Swadhyaya** (Constant study of sacred texts)
- **Ishwar Pranidhan** (Regular prayer to God)

These actions (Kriyas) are beneficial in attaining Samadhi.

Q: What are the benefits of Kriyas?

A: Kriyas help in cultivating the Samadhi Bhavna (feeling) and reduce mental afflictions.

The five types of afflictions (troubles) are described, along with their symptoms. Kriya Yoga is practiced to reduce their impact, and remedies to ignorance are provided, which promote discernment and inner calmness.



Ashtang Yoga

Ashtang Yoga, or the "Eight Limbs of Yoga," is a key concept in Yog Sutra and includes:

1. **Yama** (Ethical restraints)
2. **Niyama** (Personal disciplines)
3. **Asana** (Physical postures)
4. **Pranayama** (Breath control)
5. **Pratyahara** (Withdrawal of senses)
6. **Dharana** (Concentration)
7. **Dhyana** (Meditation)
8. **Samadhi** (Spiritual absorption)

These practices are designed to guide individuals towards spiritual enlightenment and provide knowledge for the mind and soul.



Vibhuti Pada

The word Vibhuti refers to Aishwarya or opulence, symbolizing the divine powers or manifestations of God. Ishwar (God) represents power, and the experience of God is referred to as Aishwarya. Upon achieving Samadhi, many divine powers or Vibhutis manifest in a person.

The process of mental focus involves several stages:

- **Dharana:** Focusing the mind on a particular symbol.
- **Dhyana:** Maintaining continuous focus on that symbol.
- **Samadhi:** Forgetting the body and being absorbed in the symbol.



- o By observing a person, understanding their thoughts and feelings.
- o By controlling the eyes, becoming invisible to others.
- o Knowledge of death through control over actions.
- o Gaining strength equivalent to that of an elephant.
- o Insight into future events during periods of delay in tasks.
- o Understanding the world by balancing the Sun.
- o Understanding stars and constellations by balancing the Moon.
- o Control over hunger and thirst by mastering the throat.
- o Levitation through patience in the air.
- o The ability to walk on water and fly with the help of the body and sky.
- o The ability to change one's appearance and overcome any obstacle.

There are a total of 39 Siddhis, each contributing to the yogi's spiritual and physical powers.

Kaivalya Pada



Kaivalya Pada addresses liberation, or Kaivalya, which is the ultimate goal of yoga. It represents the state where the soul transcends material existence and achieves complete independence. In this state, yogis are devoid of action. Their actions are performed without any desire, and they are not bound by sin. Unlike ordinary people, whose actions are filled with form and can lead to sin, yogis remain unaffected by these concepts.

The text describes the different types of relationships one can have with others. A person who purifies their image by following the teachings of the sages and adhering to righteous conduct is considered free from sin. The one who serves others selflessly—whether individuals, society, the nation, or the world—becomes a true yogi.

Numerous books have been written on yoga philosophy, such as Yoga Bhasya and Vigyan Bhikshu. Additionally, tantric literature and followers of various sects like Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism have contributed to the writings on yoga.



Nyaya Darshan

The Nyaya Darshan was written by Sage Gautama and delves deeply into topics related to the true nature of God and the soul. To understand the soul, one must also understand nature, the mind, intellect, and senses. Sage Gautama illuminated these concepts in his work.

This book is known as logic or Nyaya philosophy, focusing on the means of attaining salvation. According to the text, salvation is achieved by eliminating the cycle of birth, death, and suffering. When false knowledge is removed, defects or limitations vanish. This, in turn, leads to the cessation of karmic patterns. Without karma, there is no birth, and without birth, suffering ceases.

In essence, Nyaya Darshan reveals that liberation or **salvation is attained when one is free from the cycle of birth and grief**, bringing true peace and freedom.



Vaisheshika Darshan emphasizes atomism, categorizing reality into substances, qualities, and actions. It underscores the law of karma and advocates liberation through knowledge, asserting that understanding the fundamental nature of reality leads to freedom.

Sankhya Darshan presents a dualistic view, recognizing Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter) as distinct entities. Liberation is achieved by discerning their difference and realizing the independence of consciousness from material existence.

Mimamsa Darshan is rooted in Vedic rituals and focuses on dharma, the moral and religious duties of individuals. It emphasizes the importance of actions and the interpretation of sacred texts as the means to spiritual and material well-being.



