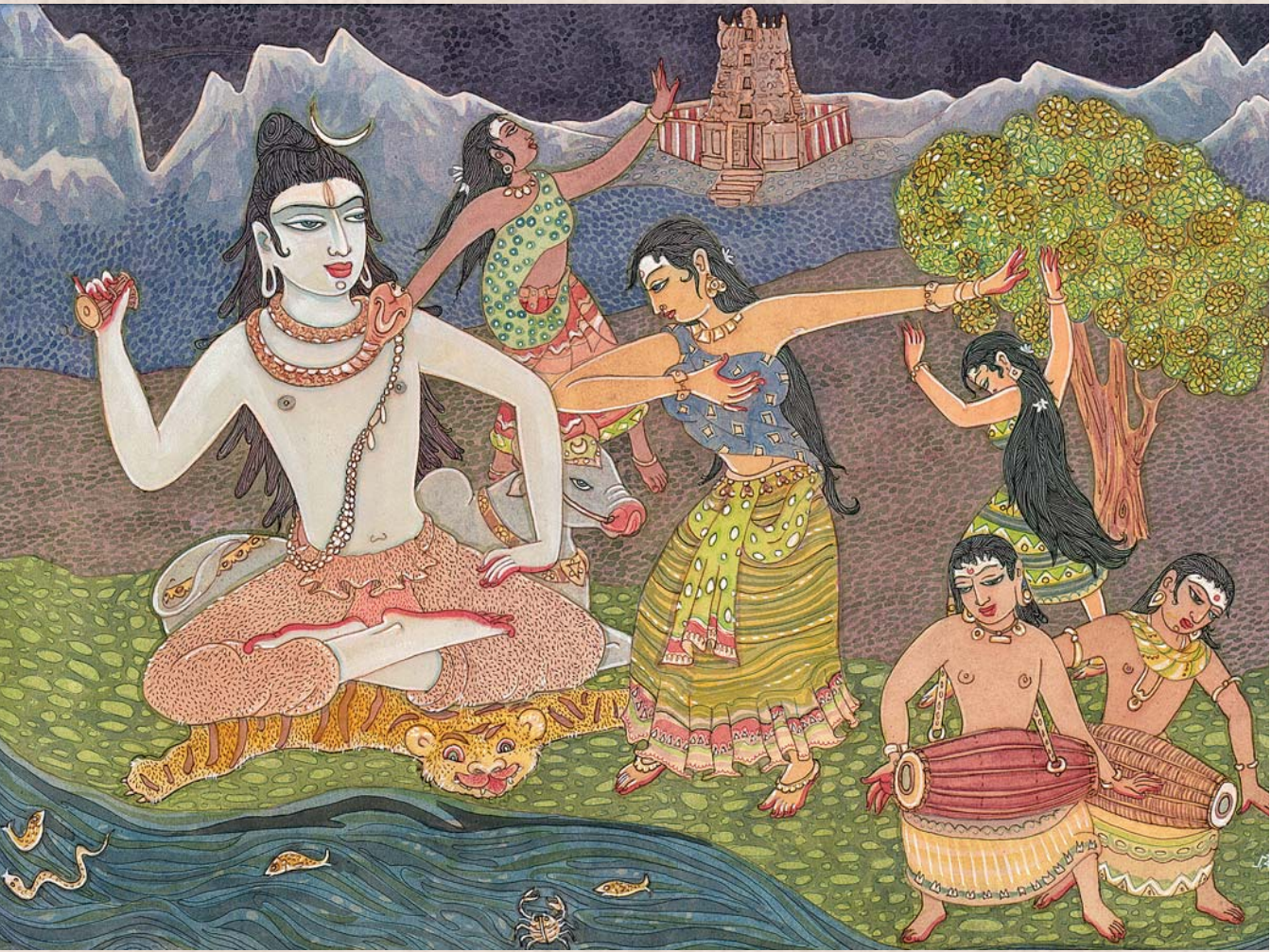


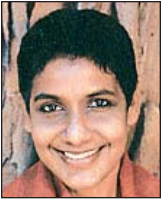
# Dancing with Śiva

HINDUISM'S CONTEMPORARY CATECHISM

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami



A richly illustrated sourcebook of Indian spirituality in question-and-answer form, exploring how to know the Divine, honor all creation and see God everywhere, in everyone



**Swami Mayatitananda**  
Spiritual Head of the Wise  
Earth Monastery in Candler,  
North Carolina, and the  
Mother Om Mission,  
Guyana, South America.

*Dancing with Siva* is part of Gurudeva's great trilogy on Hindu Dharma. In this master work, he clearly defines the profound truths of the cosmos and demonstrates how we may serve these truths, which are encoded in the human heart, at every moment in our lives. Wholly immersed in Siva, Gurudeva's words bring forth and transmit Siva's light and wisdom that speaks to human consciousness, "Divine Laws cannot be avoided. They rule us from beyond but are wrought within our very nature." When we practice living as an act of *sadhana*, we awaken the heart to conscious knowing. Cultivating thought and practice into goodness and simplicity, we are able to traverse the way of inner discovery wherein we may see the hidden unconscious that compels our impulse and action. This treatise opens the way of *dharma* to every person. As Gurudeva puts it, "Good conduct is right thought, right speech and right action." May Gurudeva's timeless words and infinite spirit continue to guide us on the path of *sadhana*.



**Dr. Mahesh Mehta** Professor  
of Indian Religions and  
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Canada

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, has performed a singular service to the global Hindu community by leaving behind his literary legacy in the form of his massive Siva trilogy. He was the true torchbearer of the eternal values and principles of Sanatana Dharma. *Dancing with Siva* is a splendid compendium of Gurudeva's profound love and wisdom and vast and intimate knowledge of the Hindu religious and philosophical tradition, and especially of the Saiva Siddhanta school, of which he was an eminent exponent. It is a meticulous and lucid presentation of the authentic Vedic-Agamic teachings on all aspects of Hindu life and thought in the context of modern ethos, despite the phenomenal diversity and complexity of Hinduism. If carefully read and followed, the full-fledged

course delineated in *Dancing with Siva* can be an effective instrument in transforming and elevating the daily life of the Hindu people. The value of the volume is enhanced by an important section on world religions and modern movements and their clear comparisons in an ecumenical spirit, a detailed Hindu timeline, and an exhaustive lexicon.



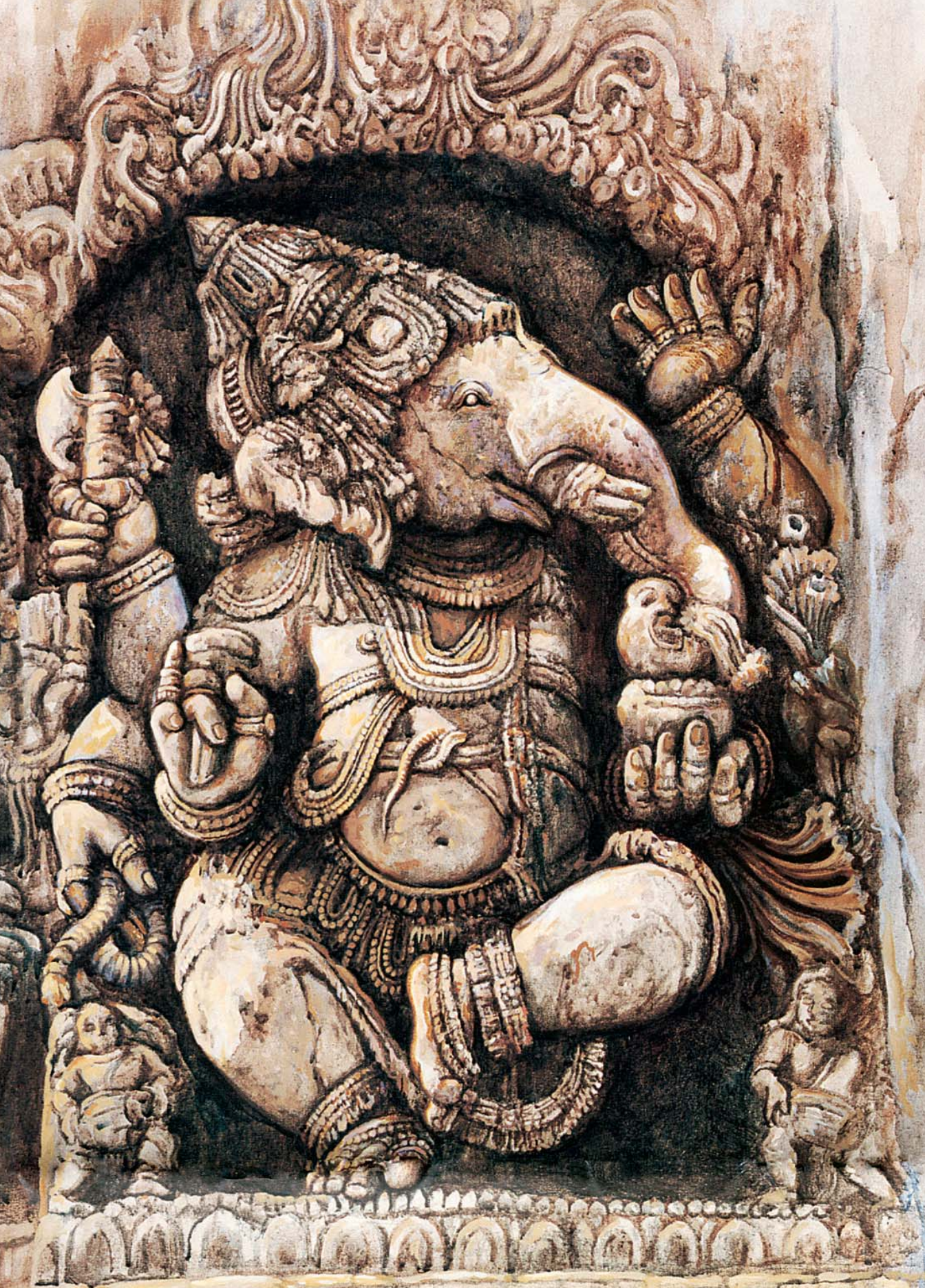
**H.H. Swami Tejomayananda**  
Spiritual Head of Chinmaya  
Mission, Central Chinmaya  
Mission Trust, Sandeepany  
Sadhanalaya, Mumbai, India

Although Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami has departed from the physical plane, he continues to live in his works. *Living with Siva* and *Dancing with Siva* are divine extensions of this divine soul. I am sure they will enlighten seekers in general and followers of Saiva Siddhanta in particular. The scriptural quotes and *slokas* on values, rituals and rites of passage, along with interpretations and illustrations, will go a long way in fulfilling the quest of householders and monks alike. I pay my homage to the great soul.



**Thillaiampalam Visuvalingam,**  
President, Saiva Siddhanta  
Manram—Canada, Managing  
Editor of the monthly Saiva  
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Ontario

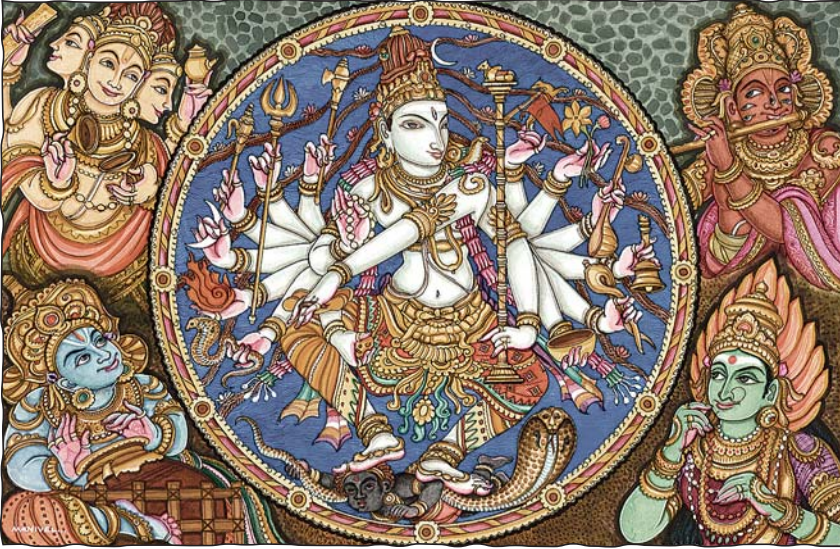
*Dancing with Siva* is a divine book of Siva consciousness. The teachings of Satguru contained in this book offer a complete and profound exposition of Saivite Hinduism and philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta in all its aspects, as there is no metaphysical problem or practical spiritual difficulty that is not brought up and solved in these pages. The language also is beyond all praise, so fresh, so pointed and so plain, simple, inspiring and easy. The constructive and open approach of Saivite Hindus to spiritual, moral and domestic life is scholarly presented and supplemented by scripture quotations, illustrations, a children's primer and charts. I cannot express in adequate terms how I have enjoyed reading and studying *Dancing with Siva*. It highlights information on the different dimensions of Saivism for men and women, young and old, around the world. This book is an authentic, extremely useful spiritual guide for those who want to know Saivite Hinduism in modern life.



# Dancing With Siva

शिवेन सह नर्तनम्

சிவனோடு ஆடுதல்



Sixth Edition

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**Himalayan Academy**

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### ***Art Descriptions***

*Cover Art: Artist S. Rajam depicts Lord Śiva in His Himālayan abode, seated on a tiger skin by a mountain stream in yoga posture. As Nandi the bull looks on, He creates the cosmic rhythm on His drum as two devotees play the mṛidaṅga and three others dance exuberantly nearby.*

*Gaṇeśa Dancing: In earthy tones that remind us of sculpted stone images found throughout India, famed Indian artist Indra Sharma paints a surprisingly agile dancing Lord Gaṇeśa, Remover of Obstacles and Lord of Dharma, who blesses the beginning of all worthy enterprises.*

*Half Title Page: Pradosha Śiva by A. Manivelu dances in a circle, His sixteen hands holding powers and divine implements. The Gods gather in worship, Brahmā plays cymbals, Indra plays the flute, Durgā Devī watches in wonderment and Viṣṇu drums on a ghatam, clay pot.*

# Dancing With Śiva

Hinduism's  
Contemporary Catechism

शिवेन सह नर्तनम्  
हिन्दुधम समकालीन प्रश्नोत्तरम्

சிவனோடு ஆடுதல  
இந்து சமயத்தின் தற்கால வினா விடை

Satguru Sivaya  
Subramuniaswami



ॐ

## Dedication

### *Samarpaṇam*

### समर्पणम्



ANĒŚA, THE LORD OF CATEGORIES, WHO REMOVED ALL BARRIERS TO THE MANIFESTATION OF THIS CONTEMPORARY HINDU CATECHISM, TO HIM WE OFFER OUR REVERENT OBEISANCE. THIS TEXT IS DEDICATED TO MY SATGURU, SAGE YOGASWAMI

of Columbuturai, Sri Lanka, perfect *siddha yogī* and illumined master who knew the Unknowable and held Truth in the palm of his hand. As monarch of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā, this obedient disciple of Satguru Chellappaswami infused in me all that you will find herein. Yogaswami commanded all to seek within, to know the Self and see God Śiva everywhere and in everyone. Among his great sayings: "Know thy Self by thyself. Śiva is doing it all. All is Śiva. Be still." Well over 2,000 years ago Rishi Tirumular, of our lineage, aptly conveyed the spirit of *Dancing with Śiva*:

The thirty-six elements dance. Sadāśiva dances. Consciousness dances. Śiva-Śakti dances. The animate and inanimate dance. All these and the *Vedas* dance when the Supreme dances His dance of bliss. The seven worlds as His golden abode, the five chakras as His pedestal, the central *kuṇḍalinī śakti* as His divine stage, thus in rapture He dances, He who is Transcendent Light. He dances with the celestials. He dances in the golden hall. He dances with the three Gods. He dances with the assembly of silent sages. He dances in song. He dances in ultimate energy. He dances in souls—He who is the Lord of Dances. Tat Astu.

---

*Indra Sharma captures the powerful grace of Satguru Siva Yogaswami of Jaffna, Sri Lanka (1872-1964). The illumined master is proudly bearing the three lines of holy ash that every Śaivite honors and a simple, hand-woven cloth which he always wore.*





# Contents

## *Vishayasūchī*

## विषयसूची

Dedication— <i>Samarpaṇam</i> .....	v
Author’s Introduction— <i>Granthakāra Bhūmikā</i> .....	xvii
The Master Course— <i>Pradhāna Pāṭhyakramah</i> .....	xxxiii
Śiva’s Cosmic Dance— <i>Śivānanda Taṇḍavaḥ</i> .....	xxxix

### UPANISHAD ONE

#### ETERNAL TRUTHS—*Sanātana Dharmah*

#### ***Maṇḍala 1: Self Realization—Paramātma Darśanam***

ŚLOKA .....	PAGE
1 Who Am I? Where Did I Come From? .....	5
2 Where Am I Going? What Is My Path? .....	7
3 What Is Meant by “Dancing with Śiva”? .....	9
4 How Can We Learn to Dance with Śiva?.....	11
5 What is the Ultimate Goal of Earthly Life?.....	13
Verses from Scripture on Self Realization.....	14

#### ***Maṇḍala 2: Hinduism—Hindu Dharmah***

6 What Are Hinduism’s Principal Sects?.....	19
7 What Is the Deeply Mystical Śaiva Sect? .....	21
8 What Is the Magic and Power of Śāktism? .....	23
9 What Is the Devotional Vaishṇava Sect? .....	25
10 What Is the Universalist Smārta Sect? .....	27
Verses from Scripture on Religion .....	28

#### ***Maṇḍala 3: Śaivite Hinduism—Śaiva Dharmah***

11 What Is the Nature of Śaivite Theology?.....	33
12 How Do Śaivites Regard Other Faiths? .....	35
13 How Does Śaivism Stay Contemporary?.....	37
14 What Is the Nature of Life for Śaivites? .....	39
15 What Is the Symbolism of Śiva’s Dance?.....	41
Verses from Scripture on Śaivism .....	42

**UPANISHAD TWO**  
**GOD AND THE GODS—Īśvaraḥ Devatāḥ cha**

**Maṇḍala 4: Our Supreme God—Śivaḥ**

16	What Is the Nature of Our God Śiva? . . . . .	49
17	What Is God Śiva's Unmanifest Reality? . . . . .	51
18	What Is God Śiva's Pure Consciousness? . . . . .	53
19	What Is the Nature of the Primal Soul? . . . . .	55
20	What Are God Śiva's Traditional Forms? . . . . .	57
	Verses from Scripture on Śiva . . . . .	58

**Maṇḍala 5: Lords of Dharma—Gaṇeśa-Kārttikeyau**

21	Do Other Gods Exist Apart from Śiva? . . . . .	63
22	What Is the Nature of Lord Gaṇeśa? . . . . .	65
23	What Is Lord Gaṇeśa's Special Duty? . . . . .	67
24	What Is the Nature of Lord Kārttikeya? . . . . .	69
25	What Does Lord Kārttikeya's <i>Vel</i> Signify? . . . . .	71
	Verses from Scripture on Lords of <i>Dharma</i> . . . . .	72

**UPANISHAD THREE**  
**OUR IMMORTAL SOUL—Amṛitātmā**

**Maṇḍala 6: The Nature of the Soul—Ātmasvarūpam**

26	What Is Our Individual Soul Nature? . . . . .	79
27	How Is Our Soul Different from Śiva? . . . . .	81
28	How Is Our Soul Identical with Śiva? . . . . .	83
29	Why Are We Not Omniscient Like Śiva? . . . . .	85
30	How Do Hindus Understand <i>Moksha</i> ? . . . . .	87
	Verses from Scripture on the Soul . . . . .	88

**Maṇḍala 7: Karma and Rebirth—Samsārah**

31	How Do Hindus Understand <i>Karma</i> ? . . . . .	93
32	Is There Good <i>Karma</i> and Bad <i>Karma</i> ? . . . . .	95
33	What Is the Process of Reincarnation? . . . . .	97
34	How Should We View Death and Dying? . . . . .	99
35	How Does One Best Prepare for Death? . . . . .	101
	Verses from Scripture on <i>Samsāra</i> . . . . .	102

**Maṇḍala 8: The Way to Liberation—San Mārgaḥ**

36	What Are the Four Stages on the Path? . . . . .	107
37	What Is the Nature of the <i>Charyā Pāda</i> ? . . . . .	109

38	What Is the Nature of the <i>Kriyā Pāda</i> ? .....	111
39	What Is the Nature of the <i>Yoga Pāda</i> ? .....	113
40	What Is the Nature of the <i>Jñāna Pāda</i> ? .....	115
	Verses from Scripture on Liberation .....	116

## UPANISHAD FOUR THE WORLD—*Śivamayam*

### ***Maṇḍala 9: The Three Worlds—Trilokam***

41	Where Did This Universe Come from? .....	123
42	What Is the Nature of the Physical Plane? .....	125
43	What Is the Nature of the Subtle Plane? .....	127
44	What Is the Nature of the Causal Plane? .....	129
45	Does the Universe Ever End? Is It Real? .....	131
	Verses from Scripture on Three Worlds .....	132

### ***Maṇḍala 10: The Goodness of All—Sarvabhadraḥ***

46	Are Souls and World Essentially Good? .....	137
47	Why Do Some Souls Act in Evil Ways? .....	139
48	What Is the Source of Good and Evil? .....	141
49	How Can a Benevolent God Permit Evil? .....	143
50	Should One Avoid Worldly Involvement? .....	145
	Verses from Scripture on Goodness .....	146

### ***Maṇḍala 11: Sin and Suffering—Pāpa-Duḥkhe***

51	Why Is There Suffering in the World? .....	151
52	What Is Sin? How Can We Atone for It? .....	153
53	Does Hell Really Exist? Is There a Satan? .....	155
54	What Is the Consequence of Sinful Acts? .....	157
55	Does God Ever Punish Wrongdoers? .....	159
	Verses from Scripture on Sin and Suffering .....	160

## UPANISHAD FIVE RIGHT LIVING—*Dharmaḥ*

### ***Maṇḍala 12: Four Dharmas—Chaturdharmāḥ***

56	What Is <i>Dharma</i> ? What Are Its Forms? .....	167
57	What Is Signified by Universal <i>Dharma</i> ? .....	169
58	What Is the Nature of Social <i>Dharma</i> ? .....	171
59	What Is the Nature of Human <i>Dharma</i> ? .....	173
60	What Is the Nature of Personal <i>Dharma</i> ? .....	175

Verses from Scripture on Four *Dharmas*. . . . . 176

***Maṇḍala 13: Good Conduct—Sadāchārah***

61	What Is the Meaning of Good Conduct? . . . . .	181
62	What Are Good Conduct's Four Keys? . . . . .	183
63	From Whom Is Good Conduct Learned? . . . . .	185
64	What Are the Ten Classical Restraints? . . . . .	187
65	What Are the Ten Classical Observances? . . . . .	189
	Verses from Scripture on Good Conduct . . . . .	190

***Maṇḍala 14: Noninjury—Ahimsā***

66	What Is the Great Virtue Called <i>Ahimsā</i> ? . . . . .	195
67	What Is the Inner Source of Noninjury? . . . . .	197
68	What Is the Inner Source of Violence? . . . . .	199
69	Is Vegetarianism Integral to Noninjury? . . . . .	201
70	How Can Peace on Earth Be Achieved? . . . . .	203
	Verses from Scripture on Noninjury . . . . .	204

**UPANISHAD SIX**

**FAMILY LIFE—*Grihastha Dharmah***

***Maṇḍala 15: Husband and Wife—Dampatī***

71	What Is the Central Purpose of Marriage? . . . . .	211
72	What Are the Duties of the Husband? . . . . .	213
73	What Are Special Duties of the Wife? . . . . .	215
74	What Is the Hindu View of Sexuality? . . . . .	217
75	What Is the Relation of Sex to Marriage? . . . . .	219
	Verses from Scripture on Husband and Wife . . . . .	220

***Maṇḍala 16: Marriage—Vivāhah***

76	What Is the Basis for a Happy Marriage? . . . . .	225
77	Must We Marry Within Our Religion? . . . . .	227
78	How Are Hindu Marriages Arranged? . . . . .	229
79	What Is the Hindu Family Structure? . . . . .	231
80	How Are Marital Problems Reconciled? . . . . .	233
	Verses from Scripture on Marriage . . . . .	234

***Maṇḍala 17: Children—Apatyam***

81	What Is the Fulfillment of a Marriage? . . . . .	239
82	What Are the Main Duties of Parents? . . . . .	241
83	How Strictly Must Children Be Guided? . . . . .	243

84	Should All Youths Be Urged to Marry? .....	245
85	How Is Family Harmony Maintained? .....	247
	Verses from Scripture on Children .....	248

**UPANISHAD SEVEN**  
**SACRED CULTURE—*Maṅgala Kriyā***

***Maṅḍala 18: Ways of Wisdom—Bodhi Tantraḥ***

86	How Do We Overcome Life's Obstacles? .....	255
87	What Are the Hindu's Daily <i>Yoga</i> Practices? .....	257
88	How Are <i>Āyurveda</i> and <i>Jyotisha</i> Used? .....	259
89	How Do Hindus Regard Art and Culture? .....	261
90	What Is the Hindu Outlook on Giving? .....	263
	Verses from Scripture on Ways of Wisdom .....	264

