

## Bhartiya Scriptures

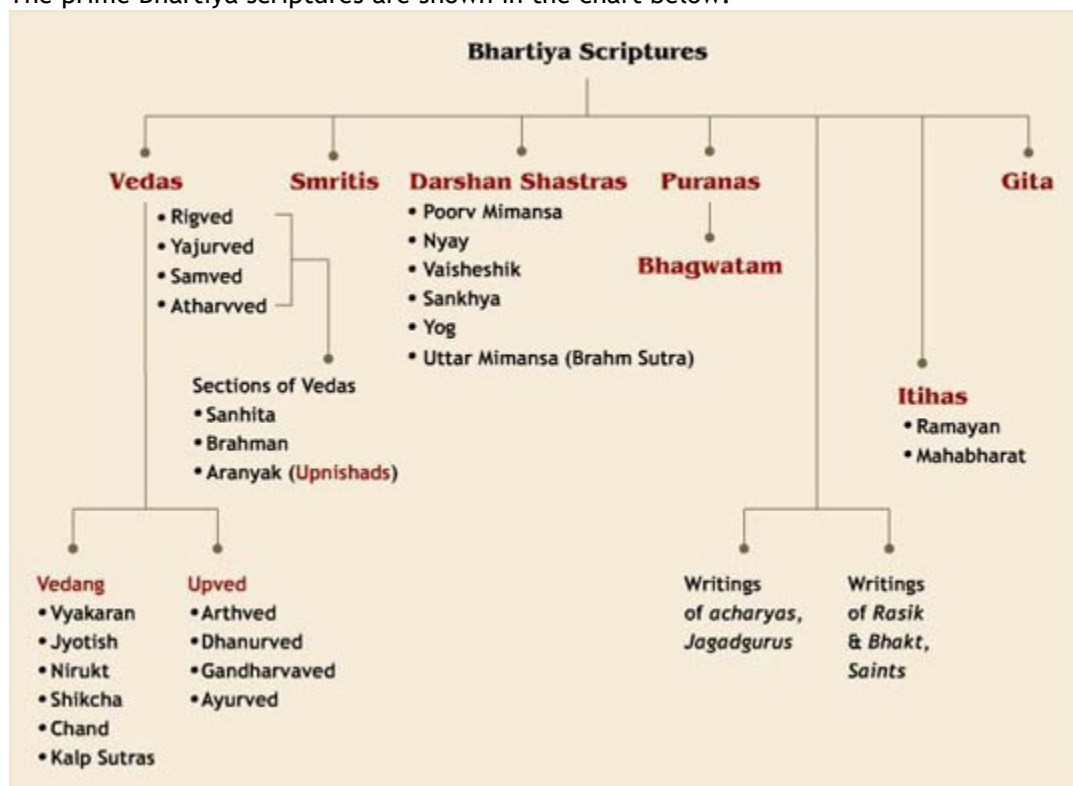
The aim of human life is to attain God realization while doing good in the world; the means of God realization is *bhakti* and God's Grace; and God, Who is omnipresent in His eternal Divine personal form, is all-kind, all-loving, all-Gracious and all-beautiful. Out of His extreme loving kindness to all the souls, He instantly reveals Himself to anyone whenever a person wholeheartedly surrenders to Him in total love and dedication. Thus, this theme of 'God realization through *bhakti*' has been the focusing point of all Bhartiya scriptures.

Bhartiya scriptures include the Vedas, the Upvedas, the Vedangas, the Smritis, the Darshan Shastras, the Upnishads, the Puranas, the Mahabharat, the Ramayan, the Gita, the Bhagwatam, and the writings of the *Jagadgurus*, *acharyas* and Saints.

The scriptures are produced with the Divine will for the mankind, to show them the path of God realization.