Charvak Darshan, a materialistic school of thought, rejects metaphysical concepts like karma, the soul, and the afterlife. Instead, it advocates for empirical evidence, sense gratification, and skepticism as the guiding principles of life.

Jain Darshan promotes the core values of nonviolence (ahimsa), asceticism, and the idea of multiple perspectives (anekantavada) as essential for achieving liberation. This school emphasizes compassion and a balanced, holistic view of the world.

Bodh Darshan (Buddhism) centers around the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, offering a way to overcome suffering (dukkha) and attain enlightenment (nirvana). Through ethical conduct, wisdom, and meditation, one can transcend suffering and reach a state of inner peace.

These diverse philosophies explore different paths to truth, blending logic, ethics, and spirituality in unique ways.

Jainism and Buddhism both have ancient roots in India. Jainism traces its origins to the first Tirthankara, Rishabhdev, who is considered one of the earliest figures in its history. Over time, there have been 24 Tirthankaras in Jainism, with Mahavir being the last. Jain philosophy differs in certain ways from Vedic philosophy, with the primary similarity lying in ethical principles. The Panchsheel—the five principles of Jainism—are quite distinct from the conduct rules found in Vedic scriptures, though they were notably popularized by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his efforts to foster peace with China.

In this context, Jainism, along with Aryan and Hindu society, represents an integral part of India's spiritual and cultural fabric. Nonviolence (Ahimsa) is held in the highest regard in Jainism, a principle that also occupies a central place in Yoga philosophy, where nonviolence is the first of the ethical observances.

Jainism has produced many sacred texts, written in languages such as Pali, Prakrit, and Sanskrit. The Jain community has made significant contributions to the propagation of knowledge, with contemporary Jain saints continuing these efforts. Jainism is divided into two major sects: Svetambar, whose followers wear white clothes and cover their mouths with a cloth, and Digambar, whose followers practice nudity as a sign of renunciation. Penance plays a vital role in Jainism, with practitioners striving to endure physical hardship as a means of spiritual purification. The Jain community is also known for its wealth and prosperity.

Buddhism, though it has spread globally, particularly to countries like China, Japan, and Tibet, is not widely practiced in its original form. Both Jainism and Buddhism arose as reactions against the violence of Vedic yajnas (sacrificial rituals), with both emphasizing nonviolence and spiritual awakening. Over time, the followers of Buddhism began to worship Buddha as a divine figure, which diverged from his original teachings, where he was regarded as an enlightened being rather than a god. Similarly, Jainism saw the emergence of worship practices, though it retained a stronger focus on individual spiritual liberation.

Buddhism is fundamentally a path of moderation, often referred to as the Middle Path. It comprises two primary aspects: knowledge and philosophy. There is a notable difference between the Buddhism practiced today and the teachings of Lord Buddha during his lifetime. As changes occurred in the conduct and spiritual practices of the Sangha (the monastic community), the original essence of the tradition began to fade. Notably, Buddha's decision to allow women into the Sangha also led to its decline, as it introduced challenges that affected the cohesion of the monastic order.



Other Important Shastras

Ayurveda Shastra: The ancient science of life, Ayurveda, emphasizes holistic health, natural remedies, and the pursuit of longevity through the harmonious balance of body, mind, and spirit. Rooted in the principles of nature, it provides a comprehensive approach to well-being, integrating diet, lifestyle, and therapies to promote physical and mental health.

Sahitya Shastra: This shastra explores the theory of literature and poetry, delving into the art of expression and the emotional resonance known as *rasa* (moods or sentiments). It examines the aesthetics of composition, guiding the creation of literary works that evoke profound emotional experiences and connect deeply with readers and listeners.

Alankar Shastra: Complementing Sahitya Shastra, this discipline focuses on rhetorical and ornamental devices that enhance the beauty and effectiveness of language in literary and poetic works. By studying various *alankars* (figures of speech), it creates a rich tapestry of stylistic and artistic brilliance, elevating the craft of writing to an art form.



Introduction to Mundane Literature

The majority of ancient Indian literature was composed after the first century CE. While early texts like the Upanishads and the Mahabharata primarily emphasized spirituality, the socio-political landscape began to shift. The tradition of Yagya (Yagna) rituals started to decline, and the rise of industries brought significant changes to society and the nation, leading to a weakening of societal structures.