***Maṅḍala 19: Sacraments—Samskārah***

91	What Are Hinduism's Rites of Passage? .....	269
92	What Are the Sacraments of Childhood? .....	271
93	What Are the Sacraments of Adulthood? .....	273
94	What Are the Child-bearing Sacraments? .....	275
95	Are There Rites for the Wisdom Years? .....	277
	Verses from Scripture on Sacraments .....	278

***Maṅḍala 20: Festivals—Utsavāḥ***

96	What Are the Festival Days of Śaivism? .....	283
97	What Are the Primary Festivals to Śiva? .....	285
98	What Are the Major Gaṇeśa Festivals? .....	287
99	What Are the Main Kārttikeya Festivals? .....	289
100	What Are Other Important Festivals? .....	291
	Verses from Scripture on Festivals .....	292

**UPANISHAD EIGHT**  
**SACRED WORSHIP—*Upāsanā***

***Maṅḍala 21: Śiva Temples—Śivālayāḥ***

101	What Is the Nature of the Śiva Temple? .....	299
102	How Are Temples Founded and Built? .....	301
103	When Should One Attend the Temple? .....	303
104	How Does One Attend a Śiva Temple? .....	305
105	What Occurs Within the Śiva Temple? .....	307
	Verses from Scripture on Śiva Temples .....	308

**Maṇḍala 22: Temple Rites—Pūjā**

106	What Is the Inner Importance of <i>Pūjā</i> ? . . . . .	313
107	What Is the Special Rite Called <i>Ārchanā</i> ? . . . . .	315
108	What Is the Nature of Image Worship? . . . . .	317
109	Who Are the Priests of Śiva Temples? . . . . .	319
110	What Does the <i>Pujārī</i> Do During <i>Pūjā</i> ? . . . . .	321
	Verses from Scripture on Temples Rites . . . . .	322

**Maṇḍala 23: Love of God—Bhaktiḥ**

111	Is Temple Worship Only for Beginners? . . . . .	327
112	How Do Devotees Prepare for Worship? . . . . .	329
113	How Do Our Prayers Reach the Gods? . . . . .	331
114	Do Śaivites Worship Only in Temples? . . . . .	333
115	What Is the Home Shrine's Significance? . . . . .	335
	Verses from Scripture on Love of God. . . . .	336

**UPANISHAD NINE****HOLY MEN AND WOMEN—Mahātmā****Maṇḍala 24: Monastic Life—Sannyāsa Dharmah**

116	What Is the Hindu Monastic Tradition? . . . . .	343
117	What Are the Goals of Renunciate Life? . . . . .	345
118	What Is the <i>Sannyāsin's Kuṇḍalinī</i> Path? . . . . .	347
119	What Is the <i>Sannyāsin's</i> Initiation Rite? . . . . .	349
120	What Are the Holy Orders of <i>Sannyāsa</i> ? . . . . .	351
	Verses from Scripture on Monastic Life . . . . .	352

**Maṇḍala 25: Knowers of God—Jñānī**

121	Who Are Hinduism's Spiritual Leaders? . . . . .	357
122	What Is a Saint, a Sage and a <i>Satguru</i> ? . . . . .	359
123	Are There Other Terms for Holy Ones? . . . . .	361
124	What Is the Nature of <i>Guru</i> Protocol? . . . . .	363
125	What Is the <i>Satguru's</i> Special Function? . . . . .	365
	Verses from Scripture on Knowers of God . . . . .	366

**UPANISHAD TEN****SACRED SCRIPTURE—Śāstram****Maṇḍala 26: Revealed Scripture—Śrutih**

126	What Are Hindu Revealed Scriptures? . . . . .	373
127	What Is the Nature of the <i>Veda</i> Texts? . . . . .	375

128	How Are the <i>Vedas</i> Significant Today? . . . . .	377
129	What Is the Nature of the Holy <i>Āgamas</i> ? . . . . .	379
130	How Are the <i>Āgamas</i> Significant Today? . . . . .	381
	Verses from Scripture on <i>Śruti</i> . . . . .	382

### ***Maṇḍala 27: Secondary Scripture—Smṛitiḥ***

131	Do <i>Smṛiti</i> and Sacred Literature Differ? . . . . .	387
132	What Texts Amplify <i>Vedas</i> and <i>Āgamas</i> ? . . . . .	389
133	Does Hinduism Have Epics and Myths? . . . . .	391
134	Are there Other Types of Sacred Texts? . . . . .	393
135	What Is the Source of This Catechism? . . . . .	395
	Verses from Scripture on <i>Smṛiti</i> . . . . .	396

### ***Maṇḍala 28: Affirmations of Faith—Mantraḥ***

136	What Is the Holy Namaḥ Śivāya <i>Mantra</i> ? . . . . .	401
137	How Is Namaḥ Śivāya Properly Chanted? . . . . .	403
138	Is Initiation Necessary to Perform <i>Japa</i> ? . . . . .	405
139	What Is Śaivism's Affirmation of Faith? . . . . .	407
140	How Is the Affirmation of Faith Used? . . . . .	409
	Verses from Scripture on Affirmation . . . . .	410

## **UPANISHAD ELEVEN**

### **MONISTIC THEISM—*Advaita Īśvaravādaḥ***

#### ***Maṇḍala 29: Monism and Dualism—Advaita-Dvaitau***

141	What Are the Many Hindu Philosophies? . . . . .	417
142	How Do Monism and Dualism Differ? . . . . .	419
143	Are Monism and Dualism Reconcilable? . . . . .	421
144	What Is the View of Monistic Theism? . . . . .	423
145	Is Monistic Theism Found in the <i>Vedas</i> ? . . . . .	425
	Verses from Scripture on One and Two. . . . .	426

#### ***Maṇḍala 30: Views of Reality—Śaiva Siddhāntaḥ***

146	What Are Śaiva Siddhānta's Two Schools? . . . . .	431
147	What Are the Two Views on Creation? . . . . .	433
148	What Are the Views on God and Soul? . . . . .	435
149	What Are the Differing Views on Evil? . . . . .	437
150	What Are the Views on <i>Mahāpralaya</i> ? . . . . .	439
	Verses from Scripture on <i>Siddhānta</i> . . . . .	440



**UPANISHAD TWELVE**  
**PASSING ON THE POWER—*Sampradāyaḥ***

***Maṇḍala 31: Himalayan Lineage—Kailāsa Paramparā***

151	What Is Hinduism’s Nātha Sampradāya? . . . . .	447
152	What Is the Lofty Kailāsa Paramparā? . . . . .	449
153	Who Were the Early Kailāsa Preceptors? . . . . .	451
154	Who Were Kadaitswami and Chellappan? . . . . .	453
155	Who Are the Most Recent Kailāsa <i>Gurus</i> ? . . . . .	455
	Verses from Scripture on <i>Paramparā</i> . . . . .	456

**RESOURCES—*Upagranthāḥ***

I.	A Śaivite Creed . . . . .	461
II.	Six Schools of Śaivism . . . . .	489
III.	The Tradition of Masters . . . . .	517
IV.	Monism and Pluralism in Śaiva Siddhānta . . . . .	529
V.	Truth Is One, Paths Are Many . . . . .	571
VI.	Hindu Timeline . . . . .	651
VII.	A Children’s Primer . . . . .	695
VIII.	Charts . . . . .	737

Conclusion— <i>Samāpaṇam</i> . . . . .	751
Glossary— <i>Śabda Kośaḥ</i> . . . . .	753
Sanskrit Pronunciation— <i>Uçchāraṇam Saṁskṛita</i> . . . . .	853
Index— <i>Anukramanikā</i> . . . . .	855
Index of Scriptural Verses— <i>Śāstra Udharāṇasūchī</i> . . . . .	905
Supplementary Reading— <i>Granthavidyā</i> . . . . .	911
Colophon— <i>Antyavachanam</i> . . . . .	917

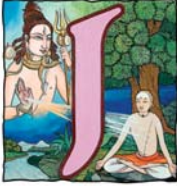




# Author's Introduction

## *Granthakāra Bhūmikā*

### ग्रन्थकार भूमिका



IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT YOU HAVE FOUND THIS BOOK AND THE TREASURES IT CONTAINS. IT'S ALL PART OF THE DIVINE DANCE OF DESTINY. THE TREASURE YOU HOLD IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND IS DIVINE KNOWLEDGE, KNOWLEDGE ABOUT YOU AND GOD,

knowledge about how to live a spiritual life, knowledge about what Hindus teach and believe. All of this and more awaits you in the chapters that follow. Put this knowledge into practice, and one day you will hold Truth in the palm of your hand—just as simply.

Dancing with Śiva! What an extraordinary expression of our closeness to God, our creative interplay with God. The Cosmic Dance describes the Hindu view of existence, from the first thunder of the drum in His right hand announcing the Beginning, to the final all-consuming flames in His left hand pronouncing the End, which but heralds a new Beginning. Thus, dancing with Śiva is everything we do, everything we think and say and feel, from our seeming birth to our so-called death. It is man and God forever engaged in sacred movement.

The ancient sages chose the dance to depict God for good reason. Esoterically, movement is the most primal act of existence. Without this simple thing, there would be no universe, no us, no experience, nothing. Light is movement. Thought is movement. Atoms are movement. Life is movement. And, the Hindu holds, God is movement. Also, dance is the only creative act in which there is perfect oneness of the creator and his creation. Unlike a painting, a poem, an invention or any other artistic impulse, when the dance is over there is no product, no thing to save and enjoy. As with life, we may perceive the dance, never possess it. One cannot separate the dancer from dancing, just as one cannot separate God from the world or from ourselves. Of special meaning is the place where Śiva dances: in the *chitsabhā*, the hall of consciousness. In other words, it happens within each of us.

The vast complexity of Śiva's Cosmic Dance is traditionally repre-

sented in 108 poses. Over twenty centuries ago, Rishi Tirumular of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā praised God Śiva's never-ending dance with loving eloquence: "In all worlds He is, the Holy Lord. In darkness He is, light He is. In sun He is, in moon He is. Everywhere He is. The Lord is in all creation. None knows His coming and going. He is distant. He is near. Multiple He is. One He is. Water, earth, sky, fire and wind, the spark within the body—all these He is. He is the walking *jīva* here below. Deathless He is."

God Śiva is among the most mysterious, complex, compassionate and profound conceptions of the one Supreme Being to be found in the religions of mankind. He is Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of all existence, the Cosmic Dancer who animates the universe from within. He is pure love, light, energy and consciousness. He is the timeless, formless and spaceless Absolute Reality, Paraśiva. Those who worship the great God Śiva are Śaivites, and their religion is called Śaivite Hinduism. Śaivism represents roughly half, perhaps somewhat more, of Hinduism's one billion members. It shares far more common ground than differences with other Hindu denominations. Still, it is distinct. Unlike the second major Hindu faith, Vaishṇavism (which is strongly dualistic), Śaivism adds a meditative, *yogic* emphasis to a *bhakti* path. For Śaivites, God and soul are essentially one. Unlike Advaita Vedānta, Śaivism is strongly devotional and theistic, believing in a one true God who is Personal Lord and Creator. The term "monistic theism" defines the essential resolution of duality and nonduality which typifies Śaivism's philosophical stance.

Scholars tell us that Śaivite Hinduism is mankind's oldest religion, the venerable Sanātana Dharma. They have traced its roots back 6-8,000 years and more to the advanced Indus Valley civilization. A better-preserved history of Śaivism lies in the ruins of Dholavira, in Gujarat state, where another Indian civilization of about the same antiquity was unearthed in 1998. Yet, sacred writings and legend tell us that there never was a time on the Earth when Śaivism did not exist. Ten of the eleven great religions existing today have a beginning in history, a birth date before which they did not exist. All other religions and faiths were founded by men. Not Śaivism. It had no beginning. It can have no end.

Through history Śaivism has given rise to other faiths, such as Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, as well as to a multitude of sects within Hinduism itself. This oldest of religions is also among the largest. One out of every six people on the Earth is a Hindu, and recent studies show that

Hinduism is among the fastest-growing faiths on the planet.

It is neither antiquity nor size which make Śaivism great. The real grandeur derives from a sweet tolerance for the views of others coupled with these: a practical culture, an emphasis on personal spiritual effort and experience, the perception that God is everywhere present—and therefore no aspect of life may be divided from religion—and a joyous devotion to the one Supreme God who all people worship and Śaivism knows as Śiva, “the Auspicious One,” and the knowledge that Truth lies within man himself.

Each Śaivite is unique, yet all seek the same things in life: to be happy and secure, to be loved and appreciated, to be creative and useful. Śaivite Hinduism has an established culture which fulfills these essential human wants and helps us to understand the world and our place in it. To all devotees it gives guidance in the qualities of character which are so necessary in spiritual life—patience, compassion for others, broadmindedness, humility, self-confidence, industriousness and devotion.

Śaivism centers around the home and the temple. Family life is very strong, and precious. Daily devotional services are conducted in the home shrine room. The massive and architecturally priceless temples—and a million other temples and shrines throughout the world—provide daily worship services and sacraments for life's passages. Śaivite worship is more individual than congregational, each approaching God directly. Yet during holy days the temple precincts resound with the genial voices of devotees gathered to sing God Śiva's praises.

### **The Need for a Hindu Catechism**

It is imperative at this time in our history—when the world, our Earth, is on the brink of an inner and outer space age—that we continue to value and learn from ancient Hindu wisdom. Long, long ago, great sages of India unfolded these eternal truths from within themselves and recorded them as scripture to be sung out through the voices of their representatives today. So great was their insight. Truly, this eternal wisdom lives now and will live on into the next generation, the next and the next. Hear the famed prayer offered by *rishis* of yore: “Lead me from unreality to reality. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality” (*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, 1.3.28).

While other religions are precisely defined by explicit and often unyielding beliefs, Hinduism condones no such constraints. For the Hindu,

intuition is far more important than intellect; experience supersedes dogma; and personal realization is held infinitely more precious than outer expressions or affiliations of faith. Philosopher S. Radhakrishnan said it well: “The mechanical faith which depends on authority and wishes to enjoy the consolations of religion without the labor of being religious is quite different from the religious faith which has its roots in experience.” Hindu religious philosophy is based on experience, on personal discovery and testing of things. It does not say, “Believe as others do or suffer.” Rather, it says, “Know thy Self, inquire and be free.”

There are no heretics in Hinduism, for God is everywhere and in all things. In such an open laboratory, Hindu spirituality has grown over the millennia so diverse and rich that it defies definition. Even knowledgeable Hindus, after a lifetime of study, will hesitate to say that Hinduism is one thing and not another. Hinduism, more than any other religion, has encompassed the full spectrum of philosophic positions, and to this day it venerates living exponents of each. Thus it is that one teacher will praise devotion as the ultimate path, while another, spurning devotion, says liberation comes only upon the shattering of this universe’s illusory appearance. How then to understand Hinduism? From the Himalayan vaults, ten thousand streams of thought descend, their cool waters giving life to all below. These flow together, their convergences becoming broad tributaries. From these, two mighty rivers are born which have through history watered and made green the growth of Indian spirituality—one is Vedānta and the other Siddhānta. This contemporary catechism is the confluence of these two potent traditions into a single torrent, the inundation of the Sanātana Dharma in full, fierce flood and force.

Indeed, the very idea of a Hindu catechism is, for many, unthinkable, a perilous and impertinent pursuit. Until now, no one has attempted such a complete overview, making this a rare, and remarkable, book. One might even say an inevitable one. If, therefore, in undertaking the impossible we have overlooked any lineage, neglected any tradition or vital issue, please call to mind that it is human to err and only God is perfect, and find room in your heart to overlook any oversight.

A simple warning is due. This collection of customs and beliefs is not a detached, scholastic analysis of Hinduism, but a view from the inside, a view of the religion as Hindus themselves would wish their tradition honored and explained to others. Nor is this yet another dogma added to the mountains of doctrines and decrees which have crushed the human

spirit throughout history. Every instinct in Hinduism rebels against the doctrine which is oppressive or narrow-minded. Every instinct in Hinduism rejoices in tolerance and in acknowledgement of the many paths, even those that seem to contradict its own. When you believe that God is everywhere, in all there is, wherever it is, it becomes impossible to hate or injure or seek to aggressively convert others. That is the spirit of this book. It is a transcript of the life lived by hundreds of millions of people, one out of six of the human family. Like Hinduism itself, this contemporary catechism is an ongoing revelation—a dance more than a doctrine.

### **Hinduism Is an Eastern Religion**

To place Hinduism in the context of world thought, it is first important to note that it is a religion of the East. This is a vital fact, for there is a vast difference between the way seekers in the East and the West have traditionally viewed the ultimate questions: “Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?” The East has tended to be unitive, idealistic and introspective. The West has tended to be dualistic, materialistic and extroverted. Whereas personal inner experience is the crux of religion from the Eastern view, belief and faith are valued most highly in the West. While Eastern religions are accommodating of other views, believing that all paths lead ultimately to God, Western religions tend to be dogmatic, stressing theirs as the one true God and the one true religion.

### **The Hindu View of Life**

The soul, in its intelligence, searches for its Self, slowly ascending the path that leads to enlightenment and liberation. It is an arduous, delightful journey through the cycles of birth, death and rebirth culminating in Self Realization, the direct and personal spiritual experience of God, of the Self, of Truth. This alone among all things in the cosmos can bring freedom from the bondages of ignorance and desire. This is the highest realization. There is none greater. Hindus believe that all men and women are on this path and that all will ultimately reach its summit. It is a glorious and encouraging concept—that every single soul will reach Truth, *moksha*, none left to suffer forever for human frailties and faults.

Hinduism is our planet's original and oldest living religion, with no single founder. For as long as man has lived and roamed across Earth's land and water masses, breathed its air and worshiped in awe its fire, the Sanātana Dharma has been a guide of righteous life for evolving souls.



# Where Hindus Live



Algeria..... 600  
 Barbados ..... 100  
 Brazil ..... 60  
 Brunei ..... 500  
 Cameroon..... 60  
 C. African Rep.. 20

Czech Republic  
 and Slovakia ... 150  
 Chad ..... 20  
 Chile ..... 20  
 China ..... 170  
 Congo ..... 100

Colombia ..... 60  
 Cuba ..... 100  
 Ecuador ..... 600  
 Finland ..... 100  
 Gabon ..... 100  
 Ghana ..... 600

Guinea..... 50  
 Hungary..... 50  
 Iceland..... 7  
 Ireland..... 20  
 Israel ..... 200  
 Ivory Coast . 1,000

While India is home to 94% of the world's nearly one billion Hindus, nearly 57 million are scattered widely across the globe. This map shows larger communities, with smaller ones listed below.



Zambia .....	600	Mexico.....	50	Senegal .....	100	Tunisia.....	100
Jordan .....	1,000	Morocco.....	60	Seychelles .....	600	Turkey.....	100
Lebanon .....	100	Mozambique .	600	Sierra Leone ..	500	Upper Volta....	100
Liberia.....	500	Panama.....	600	South Korea ....	60	Yemen, North..	100
Laos.....	600	Poland.....	100	Sudan.....	500	Zaire (Congo)	500
Libya.....	500	Qatar.....	500	Syria .....	100		

Shortly into the twenty-first century, Hindu adherents will number over a billion. All of them are Hindus, yes, but they represent a broad range of beliefs, *sādhanas* and mystic goals.

While Hindus believe many diverse and exotic things, there are several bedrock concepts on which virtually all concur. All Hindus worship one Supreme Reality, though they call it by many names, and teach that all souls will ultimately realize the truth of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. Hindus believe that there is no eternal hell, no damnation. They concur that there is no intrinsic evil. All is good. All is God. In contrast, Western faiths postulate a living evil force, embodied in Satan, that directly opposes the will of God.

Hindus believe that the universe was created out of God and is permeated by Him—a Supreme Being who both is form and pervades form, who creates, sustains and destroys the universe only to recreate it again in unending cycles. Hindus accept all genuine spiritual paths—from pure monism, which concludes that “God alone exists,” to theistic dualism, which asks, “When shall I know His Grace?” Each soul is free to find his own way, whether by devotion, austerity, meditation, *yoga* or selfless service (*sevā*). Hinduism’s three pillars are temple worship, scripture and the *guru*-disciple tradition. Hinduism strongly declares the validity of the three worlds of existence and the myriad Gods and *devas* residing within them. Festivals, pilgrimage, chanting of holy hymns and home worship are dynamic practices. Love, nonviolence, good conduct and the law of *dharma* define the Hindu path. Hinduism explains that the soul reincarnates until all *karmas* are resolved and God Realization is attained.

Hindus wear the sectarian marks, called *tilaka*, on their foreheads as sacred symbols, distinctive insignia of their heritage. Hinduism is a mystical religion, leading devotees to personally experience its eternal truths within themselves, finally reaching the pinnacle of consciousness where man and God are forever one. They prefer cremation of the body upon death, rather than burial, believing that the soul lives on and will inhabit a new body on Earth.

While Hinduism has many sacred scriptures, all sects ascribe the highest authority to the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, though their *Āgamas* differ somewhat. Hinduism’s nearly one billion adherents have tens of thousands of sacred temples and shrines, mostly in India, but now located in every community of the global village where Hindus have settled. Its spiritual core is its holy men and women—millions of *sādhus*, *yogīs*, *swāmīs*,

*vairāgīs*, saints and *satgurus* who have dedicated their lives to full-time service, devotion and God Realization, and to proclaiming the eternal truths of the Sanātana Dharma.

### **What Do Most Hindus Believe?**

There are nine beliefs, or *śraddhā*, which though not exhaustive offer a simple summary of Hindu spirituality.

1. Hindus believe in a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being who is both immanent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest Reality.
2. Hindus believe in the divinity of the *Vedas*, the world's most ancient scripture, and venerate the *Āgamas* as equally revealed. These primordial hymns are God's word and the bedrock of Sanātana Dharma, the eternal religion which has neither beginning nor end.
3. Hindus believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution.
4. Hindus believe in *karma*, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds.
5. Hindus believe that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all *karmas* have been resolved, and *moksha*, spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Not a single soul will be eternally deprived of this destiny.
6. Hindus believe that divine beings exist in unseen worlds and that temple worship, rituals, sacraments as well as personal devotionals create a communion with these *devas* and Gods.
7. Hindus believe that a spiritually awakened master, or *satguru*, is essential to know the Transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification, pilgrimage, self-inquiry and meditation.
8. Hindus believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice *ahimsā*, "noninjury."
9. Hindus believe that no particular religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine religious paths are facets of God's Pure Love and Light, deserving tolerance and understanding.

### **World Religions at a Glance**

We list here how the number of Hindus compares with other religions and provide a map indicating where Hindus reside in the world. Main statistical sources: *World Christian Encyclopedia* and the Worldwatch Institute.

### 2002 World Population

Hindus:	1 billion	Taoists:	50 million
Muslims:	1.3 billion	Other Faiths:	77 million
Catholics:	1.4 billion	Shintoists:	30 million
Protestants:	600 million	Jews:	18 million
Nonbelievers:	900 million	Sikhs:	16 million
Confucian:	400 million	Jains:	6 million
Buddhists:	360 million	Zoroastrians:	125,000
Tribals:	100 million	<b>Total:</b>	<b>6.25 billion</b>

### About This Edition of *Dancing with Śiva*

In this sixth edition, we have happily been able to present for you all of that beautiful artwork in full color, and in a larger, hardbound format. Much of the art was redone for this special legacy edition. S. Rajam created new art for the Children's Primer, and artist A. Manivelu provided new versions of the Timeline illustrations, the comparative religions symbols in the Truth Is One resource, and of the Śaiva symbols that appear on the chapter title pages.

For the fifth edition, I instructed my *sannyāsins* to completely redo the artwork. You will see that they have combined traditional images with computerized technology to produce a unique art form that is the best of the East and the best of the West. They also replaced each of the 165 reproductions of Rājput paintings, chosen for the earlier edition from a vast collection of art from many eras and many artists. Only a few of those paintings faithfully described our South Indian heritage. Now they all do, for we discovered in Mylapore, South India, a remarkable, never-before-seen collection of paintings composed over a 50-year period by a most wonderful man. Tiru S. Rajam, now 82, is both a musician and an artist, and throughout this edition and on the cover you will find his sensitive, detailed and unique depiction of South Indian culture and spirituality. His contribution is the most significant change to this newest edition.

In the 1993 fourth edition of *Dancing with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism, Hindu Dharma Samakālīna Praśnottaram*, the questions and answers were brought into the ancient form of terse *ślokas*.

In olden days in India, before paper was invented, *ślokas* were written on palm leaves (*olai*) in the South, scribed into the tough surface, or written on specially-prepared birch bark (*bhūrja pattra*) in the North. The unbound pages were small, about two inches high and six or eight inches

wide. Verses written on them were usually uniform in length, two, three or four lines. To carry forward the refined finesse of those Vedic times, the *ślokas* and *bhāshyas* of this modern catechism have been composed to precise lengths—each *śloka* exactly four lines long and each *bhāshya* exactly twenty-one lines, not a millimeter more or less.

Then I brought in hundreds of verses from Hindu scripture, mostly from the *Vedas*. There is a scriptural quote for each *bhāshya*, and at the end of every chapter, or *maṇḍala*, there are two full pages of scripture elaborating the subject under discussion. We are hopeful that this anthology of hymns will inspire readers to dive deeper into the beauties of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* on their own.