They provide the guidelines for all kinds of people of the world, which, if followed, leads them towards God realization. In brief our main scriptures teach the following: Vedas tell to become a good person; Upnishads tell to love God and don't be attached in the world because it is illusion; the Gita tells to love God selflessly and reveals the secret of the spiritual practices **that only through *bhakti*** one can realize God; and then the Bhagwatam tells what is the most loving form of God that enchanted the heart of the topmost *Yogi* and *Gyani*, Shukdeo.

The prime Bhartiya scriptures are shown in the chart below.



## Vedas

There are four Vedas: **Rigved**, **Yajurved**, **Samved** and **Atharvaved**. According to the Muktikopnishad they had 21, 109, 1,000 and 50 branches, respectively, having a total of approximately 100,000 verses in their 1,180 branches. Nowadays only 20,379 verses in total are available. 10,552 verses of **Rigved** (arranged in 10 sections called *mandal*), 1,975 verses of **Yajurved** (in 40 chapters), 1,875 verses of **Samved** (in 21 chapters) and 5,977 verses of **Atharvaved** (in 20 chapters). These verses are in praise of celestial gods and goddesses and some of them are also for the Divine form of God.

They are called mantra bhag or **Sanhita**. Then there are the same number of branches (1,180) called the **Brahman**, and the same number of branches (1,180) called the **Aranyak** which have the same number of (1,180) Upanishads. This whole collection is called the Vedas.

- The verses of the **Rigved** are mainly in the praise of Vedic gods and are used in the *yagyas*.
- **Yajurved** is for the *addhvaryu* priest who conducts the *yagya*. It has prayers and praises related to gods and also tells how to create the fire altar for *yagya* and describes various kinds of *yagyas*.
- **Samved** is for the *udgata* priest who singingly chants the verses of Samved. Samved and Yajurved deal with the practical side of the used of the invocative *mantras* of the Rigved in the *yagya*.
- Apart from the general philosophical descriptions of soul and God and His Divine Greatness, which cover a small section of the **Atharvaved**, the major section of it deals with the *mantras* and the ritual observances that are prescribed for the fulfillment of the material needs of worldly people or for general welfare of the family.

## Vedangas

There are six Vedangas (parts of the body of the Vedas): **Vyakaran, Jyotish, Nirukt, Shikcha, Chand and Kalp Sutras.** These very ancient Sanskrit grammar books are all extinct. The grammar that we have now is **Panini** grammar. It has eight chapters so it called **Ashtadhyayi**. It was directly graced by God Shiv.

Sanskrit grammar.

- **Jyotish** is astrology. Astrology was used to determine the auspicious moment to commence the *yagya* or for any other felicitous work. Very few books of Jyotish are available; the rest are extinct.
- **Nirukt** has three sections that describe the detailed explanation and the meaning of the Vedic words. Nighantu is the collection of the Vedic words with simple meaning and Nirukt is the complete explanation of all those words like a detailed dictionary. To understand the meaning of the Vedic words one has to understand the Nirukt perfectly because the words of the Vedas have sometimes very unusual and entirely different meaning than what is commonly understood.
- **Shikcha** generally means the teachings of how to correctly pronounce the Vedic *mantras*. But it is not that simple as someone learning the pronunciation of the words of any language. It is a complete science in itself.
- **Chand** simply means a poetic stanza of Vedic verse, but the poetry of the Vedas is quite different. It has many kinds of *chand*s and they all have their proper name. The book of *chand*s teaches how to create the *chand*, but how to sing a *chand* involves the correct pronunciation of the words of the Vedic *mantras*.
- **Kalp Sutras** are the concise forms of the Vedic Religion. They are of four kinds. **Shraut Sutra** describes the protocol of the *yagy*s; **Grihya Sutra** describes the rituals for a family man; **Dharm Sutra** describes the religious, social and moral duties of an individual; and **Shulb Sutra** describes the formation of the altar for *yagya*.