During this transformative period, Porus resisted the influence of Alexander's general, Seleucus, and a new chapter in Indian history began. Acharya Chanakya, with the support of the common people, overthrew the Nanda dynasty and helped Chandragupta Maurya ascend the throne of Magadha. This marked the beginning of India's golden age, which flourished during the Gupta dynasty's reign and reached its cultural and political zenith.



In this era:

1. India's territorial boundaries expanded, extending as far as Persia (modern-day Iran).
2. The Vedic religion and Aryan (Hindu) culture experienced a revival.
3. Significant advancements occurred in religion, politics, literature, and science, influencing the entire subcontinent.
4. New poetic forms emerged, reflecting deep literary contemplation.
5. The arts—music, dance, and other creative expressions—thrived.
6. By the 8th century, new policies were formulated to ensure peace and stability in various states.



Key Shastras of Mundane Life:

1. **Dharma Shastra:** Guides individuals on living a righteous and moral life by fulfilling their duties and responsibilities to achieve personal and societal harmony.
2. **Arth Shastra:** Provides insights into wealth management, kingdom administration, and political governance, emphasizing wise decision-making.
3. **Niti Shastra:** Offers practical lessons on ethics, good behavior, and wisdom for leading a successful and virtuous life.



Mundane Sanskrit Literature

In ancient India, both Vedic and secular literature significantly influenced Indian society. While Vedic literature primarily emphasized spirituality, secular literature explored the physical and material aspects of life alongside spiritual themes, collectively enhancing India's cultural glory. Below is an introduction to some prominent Sanskrit litterateurs:

Ashvaghosha: Ashvaghosha predates the great poet Kalidasa and significantly influenced later poets, including Kalidasa himself. His poetic style set a benchmark in Sanskrit literature. Among his works, Buddhacharita and Sundarananda are particularly celebrated.



Kalidasa: As discussed earlier, India entered its Golden Age after the Mahabharata and Buddhist periods. This era, marked by the resurgence of Vedic rituals and stable governance, fostered societal and cultural progress.

The great poet Kalidas is a remarkable gift of this era. Scholars have found it challenging to determine his exact time. Some believe he lived during the rule of the Gupta dynasty, particularly under the Magadh Empire, while others suggest he was from the era of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain. It appears that Chandragupta II, Samudragupta, and other Gupta kings were also known by the title Vikramaditya. Very few ancient writers have provided clear details about the period of their works. It seems that Kalidas' creation might have been a collective effort by several individuals rather than the work of a single person. Ultimately, the reader is left to form their own conclusions.



Other Prominent Poets:

1. Bharavi: Known for Kiratarjuniya, an epic poem centered on Arjuna and Lord Shiva.

2. Magha: Celebrated for Shishupala Vadha, detailing the slaying of Shishupala by Lord Krishna.

3. Harsha: Renowned for Naishadha Charita, narrating the story of King Nala and Queen Damayanti.

4. Bhatta: Authored Ravana Vadha, a depiction of Lord Rama's conquest over Ravana.

5. Kumaradasa: Known for Janaki Harana, focusing on Sita's abduction by Ravana.

These poets and their timeless works reflect the richness of mundane Sanskrit literature, showcasing India's intellectual and artistic brilliance.



Diverse Forms of Sanskrit Literature

Sanskrit literature reflects an extraordinary range of creativity, catering to the heart and mind through various forms:

Giti Kavya: Lyrical poetry meant to be sung, Giti Kavya expresses profound emotions such as love, devotion, and longing. Its musical quality resonates deeply with the soul, offering a rich aesthetic experience.

Gadya Kavya: A genre focusing on storytelling, Gadya Kavya presents ideas and events in a straightforward, structured narrative. It is known for its clarity and ability to convey profound thoughts effectively.

Champu Kavya: A unique literary form combining prose and poetry, Champu Kavya uses both styles to enhance narratives, creating an engaging and dynamic literary experience.

Natya Kavya: A blend of drama and poetry, Natya Kavya brings stories to life through dialogues, emotions, and expressions. These works aim to entertain and inspire, often offering a respite to those weary from life's struggles, described poetically as the "Word of Brahma."