We then expanded by several hundred the number of Sanskrit terms in the book, and incorporated the diacritical marks into the special Minion family of fonts. We typeset the main Lexicon entries in Devanāgarī, with the able editing assistance of several Sanskrit scholars. In the Lexicon, we worked ardently to more fully amplify the essential concepts so briefly presented in the terse *ślokas* and *bhāshyas*. Thus, over the months, what began as a simple glossary of terms steadily grew. The result is really an encyclopedic dictionary. Many terms can be defined in various ways, according to one's philosophical perspective. By studying the terms as defined in this Lexicon, one can better understand their meaning in the body of the text.

Next, we assembled a timeline, a 42-page chronology of ancient Bhārat and modern India, a record of Hindu events placed in the context of world historic landmarks, to which eminent scholars submitted key facts. I believe this chronology is the only one of its kind and encourage teachers to teach it and students to study it to understand the way Hindu history flows alongside the other great human civilizations.

Last but not least, we added a new section called "Truth Is One, Paths Are Many," drawn from our international magazine, HINDUISM TODAY. This 60-page resource offers a brief summary of the beliefs and paths of attainment of the world's major religions, faiths and philosophies and several point-counterpoints, including a comparison of Eastern and Western thought. For the past ten years it has been widely used as an educational tool in universities and various interfaith gatherings, and I felt it should definitely be part of this book. The Timeline, Lexicon and Truth Is One are each complete studies unto themselves.

One of the limitations we encountered was how to speak of the gen-

derless God without implying that the Divine is either man or woman. Working through the constraints of the English language, we just didn't know what to do with the words *he, she, him, her, hers* and *his* in reference to God and the Gods. To speak of God in the neuter form, *It*, seemed an inferior solution, for that indicates a cold and indifferent Deity. Another possibility was to speak of God as *She* and *He* alternately. But this would require also using *God* and *Goddess* alternately, since *God* itself is a masculine term. English seems to offer no reasonable way around the use of masculine pronouns, so, reluctantly, we have referred to God and Gods in mostly masculine terms. One consolation is that this problem also exists in the original Sanskrit, and in fact in all ancient and modern languages with grammatical gender categories, so we emerged from the dilemma by accepting the precedent set by the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* to describe God.

In producing this modern catechism, or *praśnottaram* (literally, “questions and answers”), we kept in mind the need to provide resources so that Hindu institutions and communities around the globe could have, at their fingertips, authentic teachings from which they could locally develop classes and courses and various kinds of study. We encourage scholars, *paṇḍitas*, *swāmīs* and elders everywhere to work with us in translating *Dancing with Śiva* into many of the world's more than 3,000 languages. As I wrote these words in late April of 1997, one of my *āchāryas* was in Moscow, invited there to celebrate the first printing of the Russian edition. That edition was sold out and a second Russian edition was printed in the year 2000, marking, perhaps, a new era for sincere seekers in one of the world's largest nations.

### **Ways to Study *Dancing with Śiva***

It is our belief that a full study of this catechism will provide a basic understanding of the Hindu religion as it is lived today. We have taught this wisdom for over forty years in many countries, and we know that it is competent to change the lives of people, to bring them closer to their inner Divinity, to strengthen husband-and-wife relationships, cement family unity and establish strong, unbreakable connections with God and the Gods. The key is study, by which we do not mean mere recitation, but living the life described in our venerable traditions. There are seven ways this book can be routinely studied, individually or in groups.

1. There are 155 *ślokas*. An ideal way to study the Catechism is to take one *śloka* and its accompanying *bhāshya* each day. Study it, meditate

- on it. Apply it to your own life. Then move on to the next. This will give a daily study of over five months, which can be repeated approximately 2.3 times to make a year of study. It can be repeated year after year, beginning with *śloka* one on the first day of the year.
2. The twelve parts, called *upanishads*, in this catechism, one for each month of the year, may be used as lecture notes or personal study for the month. Each of the twelve is a completely different subject. An *upanishad* is a collection of one, two or three *maṇḍalas*.
  3. The thirty-one chapters, called *maṇḍalas*, each containing five *ślokas*, may be studied one each day for a month and then repeated time and time again.
  4. Another way to study the book is the “subject study,” choosing concepts which interest you and following their threads throughout the book. For example, using the index, one could take the word *soul* and explore its various references—the soul’s creation, its evolution, old souls and young souls. This can be even more interesting if you explore the Lexicon references as well. Tracing the meaning of terms in this way through the Index and Lexicon is a wonderful tool for lectures, classes, teaching of children and your own personal enjoyment.
  5. The fifth way is to read and meditate on the profound Vedic verses, which are found, more than any other scripture, in this *praśnottaram*. They are as alive today as the day they were spoken thousands of years ago. Is it really what they say that stirs the higher consciousness, or is it what they do to the inner currents of the body as they stimulate spirituality?
  6. Another way is to simply read the book, cover to cover.
  7. A final way, since this book has been magically impressed into the *ākāśa*, is to hold it in your hands and absorb its knowledge or put it under your pillow at night.

### **How to Teach *Dancing with Śiva***

For those serious about conducting regular lectures or classes on *Dancing with Śiva, Hinduism’s Contemporary Catechism*, we have created the following simple guide. This approach has various benefits: 1) it gives you a systematic way of presenting the material, without repeating yourself; 2) it relieves you from having to decide what you are going to talk about when lecture or class time comes around and 3) it creates a powerful harmony of minds around the globe among all who are teaching and



learning the subject matter at the same time.

As the basis of a short talk, the *śloka* of the day can be chosen. For a longer discourse, you might discuss an entire *maṇḍala* (containing five *ślokas* and *bhāshyas*, and two pages of scriptural verses). So, for example, if you are giving a lecture on the 12th day of the month, your subject matter would be one or more of the five *ślokas* of *maṇḍala* 12, “The Four Dharmas.” These five *ślokas* and their *bhāshyas* create a complete concept and are more than ample for a well-rounded lecture or seminar.

In addition, the art and sacred symbols can be used when explaining concepts to children, adding a visual dimension to their young understanding. The entire book can be used as a coloring book as it is, or by making enlarged copies of the black-and-white photos on a photocopy machine. Children enjoy animation, and more adventuresome parents may wish to turn portions into an educational video series for their community or nation. Children love toys and games, and interesting charades and memorization games can be developed by inventive parents and teachers. After all, it is in giving our tradition to the children that we assure its perpetuation into the future.

The 1992 Bali Conference of the World Hindu Federation of Nepal, which I attended, decreed that a simple presentation of the minimal duties for parents to pass on Sanātana Dharma to their children be outlined and spread worldwide. We volunteered to take on the challenge. With that in mind, in the 1993 edition of *Dancing with Śiva* we added a new resource section called “A Children’s Primer,” which includes Hinduism A to Z in an illustrated and fun way. For older youth, we offered a more mature summary, a traditional explanation of five main precepts and practices for parents to teach their young ones, and a simple, illustrated presentation of the essential *samskāras*, Hindu sacramental rites of passage.

This textbook gives an organized approach as to what to say to the youth and the adults of our religion, and how to explain our complex heritage to those of other faiths. It also gives truth-seekers who have discovered the mystical realities a coherent and complete philosophical context through which they can understand and continue to pursue the often unbidden experiences they encounter. It validates their inner realizations and gives them the confidence to persevere.

**Awake! Arise!**

As you proceed through *Dancing with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism, Hindu Dharma Samakālīna Praśnottaram*, you will come to see that it contains a new presentation of very ancient knowledge. You will soon realize that, somewhere within you, you already know these truths. You will find yourself traveling back in your memory, perhaps several lives, and remembering that you have studied them before in the same way that you are studying them now.

A new breed of souls is even now coming up in the world. They are fearless because they are strong. They do not fear death, ill-health or lack of knowledge. Their only qualification is that they love and worship God and the Gods. They have no magic formula. They are selling nothing. They need nothing. They are who they are. You may be one of them.

So, proceed with confidence. Success is assured. You cannot fail if *bhakti* is integrated with *jñāna*, Siddhānta with Vedānta, Āgamas with *Vedas*, and Hindu Dharma with everyday life. Yea, this is the secure path, the safe path, leading to knowledge, experience and recognition, then realization, of your true, divine, eternal Self. Awake, arise and stop not until the goal is reached! It is no accident that you have found this book and the treasures it contains.

Love and blessings to you from this and inner worlds,

**Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami**

162nd Jagadāchārya of the Nandinātha

Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā

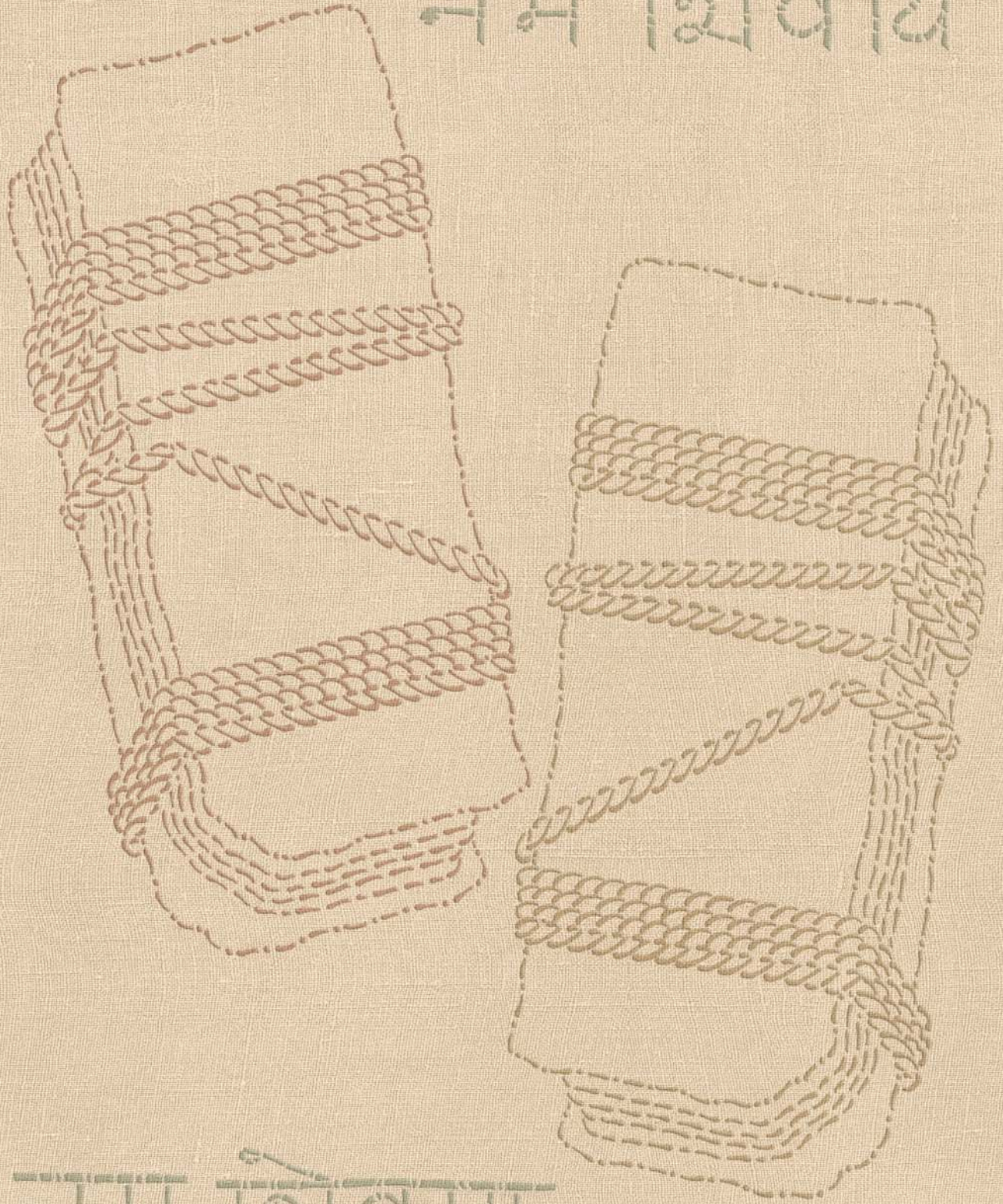
Guru Mahāsannidhānam

Kauai Aadheenam, Hawaii

Satguru Pūrṇimā, July 4, 2001

Hindu year of Vṛisha, 5103

नम शिवाय



नम शिवाय

# The Master Course

## *Pradhāna Pāṭhyakramah*

### प्रधान पाठ्यक्रमः



DRAWN FROM HALF A CENTURY OF PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION, DISCUSSION WITH ADEPTS IN MANY NATIONS, AND DECADES OF RESEARCH, *DANCING WITH ŚIVA, HINDUISM'S CONTEMPORARY CATECHISM* IS THE FIRST BOOK OF A REMARKABLE TRILOGY. THE second book is *Living with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Culture*, and the third is *Merging with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Metaphysics*. These three make up a *Master Course* to be studied daily, 365 days a year. It was in 1957 that the first edition of *The Master Course* was developed to serve the needs of devotees who worshiped at our temple, the first Hindu temple in America. Since then it has taken many forms: as lessons for personal study, a correspondence course and a series of tape recordings, twelve in all, recorded in the Guru Pīṭham at Kauai Aadheenam in 1970. A beautiful children's course on the Śaivite religion came out of it in 1993; and now, in the year 2001, after two decades of effort, *The Master Course* has emerged in its final form as three textbooks, *Dancing with Śiva, Living with Śiva* and *Merging with Śiva*, each with 1,000 or more pages of information, insight and *sādhanas*. *The Master Course* trilogy is a detailed summary and explanation of *ashṭāṅga yoga* according to the traditions of our lineage, the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā. *Ashṭāṅga yoga*, also called *rāja yoga*, has eight successive steps, each one dependent upon the one that precedes it. These eight successive steps are *yama* (restraint), *niyama* (observance), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (sense withdrawal), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (contemplation).

Often the uninformed prefer to start on their spiritual path at steps seven and eight, ignoring the other six, and more than often wonder why no immediate and lasting results are obtained. Drawing upon over half a century of teaching and explaining, the trilogy articulates in no uncertain terms why you must begin at the beginning, with a firm foundation of philosophical clarity and good character, and proceed from there.

*Dancing with Śiva*, the first book of the trilogy, lays out the philosophical, Vedic-Āgamic beliefs, attitudes and expectations of the Śaivite Hindu religion, which are so necessary to understand, adopt and uphold in order to make true progress in the areas discussed in the other two books. *Living with Śiva*, the second book of the trilogy, concerns itself with Śaivite lifestyle, culture, family life, character-building and the overcoming of uncomplimentary habits that disturb others as well as oneself. It focuses on *yama*, *niyama* and, in a lesser way, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* (*haṭha yoga*). For the entire system of *aṣṭāṅga yoga* to work, a firm philosophical-cultural foundation, as found in *Dancing with Śiva* and *Living with Śiva*, must be subconsciously accepted by the devotee as his own way of looking at and living life, relating it to experience, solving problems, approaching worship and so forth. *Merging with Śiva*, the third book of the trilogy, encompasses steps five, six and seven, leading to eight, all of which is personally experiential once we learn to dance with Śiva and live with Śiva. This means having a good philosophical understanding, a solid commitment, as well as good character, and living the religion. Upon such a foundation, the yogic and metaphysical experiences described in *Merging* come naturally and are sustainable.

*The Master Course* trilogy is a daily, lifetime study for my devotees worldwide to be explored year after year after year, generation after generation. Through great effort we have summarized this entire study of more than 3,000 pages into 365 Nandinātha Sūtras of four lines each that make up Part Four of *Living with Śiva*. *The Master Course* is a life-transforming study organized in 365 daily lessons. Devotees may begin at any time—and whatever time lesson one is begun is the most auspicious time—then continue right around the year until 365 lessons are complete. If you are ready to change your life, begin *The Master Course* today. If not, then perhaps tomorrow. There are three ways to study *The Master Course*: 1) Internet Study; 2) Home Study; and 3) Formal Correspondence Study.

**1. INTERNET STUDY:** The Internet Study can be begun immediately at any time. The current lesson of the day is found on the Internet at [www.gurudeva.org](http://www.gurudeva.org) in the *The Master Course* Daily Lesson section. Or you can receive it via e-mail by sending a message to [gurudeva-master-course-subscribe@jnanadana.org](mailto:gurudeva-master-course-subscribe@jnanadana.org). The lessons begin on the first day of the Tamil calendar year, in mid-April, but can be commenced on any day during the year. You need not wait for day one of the year to roll around. Start with the current lesson, which might be number 132—and consider

your year complete when you reach lesson 131. You will find the lessons filled with philosophical, practical and soul-stirring information potent enough to inspire even a skeptic to change his ways of thinking about life and the ultimate goal of existence on this planet. Begin now. Today is the most auspicious time.

**2. HOME STUDY:** The Master Course Home Study requires the ownership of the three books of the trilogy. Begin your daily reading on any Monday with *Dancing with Śiva*, śloka one and its *bhāshya*. Then open *Living with Śiva* and read Lesson 1. Next, turn to the Nandinātha Sūtras in Part Four of *Living with Śiva* and read the first sūtra. Lastly, open *Merging with Śiva* and read the first lesson. Reading each day's lesson from the three books takes about twenty minutes. Because there are only 155 lessons (ślokas and bhāshyas) in *Dancing with Śiva*, when you complete lesson 155 of this book, begin again at the beginning. Then, when you complete the second reading, totalling 310 days, begin again with lesson one, and continue reading until lesson 55, to coincide with lesson 365 of *Living with Śiva* and *Merging with Śiva*. If you study these lessons each day for a year, you will have completed a profound *sādhana*, a personal odyssey into the interior of you and on into the depths of Hinduism, a practice sufficient to transform your life by transforming the way you look at life itself. *The Master Course* trilogy of *Dancing*, *Living* and *Merging with Śiva* can be enjoyed by the entire family year after year after year, studied personally and read aloud at breakfast, dinner or in the shrine room after the morning *pūjā*. Proceed with confidence and without delay.

**3. FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE STUDY:** The Master Course Correspondence Study is for those who seek a personalized, supervised approach. This is a service offered by Himalayan Academy since 1957. It requires formal enrollment and qualification, openly describing the goals one wishes to accomplish and the details of one's background, education and experience. Correspondent students are required to purchase the color edition of all three books. They have access to regular e-mail news reports, discounts on Innersearch Travel-Study Programs and special attention when visiting the monastery in Hawaii. E-mail [mastercourse@hindu.org](mailto:mastercourse@hindu.org) for more information.

**A word of advice:** There is a strong tendency when a student first begins meditation to want to give up external things, to give up work and devote more time to making his meditation the perfect thing. But this is not the spirit of *The Master Course*. Many more forces that are



# Dancing with Siva

शिवेन सह  
नर्तनम्

Satguru Sivaya  
Subramuniyaswami



THE MASTER  
COURSE  
BOOK

# 1

# Living with Siva

शिवेन सह  
जीवनम्

Satguru Sivaya  
Subramuniyaswami



THE MASTER  
COURSE  
BOOK

# 2

# Merging with Siva

शिव  
सायुज्यम्

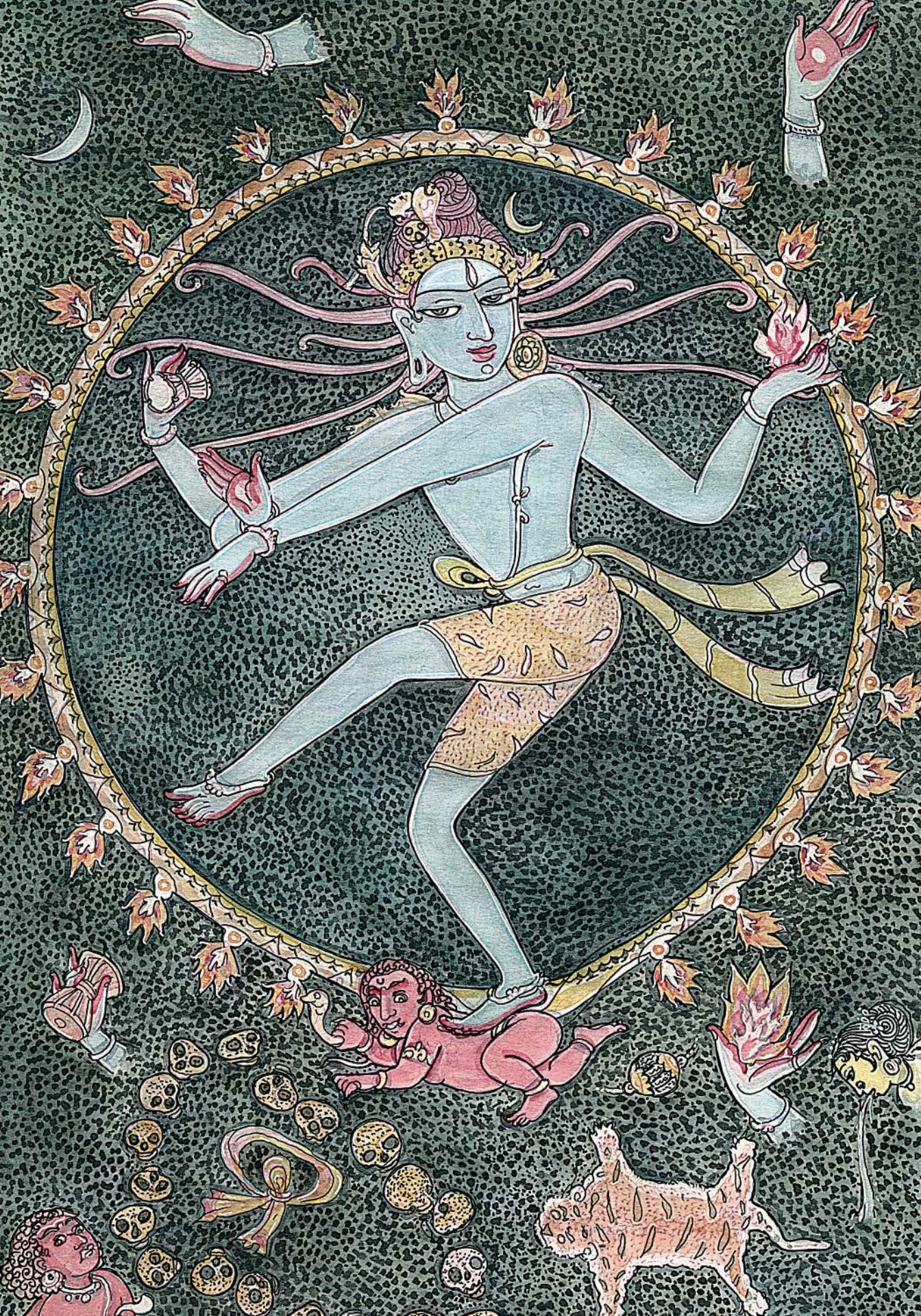
Satguru Sivaya  
Subramuniyaswami



THE MASTER  
COURSE  
BOOK

# 3





# Śiva's Cosmic Dance

## *Śivānanda Tāṇḍavaḥ*

### शिवानन्द ताण्डवः



THE COSMIC DANCE OF ŚIVA NAṬARĀJA IS BOTH SYMBOL AND REALITY. IT IS THE MOVEMENT OF CREATION, PRESERVATION AND DISSOLUTION, THE TRIAD WHICH TAKEN TOGETHER IS THE PRINCIPLE OF MĀYĀ, GOD'S ENDLESS IMPULSE, TAKING place within each of us and within every atom of the universe. We are all dancing with Śiva this very moment and He with us. In the midst of His agitated dance, God Śiva's HEAD is balanced and still, His EXPRESSION serene and calm, in perfect equipoise as the unmoved Mover. His right EARRING, made of a snake, is masculine. His left, a large discus, is feminine. Together they symbolize the fact that Śiva is neither male nor female, but transcends both. God Śiva's THIRD EYE is the eye of fire and symbolizes higher perception, extending throughout past, present and future. God Śiva's HAIR is in the long untended locks of the ascetic, flying out energetically. On His hair are: the SERPENT ŚEŚANĀGA, representing the cycle of years; a SKULL, symbolizing Śiva's power of destruction; the fifth-day CRESCENT MOON, symbolizing His creative power; and the GODDESS GAṄGĀ, India's most sacred river, symbol of descending grace. God Śiva's BACK LEFT HAND holds a blazing flame, the fire God Agni, symbolizing His power of destruction, *samhāra*, by which the universe is reabsorbed at the end of each cycle of creation, only to be recreated again by God Śiva. This hand represents **NA** in the Pañchākshara Mantra, **Na-Ma-Śi-Vā-Ya**. His PLANTED FOOT stands for the syllable **MA** and symbolizes His concealing grace, *tirodhāna śakti*, which limits consciousness, allowing souls to mature through experience. Śiva dances upon the figure known as APASMĀRA, "forgetful or heedless," who represents the soul bound by *āṇava mala*, the individuating veil of duality, source of separation from God. Apasmārapurusha looks

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*Śiva Naṭarāja, the Lord of Dance, stands poised between unrestrained power and perfect equilibrium. He dances creation into being within a circle of fire, representing consciousness. Each element is symbolic—the hands, the moon, the dwarf, the ten braids of hair, the skulls, and more.*

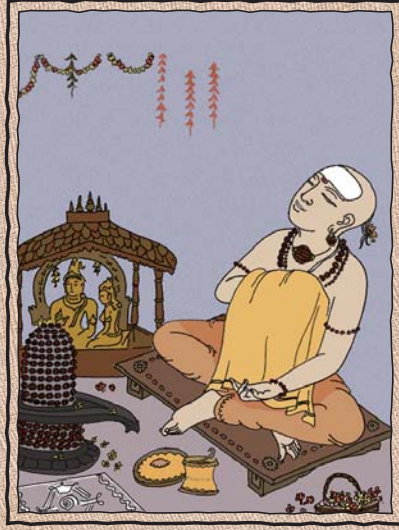
up serenely at Lord Śiva's raised foot, the ultimate refuge, release and destiny of all souls without exception. Lord Śiva's LEFT FRONT HAND, representing the syllable **VĀ**, held in the elephant trunk pose, *gajahasta*, points to His left foot, source of revealing grace, *anugraha śakti*, by which souls return to Him. Left and right back arms are balanced, as are creation and destruction. Śiva's BACK RIGHT HAND, standing for the syllable **ŚI**, holds the thin-waisted rattle drum, *damaru*, symbol of creation, which begins with soundless sound, *Paranāda*, from which arises the *mantra Aum*. The FRONT RIGHT HAND is raised in the gesture *abhaya*, "fear not," symbolizing Śiva's power of *śriṣṭi*, preservation and protection, and standing for the syllable **YA**. Lord Śiva's RAISED FOOT symbolizes His revealing grace, *anugraha śakti*, by which the soul ultimately transcends the bonds of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* and realizes its identity with Him. Lord Śiva's SKIN is a pinkish color. His body is smeared with white HOLY ASH, *vibhūti*, symbol of purity. The BLUE THROAT represents His compassion in swallowing the deadly *hālāhala* poison to protect mankind. He wears a SKULL NECKLACE, symbolizing the perpetual revolution of ages. The SERPENT JAHNUWI adorns His body, symbol of His identity with the *kuṇḍalinī* power, the normally dormant spiritual force within man coiled at the base of the spine. Raised through *yoga*, this force propels man into God Realization. Śiva wears a TIGER SKIN, symbol of nature's power. His SASH, *kaṭibandha*, is blown to one side by His rapid movement. The ARCH OF FLAMES, *prabhāvali*, in which Śiva dances is the Hall of Consciousness. Each flame has three sub-flames, symbolizing fire on Earth, in the atmosphere and in the sky. At the top of the arch is MAHĀKĀLA, "Great time." Mahākāla is God Śiva Himself who creates, transcends and ends time. Śiva Naṭarāja dances within the state of timeless transcendence. The double lotus PEDESTAL, *mahāmbujapīṭha*, symbolizes manifestation. From this base springs the cosmos.