## Upvedas

There are four Upvedas (*up* means subsidiary):

- **Arthved** (science of sociology and economics) is related to Rigved
- **Dhanurved** (science of defense and war and the making of its related appliances) is related to Yajurved
- **Gandharvaved** (science of music, both singing and instrumental) is related to Samved
- **Ayurved** (the medical science) is related to Atharvaved

The first three are almost extinct, the fourth one, **Ayurved**, is still in existence but all of its books are not available. Our Sages wrote a number of books on the science of the preparation and the uses of herbs, roots, gems, metals and pearls etc., for all kinds of diseases but only some of them are available nowadays, although the basic theory of **Ayurved** is available in full.

## Upnishads

There were 1,180 Upnishads, related to 1,180 branches of the Vedas. Out of them about 200 Upnishads are still available. The Upnishads tell about the illusive nature of the world, introduce a correct understanding about the soul and God and they normally use the term brahm or a pronoun for all the forms of God. The Upnishads distinguish the celestial gods from the Divine forms of God. The main theme of the Upnishads is to surrender to God (brahma) and receive liberation from the bondage of maya (the cosmic power or the material power) and enter into the eternal state of the Divine Bliss. Following are explanations of eleven prominent Upnishads.

- **Ishopnishad** is the first one in the list of Upnishads. It starts with the very first word *Ishwar* which means the Divine personality of God. It only has 18 verses. In its first verse it gives a condensed philosophy of God and God realization which is the gist of the Upnishadic philosophy.
- **Kathopnishad** has six chapters in two sections, and is in the form of question and answer where Nachiketa is questioning and the god of justice, Yamraj, is answering. The Kathopnishad advises the souls and says, "Human body is the only chance where a person could receive liberation from the eternal bondage and the inflictions of *maya*. If you do not realize God before death overtakes you, it would be the greatest disaster of your life and you will be suffering for uncountable lifetimes by taking birth in various species." (2/3/4)
- **Mundakopnishad** has six chapters in three sections called *mundak*. In this Upnishad Sage Angira is telling about God and the method of God realization to Shaunak who desired to know as to what is the absolutely knowable truth. In one of the verses of Mundakopnishad, Sage Angira says, "The ritualist *brahmans* discovered that the vedic discipline of observing *yagyas* only provides celestial luxuries which is only *mayic* and does not take the doer to God, so they

renounced it. To know and to realize God one should dedicatingly go and surrender to such a God realized Saint who has also full knowledge of the scriptural secrets." (1/2/12)

- **Mandukyopnishad** has only 12 verses and explains the *nirakar* (impersonal) aspect of God, and in fact, this is the only Upnishad that truly defines the *nirakar brahm*. Other Upnishads relate to the personal form of God, which is the main form of God.
- **Tattariya** has three big chapters called Shikcha, Valli, Brahmanand Valli and Bhrigu Valli with their subsections. It tells more about the creation of the universe.
- **Shvetashvatar** has six chapters and is one of the important Upnishads. It explains the definite characteristics of all the three: soul, *maya*, and God; and also tells the definite procedure of God realization. Figuratively describing the human body as a tree, the Shvetashvatar Upnishad says, "Two birds, which are eternal friends, live on the same tree, whereas one bird (the soul) is enjoying eating the fruit (sensual pleasures) of that tree and the other one (God) is simply watching the first one." (4/6) Revealing the true secret of God realization, it further says, "When a devotee has infallible love and devotion for his beloved and Gracious God and he is equally dedicated to his Spiritual Master (who is a God realized Saint), only then that soul (with the Grace of the Saint) perceives, conceives and understands the Divine secrets (and becomes God realized)." (6/23)
- In the **Muktikopnishad** Hanuman is asking Bhagwan Ram as to what is the simplest path which could ensure liberation from the *mayic* bondage, and Bhagwan Ram is answering. It says that Mandukyopnishad is for conceiving the theme of *nirakar brahm*, and the knowledge contained in the other Upnishads ensures the attainment of the Divine abode (1/27), which clearly indicates that the Upnishads primarily relate to the personal form of God and not the *nirakar* (impersonal form of God).
- **Yogshikhopnishad** relates to the *yogic* practices for the attainment of true *brahm gyan* that ensures *kaivalya mokch* (the liberation of *gyanis*). It has its importance as it is said by God Shiv Himself Who is God of *yogis* (Yogishwar).
- **Tripadvibhushit Mahanarayanopnishad** reveals certain eminent issues that were mentioned in the first eleven of the 108 Upnishads, but not explained. In its last chapter, it says, "Without *bhakti*, *brahm gyan* can never be attained. Thus a soul, leaving all other practices of heart purification, should firmly stick to the path of *bhakti* and establish his mind *only in bhakti*, *only in bhakti*, and *only in bhakti*, because through *bhakti* one can attain anything and everything in the Divine world."
- **Krishnopnishad** reveals the supremacy of Krishn love upon all other forms of Divine Blissfulness. It gives the example of the devotees of Dandak forest of *tretayug* when Bhagwan Ram, during His descension period came to Grace them. It further details that during the descension period of Krishn the eternal Divine existences, powers, and the Divine personalities also descended in Braj to serve Krishn and to experience the sweetness of Krishn love.
- **Gopal Poorv Tapiniyopnishad** has two chapters. The statement of Tattariyopnishad is "He is the absolute Bliss or He is the Bliss of Bliss" is further explained in this Upnishad.