Classic Storytelling Masterpieces -

Sanskrit literature is also celebrated for its storytelling traditions, with timeless works that impart wisdom through engaging narratives:

Panchatantra: Written by Vishnu Sharma, Panchatantra is a collection of animal fables aimed at teaching moral lessons and practical wisdom. It delves into human nature and ethical decision-making, remaining relevant across generations.

Hitopadesha: Created by Narayana, Hitopadesha follows a style similar to Panchatantra but with a more refined approach. It offers ethical teachings through stories designed to guide young minds.

Kathasaritsagara: Compiled by Somadeva, Kathasaritsagara is an expansive collection of folk tales that intertwine adventure, romance, and moral lessons. This masterpiece showcases the diversity and richness of India's storytelling traditions.

Vetal Panchavimshati (The Twenty-Five Tales of Vetala): These captivating stories revolve around a king and a ghost. Each tale is a reflection on wisdom, life, and the human condition, offering profound insights alongside entertainment.

Together, these works and literary forms demonstrate the depth and versatility of Sanskrit literature, celebrating India's intellectual and artistic heritage while continuing to inspire and enlighten readers worldwide.



Introduction to Hindi Literature

Hindi literature draws inspiration from Vedic and Jain literature, encompassing an immeasurable number of works across diverse subjects. To better understand its vast expanse, Hindi literature is traditionally divided into four distinct periods:

1. **Aadi Kaal** - Veer Gatha Kaal (1050–1375 CE)
2. **Bhakti Kaal** (1375–1700 CE)
3. **Riti Kaal** (1700–1900 CE)
4. **Modern Age** (Post-1900 CE)

Aadi Kaal - Veer Gatha Kaal



The Aadi Kaal, or the Veer Gatha Kaal, marked an era of heroic poetry, reflecting the eternal struggle of human existence. Literature from this period often showcased the dichotomy between good and evil, symbolized as the battle between divine and demonic forces. Human life, characterized by struggles against selfishness, greed, and anger, also celebrated virtues like truth, non-violence, service, and compassion. These qualities were attributed to divine beings, while those who indulged in selfish and evil deeds were likened to demons. This timeless battle between virtues and vices has been a recurring theme in Indian literature.

In the Vedic era, gods and demons were depicted as perpetually at war. Similarly, in the Mahabharata, the battle for power reflected societal turmoil. Practices such as animal sacrifices caused unrest within the Vedic community, leading to a spiritual and cultural war spearheaded by Jainism and Buddhism. These movements waged a peaceful, unarmed war against societal evils, advocating for simplicity and non-violence.

While Jainism promoted a simple and virtuous life, certain superstitions began to emerge over time. In response to these challenges, the Supreme Father is believed to have taken the form of Adi Shankaracharya, who revitalized the propagation of Vedic knowledge in its purest form.

Adi Shankaracharya, in his brief lifespan of 32 years, profoundly impacted Indian philosophy and literature. His efforts not only rejuvenated Vedic wisdom but also influenced Jainism and Buddhism. His contributions highlighted the essence of spiritual and cultural harmony.

Another notable figure, Kumarila Bhatta, also played a pivotal role during this period. He contributed significantly to reviving the Vedic tradition, countering misinterpretations, and re-establishing its core principles.

The Aadi Kaal represents a period of heroism, spiritual revival, and the triumph of virtues over vices, laying the foundation for subsequent eras in Hindi literature.

Despite being divided into numerous small and large states, ancient India remained united in terms of religious ideology. There was a continuous exchange of ideas across sects, fostering intellectual and spiritual growth. This era witnessed the gradual development of literature, art, and architecture. Notable examples include the magnificent cave complexes of Ajanta and Ellora, which stand as remarkable gifts of this time.

However, mutual conflicts among the state governments began to surface, weakening the internal unity of India. Although Kannauj's ruler Harshavardhana succeeded in establishing a vast empire, it eventually declined over time. This vulnerability opened the gates for external invasions.

The series of external attacks began around the eighth century and intensified with Mohammed Ghori's invasion in 1050 CE. The defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan in 1193 CE marked a significant turning point, paving the way for further incursions into Indian territory. During this period, the Rajput kings were frequently at war with each other, further destabilizing the region.



Amidst this chaos, poets began to compose heroic poems (veer rasa) to celebrate valor and resilience. This marked the beginning of Hindi literature's Veer Gatha period, characterized by works that instilled courage and pride in the face of adversity. Prominent poets of this time include Dalpati Vijay, Chand Bardai, Bhatt Kedar, Vidyapati, and Shridhar. Additionally, Amir Khusro, a poet of great renown, penned riddles that became immensely popular during this era.