The four sacred *Vedas*, mankind's oldest scriptures, intone, "To Rudra [Śiva], Lord of sacrifice, of hymns and balmy medicines, we pray for joy and health and strength. He shines in splendor like the sun, refulgent as bright gold is He, the good, the best among the Gods (*Rig Veda* 1.43.4-5)." "He is God, hidden in all beings, their inmost soul who is in all. He watches the works of creation, lives in all things, watches all things. He is pure consciousness, beyond the three conditions of nature (*Yajur Veda*, *Svetāśvatara Upanishad* 6.11 UPM)."





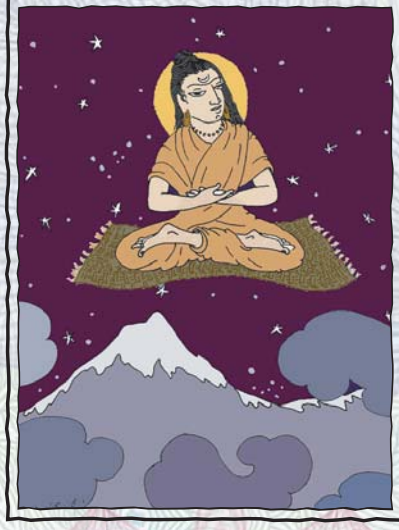
Sanātana Dharmah  
सनातनधर्मः



UPANISHAD ONE  
**Eternal Truths**



Paramātmā Darśanam  
परमात्मदर्शनम्

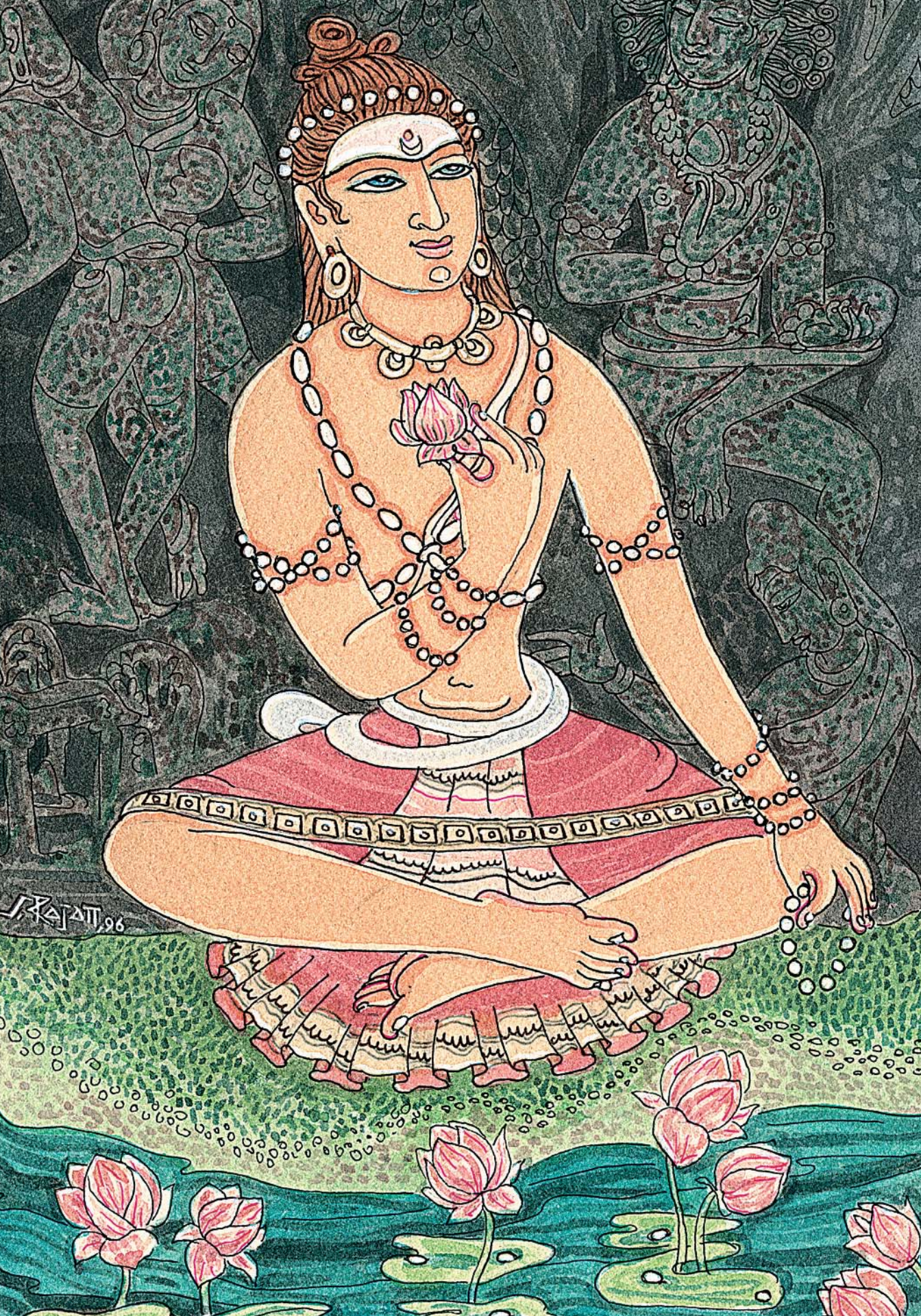


Self Realization

Subtlest of the subtle, greatest of the great, the ātman  
is hidden in the cave of the heart of all beings. He who,  
free from all urges, beholds Him overcomes sorrow,  
seeing by grace of the Creator, the Lord and His glory.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 3.20. VE, 735*





राजा, 96

## Who Am I? Where Did I Come From?

### ŚLOKA 1

*Rishis* proclaim that we are not our body, mind or emotions. We are divine souls on a wondrous journey. We came from God, live in God and are evolving into oneness with God. We are, in truth, the Truth we seek. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

We are immortal souls living and growing in the great school of earthly experience in which we have lived many lives. Vedic *ṛishis* have given us courage by uttering the simple truth, “God is the Life of our life.” A great sage carried it further by saying there is one thing God cannot do: God cannot separate Himself from us. This is because God is our life. God is the life in the birds. God is the life in the fish. God is the life in the animals. Becoming aware of this Life energy in all that lives is becoming aware of God’s loving presence within us. We are the undying consciousness and energy flowing through all things. Deep inside we are perfect this very moment, and we have only to discover and live up to this perfection to be whole. Our energy and God’s energy are the same, ever coming out of the void. We are all beautiful children of God. Each day we should try to see the life energy in trees, birds, animals and people. When we do, we are seeing God Śiva in action. The *Vedas* affirm, “He who knows God as the Life of life, the Eye of the eye, the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind—he indeed comprehends fully the Cause of all causes.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Seated by a lotus pond, symbol of his quieted mind, a seeker intones “Aum Namaḥ Śivāya” on his mālā and contemplates his destiny, which blossoms as naturally as the flower he holds. Behind are depicted past lives that brought him to his maturity.*



## Where Am I Going? What Is My Path?

### ŚLOKA 2

**We are all growing toward God, and experience is the path. Through experience we mature out of fear into fearlessness, out of anger into love, out of conflict into peace, out of darkness into light and union in God. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

We have taken birth in a physical body to grow and evolve into our divine potential. We are inwardly already one with God. Our religion contains the knowledge of how to realize this oneness and not create unwanted experiences along the way. The peerless path is following the way of our spiritual forefathers, discovering the mystical meaning of the scriptures. The peerless path is commitment, study, discipline, practice and the maturing of *yoga* into wisdom. In the beginning stages, we suffer until we learn. Learning leads us to service; and selfless service is the beginning of spiritual striving. Service leads us to understanding. Understanding leads us to meditate deeply and without distractions. Finally, meditation leads us to surrender in God. This is the straight and certain path, the San Mārga, leading to Self Realization—the inmost purpose of life—and subsequently to *moksha*, freedom from rebirth. The *Vedas* wisely affirm, “By austerity, goodness is obtained. From goodness, understanding is reached. From understanding, the Self is obtained, and he who obtains the Self is freed from the cycle of birth and death.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*An aspirant climbs the highest peak of all, the summit of consciousness. Though the higher reaches of this path are arduous, solitary, even severe, he remains undaunted, impervious to distraction, his eyes fixed firmly on the goal—Self Realization.*



## What Is Meant by “Dancing with Śiva”?

### ŚLOKA 3

**All motion begins in God and ends in God. The whole universe is engaged in a whirling flow of change and activity. This is Śiva’s dance. We are all dancing with Śiva, and He with us. Ultimately, we are Śiva dancing. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

The world is seen as it truly is—sacred—when we behold Śiva’s cosmic dance. Everything in the universe, all that we see, hear and imagine, is movement. Galaxies soar in movement; atoms swirl in movement. All movement is Śiva’s dance. When we fight this movement and think it should be other than it is, we are reluctantly dancing with Śiva. We are stubbornly resisting, holding ourselves apart, criticizing the natural processes and movements around us. It is by understanding the eternal truths that we bring all areas of our mind into the knowledge of how to accept what is and not wish it to be otherwise. Once this happens, we begin to consciously dance with Śiva, to move with the sacred flow that surrounds us, to accept praise and blame, joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity in equanimity, the fruit of understanding. We are then gracefully, in unrestrained surrender, dancing with Śiva. The *Vedas* state, “The cosmic soul is truly the whole universe, the immortal source of all creation, all action, all meditation. Whoever discovers Him, hidden deep within, cuts through the bonds of ignorance even during his life on Earth.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Nandi the bull plays the drum and others play vīṇā and cymbals as Śiva dances the world into creation. Lord Śiva is the Life of our life, the motion within all movements. Our every experience is intimately connected to and dependent on His dance.*



राजश्री, 95

## How Can We Learn to Dance with Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 4

Dance is movement, and the most exquisite dance is the most disciplined dance. Hindu spiritual disciplines lead to oneness with God through self-reflection, surrender, personal transformation and the many *yogas*. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

To progress on the path, we study the *Vedas*, other scriptures and our *guru's* teachings and make every effort to apply these philosophical truths to daily experience. We strive to understand the mind in its fourfold nature: *chitta*, consciousness; *manas*, instinctive mind; *buddhi*, intellectual mind; and *aham-kāra*, ego or I-maker. We perform *japa*, meditation and *yoga* each day. Such spiritual discipline is known as *sādhana*. It is the mystical, mental, physical and devotional exercise that enables us to dance with Śiva by bringing inner advancement, changes in perception and improvements in character. *Sādhana* allows us to live in the refined and cultured soul nature, rather than in the outer, instinctive or intellectual spheres. For consistent progress, *sādhana* should be performed regularly, without fail, at the same time each day, preferably in the early hours before dawn. The most important *sādhanas* are the challenges and practices given by one's *guru*. The *Vedas* caution, "The Self cannot be attained by the weak, nor by the careless, nor through aimless disciplines. But if one who knows strives by right means, his soul enters the abode of God." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In an outer temple corridor, two sages are learning to dance with Śiva. With enthusiastic accompaniment from the drum, flute and cymbals, Śiva performs His joyous ānanda tāṇḍava, inspiring awe in the sages, who clasp their hands in adulation.*





## What Is the Ultimate Goal of Earthly Life?

### ŚLOKA 5

The ultimate goal of life on Earth is to realize the Self, the rare attainment of *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Each soul discovers its Śivaness, Absolute Reality, Paraśiva—the timeless, formless, spaceless Self God. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The realization of the Self, Paraśiva, is the destiny of each soul, attainable through renunciation, sustained meditation and frying the seeds of *karmas* yet to germinate. It is the gateway to *moksha*, liberation from rebirth. The Self lies beyond the thinking mind, beyond the feeling nature, beyond action or any movement of even the highest state of consciousness. The Self God is more solid than a neutron star, more elusive than empty space, more intimate than thought and feeling. It is ultimate reality itself, the innermost Truth all seekers seek. It is well worth striving for. It is well worth struggling to bring the mind under the dominion of the will. After the Self is realized, the mind is seen for the unreality that it truly is. Because Self Realization must be experienced in a physical body, the soul cycles back again and again into flesh to dance with Śiva, live with Śiva and ultimately merge with Śiva in undifferentiated oneness. Yea, *jīva* is actually Śiva. The *Vedas* explain, “As water poured into water, milk poured into milk, *ghee* into *ghee* become one without differentiation, even so the individual soul and the Supreme Self become one.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord Śiva is seated beneath a banyan, His knees held in meditative pose by the yogabandha. Seekers approach to inquire of life’s true purpose and goal. In silence Śiva instructs them on the Self God, and guides them to enter the Śivaliṅga within.*

Lead me from unreality to reality. Lead me from darkness to light.  
Lead me from death to immortality.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1.3.28. HH, 202*

He is the Supreme Brahman, the Self of all, the chief foundation of this world, subtler than the subtle, eternal. That thou art; thou art That.

*Atharva Veda, Kaivalya Upanishad 16. UPH, 930*

One should meditate on the *ātman*, which consists of spirit, whose embodiment is life, whose form is light, whose essence is space, which changes its form at will, swift as thought.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.6.3.2. VE, 705*

Perishable is matter. Immortal, imperishable the Lord, who, the One, controls the perishable and also the soul. Meditating on Him, uniting with Him, becoming more and more like Him, one is freed at the last from the world's illusion.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Svetāśvatara Upanishad 1.10. VE, 762*

I am the Supreme Brahman! I am the Lord of the universe! Such is the settled conviction of the *muktas*. All other experiences lead to bondage. When the Self is clearly realized not to be the body, the realizer gains peace and becomes free from all desires.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchāra-vichāra 50-51. RM, 114*

Realize the Self always to be neither above nor below, nor on either side, not without nor within, but to be eternal and shining beyond the sublime world.

*Sarvajñānottara Āgama, Ātma Sakshatkara 29. RM, 108*

That which is neither conscious nor unconscious, which is invisible, impalpable, indefinable, unthinkable, unnameable, whose very essence consists of the experience of its own self, which absorbs all diversity, is tranquil and benign, without a second, which is what they call the fourth state—that is the *ātman*. This it is which should be known.

*Atharva Veda, Māṇḍūkya Upanishad 7. VE, 723*

On the emergence of spontaneous supreme knowledge occurs that state of movement in the vast unlimited expanse of consciousness which is Śiva's state, the supreme state of Reality.

*Śiva Sūtras 2.5. ss, 99*

When the Creator dances, the worlds He created dance. To the measure that He dances in our knowledge, our thoughts, too, dance. When He in heart endearing dances, the several elements, too, dance. Witness in rapture surpassing the dance of Him who is a glowing flame.

*Tirumantiram 2786. TM*

O God of mercy, who performs the dance of illimitable happiness in the hall of inconceivable intelligence! The *Ṛig* and the other *Vedas* are thundering forth in words, announcing to us that all are thy slaves, all things belong to thee, all actions are thine, that thou pervades everywhere, that this is thy nature. Such is the teaching of those who, though they never speak, yet broke silence for our sake.

*Karunakara Kadavul 6.3. PT, 33*

Just as light shines, dispelling darkness, so also the Supreme Self shines, dispelling ignorance. Just as a lamp spontaneously goes out if not fed with oil, so also the ego becomes extinct if one meditates unceasingly and becomes merged in the Self. There is no higher gain than the Self.

*Sarvajñānottara Āgama*

The Supreme Lord is not two. To me belongs the glory of meditating that I, His devoted servant, am He. As one imagines, so one becomes. Therefore, practice the meditation of "I am He." Then all your actions will become His action.

*Natchintanai, "I am He." NT, 8*

Undistracted, I sit aloof and meditate. Doubt-free, following the ancient Vedas, I cross the awesome wasteland that this life is and beyond, into the Void that defies imagination, I merge. Meditating in oneness, I visioned Paraparam. Meditating in oneness, I realized Śiva-state. Meditating in oneness, I experienced awareness transcendental. Meditating in oneness, I witnessed eons upon eons.

*Tirumantiram 2948; 2953. TM*



# Hindu Dharmah हिन्दुधर्मः



## Hinduism

He is the Ancient One. He created the beings of Earth  
and Heaven in days of yore in order divine. The six  
faiths seek the feet but of the One Primal, Peerless God.  
And in them all, He pervades in measure appropriate.

*Tirumantiram 1557. TM*



## What Are Hinduism's Principal Sects?

### ŚLOKA 6

The Sanātana Dharma, or “eternal faith,” known today as Hinduism, is a family of religions that accept the authority of the *Vedas*. Its four principal denominations are Śaivism, Śāktism, Vaishṇavism and Smārtism. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The world's billion Hindus, one-sixth of the human family, are organized in four main denominations, each distinguished by its Supreme Deity. For Vaishṇavites, Lord Viṣṇu is God. For Śaivites, God is Śiva. For Śāktas, Goddess Śakti is supreme. For Smārtas, liberal Hindus, the choice of Deity is left to the devotee. Each has a multitude of *guru* lineages, religious leaders, priesthoods, sacred literature, monastic communities, schools, pilgrimage centers and tens of thousands of temples. They possess a wealth of art and architecture, philosophy and scholarship. These four sects hold such divergent beliefs that each is a complete and independent religion. Yet, they share a vast heritage of culture and belief—*karma*, *dharma*, reincarnation, all-pervasive Divinity, temple worship, sacraments, manifold Deities, the *guru-śishya* tradition and the *Vedas* as scriptural authority. While India is home to most Hindus, large communities flourish worldwide. The *Vedas* elaborate, “He is Brahmā. He is Śiva. He is Indra. He is the immutable, the supreme, the self-luminous. He is Viṣṇu. He is life. He is time. He is the fire, and He is the moon.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Adorned in the saffron-hued robes of the renunciate, Adi Sankara is surrounded by the five primary Gods ardently worshipped by a billion devotees in Hinduism's four primary modern-day denominations: Śiva, Śakti, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa and Muruga.*





## What Is the Deeply Mystical Śaiva Sect?

### ŚLOKA 7

Śaivism is the world's oldest religion. Worshiping God Śiva, the compassionate One, it stresses potent disciplines, high philosophy, the *guru's* centrality and *bhakti-rāja-siddha yoga* leading to oneness with Śiva within. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Śaivism is ancient, truly ageless, for it has no beginning. It is the precursor of the many-faceted religion now termed Hinduism. Scholars trace the roots of Śiva worship back more than 8,000 years to the advanced Indus Valley civilization. But sacred writings tell us there never was a time when Śaivism did not exist. Modern history records six main schools: Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāśupatism, Kashmīr Śaivism, Vīra Śaivism, Siddha Siddhānta and Śiva Advaita. Śaivism's grandeur and beauty are found in a practical culture, an enlightened view of man's place in the universe and a profound system of temple mysticism and *siddha yoga*. It provides knowledge of man's evolution from God and back to God, of the soul's unfoldment and awakening guided by enlightened sages. Like all the sects, its majority are devout families, headed by hundreds of orders of *swāmīs* and *sādhus* who follow the fiery, world-renouncing path to *moksha*. The *Vedas* state, "By knowing Śiva, the Auspicious One who is hidden in all things, exceedingly fine, like film arising from clarified butter, the One embracer of the universe—by realizing God, one is released from all fetters." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Śiva's sons vie to circle the globe, competing for a ripe mango, symbol of spiritual attainment. Murugan completes the race, only to find Gaṇeśa has won by a playful ruse, circling His parents and claiming victory, as all worlds are contained in Śiva-Śakti.*



## What Is the Magic and Power of Śāktism?

### ŚLOKA 8

Śāktism reveres the Supreme as the Divine Mother, Śakti or Devī, in Her many forms, both gentle and fierce. Śāktas use *mantra*, *tantra*, *yantra*, *yoga* and *pūjā* to invoke cosmic forces and awaken the *kuṇḍalinī* power. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

While worship of the Divine Mother extends beyond the pale of history, Śākta Hinduism arose as an organized sect in India around the fifth century. Today it has four expressions—devotional, folk-shamanic, *yogic* and universalist—all invoking the fierce power of Kālī or Durgā, or the benign grace of Pārvatī or Ambikā. Śākta devotionalists use *pūjā* rites, especially to the Śrī Chakra *yantra*, to establish intimacy with the Goddess. Shamanic Śāktism employs magic, trance mediumship, firewalking and animal sacrifice for healing, fertility, prophecy and power. Śākta *yogīs* seek to awaken the sleeping Goddess Kuṇḍalinī and unite her with Śiva in the *sahasrāra chakra*. Śākta universalists follow the reformed Vedāntic tradition exemplified by Sri Rāmakrishna. “Left-hand” *tantric* rites transcend traditional ethical codes. Śāktism is chiefly *advaitic*, defining the soul’s destiny as complete identity with the Unmanifest, Śiva. Central scriptures are the *Vedas*, *Śākta Āgamas* and *Purāṇas*. The *Devī Gītā* extols, “We bow down to the universal soul of all. Above and below and in all four directions, Mother of the universe, we bow.” Aum Chaṇḍikāyai Namaḥ.

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*Śakti, depicted in Her green form, radiates beauty, energy, compassion and protection for followers. Wearing the forehead tilaka of the Śākta sect, She blesses devotees, who shower rosewater, hold an umbrella aloft and prostrate at Her feet in adoration.*



## What Is the Devotional Vaishṇava Sect?

### ŚLOKA 9

Vaishṇavism is an ancient Hindu sect centering on the worship of Lord Viṣṇu and His incarnations, especially Kṛiṣṇa and Rāma. Largely dualistic, profoundly devotional, it is rich in saints, temples and scriptures. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The worship of Viṣṇu, meaning “pervader,” dates back to Vedic times. The Pañcharātra and Bhāgavata sects were popular prior to 300 BCE. Today’s five Vaishṇava schools emerged in the middle ages, founded by Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya. Vaishṇavism stresses *prapatti*, single-pointed surrender to Viṣṇu, or His ten or more incarnations, called *avatāras*. *Japa* is a key devotional *sādhana*, as is ecstatic chanting and dancing, called *kīrtana*. Temple worship and festivals are elaborately observed. Philosophically, Vaishṇavism ranges from Madhva’s pure dualism to Ramanuja’s qualified nondualism to Vallabha’s nearly monistic vision. God and soul are everlastingly distinct. The soul’s destiny, through God’s grace, is to eternally worship and enjoy Him. While generally nonascetic, advocating *bhakti* as the highest path, Vaishṇavism has a strong monastic community. Central scriptures are the *Vedas*, *Vaishṇava Āgamas*, *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* states, “On those who meditate on Me and worship with undivided heart, I confer attainment of what they have not, and preserve what they have.” Aum Namō Nārāyaṇāya.