## Smritis

These are the books of codes related to the social living. They describe what are the sins and the good deeds; define what penances, or what kind of fasting, or what kind of charity could redeem what sin, or what should be the punishment for a particular sin. They also describe what kind of rites and rituals a person is supposed to observe in the family, and what is the right conduct and right behavior for the people of various orders of life in the society and so on.

## Darshan Shastras

There are six Darshan Shastras called the six schools of philosophy. They are (1) Poorv Mimansa by Sage Jaimini, (2) Nyay by Sage Gautum (3) Vaisheshik by sage Kanad, (4) Sankhya by Bhagwan Kapil, (5) Yog by Sage Patanjali and (6) Uttar Mimansa (Brahm Sutra) by Bhagwan Ved Vyas. All the six Darshan Shastras are in sutra form.

The Vedic literature is so extensive that it is hard even for a Vedic genius to comprehend and remember the theme of all of them. So Sage Jaimini, who was the pupil of Ved Vyas, wrote the Poorv Mimansa Sutras to facilitate the correct understanding of the Vedas. Nyay and Vaisheshik Sutras describe the logical steps of how to determine the rights and the wrongs in terms of finding the absolute good for a person. Sankhya Sutras explain the extent of mayic creation and Divinity beyond that. It tells that the entire mayic creation is worth discarding and only the Divinity is to be attained because that is the only source of Bliss. Yog Sutras then explain the practical process of heart purification which may qualify a person to experience the absolute Divine. Then the Brahm Sutra (Uttar Mimansa) reveals this secret that God is absolute Divinity and absolute Bliss, and He is Gracious. So yearnfully remember Him and with His Grace experience His absolute Blissfulness forever. This is the general outline of all the six Darshan Shastras.

- **Poorv Mimansa** by Jaimini is the condensed explanation of the Vedic theme and at the same time the clarification of its issues. It has 12 chapters for a person who desires to know the rightful means (called *dharm*) of obtaining the personal happiness in this life and the life after. Poorv Mimansa does not relate to God realization, its subject matter is the attainment of celestial luxuries only.
- **Nyay** by Sage Gautum is a logical quest for God, the absolute Divinity. It tells that the material power *maya*, with the help of God, becomes the universe. In the beginning of the book the Nyay Darshan goes into intricate discussions to establish as to what is the right substance to know (which of course is the Divine) and it designs 16 steps of logical discussions called the 16 *padarth*. Nyay Darshan is based on establishing the fact that only the Divinity (God) is desirable, knowable and attainable, and not this world.
- The philosophy of the **Vaisheshik Darshan** by Sage Kanad is like the Nyay Darshan. Its aim is to receive happiness in this life (by renouncing worldly