This period also saw a significant contribution from Jain literature, which focused on spirituality, mysticism, and tantric ideologies. While many sects and cults existed, they were collectively referred to as Hindus. The term "Hindu" was introduced by Muslim rulers, deriving from the word **Sindhu** (Indus River). It is believed that in their language, the letter "**S**" was pronounced as "**H**," giving rise to the term.



Society during this time was culturally cohesive, with minimal divisions based on caste or sect. However, the advent of Muslim rule brought significant disruptions to the cultural fabric of India. Temples, libraries, and traditional religious institutions—the cornerstones of Indian culture—were attacked and destroyed, resulting in the loss of ancient written works and a decline in social conditions.

Despite these challenges, Indian society found strength in devotion. The Bhakti movement emerged as a unifying force, offering solace and hope during times of turmoil. Through devotional songs and spiritual practices, people preserved their cultural identity and moved forward collectively.

Though successive invasions by Muslim rulers brought widespread destruction, the indomitable spirit of Indian society endured. The path of devotion became a beacon of resilience, allowing the society to survive and thrive amidst adversity.

This era laid the foundation for future periods of Hindi literature, highlighting the interplay between struggle, resilience, and cultural evolution.



Bhakti Kaal: The Age of Devotion

Since the Vedic era, Indian society has shown a natural inclination toward devotion. In times of political turmoil and the absence of protective governance, the common people sought solace in divine power. This inclination was further intensified during the Bhakti Kaal due to the cultural, religious, and social clashes between Hindus and Muslims.

Hindu society, wary of the differences in lifestyle, diet, and conduct, distanced itself from the Muslim population. However, a more significant divide emerged between Hindus and those who had converted to Islam. It was during this challenging period that saints emerged as spiritual leaders, bridging the gap between the wisdom of the Vedas and the devotional aspirations of the masses.

These saints transformed the Vedic philosophy into accessible streams of devotion, likened to the sacred Ganga flowing into the vast ocean of life. This devotional movement became the cornerstone of the Indian spiritual psyche, offering hope, unity, and purpose.



Two Streams of Devotion

The Bhakti movement is divided into two main streams:

Nirgun Dhara (The Formless Path)

1. Gyan Margi Shakha (Path of Knowledge): Focused on spiritual wisdom and the realization of the divine without attributes or form.
2. Prem Margi Shakha (Path of Love): Emphasized the power of unconditional love and surrender to the formless divine.

Sagun Dhara (The Path of Form)

1. Ram Bhakti Shakha (Path of Devotion to Ram): Celebrated Lord Ram as the epitome of dharma and righteousness.
2. Krishna Bhakti Shakha (Path of Devotion to Krishna): Focused on Lord Krishna as a symbol of love, playfulness, and divine wisdom.



Philosophical Foundations of Bhakti

According to Vedic philosophy, God is understood through three core aspects, referred to as Brahma in different contexts. These correspond to the three Gunas (qualities) found in nature:

- **Satva Guna** (Purity and Goodness): Represents balance and harmony.
- **Rajoguna** (Activity and Passion): Denotes energy and movement.
- **Tamoguna** (Inertia and Darkness): Symbolizes ignorance and rest.

God, however, transcends these qualities and is considered Nirgun Brahma, the formless divine beyond all attributes. Yet, some wise thinkers propose that when God manifests creation, He adopts a Sagun (with form) aspect. This Sagun form is accessible to human understanding and worship, often depicted as deities like Ram, Krishna, Shiva, and others.

In their devotion, people turned to these divine forms, finding refuge and inspiration in the power of God. These devotional streams were enriched by the teachings of wise saints who guided and supported the masses in their spiritual journeys.

The Bhakti movement thus bridged the divide between the formless and the formed divine, offering spiritual sustenance to a society in turmoil. It remains a testament to the enduring strength and adaptability of Indian spirituality.

Key Saint-Poets of the Bhakti Movement

Kabir (1400s)

1. A fearless speaker and reformer, Kabir was known for his straightforward and uncompromising words.
2. His teachings opposed caste discrimination, ritualism, and idolatry.
3. Kabir's dohas (couplets) remain popular for their profound simplicity and wisdom.