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*Viṣṇu is the infinite ocean from which the world emerges. He stands on waves, surrounded by the many-headed Śeṣanāga, representing agelessness, regarded as an extension of divine energy and an incarnation of Bālarāma, Kṛiṣṇa’s brother.*



## What Is the Universalistic Smārta Sect?

### ŚLOKA 10

**Smārtism is an ancient brāhminical tradition reformed by Sankara in the ninth century. Worshiping six forms of God, this liberal Hindu path is monistic, nonsectarian, meditative and philosophical. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.**

### BHĀSHYA

Smārta means a follower of classical *smṛiti*, particularly the *Dharma Śāstras*, *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*. Smārtas revere the *Vedas* and honor the *Āgamas*. Today this faith is synonymous with the teachings of Adi Sankara, the monk-philosopher known as *shaṅmata sthāpanāchārya*, “founder of the six-sect system.” He campaigned India-wide to consolidate the Hindu faiths of his time under the banner of Advaita Vedānta. To unify the worship, he popularized the ancient Smārta five-Deity altar—Gaṇapati, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti—and added Kumāra. From these, devotees may choose their “preferred Deity,” or *Ishta Devatā*. Each God is but a reflection of the one Saguṇa Brahman. Sankara organized hundreds of monasteries into a ten-order, *daśanāmī* system, which now has five pontifical centers. He wrote profuse commentaries on the *Upanishads*, *Brahma Sūtras* and *Bhagavad Gītā*. Sankara proclaimed, “It is the one Reality which appears to our ignorance as a manifold universe of names and forms and changes. Like the gold of which many ornaments are made, it remains in itself unchanged. Such is Brahman, and That art Thou.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Adi Sankara lived from 788 to 820, a mere 32 years, yet he gave Hinduism a popular new liberal sect—Smārtism. Wearing a monk’s holy marks, he holds his writings, surrounded by six Deities: Sūrya the Sun, Śiva, Śakti, Viṣṇu, Murugan and Gaṇeśa.*



They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni or the heavenly sunbird Garutmat. The seers call in many ways that which is One; they speak of Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.

*Rig Veda* 1.164.46. VE, 660

Him who is without beginning and without end, in the midst of confusion, the Creator of all, of manifold form, the One embracer of the universe—by knowing God, one is released from all fetters.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 5.13. UPH, 407

The Primordial Vastness is the sky. The Primordial Vastness is the sphere of space. The Primordial Vastness is the mother, the father, the son. The Primordial Vastness is all the Gods, the five sorts of men, all that was born and shall be born.

*Rig Veda* 1.89.10. HP, 114

May I attain to Viṣṇu's glorious mansion where the faithful rejoice, where, close beside the Strider, within His highest footstep springs the well of purest honey.

*Rig Veda* 1.154.5. VE, 152

I am the ruling Queen, the amasser of treasures, full of wisdom, first of those worthy of worship. In various places, divine powers have set Me. I enter many homes and take numerous forms.

*Rig Veda* 10.125.3. VE, 97

He who bestows life force and hardy vigor, whose ordinances even the Gods obey, whose shadow is immortal life—and death—what God shall we adore with our oblation? Who by his grandeur has emerged sole sovereign of every living thing that breathes and slumbers, he who is Lord of man and four-legged creatures, what God shall we adore with our oblation?

*Rig Veda* 10.121.2-3. VE, 71

When a man knows God, he is free: his sorrows have an end, and birth and death are no more. When in inner union he is beyond the world of the body, then the third world, the world of the Spirit, is found, where the power of the All is, and man has all—for he is one with the One.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 1.11. UPM, 86

Whatever exists and wherever it exists is permeated by the same divine power and force.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Īśa Upanishad 1. EH, 45*

Recognition of the world as the manifestation of Śakti is worship of Śakti. Pure knowledge, unrelated to objects, is absolute.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchāra-vichāra 14. RM, 112*

When milk is poured into milk, oil into oil, water into water, they blend in absolute oneness. So also the illumined seer, the knower of the *ātman*, becomes one with the *ātman*.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchāra-vichāra 14. RM, 112*

Let us worship Him, the pure-formed One, the cloud which, emitting a rain of unthinkable joy, satiates the hearts and eyes of its followers, as if millions of rain clouds had poured down, the stay of the Great Silence, called by many names, described by many religions, the embodiment of ineffable degrees of spiritual happiness.

*Tayumanavar 1.2. PT, 14*

O God of mercy who performs the dance of illimitable happiness in the hall of inconceivable Intelligence! O thou Preceptor who art named Nilakaṇṭha! O thou Preceptor of wisdom who art of the form of Viṣṇu! O thou Preceptor who art of the form of the four-headed Brahmā, the author of *Vedas*! O thou who discharges the duties of a Preceptor in all religions! O thou who as Preceptor enlightens in love those followers who have implored thee not to abandon them.

*Tayumanavar 6.5. PT, 34*

Worship, by offering sweet-scented flowers, the God who is the Infinite Lord of all. Give reverence to your tradition's God, who the whole world and all that lives pervades. Before the body falls, revere the God who both the One and many has become.

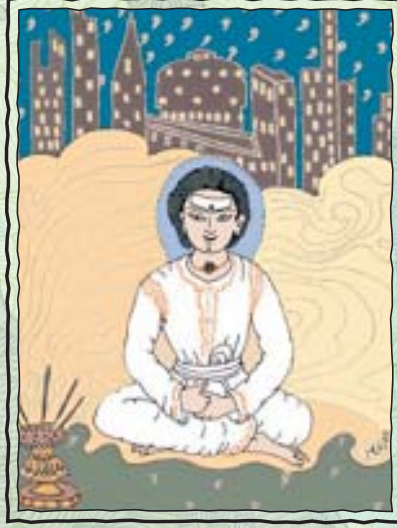
*Natchintanai, "The Wisdom..." NT, 202*

Whatever you see, see as Śiva and do not be distressed, O mind! Those who are free from agitation and who the senses five control will surely win the bliss of Śiva. The path prescribed by your religion you should always tread, and live in changeless, silent contemplation. Whatever you see, see as Śiva.

*Natchintanai, "Whatever You See..." NT, 68*



## Śaiva Dharmah शैवधर्मः



## Śaivite Hinduism

The path of Śiva is the proven path. It led them to Hara. It is the royal path that renowned souls have walked. By this path divine, the devout pervade the universe. That path do seek, enter and persevere.

*Tirumantiram 1563. TM*



## What Is the Nature of Śaivite Theology?

### ŚLOKA 11

Śaivism proclaims: God Śiva is Love, both immanent and transcendent, both the creator and the creation. This world is the arena of our evolution, which leads by stages to *moksha*, liberation from birth and death. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Śaivism is a unique religion in which God is both manifest and unmanifest, dual and nondual, within us and outside of us. It is not strictly pantheistic, polytheistic or monotheistic. Its predominant theology is known as monistic theism, panentheism, or Advaita Īśvaravāda. Monism, the opposite of dualism, is the doctrine that reality is a one whole or existence without independent parts. Theism is belief in God and the Gods, both immanent and transcendent. Śaivism is monistic in its belief in a one reality and in the advaitic, or nondual, identity of man with that reality. Śaivism is theistic in its belief in the Gods, and in God Śiva as a loving, personal Lord, immanent in the world. Śaivism expresses the oneness of *Paṭi-pāśu-pāśa*, God-soul-world, encompassing the nondual and the dual, faithfully carrying forth both Vedānta and Siddhānta, the pristine Sanātana Dharma of the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*. The *Tirumantiram* states, “Śuddha Śaivas meditate on these as their religious path: Oneself, Absolute Reality and the Primal Soul; the categories three: God, soul and bonds; immaculate liberation and all that fetters the soul.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*For Hindus the Divine is both immanent and transcendent, within and beyond. Śiva is often considered formless and Śakti is manifest form, with the two united in Ardhanārīśvara, half man, half woman. Śiva's bull mount and Śakti's lion rest nearby.*



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## How Do Śaivites Regard Other Faiths?

### ŚLOKA 12

**Religious beliefs are manifold and different. Śaivites, understanding the strength of this diversity, wholeheartedly respect and encourage all who believe in God. They honor the fact that Truth is one, paths are many. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Since the inner intent of all religions is to bind man back to God, Śaivite Hindus seek not to interfere with anyone's faith or practice. We believe that there is no exclusive path, no one way for all. Śaivites profoundly know that God Śiva is the same Supreme Being in whom peoples of all faiths find solace, peace and liberation. Nonetheless, we realize that all religions are not the same. Each has its unique beliefs, practices, goals and paths of attainment, and the doctrines of one often conflict with those of another. Even this should never be cause for religious tension or intolerance. Śaivites respect all religious traditions and the people within them. They know that good citizens and stable societies are created from groups of religious people. Śaivite leaders support and participate in ecumenical gatherings with all religions. Still, Śaivites defend their faith, proceed contentedly with their practices and avoid the enchantment of other ways, be they ancient or modern. The *Vedas* explain, "Let us have concord with our own people, and concord with people who are strangers to us. Aśvins, create between us and the strangers a unity of hearts." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord Śiva watches over followers of all faiths. While regarding their tradition as uniquely blessed, Śaivites love, respect and honor all religious votaries, here shown as a Śaivite, Vaiṣṇavite, Jain, Sikh, Christian, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist and Taoist.*





## How Does Śaivism Stay Contemporary?

### ŚLOKA 13

**Inner truths never change, but outer forms of practice and observance do evolve. Śaivism seeks to preserve its mystical teachings while adapting to the cultural, social and technological changes of each recurrent age. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Śaivism is an orthodox religion, conservative in its ways and yet pliant and understanding. It is simultaneously the most demanding spiritual path and the most forgiving. Śaivites have persisted through many ages through successfully adapting work, service and skills according to the times while internalizing worship and holding firmly to the eternal values. The outer form of service or occupation does not change the spiritual search. Be he a skilled farmer, factory worker, village merchant, computer programmer or corporate executive, the Śaivite is served well by his religion. Śaivism has all of the facilities for the education of humankind back to the Source. Each futuristic age does not reflect a difference in the Śaivite's relationship with his family, *kula guru*, teacher, *satguru*, Gods or God in his daily religious life. The Śaiva Dharma: it is now as it always was. The *Vedas* implore: "O self-luminous Divine, remove the veil of ignorance from before me, that I may behold your light. Reveal to me the spirit of the scriptures. May the truth of the scriptures be ever present to me. May I seek day and night to realize what I learn from the sages." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A billion-strong, India is Earth's largest democracy. Here are depicted Bharat's agricultural and political prowess, trade, transportation and hydroelectric power. Amid all this technology, a procession takes place, as religion informs every aspect of life.*



## What Is the Nature of Life for Śaivites?

### ŚLOKA 14

To the Śaivite Hindu, all of life is sacred. All of life is religion. Thus, Śaivite art is sacred art, Śaivite music is devotional music, and the Śaivite's business is not only his livelihood, it is his service to man and God. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Each Śaivite is unique in his or her quest, yet all seek the same things in life: to be happy and secure, loved and appreciated, creative and useful. Śaivism has an established culture which fulfills these essential human wants and helps us understand the world and our place in it. To all devotees it gives guidance in the qualities of character so necessary in spiritual life: patience, compassion, broadmindedness, humility, industriousness and devotion. Śaivism centers around the home and the temple. Monastic life is its core and its power. Family life is strong and precious. Śaivism possesses a wealth of art and architecture, traditions of music, art, drama and dance, and a treasury of philosophy and scholarship. Śaivite temples provide worship services daily. Scriptures give ethical guidelines. *Satgurus* offer advanced spiritual initiation. These three—temples, scriptures and *satgurus*—are our pillars of faith. The *Vedas* implore, “O learned people, may we with our ears listen to what is beneficial, may we see with our eyes what is beneficial. May we, engaged in your praises, enjoy with firm limbs and sound bodies, a full term of life dedicated to God.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lived deeply, life is a communion with God in every experience. Here a kshatriya and his wife trek in a forest, coming upon Śiva and Śakti. The blessing of this darśana will forever guide them through life's thickets, along the pure and good path.*



## What Is the Symbolism of Śiva's Dance?

### ŚLOKA 15

The symbolism of Śiva Naṭarāja is religion, art and science merged as one. In God's endless dance of creation, preservation, destruction and paired graces is hidden a deep understanding of our universe. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Naṭarāja, the King of Dance, has four arms. The upper right hand holds the drum from which creation issues forth. The lower right hand is raised in blessing, betokening preservation. The upper left hand holds a flame, which is destruction, the dissolution of form. The right leg, representing obscuring grace, stands upon Apasmārapurusha, a soul temporarily Earth-bound by its own sloth, confusion and forgetfulness. The uplifted left leg is revealing grace, which releases the mature soul from bondage. The lower left hand gestures toward that holy foot in assurance that Śiva's grace is the refuge for everyone, the way to liberation. The circle of fire represents the cosmos and especially consciousness. The all-devouring form looming above is Mahākāla, "Great Time." The cobra around Naṭarāja's waist is *kuṇḍalinī śakti*, the soul-impelling cosmic power resident within all. Naṭarāja's dance is not just a symbol. It is taking place within each of us, at the atomic level, this very moment. The *Āgamas* proclaim, "The birth of the world, its maintenance, its destruction, the soul's obscuration and liberation are the five acts of His dance." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A drummer keeps rhythm on musical pots as Lord Śiva, clad in a tiger skin, dances in the blue ākāśa. Dance is the only art form where doer and doing are one and inseparable. His dance is powerful, yet Śiva is poised, centered, moving yet unmoved.*

To the strong Rudra bring we these, our songs of praise, to Him the Lord of heroes, He with braided hair, that it be well with our cattle and our men, that in this village all be healthy and well fed.

*Rig Veda* 1.114.1. RVG, VOL. 1, 161

Instill in us a wholesome, happy mind, with goodwill and understanding. Then shall we ever delight in your friendship like cows who gladly rejoice in meadows green. This is my joyful message.

*Rig Veda* 10.25.1. VE, 302

He is the never-created creator of all: He knows all. He is pure consciousness, the creator of time, all-powerful, all-knowing. He is the Lord of the soul and of nature and of the three conditions of nature. From Him comes the transmigration of life and liberation, bondage in time and freedom in eternity.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 6.16. UPM, 96

All this universe is in the glory of God, of Śiva, the God of love. The heads and faces of men are His own, and He is in the hearts of all.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 3.11. UPM, 90

God is, in truth, the whole universe: what was, what is and what beyond shall ever be. He is the God of life immortal and of all life that lives by food. His hands and feet are everywhere. He has heads and mouths everywhere. He sees all, He hears all. He is in all, and He Is.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 3.15-16. UPM, 90

He is the God of forms infinite, in whose glory all things are, smaller than the smallest atom, and yet the creator of all, ever living in the mystery of His creation. In the vision of this God of love there is everlasting peace.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 4.14. UPM, 92

Devoid of beginning, duration and ending, by nature immaculate, powerful, omniscient, supremely perfect—thus is Śiva spoken of in Śaivite tradition.

*Ajita Āgama* 2.2618.1. SA, 56

Unequaled, free from pain, subtle, all-pervading, unending, unchanging, incapable of decay, sovereign—such is the essence of Śiva, Lord of the summit of all paths.

*Svāyambhuva Āgama* 4.3. SA, 56

They are not for outward form and attire, nor for pomp and ceremony. Uprooting all bond and desire, abiding in the immaculate Lord, they bring to dire destruction the soul's egoity and its troublesome attachments. They, indeed, are pure Śaivas.

*Tirumantiram* 1438. TM

Now have I realized the path of Hara. In the past I sought Him in narrow paths and strayed. Lo! All the while He stood before me like a beacon light in firmament, guiding my voyage across the sea of my soul's longing. The path of Śiva is the proven path. It led them to Hara. It is the royal path that renowned souls have walked, the path divine that took the devout to cosmic space. That path do seek, enter and persevere. Still your wandering thoughts, chant the sacred syllable Śi and so persevere on the path of Hara. You shall envision primal light effulgent.

*Tirumantiram* 1562-1563. TM

If you could see the arch of his brow, the budding smile on lips red as the *kovai* fruit, cool, matted hair, the milk-white ash on coral skin and the sweet golden foot raised up in dance, then even human birth on this wide Earth would become a thing worth having.

*Tirumurai* 4.81.4, *Appar.* PS, 31

With body as temple, with mind ever subject to Him, with truthfulness as purity, with the light of the mind as his Liṅga, with love as melted butter and milk together with the holy water, let us offer sacrifice to the Lord.

*Tirumurai, Appar.* LG, 152

Hara, Hara! Śiva, Śiva, who in Thy lover's heart dost dwell, who art the essence of the *Vedas!* O wealth! O jewel! O beauteous king, our ruler whom the poets praise, who art commingled with the eyes that see and dost, like the sunlight, everything pervade!

*Natchintanai, "Hara! Siva..."* NT, 209





Iśvaraḥ Devatāḥ cha  
ईश्वरः देवताः च



UPANISHAD TWO  
**God and Gods**



Śivah  
शिवः



## Our Supreme God

Fire is His head, the sun and moon His eyes, space His ears, the *Vedas* His speech, the wind His breath, the universe His heart. From His feet the Earth has originated. Verily, He is the inner Self of all beings.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2.1.4. EH, 159-160*



## What Is the Nature of Our God Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 16

**God Śiva is all and in all, one without a second, the Supreme Being and only Absolute Reality. He is Pati, our Lord, immanent and transcendent. To create, preserve, destroy, conceal and reveal are His five powers. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

God Śiva is a one being, yet we understand Him in three perfections: Absolute Reality, Pure Consciousness and Primal Soul. As Absolute Reality, Śiva is unmanifest, unchanging and transcendent, the Self God, timeless, formless and spaceless. As Pure Consciousness, Śiva is the manifest primal substance, pure love and light flowing through all form, existing everywhere in time and space as infinite intelligence and power. As Primal Soul, Śiva is the five-fold manifestation: Brahmā, the creator; Viṣṇu, the preserver; Rudra, the destroyer; Maheśvara, the veiling Lord, and Sadāśiva, the revealer. He is our personal Lord, source of all three worlds. Our divine Father-Mother protects, nurtures and guides us, veiling Truth as we evolve, revealing it when we are mature enough to receive God's bountiful grace. God Śiva is all and in all, great beyond our conception, a sacred mystery that can be known in direct communion. Yea, when Śiva is known, all is known. The *Vedas* state: "That part of Him which is characterized by *tamas* is called Rudra. That part of Him which belongs to *rajas* is Brahmā. That part of Him which belongs to *sattva* is Viṣṇu." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Legend says married ṛishis once lived in a forest. An ascetic, Lord Śiva, appeared, and the wives were smitten. The ṛishis conjured a tiger and an elephant to destroy Him, but Śiva donned them as sash and shawl, symbolizing the conquest of egoity.*



## What Is God Śiva's Unmanifest Reality?

### ŚLOKA 17

**Paraśiva is God Śiva's Unmanifest Reality or Absolute Being, distinguished from His other two perfections, which are manifest and of the nature of form. Paraśiva is the fullness of everything, the absence of nothing. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Paraśiva, the Self God, must be realized to be known, does not exist, yet seems to exist; yet existence itself and all states of mind, being and experiential patterns could not exist but for this ultimate reality of God. Such is the great mystery that *yogīs*, *ṛishis*, saints and sages have realized through the ages. To discover Paraśiva, the *yogī* penetrates deep into contemplation. As thoughts arise in his mind, mental concepts of the world or of the God he seeks, he silently repeats, “*Neti, neti*—it is not this; it is not that.” His quieted consciousness expands into Satchidānanda. He is everywhere, permeating all form in this blissful state. He remembers his goal, which lies beyond bliss, and holds firmly to “*Neti, neti*—this is not that for which I seek.” Through *prāṇāyāma*, through *mantra*, through *tantra*, wielding an indomitable will, the last forces of form, time and space subside, as the *yogī*, deep in *nirvikalpa samādhi*, merges into Paraśiva. The *Vedas* explain, “Self-resplendent, formless, unoriginated and pure, that all-pervading being is both within and without. He transcends even the transcendent, unmanifest, causal state of the universe.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A mystical ascetic, one hand in jñāna mudrā, which inspires devotion to the satguru, sits radiating effulgent blessings. He has realized the Self God, the timeless, causeless, formless Absolute Reality symbolized by the Śivaliṅga enshrined within him.*





## What Is God Śiva's Pure Consciousness?

### ŚLOKA 18

**Parāśakti is pure consciousness, the substratum or primal substance flowing through all form. It is Śiva's inscrutable presence, the ultimate ground and being of all that exists, without which nothing could endure. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Parāśakti, "Supreme Energy," is called by many names: silence, love, being, power and all-knowingness. It is Satchidānanda—existence-consciousness-bliss—that pristine force of being which is undifferentiated, totally aware of itself, without an object of its awareness. It radiates as divine light, energy and knowing. Out of Paraśiva ever comes Parāśakti, the first manifestation of mind, superconsciousness or infinite knowing. God Śiva knows in infinite, all-abiding, loving superconsciousness. Śiva knows from deep within all of His creations to their surface. His Being is within every animate and inanimate form. Should God Śiva remove His all-pervasive Parāśakti from any one or all of the three worlds, they would crumble, disintegrate and fade away. Śiva's Śakti is the sustaining power and presence throughout the universe. This unbounded force has neither beginning nor end. Verily, it is the Divine Mind of Lord Śiva. The *Vedas* say, "He is God, hidden in all beings, their inmost soul who is in all. He watches the works of creation, lives in all things, watches all things. He is pure consciousness, beyond the three conditions of nature." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Creation issues forth from Śiva as Satchidānanda and returns to Him. That cosmic manifestation is shown here as the life-giving waters of Gaṅgā, flowing from Śiva's hair, filling the well and the lotus pond with existence, consciousness, bliss.*



## What Is the Nature of the Primal Soul?

### ŚLOKA 19

**Parameśvara is the uncreated, ever-existent Primal Soul, Śiva-Śakti, creator and supreme ruler of Mahādevas and beings of all three worlds. Abiding in His creation, our personal Lord rules from within, not from above. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Parameśvara, “Supreme Lord,” Mother of the universe, is the eternal, sovereign one, worshiped by all the Gods and sentient beings. So loved is Śiva-Śakti that all have an intimate relationship. So vast is His vastness, so over-powering is He that men cringe to transgress His will. So talked of is He that His name is on the lips of everyone—for He is the primal sound. Being the first and perfect form, God Śiva in this third perfection of His being—the Primal Soul, the manifest and personal Lord—naturally creates souls in His image and likeness. To love God is to know God. To know God is to feel His love for you. Such a compassionate God—a being whose resplendent body may be seen in mystic vision—cares for the minutiae such as we and a universe such as ours. Many are the mystics who have seen the brilliant milk-white form of Śiva’s glowing body with its red-locked hair, graceful arms and legs, large hands, perfect face, loving eyes and musing smile. The *Āgamas* say, “Parameśvara is the cause of the five manifest aspects: emanation, *śṛishṭi*; preservation, *sthiti*; dissolution, *samhāra*; concealment, *tirobhāva*; and revelation, *anugraha*.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*As the Primal Soul, God has a form, with arms and legs and a vast mind. In this perfection, called Parameśvara, He is creator of universes and ruler of all. A story tells of Śiva as an infinite pillar of fire which Brahmā and Viṣṇu cannot fathom.*



## What Are God Śiva's Traditional Forms?

### ŚLOKA 20

Our adoration of the one great God Śiva is directed toward diverse images and icons. Primary among them are Śivaliṅga, Naṭarāja, Ardhanārīśvara, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Hari-Hara, Bhairava and the *triśūla*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Every form is a form of Śiva. Tradition has given us several of special sacredness. The Śivaliṅga was the first image of Divinity. After it all other icons evolved from mystic visions. We contemplate God Śiva as Paraśiva when we worship the Śivaliṅga. Its simple elliptical shape speaks silently of God's unspeakable Absolute Being. We exalt Śiva as Parāśakti or Satchidānanda, God's living omnipresence, when we worship any form of His never-separate Śakti, especially Ardhanārīśvara, whose right half is masculine and left half is feminine, and in whom all opposites are reconciled. We adore Him as Parameśvara, the Primal Soul, when we worship Naṭarāja, the Divine Dancer who animates the universe. Thus we worship Śiva's three perfections in three forms, yet knowing that He is a one Being, fully present in each of them. He is also Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the silent teacher; Hari-Hara—half-Śiva, half-Vishṇu—and Bhairava, the fierce wielder of *triśūla*, the trident of love, wisdom and action. The *Tirumantiram* declares, "Everywhere is the Holy Form. Everywhere is Śiva-Śakti. Everywhere is Chidambaram. Everywhere is Divine Dance." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*One of Śiva's forms is Nīlakaṇṭha, Blue-Throated Lord. When devas and demons churned the Ocean of Milk, a poison arose, and death was everywhere. To save mankind, Śiva gathered the poison and drank it, which turned His throat blue.*

He is the God of forms infinite in whose glory all things are—smaller than the smallest atom, and yet the Creator of all, ever living in the mystery of His creation. In the vision of this God of love there is everlasting peace. He is the Lord of all who, hidden in the heart of things, watches over the world of time. The Gods and seers of Brahman are one with Him, and when a man knows Him, he cuts the bonds of death.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 4.14-15. UPM, 91-92*

There the eye goes not, nor words, nor mind. We know not. We cannot understand how He can be explained. He is above the known, and He is above the unknown. Thus have we heard from the ancient sages who explained this truth to us.