desires) and finally to receive the ultimate liberation (through the attachment of the true knowledge of the Divine). Nyay Darshan and Vaisheshik Darshan are written in the form of questions and answers and are in themselves a complete science of logical representation of the futility of *mayic* creation, and the natural and absolute desirability of the Divine (God) which may terminate the bondage of the *karmas* and ensure liberation. The aim of Nyay and Vaisheshik Darshan Shastras is to invoke a deep desire to find God by describing the *karmic* consequences of material attachments, but they do not provide the detail of the nature, form, virtues and the Graciousness of God.

- **Sankhya Darshan** by Bhagwan Kapil starts with a *sutra* explaining that the aim of Sankhya is to eliminate all kinds of physical and mental pains and to receive liberation. It tells about the 24 aspects of *maya* and God, the Divine. Souls are parts of the Divine but they are eternally affiliated with *maya*. Sankhya Darshan says that attachment in the *mayic* world creates the bondage; and the understanding of the Divine truth (God) releases the soul from such bondage.
- **Yog Darshan** by Sage Patanjali has four chapters and accepts three kinds of evidences for determining the aim of life (perceptual, inferential and scriptural). It also tells about five kinds of pain inflicting modes of the mind: ignorance, ego, attachment, hatred, and fear of death, with which a soul is always affected. To get rid of these pains of life a person has to practice *yog* and observe total renunciation. The Yog Darshan defines renunciation as the elimination of all the thoughts and the desires that arise either out of the perception of this world, or have been heard from somewhere. The practice of perfecting this renunciation is *yog*, which is eightfold. Patanjali advises to take the help of God (in *sutra* 2/45) because with His help the aim of perfecting the state of *samadhi* could be fulfilled.
- **Uttar Mimansa (Brahm Sutra)** has four chapters and each chapter has four sections. It starts by defining the prerequisite that the Brahm Sutra is for that person who has a real deep desire to know God. Then it declares that true liberation could only be attained by lovingly surrendering to Him. Further it tells that God has unlimited and absolute virtues. In its four chapters, it reveals that God has His Divine personal form with all of His Divine virtues, describes the existing status of the universe, details the existing form and situation of a soul which is under the bondage of *maya*, and tells about the greatness of *bhakti* by explaining that through *bhakti* a devotee easily receives the Grace of God. The Brahm Sutra represents the theme of the Upanishads which are the essence of the entire literature of the Vedic realm.

## Puranas

There are 18 Puranas: Brahm Puran, Padm Puran, Vishnu Puran, Vayu Puran, Bhagwat Maha Puran, Narad Puran, Markandeya Puran, Agni Puran, Bhavishya Puran, Brahm Vaivart Puran, Ling Puran, Varah Puran, Skand Puran, Vaman Puran, Kurm Puran, Matsya Puran, Garud Puran and Brahmand Puran.

It is a general feature of all the Puranas that they fully explain the creation aspect and also the dissolution aspect of the universe, give the description of all the Manus and tell the history of the important families along with their family successions and the dynasties of kings etc. Whatever the Puranas describe, their main concentration is to introduce a feeling of *bhakti* and dedication towards a personal form of God in the heart of the reader. Thus their every description is in the praise of God and established the Graciousness of the actions of those Divine personalities who represented themselves as Sages, Rishis, Saints, family men, kings or hermits etc. Most of those whose life history is described in the Puranas are the eternal Saints.

The Puranas, in general, are for all kinds of people, from an ordinary family man who is deeply attached to his family and friends and up to a renounced person who is longing to meet his Divine beloved God in His personal Divine form.