Guru Nanak (1469–1539)

1. Born in Punjab, Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism and is revered as the first Sikh Guru.
2. Like Kabir, he opposed social evils and emphasized the worship of Nirgun Brahma (formless God).
3. Despite being less formally educated, his deep self-awareness and spiritual insight inspired countless followers.
4. His teachings laid the foundation for Sikhism, later fortified by the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, who established the Khalsa sect and introduced martial elements to the faith.

Prem Margi Shakha: The Sufi Influence-

Sufi Poetry (Sufi Kavya) emerged as a significant aspect of the Bhakti movement, focusing on love as the central theme of devotion.

·Origin of the Term ‘Sufi’: The word Sufi is believed to have originated from the Arabic word Suffa, referring to a spot in Medina where Allah’s devotees would gather and chant praises. Others trace its origin to Safi, meaning pure or clean, reflecting the purity of heart and intention in Sufi teachings.

Impact on Indian Culture: Sufi poets in India were deeply influenced by Vedanta, adopting concepts like “I am Brahma” to express unity with the divine.

Their poetry reflected infinite love and devotion toward God, blending spiritual insights with heartfelt emotion.

The Indian saints were similarly inspired, leading to a cross-pollination of ideas between Vedanta and Sufism.

Notable Sufi Poets

· Malik Muhammad Jayasi: Known for works like Padmavat, Akhravat, and Aakhiri Kalam, Jayasi’s poetry beautifully expressed divine love through allegory and storytelling.

The Sufi and Bhakti movements collectively enriched Indian literature and spiritual thought, fostering a culture of inclusivity and devotion that transcended religious and social barriers.

Ram Bhakti Shakha- The Ram Bhakti Shakha (Stream of Devotion to Lord Rama) produced many influential poets, including:

- Saint Tulsidas: Renowned as the most eminent poet of this stream.
- Other notable contributors: Keshav, Agra Das, Ramdas, Senapati, Guru Gobind Singh, and Maharaj Vishwanath.

Tulsidas and Ramcharitmanas

- Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas stands as a monumental work of this era.
- The text beautifully integrates elements from Lord Rama's biography, the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and historical teachings.
- It became a cornerstone of Ram Bhakti, inspiring generations of devotees through its portrayal of Lord Rama as the ideal human being.



Krishna Bhakti Shakha- The Krishna Bhakti Shakha (Stream of Devotion to Lord Krishna) has its roots in the Vedic era and gained prominence with the works of several poets:

Surdas: A pivotal figure in Krishna Bhakti, his devotion is evident in his extensive body of poetry, which celebrates Lord Krishna's playful and divine aspects. His compositions are deeply rooted in Vedic and Puranic influences.

Other Eminent Poets: Kumandas, Krishnadas, Parmanand Das, Govind Swami, Sheet Swami, Chaturbhujdas, and Nanddas also significantly contributed to Krishna Bhakti literature.

Meera Bai: A Unique Devotee

- Meera Bai, born into a royal family, stands out as one of the greatest Krishna devotees.
- She renounced her royal ties and embraced an intimate spiritual connection with Lord Krishna, whom she worshipped as her husband.
- Her poetry radiates love and devotion, vividly portraying Krishna's presence in her life.
- Meera's unwavering devotion and her ability to transcend societal norms make her a celebrated figure in Krishna Bhakti literature.



Interfaith Contributions

· **Rahim:** A Muslim poet and devotee of Krishna, Rahim's works reflect his efforts to foster harmony between Hindu and Muslim communities. His poetry embodies a synthesis of **spiritual devotion and social unity**, making him a notable figure in Krishna Bhakti literature.

Legacy of Bhakti Movements

The Ram Bhakti and Krishna Bhakti streams enriched Indian spiritual and literary traditions. These poets and their works continue to inspire devotion, love, and unity, transcending cultural and religious boundaries.

Modern Period (From 1900s)



The Modern Period is often referred to as the Prose Period due to the emergence and popularity of prose literature. This period witnessed remarkable diversification in literary forms, including stories, novels, essays, and more, alongside poetry.

Characteristics

- Inspired by the freedom movement, literature became a powerful medium for expressing patriotic and social sentiments.
- Newspapers and magazines proliferated, encouraging writers to engage with current issues and administrative developments.
- Literature from this period is rich in ideologies, blending devotion, spirituality, and nationalism with evolving literary styles.