*Sāma Veda, Kena Upanishad 1.3. UPM, 51*

This *ātman* is the Lord of all beings, the King of all beings. Just as the spokes are fixed in the hub and the rim of a chariot wheel, in the same way all these beings, all the Gods, all the worlds, all life breaths, all these selves, are fixed in the *ātman*.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2.5.15. VE, 716*

He, the Self, is not this, not this. He is ungraspable, for He is not grasped. He is indestructible, for He cannot be destroyed. He is unattached, for He does not cling to anything. He is unbound, He does not suffer, nor is He injured.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4.5.15. VE, 421*

To Rudra, Lord of sacrifice, of hymns and balmy medicines, we pray for joy and health and strength. He shines in splendor like the sun, refulgent as bright gold is He, the good, the best among the Gods.

*Rig Veda 1.43.4-5, 64*

Now, that golden Person who is seen within the sun has a golden beard and golden hair. He is exceedingly brilliant all, even to the finger-nail tips. His eyes are even as a Kapyasa lotus flower. His name is high. He is raised high above all evils. Verily, he who knows this rises high above all evils.

*Sāma Veda, Chandogya Upanishad 1.6.6-7. UPH, 183*

The bodily form of the Almighty, being constituted of powers, is not comparable to ours. Most conspicuous is the absence of *āṇava*. His bodily form, having a head, etc., is composed of five *mantras*, corresponding each to the five activities—Īśa, Tat Purusha, Aghora, Vāma and Aja.

*Mrigendra Āgama, Jñāna Pāda 3.A.8A-9A. MA, 119-20*

The Lord He is: Hari, Brahmā and Rudra. He is the Seed of the corporeal world. Distant and near is He. He is sugar-cane-sweet ambrosia divine. Thus He stands, close to *jīva*.

*Tirumantiram 2365. TM*

As movement within wind, as sugar within sugarcane, as *ghee* within milk, as juice within fruit, as fragrance within flower, thus does the Lord pervade all.

*Tirumantiram 2639. TM*

Himself creates. Himself preserves. Himself destroys. Himself obscures. Himself, all these He does and then grants *mukti*—Himself the all-pervading Lord.

*Tirumantiram 1809. TM*

An earring of bright, new gold glows on one ear; a coiled conch shell sways on the other. On one side He chants the melodies of the ritual *Veda*; on the other He gently smiles. Matted hair adorned with sweet *konrai* blossoms on one half of His head, and a woman's curls on the other, He comes. The one is the nature of His form, the other, of Hers; and both are the very essence of His beauty.

*Tirumurai 4.8.10. PS, 105*

Bearing Gaṅgā on spreading, matted locks, the forehead eye sparkling, the breath spirating as tempestuous wind, the immaculate form shining radiant as the clear sky, the holy feet stretching to the ends of Earth, the blemishless heart serving as pedestal, the *Vedas* chanting aloud of themselves, the right hand that grants refuge and the left hand that grants favors both appropriately gesturing, the *nāda* sound of drum filling the air all around—thus Śiva dances.

*Tayumanavar 15.4-5. HT, 177*

Love of Śiva's feet eradicates bad *karma*. Love of Śiva's feet grants you clarity of mind. Love of Śiva's feet imbues the heart with gladness. Love of Śiva's feet is consciousness itself.

*Natchintanai, "Love the Feet..." NT, 164*





**Ganeśa-Kārttikeyau**  
**गणेशकार्तिकेयौ**



**Lords of Dharma**

In whose one limb all the Gods, three  
and thirty in number, are affixed, tell  
me of that Support—who may He be?

*Atharva Veda 10.7.13. VE, 64*



## Do Other Gods Exist Apart from Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 21

Supreme God Śiva has created all the Gods and given them distinct existence and powers, and yet He pervades them wholly. They are separate but inseparable. At the deepest level, nothing exists apart from Him. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

God Śiva is the Supreme Being, the Lord of lords. He alone prevails everywhere. Not an atom moves except by His will. Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Indra, Agni and all the 330 million Gods of Hinduism are beings just as we are, created by Lord Śiva and destined to enjoy union with Him. The Gods are souls of high evolution. They are very old and mature souls, mighty beings who live in the Śivaloka. Though neither male nor female, they may be popularly depicted as Gods and Goddesses. The *devas* are benevolent beings of light abiding in the higher Antarloka. They help guide evolution from their world between births. The *asuras* are demonic beings of darkness, immature souls who temporarily inhabit Naraka, the lower Antarloka. *Devas* and *asuras* are usually subject to rebirth. We worship Śiva and the Gods. We neither worship the *devas* nor invoke the *asuras*. Kārttikeya, Gaṇeśa and all the Gods, *devas* and *asuras* worship Śiva. The *Vedas* explain, “From Him, also, are born the Gods, in manifold ways, the celestials, men, cattle, birds, the in-breath and the out-breath, rice and barley, austerity, faith, truth, chastity and the law.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Brahmā, Indra, Viṣṇu, Devī, Murugaṇ and other Deities have gathered to offer hymns of praise to Śiva, the Supreme God, Lord and Creator, represented only by His hand. Their mounts, Indra’s elephant, Durga’s lion and others, wait nearby.*



S. RAJAT '04

## What Is the Nature of Lord Gaṇeśa?

### ŚLOKA 22

**Lord Gaṇeśa is the elephant-faced Patron of Art and Science, the Lord of Obstacles and Guardian of Dharma. His will prevails as the force of righteousness, the embodiment of Śiva's *karmic* law in all three worlds. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Lord Śiva, the Almighty Power, created Heaven and Earth and the God Lord Gaṇeśa to oversee the intricate *karmas* and *dharma*s within the heavens and all the earths. Lord Gaṇeśa was created as a governor and interplanetary, intergalactic Lord. His knowledge is infinite, His judgment is just. It is none other than Lord Gaṇeśa and His mighty band of *gaṇas* who gently help souls out of the Naraka abyss and adjust them into higher consciousness after due penance has been paid, guiding them on the right path toward dharmic destiny. He is intricate of mind, loving pomp, delighting in all things sweet and enjoying adulation. Lord Śiva proclaimed that this son be worshiped first, even before Himself. Verily, He is the Lord of *Karma*. All Mahādevas, minor Gods, *devas* and sentient beings must worship Gaṇeśa before any responsible act could hope to be successful. Those who do not are subject to their own barriers. Yea, worship of Him sets the pattern of one's destiny. The *Tirumantiram* says, "Five-armed is He, elephant-faced with tusks protruding, crescent-shaped, son of Śiva, wisdom's flower, in heart enshrined, His feet I praise." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord of Karma, Gaṇeśa removes obstacles with the goad. He also places obstacles in our path, using the noose. The broken tusk is sacrifice, and the ripe mango is spiritual attainment. This red form is Vijaya Gaṇapati, victorious bestower of success.*



श्रीगणेशाय नमः

## What Is Lord Gaṇeśa's Special Duty?

### ŚLOKA 23

As Lord of Obstacles, Gaṇeśa wields the noose and the goad, icons of His benevolent power of preventing or permitting events to happen in our life. Thus, we invoke His grace and wisdom before any worship or task. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Lord Gaṇeśa, the God of time and memory, strategically seated on the *mūlādhāra chakra*, poised between the higher and lower *chakras*, stabilizes all sentient beings. He holds the architect's plans of the divine masterpiece of universal past and future. Only good comes from Lord Gaṇeśa, who by taking the form of an elephant distinguishes Himself from other Gods. The *charyā pāda* begins with His worship. He staves off misfortune for those who perform penance in His name. He guides our *karma* from within us through the timing of events. Before any important undertaking, we supplicate Him to clear obstacles from the path, if it be His will. This Lord of Obstacles prevents us from hurting ourselves through living under an incomplete concept or making a request unneeded or beginning an endeavor not well thought out. Before we petition Him, He expects us to use all of our faculties to arrive at the decision He would have made. The *Āgamas* declare, "These Lords who, it is said, on the pure path, attend to the various duties deriving from a higher realm of *māyā* are at the prow of the effects of the higher realm of *māyā*." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Bow at the ready, hurling His sharp tusk, Lord Gaṇeśa protects devotees by warding away an elephant asura, who drops all weapons and turns into a mouse which Gaṇeśa takes as His mount. This story shows how Gaṇeśa safeguards us always.*





## What Is the Nature of Lord Kārttikeya?

### ŚLOKA 24

Lord Kārttikeya, Murugan, first *guru* and Pleiadean master of *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, was born of God Śiva's mind. His dynamic power awakens spiritual cognition to propel souls onward in their evolution to Śiva's feet. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Lord Kārttikeya flies through the mind's vast substance from planet to planet. He could well be called the Emancipator, ever available to the call of those in distress. Lord Kārttikeya, God of will, direct cognition and the purest, child-like divine love, propels us onward on the righteous way through religion, His Father's law. Majestically seated on the *maṇipūra chakra*, this scarlet-hued God blesses mankind and strengthens our will when we lift to the inner sky through *sādhana* and *yoga*. The *yoga pāda* begins with the worship of Him. The *yogī*, locked in meditation, venerates Kārttikeya, Skanda, as his mind becomes as calm as Śaravaṇa, the lake of Divine Essence. The *kuṇḍalinī* force within everyone is held and controlled by this powerful God, first among renunciates, dear to all *sannyāsins*. Revered as Murugan in the South, He is commander in chief of the great *devonic* army, a fine, dynamic soldier of the within, a fearless defender of righteousness. He is Divinity emulated in form. The *Vedas* say, "To such a one who has his stains wiped away, the venerable Sanatkumāra shows the further shore of darkness. Him they call Skanda." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord Shanmugam, the six-faced, twelve-armed son of Śiva, wields many weapons, as He battles the forces of darkness to end wars, large and small. He rides the noble peacock, Mayil, which represents effulgent beauty and religion in its fullest glory.*



## What Does Lord Kārttikeya's Vel Signify?

### ŚLOKA 25

The lancelike vel wielded by Lord Kārttikeya, or Skanda, embodies discrimination and spiritual insight. Its blade is wide, long and keen, just as our knowledge must be broad, deep and penetrating. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The *śakti* power of the *vel*, the eminent, intricate power of righteousness over wrongdoing, conquers confusion within the realms below. The holy *vel*, that when thrown always hits its mark and of itself returns to Kārttikeya's mighty hand, rewards us when righteousness prevails and becomes the *kuṇḍalini* serpent's unleashed power thwarting our every effort with punishing remorse when we transgress *dharma*'s law. Thus, the holy *vel* is our release from ignorance into knowledge, our release from vanity into modesty, our release from sinfulness into purity through *tapas*. When we perform penance and beseech His blessing, this merciful God hurls His *vel* into the astral plane, piercing discordant sounds, colors and shapes, removing the mind's darkness. He is the King of kings, the power in their scepters. Standing behind the temporal majesty, He advises and authorizes. His *vel* empowering the ruler, justice prevails, wisdom enriches the minds of citizens, rain is abundant, crops flourish and plenty fills the larders. The *Tirumurai* says, "In the gloom of fear, His six-fold face gleams. In perils unbounded, His *vel* betokens, 'Fear not.'" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Skanda's vel is the potent lance, scepter of His authority as Lord of Yoga and Commander-in-Chief of the devonic armies. An asura threatens three devotees with suffering and loss during their forest worship, and Skanda intervenes to protect them.*

As the God evoked faith from the mighty *asuras*, so may my prayer for the generous worshiper be accepted!

*Rig Veda* 10.151.3. VE, 180

He who is source and origin of the Gods, the Lord of all, Rudra, the Mighty Sage who produced in ancient days the Golden Germ—may He endow us with purity of mind!

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 3.4. VE, 156

Great are the Gods who were born from Nonbeing. Yet men aver this Nonbeing to be the single limb of the Support, the great Beyond.

*Atharva Veda* 10.7.23-25. VE, 65

A mighty wonder in the midst of creation moves, thanks to Fervor, on the waters' surface. To Him whatever Gods there are adhere like branches of a tree around the trunk. To whom the Gods always with hands and feet, with speech, ear, and eye, bring tribute unmeasured in a well-measured place of sacrifice, tell me of that Support—who may He be?

*Atharva Veda* 10.7.38-39. VE, 66

“Agni, Vāyu, Āditya who is the time (Prajāpati), *prāṇa*, food, Brahmā, Rudra, Vishṇu. From among these, some, meditating, adore one, others another. Please tell us: who among them is adored most, who is He?” Then he said to them: “These, indeed, are the foremost appeared forms of the highest, immortal, incorporeal Brahman.”

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad* 4.5-6. UPB, 343

In Him exists neither action nor organ of action; no one is found His equal or superior to Him. His supreme power is revealed in manifold forms; inherent to His nature is the working of His strength and wisdom.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 6.8. VE, 156

I'll not sell you, not for a thousand or ten thousand pieces! O Indra, you are more to me than a father. I count a brother naught compared to you. You and a mother, O Bountiful, vie with each other in generous giving and in bestowal of joy.

*Rig Veda* 8.1.5-6. VE, 202

Let us know that Supreme Being and meditate upon Him, the Supreme General of the great *deva* army. May He enlighten us and lead us to be one with Him, Lord Skanda.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Āraṇyaka 10.6.2-3 (Shaṇmukha Gāyatrī). LW, 112*

In the heart of those who recount His name, He reveals His gracious feet. Thus He appears to those who chant the hallowed name *Murugan*. He stands immanent in all.

*Tirumurai 11, Nakkirar. KD, 224*

The moon, sun and fire are in unison radiating their resplendent effulgence. Radiating the luminous sparks is Murugan, who lights up the world by His peerless light.

*Kathirgama Purāṇa. KD, 220*

If you worship the elephant-faced Vināyaka, your life will expand bountifully. If you worship the white-tusked Vināyaka, your desires and doubts will flee. Therefore, worship Him with love-offerings of jack, hoppers, plantain and mango fruits and thus mitigate the burden of deeds.

*Saint Auvaigar. AG, 127*

He has one tusk and four arms. Two of His hands hold a noose and a hook, while the other hands show the gestures of removing fear and granting boons. A mouse is seen on His flag. Red, obese, He has ears like winnowing baskets. He is dressed in red, with limbs painted with red sandalpaste.

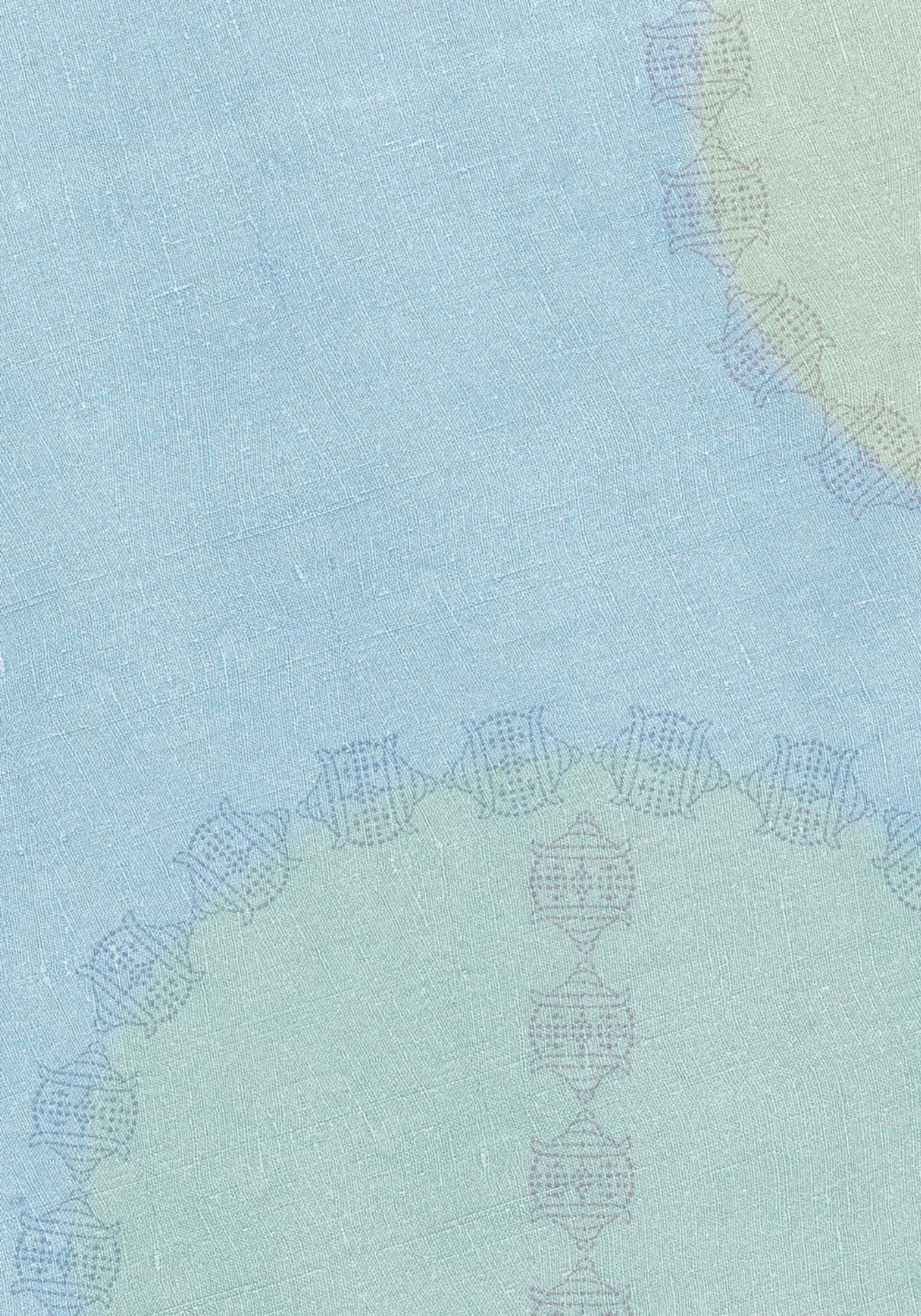
*Gaṇapati Upanishad 11-12. HP, 295*

Murugan, Kumāran, Guhan—to utter and melt and have divine experience—when shall Thou grant this, O *guru* supreme, worshiped by the *devas* devout and mortals alike, O abode of virtues eight!

*Kandar Anubhuti 15. KA, 116*

The God with the elephantine visage I shall never forget—Śaṅkara's son, with massive belly and the *thodu* in His ear, the Lord who gave His grace to Indra, of whom *mantra* is His very form.

*Natchintanai, "Adoration..." NT, 222*



Amṛitātma  
अमृतात्मा



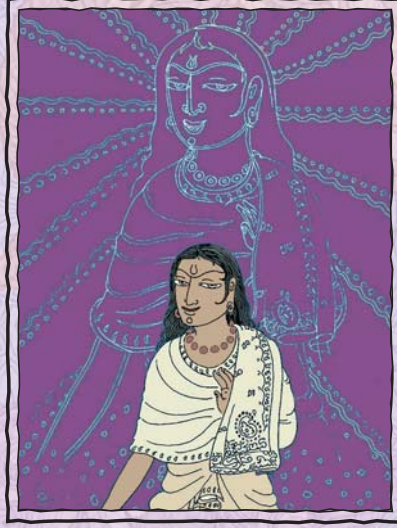
UPANISHAD THREE

**Our Immortal Soul**





## Ātmasvarūpam आत्मस्वरूपम्



## The Nature of the Soul

A part of Infinite Consciousness becomes our own finite consciousness, with powers of discrimination and definition and with false conceptions. He is, in truth, Prajāpati and Viśva, the Source of Creation and the Universal in us all. This Spirit is consciousness and gives consciousness to the body. He is the driver of the chariot.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 2.5. UPM, 99*



राजा,

## What Is Our Individual Soul Nature?

### ŚLOKA 26

**Our individual soul is the immortal and spiritual body of light that animates life and reincarnates again and again until all necessary *karmas* are created and resolved and its essential unity with God is fully realized. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Our soul is God Śiva's emanational creation, the source of all our higher functions, including knowledge, will and love. Our soul is neither male nor female. It is that which never dies, even when its four outer sheaths—physical, *prāṇic*, instinctive and mental—change form and perish as they naturally do. The physical body is the *annamaya kośa*. The *prāṇic* sheath of vitality is the *prāṇamaya kośa*. The instinctive-intellectual sheath is the *manomaya kośa*. The mental, or cognitive, sheath is the *vijñānamaya kośa*. The inmost soul body is the blissful, ever-giving-wisdom *ānandamaya kośa*. Paraśakti is the soul's superconscious mind—God Śiva's mind. Paraśiva is the soul's inmost core. We are not the physical body, mind or emotions. We are the immortal soul, *ātman*. The sum of our true existence is *ānandamaya kośa* and its essence, Paraśakti and Paraśiva. The *Vedas* expostulate, “The soul is born and unfolds in a body, with dreams and desires and the food of life. And then it is reborn in new bodies, in accordance with its former works. The quality of the soul determines its future body; earthly or airy, heavy or light.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*With the red-and-white walls and towering gate of a temple behind him, a soul hovers in perfect poise, hands in graceful mudrās that indicate he is fully aware of his inherent oneness with God Śiva, his radiant essence and immortal identity.*



## How Is Our Soul Different from Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 27

**Our soul body was created in the image and likeness of the Primal Soul, God Śiva, but it differs from the Primal Soul in that it is immature. While Śiva is unevolutionary perfection, we are in the process of evolving. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

To understand the mysteries of the soul, we distinguish between the soul body and its essence. As a soul body, we are individual and unique, different from all others, a self-effulgent being of light which evolves and matures through an evolutionary process. This soul body is of the nature of God Śiva, but is different from Śiva in that it is less resplendent than the Primal Soul and still evolving, while God is unevolutionary perfection. We may liken the soul body to an acorn, which contains the mighty oak tree but is a small seed yet to develop. The soul body matures through experience, evolving through many lives into the splendor of God Śiva, ultimately realizing Śiva totally in *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Even after Self Realization is attained, the soul body continues to evolve in this and other worlds until it merges with the Primal Soul, as a drop of water merges with its source, the ocean. Yea, this is the destiny of all souls without exception. The *Vedas* say, “As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river beds, as fire in friction sticks, so is the *ātman* grasped in one’s own self when one searches for Him with truthfulness and austerity.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Kneeling before the divine Śiva-Śakti, a devotee offers his long, braided locks at the Lord’s feet. Such personal sacrifice represents the surrender of ego, which must be relinquished as we approach the Creator, Preserver and Dissolver of the universe.*



## How Is Our Soul Identical with Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 28

The essence of our soul, which was never created, is immanent love and transcendent reality and is identical and eternally one with God Śiva. At the core of our being, we already are That—perfect at this very moment. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

At the core of the subtle soul body is Parāśakti, or Satchidānanda, immanent love; and at the core of that is Paraśiva, transcendent reality. At this depth of our being there exists no separate identity or difference—all are One. Thus, deep within our soul we are identical with God now and forever. These two divine perfections are not aspects of the evolving soul, but the nucleus of the soul which does not change or evolve. From an absolute perspective, our soul is already in nondual union with God, but to be realized to be known. We are That. We do not become That. Deep within this physical body, with its turbulent emotions and getting-educated mind, is pure perfection identical to Śiva's own perfections of Parāśakti and Paraśiva. In this sacred mystery we find the paradoxes of oneness and twoness, of being and becoming, of created and uncreated existence subtly delineated. Yea, in the depth of our being, we are as He is. The *Vedas* explain, “The one controller, the inner Self of all things, who makes His one form manifold, to the wise who perceive Him as abiding in the soul, to them is eternal bliss—to no others.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*One gift of spiritual awakening is to see oneself in all things, animate and inanimate. A bhakta experiences this Satchidānanda, realizing his soul's essence as the core of existence, witnessing the truth that he is, and always was, That—God within all.*





## Why Are We Not Omniscient Like Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 29

The three bonds of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* veil our sight. This is Śiva's purposeful limiting of awareness which allows us to evolve. In the superconscious depths of our soul, we share God Śiva's all-knowingness. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Just as children are kept from knowing all about adult life until they have matured into understanding, so too is the soul's knowledge limited. We learn what we need to know, and we understand what we have experienced. Only this narrowing of our awareness, coupled with a sense of individualized ego, allows us to look upon the world and our part in it from a practical, human point of view. *Pāśa* is the soul's triple bondage: *māyā*, *karma* and *āṇava*. Without the world of *māyā*, the soul could not evolve through experience. *Karma* is the law of cause and effect, action and reaction governing *māyā*. *Āṇava* is the individuating veil of duality, source of ignorance and finitude. *Māyā* is the classroom, *karma* the teacher, and *āṇava* the student's ignorance. The three bonds, or *malas*, are given by Lord Śiva to help and protect us as we unfold. Yet, God Śiva's all-knowingness may be experienced for brief periods by the meditator who turns within to his own essence. The *Tirumantiram* explains, "When the soul attains Self-knowledge, then it becomes one with Śiva. The *malas* perish, birth's cycle ends and the lustrous light of wisdom dawns." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Deep in a pristine forest, worshipers perform pūjā to a Śivaliṅga, invoking Śiva-Śakti who appear in a vision. Lord Śiva, the architect of knowledge, hands in abhaya and varada mudrās, expounds on the soul's three bonds: āṇava, karma and māyā.*



## How Do Hindus Understand Moksha?

### ŚLOKA 30

The destiny of all souls is *moksha*, liberation from rebirth on the physical plane. Our soul then continues evolving in the Antarloka and Śivaloka, and finally merges with Śiva like water returning to the sea. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

*Moksha* comes when earthly *karma* has been resolved, *dharma* well performed and God fully realized. Each soul must have performed well through many lives the *varṇa dharmas*, or four castes, and lived through life's varied experiences in order to not be pulled back to physical birth by a deed left undone. All souls are destined to achieve *moksha*, but not necessarily in this life. Hindus know this and do not delude themselves that this life is the last. While seeking and attaining profound realizations, they know there is much to be done in fulfilling life's other goals (*purushārthas*): *dharma*, righteousness; *artha*, wealth; and *kāma*, pleasure. Old souls renounce worldly ambitions and take up *sannyāsa* in quest of Paraśiva, even at a young age. Toward life's end, all Hindus strive for Self Realization, the gateway to liberation. After *moksha*, subtle *karmas* are made in inner realms and swiftly resolved, like writing on water. At the end of each soul's evolution comes *viśvagrāsa*, total absorption in Śiva. The *Vedas* say, "If here one is able to realize Him before the death of the body, he will be liberated from the bondage of the world." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Saint Sundarar was intensely devoted to Śiva. When he was ready to relinquish his body, a white elephant descended and took him to Śiva's feet. It is in that subtle world that Self-realized souls further evolve after the completion of earthly births.*

The *ātman* pervades all like butter hidden in milk. He is the source of Self-knowledge and ascetic fervor. This is the Brahman teaching, the highest goal! This is the Brahman teaching, the highest goal! He who with the truth of the *ātman*, unified, perceives the truth of Brahman as with a lamp, who knows God, the unborn, the stable, free from all forms of being, is released from all fetters. The inspired Self is not born nor does He die; He springs from nothing and becomes nothing. Unborn, permanent, unchanging, primordial, He is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 1.16; 2.15 & 18. VE, 711, 762, 566

There is a spirit which is pure and which is beyond old age and death; and beyond hunger and thirst and sorrow. This is *ātman*, the spirit in man. All the desires of this spirit are Truth. It is this spirit that we must find and know; man must find his own soul. He who has found and knows his soul has found all the worlds, has achieved all his desires. What you see when you look into another person's eyes, that is the *ātman*, immortal, beyond fear; that is Brahman.