The Puranas explain that the Grace of God is never at random and also it is not the consequence of any amount of good actions or *yog* or austerity. It is automatically experienced when a soul lovingly and totally submits himself to God. This loving submission is *bhakti*. The philosophies of the Upnishads and the Darshan Shastras are a kind of dry description of the theory of God realization; the Puranas make them lively and easy to understand.



## Bhagwatam

It is a common saying that where the philosophy of the Gita ends, the philosophy of the Bhagwatam begins. The Bhagwatam tells only selfless devotion of Krishn which ensures everything: liberation from all the pains of the world, Divine vision and the Divine love of Krishn. The Bhagwatam is like a crown jewel among all other scriptures but it has to be properly understood and correctly followed. The seven Divine virtues of the Bhagwatam:

- It has a very systematic description of the events.
- It is beyond the Puranas.
- It is beyond *dharm*, *arth*, *kam* and *mokcha*, and it is beyond the Vedas and the Upnishads.
- It was taught to such a Saint (Shukdeo) who was totally absorbed in the Divine Bliss.
- It embodies all the spiritual philosophies.
- It represents the true form of Krishna love which is not fully described in the Puranas or the Upnishads.
- It describes the greatness of Radha Rani in a special way.

## Itihas

Ramayan and Mahabharat are called the *itihias* (history) books because, along with regular description of their own topic, they also tell a lot about the general history of that period.

### Ramayan

Ramayan describes the Divine *leelas* of Bhagwan Ram Who descended on the earth planet 18.144 million years ago in Ayodhya from His Divine abode, Saket, along His brothers Lakchman, Bharat and Shatrughn. The eternal consort of Ram, Goddess Sita, had descended in Mithila, the kingdom of King Janak, who was called *videh* because he was always absorbed in the Bliss of absolute *brahm*. Sage Valmiki was during the time of Bhagwan Ram. He wrote the Ramayan (called Valmiki Ramayan) in Sanskrit language while living in his hut as he saw all the *leelas* of Ram from his Divine eyes. Ved Vyas, about 5,000 years ago, reproduced the Valmiki Ramayan.

## Mahabharat

Mahabharat was produced by Bhagwan Ved Vyas after the war of Mahabharat, and after that the Bhagwatam was produced by him. Mahabharat has 18 sections called 'parv.' Out of these only five Parvas relate to the actual war. The rest of them, like the Puranas, describe the general history of the creation and *manvantar*, the history of Sages and Saints, the important family succession, the total history of the Puru dynasty in which the Pandavas were born, and the detailed history of the Pandav Family along with the general teachings of *dharm* and devotion to God. In about fourteen chapters in Van Parv the *leelas* of Bhagwan Ram are described and the Gracious description of Krishn comes almost everywhere in the Mahabharat. The two Parvas, Shanti and Anushasan, reveal the philosophies

of the Vedas and the Upnishads in a simple way; that's why it is also called the fifth Ved. It explains about *karm*, *gyan*, *yog*, *sankhya*, *austerity*, general worship to God, the behavior of a pious king, the liberation, renunciation, *varnashram dharm*, the hellish sufferings from the evil deeds, futility of the worldly happiness and the greatness of *bhakti* etc. The most famous scripture, [Gita](#), is a part of Mahabharat.

## Gita

The Gita is a prime Upnishad and it is the practical guide that gives the true knowledge of God and God realization. It has eighteen chapters. Gita is the direct speech of Krishn, the supreme personality of God, Who Himself descended on the earth planet in His Divine form to show the path of God realization. It contains the essence of the Upnishads and the theme of all the Divine philosophies.

Krishn Himself summarizes the teachings of the Gita in one verse and says, "O Arjun! You are very dear to Me. So, for your own good, I am telling you the greatest secret of the Divine world. Listen carefully. If you or any soul of the world desires to come to Me and be with Me forever, the easiest path is that he should worship Me, love Me, remember Me all the time and dedicate his life for Me. Then surely he will come to Me. It's My promise." (18/64, 65)