Key Literary Movements and Figures



Nationalist Writers:

- o Bharatendu Harishchandra
- o Maithilisharan Gupta
- o Ramdhari Singh Dinkar
- o Shivmangal Singh Suman

Progressive Writers:

- o Munshi Premchand (Master storyteller, social reformer)
- o Sachchidanand Hirananda Vatsyayan (Agyeya)
- o Ramvilas Sharma

Management and Analytical Writers:

- o Ramchandra Shukla
- o Hari Prasad Dwivedi
- o Bhagwati Charan Verma
- o Upendranath Ashk
- o Ilaichand Joshi

This era showcased an unparalleled diversity of ideas, making Hindi literature richer and more inclusive.

The Ritikal and Modern Periods reflect the evolution of Hindi literature from emotional refinement to intellectual and socio-political engagement, portraying the essence of Bharat's timeless spirit.

Now, Why Bharat?



The name Bharat originates from the Vishnu Purana, which describes the geographical and cultural identity of the land:

**"Uttaram yat samudrasya
himādreścaiva dakṣiṇam,
varṣam tad bhāratam nāma bhāratī
yatra santatiḥ."**

Translation:

The land that lies to the north of the ocean and south of the Himalayas is known as Bharatvarsha, and its people are called Bharatis (descendants of Bharata).

This verse highlights India's ancient roots, its divine connection, and its enduring cultural identity.

As we reflect on the ancient wisdom of Sanatan Dharma, it becomes clear that these timeless principles are not confined to the past but are deeply relevant to our modern-day lives.

Through this work, I hope to have offered a meaningful exploration of Hinduism's core teachings and their role in guiding us toward self-awareness, inner peace, and spiritual growth.

At its essence, the teachings remind us that the divine is not something external or distant—it resides within us, in the purity of our voice and the sincerity of our words. Our voice is a sacred instrument, capable of creating, healing, and connecting with the world and the divine. When used with intention, truth, and love, it becomes a pathway to realizing our higher selves and honoring the divine presence in all beings.

May this exploration inspire you to embrace the wisdom of our heritage and to find the divine voice within you, guiding your journey toward greater understanding and harmony.



Thank You

This E Book is a translation from the writings of Acharya Veer Bhadra Shastri, a devoted husband who authored Sources to Self-Knowledge in memory of his beloved wife. After her untimely departure, he channeled his love and admiration for her into this profound work. Though he is no longer with us, his wisdom and the deep bond they shared live on through his writings.

With every word, he sought not only to share timeless knowledge but also to honor her invaluable contribution to his life. This E Book stands as a tribute to their enduring love and the legacy of insight he left behind in her name.



A Personal Reflection on Sanatan Dharma and Hinduism: By Abhishek Sundriyal

This E Book is compiled and translated by Abhishek Sundriyal, the founder of Condolence Tours, an initiative dedicated to promoting Vedic rituals and spiritual practices. Based in the serene mountains of Garhwal, Uttarakhand, Abhishek draws inspiration from his personal journey and profound connection with Vedic traditions to bring timeless insights to a modern audience.

Born into a Brahmin family and raised in New Delhi, India, Abhishek attended Dayanand Public School, where performing hawan and practicing yoga were an integral part of the curriculum. These formative experiences sparked his deep appreciation for Vedic rituals and spiritual practices from an early age.

While pursuing higher education in hospitality, Abhishek's life was profoundly altered by the tragic loss of his roommate in a road accident, followed by the passing of his grandfather and closest uncle. These personal losses stirred within him a sense of grief and unfinished business, propelling him on a path of spiritual exploration.

After facing multiple challenges, Abhishek moved back to his ancestral land in Garhwal, Uttarakhand. There, amidst the tranquility of the mountains, he began experiencing extraordinary synchronicities, most notably the recurring appearance of the number 33—in his address, pin code, and various life events. This number seemed to guide him toward a higher purpose, deepening his connection to a spiritual journey of self-discovery.

Through this work, Abhishek seeks to honor not only the memory and wisdom of his late grandfather, Acharya Veer Bhadra Shastri, but also to share the essence of Vedic knowledge with the world. His translation reflects a commitment to preserving timeless teachings that offer spiritual growth, self-awareness, and a deeper understanding of life.



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