*Sāma Veda, Chandogya Upanishad* 8.7.3-4. UPM, 121-122

Now, the teaching concerning the *ātman*: the *ātman* is below, it is above, it is behind, it is before, it is in the South, it is in the North. The *ātman* indeed is all that is. He who sees, reflects and knows this—he has joy in the *ātman*, he plays with the *ātman*, he unites with the *ātman*, his is the bliss of the *ātman*. He becomes free and is free to move in all the worlds. But those who think otherwise are ruled by others and their worlds are perishable. They are unfree in all the worlds.

*Sāma Veda, Chandogya Upanishad* 7.25.2. VE, 740

There are five subtle elements, *tanmantra*, and these are called elements. There are also five gross elements, *mahābhutas*, and these are called elements. The union of these is called the human body. The human soul rules the body; but the immortal spiritual soul is pure like a drop of water on a lotus leaf. The human soul is under the power of the three constituents and conditions of nature, and thus it falls into confusion. Because of this confusion the soul cannot become conscious of the God who dwells within and whose power gives us power to work.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad* 3.2. UPM, 100

He who dwells in the light, yet is other than the light, whom the light does not know, whose body is the light, who controls the light from within—He is the *ātman* within you.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 3.7.14. VE, 708*

The three impurities are *āṇava*, *māyā* and the one caused by actions.

*Suprabheda Āgama 2.1. SA, 102*

Pure consciousness, taking form as knowledge and action, is present in the soul everywhere and always, for the soul is universal in its unfettered state.

*Mṛigendra Āgama, Jñāna Pāda 2.A.5. MA, 60*

When the state is attained where one becomes Śiva, the *malas*—the bonds diverse, mental states and experiences that arose for the individualized soul—will all fade like the beams of the moon in the presence of the rising sun.

*Tirumantiram 2314. TM*

When *jīva* attains the state of neutrality to deeds good and evil, then does divine grace in *guru* form descend, remove attributes all and implant *jñāna* that is unto a heavenly cool shade. The *jīva* is without egoity, and the impurities three are finished. He is Śiva who all this does.

*Tirumantiram 1527. TM*

In the primal play of the Lord were *jīvas* created. Enveloped in mighty *malas* were they. Discarding them, they realized themselves and besought the feet of their hoary Lord. Thus they became Śiva, with birth no more to be.

*Tirumantiram 2369. TM*

A goldsmith fashions several ornaments out of gold. So God, the great goldsmith, makes many ornaments—different souls—out of the one Universal Spirit.

*Natchintanai, "Seek the Profit..." NT, 11*

The *ātman* is eternal. This is the conclusion at which great souls have arrived from their experience. Let this truth become well impressed in your mind.

*Natchintanai, Letter 1. NT, 15*



Samsārah  
संसारः



## Karma and Rebirth

Through the ripening of the fruits of his actions he does not attain any rest, like a worm caught within a whirlpool. The desire for liberation arises in human beings at the end of many births, through the ripening of their past virtuous conduct.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Paingala Upanishad 2.11. UPR, 913*





## How Do Hindus Understand Karma?

### ŚLOKA 31

*Karma* literally means “deed” or “act” and more broadly names the universal principle of cause and effect, action and reaction which governs all life. *Karma* is a natural law of the mind, just as gravity is a law of matter. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Karma* is not fate, for man acts with free will, creating his own destiny. The *Vedas* tell us, if we sow goodness, we will reap goodness; if we sow evil, we will reap evil. *Karma* refers to the totality of our actions and their concomitant reactions in this and previous lives, all of which determines our future. It is the interplay between our experience and how we respond to it that makes *karma* devastating or helpfully invigorating. The conquest of *karma* lies in intelligent action and dispassionate reaction. Not all *karmas* rebound immediately. Some accumulate and return unexpectedly in this or other births. The several kinds of *karma* are: personal, family, community, national, global and universal. Ancient *ṛishis* perceived personal *karma*’s three-fold edict. The first is *sañchita*, the sum total of past *karmas* yet to be resolved. The second is *prārabdha*, that portion of *sañchita* to be experienced in this life. *Kriyamāna*, the third type, is *karma* we are currently creating. The *Vedas* propound, “Here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will. As is his will, so is his deed. Whatever deed he does, that he will reap.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A farmer sits intently at a gambling table, his grain harvest nearby. Pondering a wager which could make him rich or risk his family’s wealth, he knows he is responsible for his karmas, good and bad. Śiva silently witnesses all actions and reactions.*



## Is There Good Karma and Bad Karma?

### ŚLOKA 32

**In the highest sense, there is no good or bad *karma*. All experience offers opportunities for spiritual growth. Selfless acts yield positive, uplifting conditions. Selfish acts yield conditions of negativity and confusion. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

*Karma* itself is neither good nor bad but a neutral principle that governs energy and motion of thought, word and deed. All experience helps us grow. Good, loving actions bring to us lovingness through others. Mean, selfish acts bring back to us pain and suffering. Kindness produces sweet fruits, called *puṇya*. Unkindness yields spoiled fruits, called *pāpa*. As we mature, life after life, we go through much pain and joy. Actions that are in tune with *dharma* help us along the path, while *adhar-mic* actions impede our progress. The divine law is: whatever *karma* we are experiencing in our life is just what we need at the moment, and nothing can happen but that we have the strength to meet it. Even harsh *karma*, when faced in wisdom, can be the greatest catalyst for spiritual unfoldment. Performing daily *sādhana*, keeping good company, pilgrimaging to holy places, seeing to others' needs—these evoke the higher energies, direct the mind to useful thoughts and avoid the creation of troublesome new *karmas*. The *Vedas* explain, “According as one acts, so does he become. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The law of karma is neutral, like the grain in the man's pouch. One lady puts out grain for hungry crows. Seeing a beggar's pleading tears, a man hoards his grain, bringing tears to his own eyes as well. Another man, caught stealing grain, lands in jail.*



## What Is the Process of Reincarnation?

### ŚLOKA 33

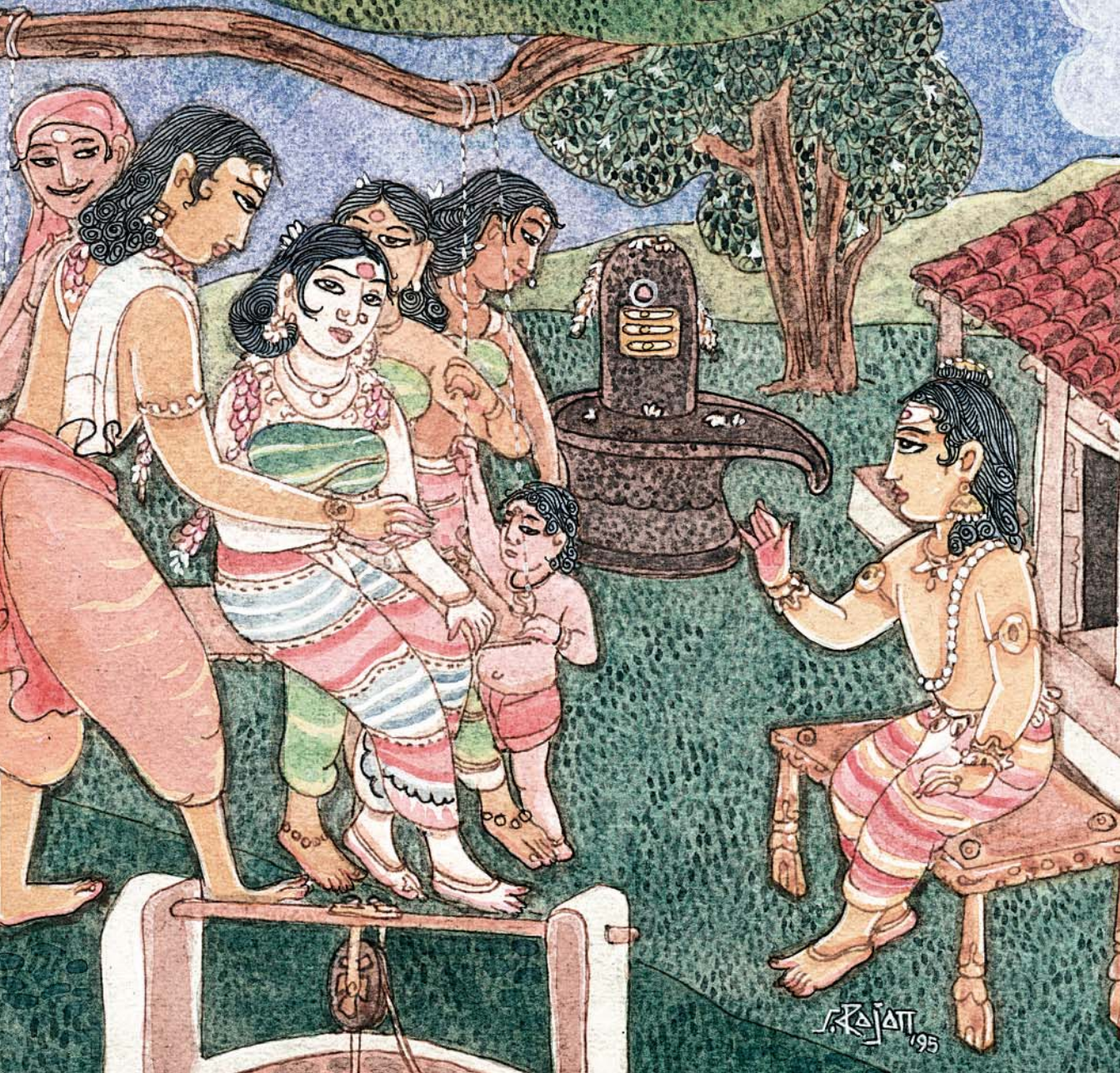
Reincarnation, *punarjanma*, is the natural process of birth, death and rebirth. At death we drop off the physical body and continue evolving in the inner worlds in our subtle bodies, until we again enter into birth. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Through the ages, reincarnation has been the great consoling element within Hinduism, eliminating the fear of death, explaining why one person is born a genius and another an idiot. We are not the body in which we live but the immortal soul which inhabits many bodies in its evolutionary journey through *samsāra*. After death, we continue to exist in unseen worlds, enjoying or suffering the harvest of earthly deeds until it comes time for yet another physical birth. Because certain *karmas* can be resolved only in the physical world, we must enter another physical body to continue our evolution. After soaring into the causal plane, we enter a new womb. Subsequently the old *manomaya kośa* is slowly sloughed off and a new one created. The actions set in motion in previous lives form the tendencies and conditions of the next. Reincarnation ceases when *karma* is resolved, God is realized and *moksha* attained. The *Vedas* say, “After death, the soul goes to the next world bearing in mind the subtle impressions of its deeds, and after reaping their harvest returns again to this world of action. Thus, he who has desires continues subject to rebirth.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A soul passes through the doorway to the inner worlds. Death for the Hindu is an exalted experience, shown by devas offer prayers and flowers. Following its final final birth on Earth, this soul becomes one with God, merging into the Śivaliṅga.*



## How Should We View Death and Dying?

### ŚLOKA 34

**Our soul never dies; only the physical body dies. We neither fear death nor look forward to it, but revere it as a most exalted experience. Life, death and the afterlife are all part of our path to perfect oneness with God. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

For Hindus, death is nobly referred to as *mahāprasthāna*, “the great journey.” When the lessons of this life have been learned and *karmas* reach a point of intensity, the soul leaves the physical body, which then returns its elements to the earth. The awareness, will, memory and intelligence which we think of as ourselves continue to exist in the soul body. Death is a most natural experience, not to be feared. It is a quick transition from the physical world to the astral plane, like walking through a door, leaving one room and entering another. Knowing this, we approach death as a *sādhana*, as a spiritual opportunity, bringing a level of detachment which is difficult to achieve in the tumult of life and an urgency to strive more than ever in our search for the Divine Self. To be near a realized soul at the time he or she gives up the body yields blessings surpassing those of a thousand and eight visits to holy persons at other times. The *Vedas* explain, “As a caterpillar coming to the end of a blade of grass draws itself together in taking the next step, so does the soul in the process of transition strike down this body and dispel its ignorance.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A dying man is attended by his family. One rushes to his side with a remedy, but too late, and he passes away. Below the family console one another, moving from grief toward acceptance, aided by a youth’s reminder of the soul’s immortality.*





## How Does One Best Prepare for Death?

### ŚLOKA 35

Blessed with the knowledge of impending transition, we settle affairs and take refuge in *japa*, worship, scripture and *yoga*—seeking the highest realizations as we consciously, joyously release the world. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Before dying, Hindus diligently fulfill obligations, make amends and resolve differences by forgiving themselves and others, lest unresolved *karmas* bear fruit in future births. That done, we turn to God through meditation, surrender and scriptural study. As a conscious death is our ideal, we avoid drugs, artificial life-extension and suicide. Suicide only postpones and intensifies the *karma* one seeks escape from, requiring several lives to return to the evolutionary point that existed at the moment of suicide. In cases of terminal illness, under strict community regulation, tradition does allow *prāyopaveśa*, self-willed religious death by fasting. When nearing transition, if hospitalized, we return home to be among loved ones. In the final hours of life, we seek the Self God within and focus on our *mantra* as kindred keep prayerful vigil. At death, we leave the body through the crown *chakra*, entering the clear white light and beyond in quest of *videhamukti*. The *Vedas* affirm, “When a person comes to weakness, be it through old age or disease, he frees himself from these limbs just as a mango, a fig or a berry releases itself from its stalk.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The Tirukural says, “Death is like falling asleep, and birth is like waking from that sleep.” On his deathbed, a man has prepared for his transition, donned rudrākshas and applied holy ash. Now his mind turns to Lord Śiva as he releases the body.*

Desireless, wise, immortal, self-existent, full of bliss, lacking in nothing, is the one who knows the wise, unaging, youthful *ātman*. He fears not death!

*Atharva Veda* 10.8.44. VE, 538

He, however, who has not understanding, who is unmindful and ever impure, reaches not the goal, but goes on to reincarnation. He, however, who has understanding, who is mindful and ever pure, reaches the goal from which he is born no more.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad* 3.7-8. UPH, 352

Go, my breath, to the immortal Breath. Then may this body end in ashes! Remember, O my mind, the deeds of the past, remember the deeds, remember the deeds!

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Īśa Upanishad* 17. VE, 831

Even as a heavy laden cart moves on groaning, even so the cart of the human body, wherein lives the spirit, moves on groaning when a man is giving up the breath of life. And as when a king is going to depart, the nobles and officers, the charioteers and the heads of the village assemble around him, even so all the powers of life gather about the soul when a man is giving up the breath of life. When departing, by the head, or by the eye or other parts of the body, life arises and follows the soul, and the powers of life follow life. The soul becomes conscious and enters into Consciousness. His wisdom and works take him by the hand, and the knowledge known of old. Then even as a worker in gold, taking an old ornament, molds it into a form newer and fairer, even so the soul, leaving the body and unwisdom behind, goes into a form newer and fairer, a form like that of the ancestors in heaven, or of the celestial beings, or of the Gods of light, or of the Lord of Creation, or of Brahmā, the Creator supreme, or a form of other beings.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* 4.3.35; 37 & 4.4.2; 3. UPM, 138-139

O Māghavan, verily, this body is mortal. It has been appropriated by death. But it is the standing ground of that deathless, bodiless Self (*ātman*). Verily, he who is incorporate has been appropriated by pleasure and pain. Verily, there is no freedom from pleasure and pain for one while he is incorporate. Verily, while one is bodiless, pleasure and pain do not touch him.

*Sāma Veda, Chandogya Upanishad* 8.12.1. UPH, 272

I pray Thee for undying love. I pray Thee for the birthless state; but were I to be born again, for the grace of never forgetting Thee. Still more do I pray to be at Thy feet singing joyfully while Thou dancest.

*Tirumurai* 11, *Karaikkal Ammaiyar*. PR, 132

Thus acting from the principle of *māyā* itself down to the lowest level, *karma*, even when it manifests as good, is an obstacle still, because it is not toward liberation that it leads. *Karma* does not dissolve without its various fruits being tasted and consumed.

*Mrigendra Āgama, Jñāna Pāda* 8.A.5-6. MA, 193-4

A twice-born, gone to the end of the *Veda*, knowing that life is impermanent, may abandon the body there by fasting to death according to prescription. After worshiping the Gods and honoring the *munis*, the *siddhā* may go to heaven, the eternal realm of Brahmā.

*Mahābhārata, Anu. Parva* 25.63-64. HE, 100

Even as the snake sloughs off its skin, even as the bird leaves its shell, even as in its waking state the *jīva* forgets happenings of the dream state—thus does *jīva* from one body to another migrate until, with grace of Hara, it reaches where it is destined to be, and there experiences the two *karmas*, good and evil.

*Tirumantiram* 2132. TM

They germinate the seed. They plant the seedlings. But, poor in spirit, they do not think of their own fleeting life. Knowing nothing of *karmic* sorrows, verily they are consumed in the funeral pyre.

*Tirumantiram* 2084. TM

All suffering recoils on the wrongdoer himself. Therefore, those desiring not to suffer refrain from causing others pain. If a man visits sorrow on another in the morning, sorrow will visit him unbidden in the afternoon.

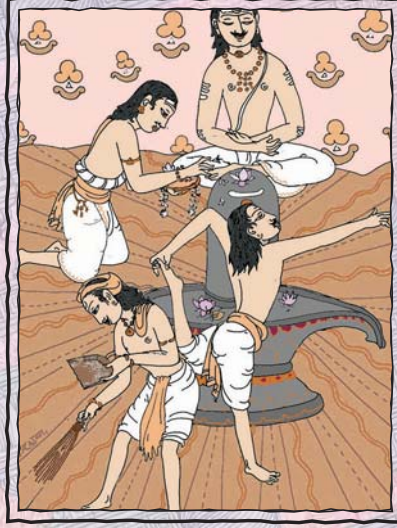
*Tirukural* 320, 319. WW

The Life of my life, whose nature 'tis to hold the fire in His hand, essence of Truth of purest gold, who neither comes nor goes, the Mighty One who doth all souls pervade—in this great world, for those who thus meditate on Him, all future births will end.

*Natchintanai, "Cure for Birth."* NT, 191



## San Mārgah सन्मार्गः



## The Way to Liberation

When the nets of dispositions good and bad are dissolved without any residue, when the accumulated deeds virtuous and vicious are completely destroyed to the very roots, the past and the future alike, owing to the removal of all impediments, bring about the direct and immediate perception of Brahman as of the *āmalaka* fruit on the palm of the hand, then the knower of Brahman becomes one liberated while in life.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Paingala Upanishad 3.2. UPR, 916*



## What Are the Four Stages on the Path?

### ŚLOKA 36

The path of enlightenment is divided naturally into four stages: *charyā*, virtue and selfless service; *kriyā*, worshipful *sādhana*s; *yoga*, meditation under a *guru*'s guidance; and *jñāna*, the wisdom state of the realized soul. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna* are the sequence of the soul's evolutionary process, much like the natural development of a butterfly from egg to caterpillar, from caterpillar to pupa, and then the final metamorphosis to butterfly. These are four *pādas*, or stages, through which each human soul must pass in many births to attain its final goal. Before entering these spiritual stages, the soul is immersed in the lower nature, the *āṇava mārḡa*, or self-centered path, bound in fear and lust, hurtful rage, jealousy, confusion, selfishness, consciencelessness and malice. Then it awakens into *charyā*, unselfish religious service, or *karma yoga*. Once matured in *charyā*, it enters *kriyā*, devotion or *bhakti yoga*, and finally blossoms into *kuṇḍalinī yoga*. *Jñāna* is the state of enlightened wisdom reached toward the path's end as a result of Self Realization. The four *pādas* are not alternative ways, but progressive, cumulative phases of a one path, San Mārḡa. The *Tirumantiram* says, "Being the Life of life is splendrous *jñāna* worship. Beholding the Light of life is great *yoga* worship. Giving life by invocation is external worship. Expressing adoration is *charyā*." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Three stages of the path are depicted here—all leading to jñāna, the fourth stage. In the charyā stage, a woman offers her cherished jewelry to God. In kriyā, a boy receives blessings to study scripture. The yoga stage is sādhana under a guru's guidance.*





राजा

## What Is the Nature of the Charyā Pāda?

### ŚLOKA 37

*Charyā* is the performance of altruistic religious service and living according to traditional ethical conduct and culture, by which the outer nature is purified. It is the stage of overcoming basic instinctive patterns. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Charyā*, literally “conduct,” is the first stage of religiousness and the foundation for the next three stages. It is also called the *dāsa mārḡa*, meaning “path of servitude,” for here the soul relates to God as servant to master. The disciplines of *charyā* include humble service, attending the temple, performing one’s duty to community and family, honoring holy men, respecting elders, atoning for misdeeds and fulfilling the ten classical restraints called *yamas*. Within a strong society, one performs *charyā* whether he wants to or not. Young or rebellious souls often resist and resent, whereas mature souls fulfill these obligations most naturally. Right behavior and self-sacrificing service are never outgrown. The keynote of *charyā*, or *karma yoga*, is *sevā*, religious service given without the least thought of reward, which has the magical effect of softening the ego and bringing forth the soul’s innate devotion. The *Tiruman-tiram* explains, “The simple temple duties, lighting the lamps, picking flowers, lovingly polishing the floors, sweeping, singing the Lord’s praise, ringing the bell and fetching ceremonial water—these constitute the *dāsa mārḡa*.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A young man brings the sacred temple pūjā implements to the family well, using water and lime to clean and polish the brass pots, camphor holders and oil lamps. Goddesses of the home look on in silent benediction of his simple selfless service.*



## What Is the Nature of the Kriyā Pāda?

### ŚLOKA 38

*Kriyā* is joyous and regular worship, both internal and external, in the home and temple. It includes *pūjā*, *japa*, penance, fasting and scriptural learning, by which our understanding and love of God and Gods deepen. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Hinduism demands deep devotion through *bhakti yoga* in the *kriyā pāda*, softening the intellect and unfolding love. In *kriyā*, the second stage of religiousness, our *sādhana*, which was mostly external in *charyā*, is now also internal. *Kriyā*, literally “action or rite,” is a stirring of the soul in awareness of the Divine, overcoming the obstinacy of the instinctive-intellectual mind. We now look upon the Deity image not just as carved stone, but as the living presence of the God. We perform ritual and *pūjā* not because we have to but because we want to. We are drawn to the temple to satisfy our longing. We sing joyfully. We absorb and intuit the wisdom of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. We perform pilgrimage and fulfill the sacraments. We practice diligently the ten classical observances called *niyamas*. Our relationship with God in *kriyā* is as a son to his parents and thus this stage is called the *satputra mārga*. The *Tirumantiram* instructs, “*Pūjā*, reading the scriptures, singing hymns, performing *japa* and unsullied austerity, truthfulness, restraint of envy, and offering of food—these and other self-purifying acts constitute the flawless *satputra mārga*.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Each morning in India women clean their home’s entrance and draw sacred symbols, called kolams, to bring auspiciousness to the family. Having just picked a basket of flowers for pūjā, this lady sketches traditional diagrams with rice flour.*



## What Is the Nature of the Yoga Pāda?

### ŚLOKA 39

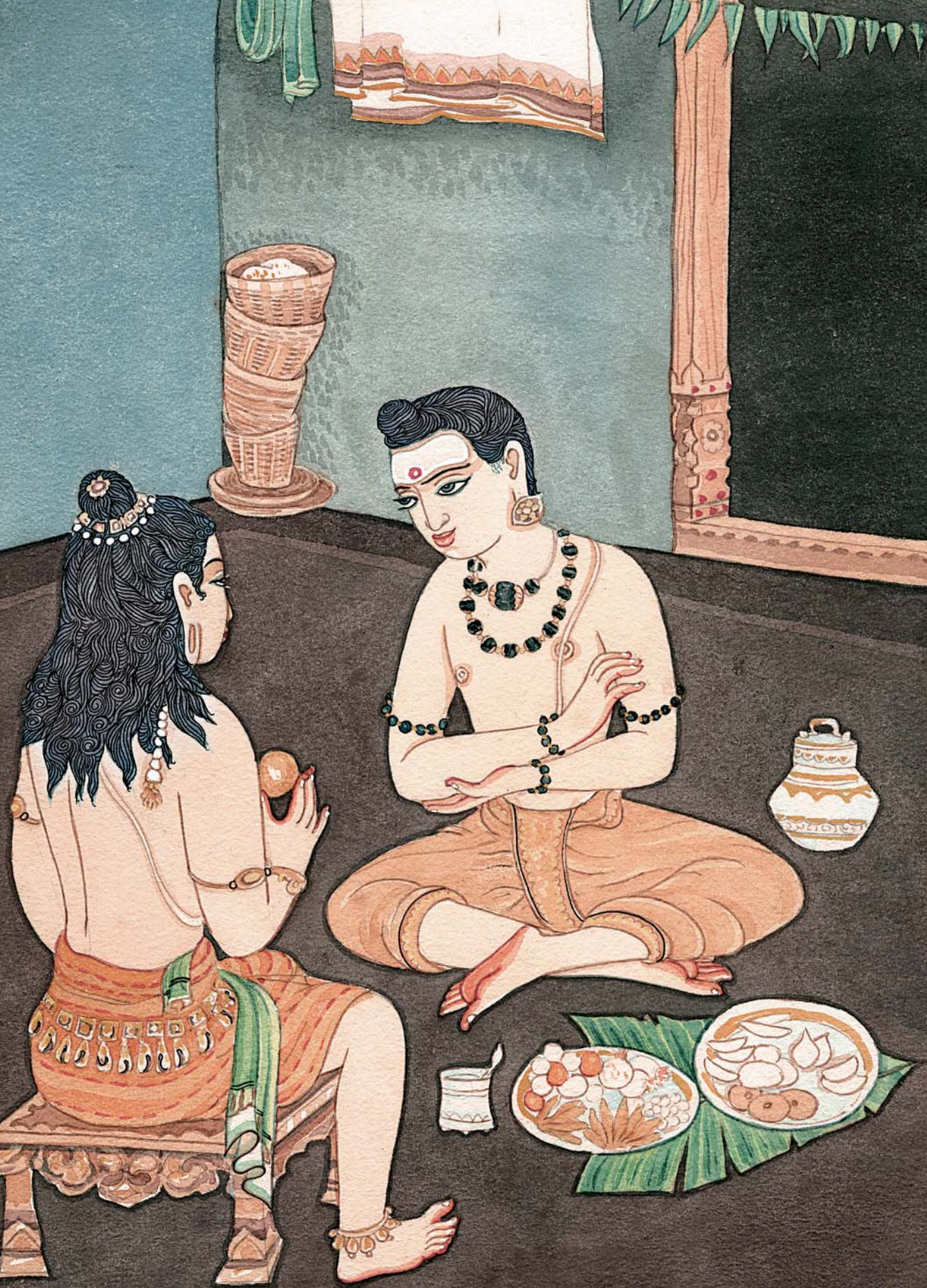
***Yoga* is internalized worship which leads to union with God. It is the regular practice of meditation, detachment and austerities under the guidance of a *satguru* through whose grace we attain the realization of Paraśiva. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

*Yoga*, “union,” is the process of uniting with God within oneself, a stage arrived at through perfecting *charyā* and *kriyā*. As God is now like a friend to us, *yoga* is known as the *sakhā mārḡa*. This system of inner discovery begins with *āsana*—sitting quietly in *yogic* posture—and *prāṇāyāma*, breath control. *Pratyāhāra*, sense withdrawal, brings awareness into *dhāraṇā*, concentration, then into *dhyāna*, meditation. Over the years, under ideal conditions, the *kuṇḍalinī* fire of consciousness ascends to the higher *chakras*, burning the dross of ignorance and past *karmas*. *Dhyāna* finally leads to ecstasy—first to *savikalpa samādhi*, the contemplative experience of Satchidānanda, and ultimately to *nirvikalpa samādhi*, Paraśiva. Truly a living *satguru* is needed as a steady guide to traverse this path. When *yoga* is practiced by one perfected in *kriyā*, the Gods receive the *yogī* into their midst through his awakened, fiery *kuṇḍalinī*. The *Vedas* enjoin the *yogī*, “With earnest effort hold the senses in check. Controlling the breath, regulate the vital activities. As a charioteer holds back his restive horses, so does a persevering aspirant restrain his mind.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*As Lord Śiva looks on from the inner planes, His damaru resounding with the varied rhythms of creation, the great Maharishi Nandinatha, right hand in abhaya mudrā, the gesture of protection, blesses his eight disciples and their yogic quest.*



## What Is the Nature of the Jñāna Pāda?

### ŚLOKA 40

*Jñāna* is divine wisdom emanating from an enlightened being, a soul in its maturity, immersed in Śivaness, the blessed realization of God, while living out earthly *karma*. *Jñāna* is the fruition of *yoga tapas*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The instinctive mind in the young soul is firm and well-knit together. The intellectual mind in the adolescent soul is complicated, and he sees the physical world as his only reality. The subsuperconscious mind in the mystically inclined soul well perfected in *kriyā* longs for realization of Śiva's two perfections, Satchidānanda and Paraśiva. Through *yoga* he bursts into the superconscious mind, experiencing bliss, all-knowingness and perfect silence. It is when the *yogī's* intellect is shattered that he soars into Paraśiva and comes out a *jñānī*. Each time he enters that unspeakable *nirvikalpa samādhi*, he returns to consciousness more and more the knower. He is the liberated one, the *jīvanmukta*, the epitome of *kaivalya*—perfect freedom—far-seeing, filled with light, filled with love. One does not become a *jñānī* simply by reading and understanding philosophy. The state of *jñāna* lies in the realm of intuition, beyond the intellect. The *Vedas* say, “Having realized the Self, the *ṛishis*, perfected souls, satisfied with their knowledge, passion-free, tranquil—those wise beings, having attained the omnipresent on all sides—enter into the All itself.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The wisdom called jñāna is brought forth by purification, practice and realization. A young saint, seated on a wooden stool, holds a sweet modaka ball, symbol of spiritual attainment. He will give it to the seeker who has come with offerings.*



Like the household fire, devotees seek the glory of the Lord even from afar and enshrine it in their inner chamber for enlightenment. The glory of our Lord is full of splendor, all-illuminative and worthy to be honored in every heart.

*Rig Veda* 7.1.2. RVP, 2341

For the great-souled, the surest way to liberation is the conviction that “I am Brahman.” The two terms, what leads to bondage and what leads to liberation, are the sense of mineness and the absence of the sense of mineness.

*Yajur Veda, Paiṅgala Upanishad* 4.19. UPR, 923

He remains aloof, but not aloof, in the body, but not in the body; his inmost Self becomes the All-Pervading. Having purified his heart and accomplished his perfect thinking, the *yogin* sees: I am the All, the Highest Bliss.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Paiṅgala Upanishad* 4.9. VE, 441

When the *yogin* unites his breath with Aum or is united with the All in manifold ways, it is called *yoga*. This oneness of breath, mind and senses, the renunciation of all existence—this is termed *yoga*.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad* 6.25. VE, 776

When cease the five (sense) knowledges, together with the mind, and the intellect stirs not—that, they say, is the highest course.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad* 6.30. UPH, 443

The initiation for the attainment of liberation can only be obtained from the *guru*. Without the help of the *guru*, no penance could ever be helpful in producing the desired result. The *guru* teaches the pupil. The *guru* becomes the object of glory for the disciple and enhances the pupil’s dignity. Hence the disciple must have immense regard for the *guru*. The *guru* is Śiva Himself, and Śiva is called the *guru*. Whether *guru* or Śiva, both have been accepted as *vidyā*.

*Chandrajñāna Śaiva Āgama, Kriyāpāda*, 2.7

It should be known that effort for *yogic* realization by *yogīs* must proceed in eight steps: *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

*Suprabheda Āgama*, 3.54-55. BO SA, 314

Never does a man attain *moksha* by his own skill; by no means other than the grace of Śiva, the dispeller of evil, is such an attainment possible.

*Paushkara Āgama*

He alone is learned, he alone is fortunate and successful, whose mind is no longer unstable as air, but is held firm. That is the way to liberation, that is the highest virtue, that is wisdom, that is strength and that is the merit of those who seek.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchara-vichara 7-8. RM, 112*

This Lord of Māyā-world that has its rise in the mind, He knows all our thoughts, but we do not think of Him. Some be who groan, “God is not favorable to me,” but surely God seeks those who seek, their souls to save. “How is it they received God Śiva’s grace?” you ask. In the battle of life, their bewildered thoughts wandered. They trained their course and, freed of darkness, sought the Lord and adored His precious, holy feet.

*Tirumantiram 22; 599. TM*

To see him, to adore him, to meditate on him, to touch him, to sing of him, to bear his holy feet on humbled head—they that render devotion to *guru* in diverse ways thus—they indeed walk the San Mārga that to liberation leads.

*Tirumantiram 1479. TM*

Self-control will place one among the Gods, while lack of it will lead to deepest darkness.

*Tirukural 121. WW*

Listen while I tell you the path to liberation: truth, patience, calmness and discipline of self, discrimination between the eternal and the passing; devotion to the humble servants of the Lord; rising in the early morning and bathing before daybreak; repeating in the way prescribed the flawless Letters Five; worshipping the *guru’s* feet; applying holy ash; eating but when hungry; with the whole heart giving praise; studying the *śāstras*; seeing others as oneself; severing attachment to all property and wealth; speaking with fit courtesy; avoiding argument; driving from the mind all thought of family and caste; being ever free of the smallest like or dislike; living and abiding ’neath the Lord’s eternal feet.

*Natchintanai, “Path to Liberation.” NT, 33*



Śivamaya  
शिवमय



UPANISHAD FOUR  
**The World**



## Trilokam त्रिलोकम्



## The Three Worlds

The spirit of man has two dwellings: this world and the world beyond. There is also a third dwelling place: the land of sleep and dreams. Resting in this borderland, the spirit of man can behold his dwelling in this world and in the other world afar; and wandering in this borderland, he beholds behind him the sorrows of this world, and in front of him he sees the joys of the beyond.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4.3.9. UPM, 134*



A Rajat  
2020

## Where Did This Universe Come from?

### ŚLOKA 41

Supreme God Śiva created the world and all things in it. He creates and sustains from moment to moment every atom of the seen physical and unseen spiritual universe. Everything is within Him. He is within everything. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

God Śiva created us. He created the Earth and all things upon it, animate and inanimate. He created time and gravity, the vast spaces and the uncounted stars. He created night and day, joy and sorrow, love and hate, birth and death. He created the gross and the subtle, this world and the other worlds. There are three worlds of existence: the physical, subtle and causal, termed Bhūloka, Antarloka and Śivaloka. The Creator of all, Śiva Himself is uncreated. As supreme Mahādeva, Śiva wills into manifestation all souls and all form, issuing them from Himself like light from a fire or waves from an ocean. *Rishis* describe this perpetual process as the unfoldment of thirty-six *tattvas*, stages of manifestation, from the Śiva *tattva*—Parāśakti and *nāda*—to the five elements. Creation is not the making of a separate thing, but an emanation of Himself. Lord Śiva creates, constantly sustains the form of His creations and absorbs them back into Himself. The *Vedas* elucidate, “As a spider spins and withdraws its web, as herbs grow on the earth, as hair grows on the head and body of a person, so also from the Imperishable arises this universe.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*From the imperishable Mahādeva issues forth this vast, impermanent world of galaxies, time, forms and creatures. Creation is an emanation from Śiva Himself, a divine expression and expansion, said to originate from His sacred vāk, or speech.*





## What Is the Nature of the Physical Plane?

### ŚLOKA 42

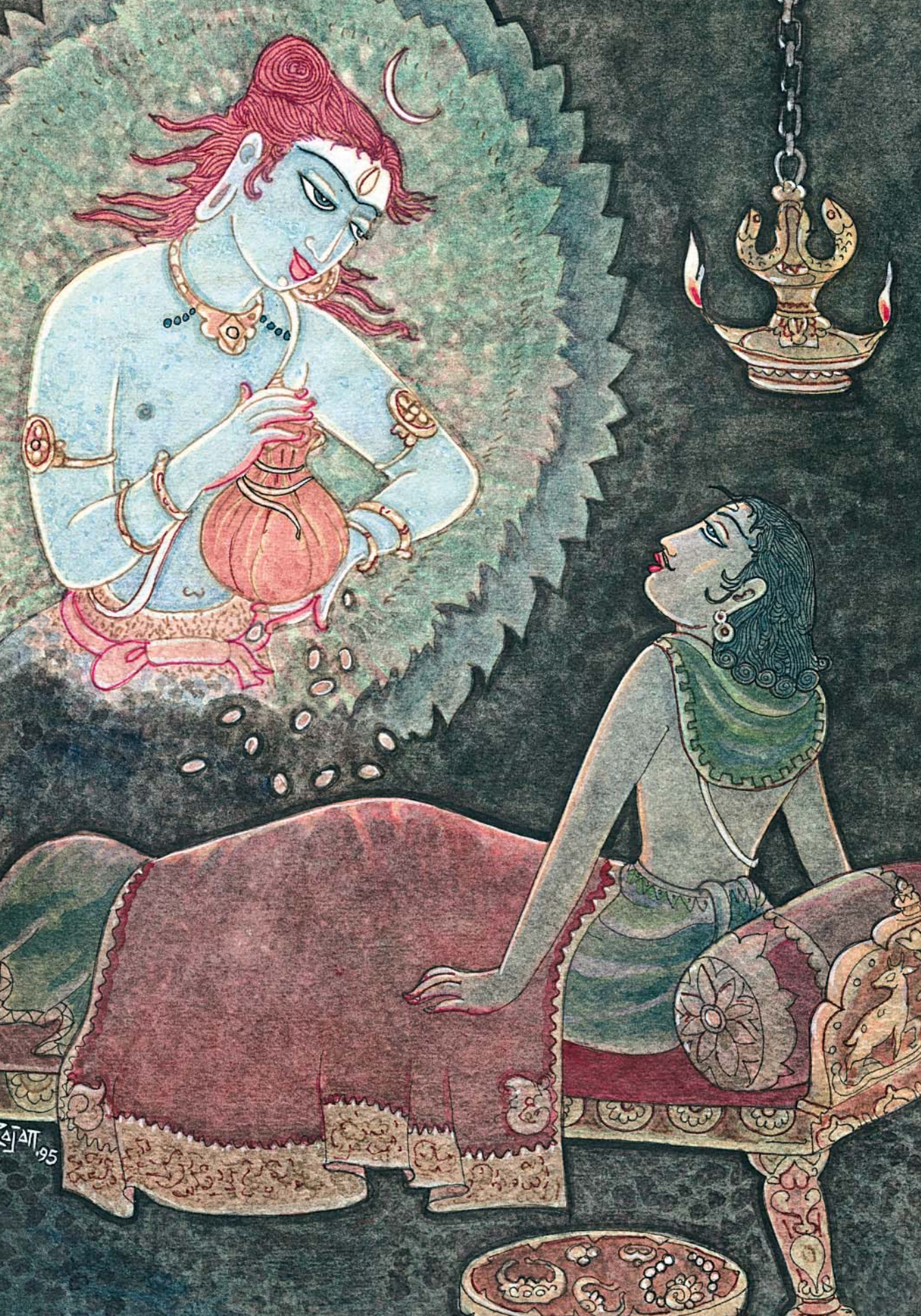
The physical plane, or Bhūloka, is the world of gross or material substance in which phenomena are perceived by the five senses. It is the most limited of worlds, the least permanent and the most subject to change. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The material world is where we have our experiences, manufacture *karma* and fulfill the desires and duties of life in a physical body. It is in the Bhūloka that consciousness is limited, that awareness of the other two worlds is not always remembered. It is the external plane, made of gross matter, which is really just energy. The world is remarkable in its unending variety and enthralling novelty. Mystics call it the unfoldment of *prakṛiti*, primal nature, and liken it to a bubble on the ocean's surface. It arises, lives and bursts to return to the source. This physical world, though necessary to our evolution, is the embodiment of impermanence, of constant change. Thus, we take care not to become overly attached to it. It is mystically subjective, not objective. It is dense but not solid. It is sentient, even sacred. It is rocks and rainbows, liquid, gas and conflagration, all held in a setting of space. The *Vedas* affirm, "The knower, the author of time, the possessor of qualities and all knowledge, it is He who envelopes the universe. Controlled by Him, this work of creation unfolds itself—that which is regarded as earth, water, fire, air and ether." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*To most people, the world seems as solid, powerful and real as the elephant does to these men. Fully identified with the five senses, they are enthralled by the novelty of the physical plane, immersed in its charms and unaware of the worlds within.*



## What Is the Nature of the Subtle Plane?

### ŚLOKA 43

The subtle plane, or Antarloka, is the mental-emotional sphere that we function in through thought and feeling and reside in fully during sleep and after death. It is the astral world that exists within the physical plane. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The astral plane is for the most part exactly duplicated in the physical plane, though it is of a more intense rate of vibration. Beings in the higher Antarloka are trained in technology, the arts and increments of culture to take up bodies in the Bhūloka, to improve and enhance conditions within it. It is in this more advanced realm that new inventions are invented, new species created, ideas unfolded, futures envisioned, environments balanced, scientists trained and artists taught finesse. We function constantly, though perhaps not consciously, in this subtle plane by our every thought and emotion. Here, during sleep and after death, we meet others who are sleeping or who have died. We attend inner-plane schools, there to advance our knowledge. The Antarloka spans the spectrum of consciousness from the hellish Naraka regions beginning at the *pātāla chakra* within the feet, to the heavenly realm of divine love in the *viśuddha chakra* within the throat. The *Vedas* recount, “Now, there are, of a truth, three worlds: the world of men, the world of the fathers, and the world of the Gods. The world of the Gods is verily the best of worlds.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Startled by the vividness of a dream, a man sits up in bed and finds the dream continuing in his waking state. In this astral vision, Śiva holds a pouch of gold coins, which He showers down. Will the vision bring worldly riches or spiritual wealth?*



SRJATI.

## What Is the Nature of the Causal Plane?

### ŚLOKA 44

The causal plane, or Śivaloka, pulsates at the core of being, deep within the subtle plane. It is the superconscious world where the Gods and highly evolved souls live and can be accessed through *yoga* and temple worship. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The causal plane is the world of light and blessedness, the highest of heavenly regions, extolled in the scriptures of all faiths. It is the foundation of existence, the source of visions, the point of conception, the apex of creation. The causal plane is the abode of Lord Śiva and His entourage of Mahādevas and other highly evolved souls who exist in their own self-effulgent form—radiant bodies of centillions of quantum light particles. Even for embodied souls, this refined realm is not distant, but exists within man. It is ever-present, ever-available as the clear white light that illumines the mind, accessed within the throat and cranial *chakras*—*viśuddha*, *ājñā* and *sahasrāra*—in the sublime practices of *yoga* and temple worship. It is in the causal plane that the mature soul, unshrouded of the physical body’s strong instinctive pulls and astral body’s harsh intellectual stranglehold, resides fully conscious in its self-effulgent form. The Śivaloka is the natural refuge of all souls. The *Vedas* intone, “Where men move at will, in the threefold sphere, in the third heaven of heavens, where are realms full of light, in that radiant world make me immortal.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The deepest plane, filled with Divinities, is circled here by a cobra—Śiva as Nāgarāja, king of serpents. The serpent is venerated as a symbol of immortality, control of instincts, and of kuṇḍalinī, which empowers yoga and grants access to the Śivaloka.*



## Does the Universe Ever End? Is It Real?

### ŚLOKA 45

The universe ends at *mahāpralaya*, when time, form and space dissolve in God Śiva, only to be created again in the next cosmic cycle. We call it relatively real to distinguish it from the unchanging Reality. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

This universe, and indeed all of existence, is *māyā*, Śiva's mirific energy. While God is absolutely real, His emanated world is relatively real. Being relatively real does not mean the universe is illusory or nonexistent, but that it is impermanent and subject to change. It is an error to say that the universe is mere illusion, for it is entirely real when experienced in ordinary consciousness, and its existence is required to lead us to God. The universe is born, evolves and dissolves in cycles much as the seasons come and go through the year. These cycles are inconceivably immense, ending in *mahāpralaya* when the universe undergoes dissolution. All three worlds, including time and space, dissolve in God Śiva. This is His ultimate grace—the evolution of all souls is perfect and complete as they lose individuality and return to Him. Then God Śiva exists alone in His three perfections until He again issues forth creation. The *Vedas* state, “Truly, God is One; there can be no second. He alone governs these worlds with His powers. He stands facing beings. He, the herdsman, after bringing forth all worlds, reabsorbs them at the end of time.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In unending cycles, the world undergoes epochs of creation, duration and dissolution. Here Lord Śiva presides over the cosmic extinguishing—drawing all forms, time and space, back to Himself until commencing the next grand cycle of creation.*



Even as airy threads come from a spider, or small sparks come from a fire, so from *ātman*, the Spirit in man, come all the powers of life, all the worlds, all the Gods, all beings. To know the *ātman* is to know the mystery of the *Upanishads*, the Truth of truth. The powers of life are truth and their Truth is *ātman*, the Spirit.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 2.1.20. UPM, 130*

In the world of heaven there is no trace of fear. You, Death, are not there. There one dreads not old age. Thirst and hunger transcended and sorrow overpassed, a man rejoices in the world of heaven.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad 1.12. VE, 639*

Now this *ātman* is the bridge and the boundary separating these worlds. Day and night do not cross over this bridge, or old age, or death, or sorrow, or good works or bad works; all evils turn back from it, for this world of Brahman is free from evil. Thus, after crossing that bridge, the blind man sees, the wounded one is healed, the sufferer is freed from suffering. Therefore, for the one who has crossed that bridge, even the night is transformed into day, for the world of Brahman is ever illumined. But the world of Brahman belongs only to those who find it by the practice of chastity and the study of Brahman. For them there is freedom in all the worlds.

*Sāma Veda, Chandogya Upanishad 7.8.4. VE, 638*

This universe is a tree eternally existing, its root aloft, its branches spread below. The pure root of the tree is Brahman, the immortal, in whom the three worlds have their being, whom none can transcend, who is verily the Self.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad 6.1. UPP, 36*

These worlds, tiered one above the other from the lowest to the highest, make up the universe of transmigration. Knowers of Reality describe it as the place of effective experience.

*Mṛigendra Āgama, Jñāna Pāda 13.A.2. MA, 286--132*

All these visibles and invisibles, movables and immovables, are pervaded by Me. All the worlds existing in the *tattvas* from Śakti to *prithivī* [earth] exist in me. Whatever is heard or seen, internally or externally, is pervaded by Me.

*Sarvajñānottara Āgama 2.9-11*

May God—who, in the mystery of His vision and power, transforms His white radiance into His many-colored creation, from whom all things come and into whom they all return—grant us the grace of pure vision. He is the sun, the moon and the stars. He is the fire, the waters and the wind. He is Brahmā, the creator of all, and Prajāpati, the Lord of creation. Thou this boy, and thou this maiden; Thou this man, and Thou this woman; Thou the God who appears in forms infinite. Thou the blue bird and Thou the green bird; Thou the cloud that conceals the lightning and Thou the seasons and the oceans. Beyond beginning, Thou are in Thy infinity, and all the worlds had their beginning in Thee.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 4.1-4. UPM, 91*

The gross body with presence prominent, the subtle body that invisible takes shape and the causal body that by inference is—all these bodies disappear when merging in the Lord's feet. *Tirumantiram 2130. TM*

The Lord created the world, the dwelling place of man. How shall I sing His majesty? He is as mighty as Mount Meru, whence He holds sway over the three worlds; and He is the four paths of Śaivam here below. Those who tread the path of Śuddha Śaivam stand aloft, their hearts intent on Eternal Para; transcending worlds of pure and impure *māyā*, where pure intelligence consorts not with base ignorance and the lines that divide Real, Unreal and Real-Unreal are sharply discerned.

*Tirumantiram 1419-1240. TM*

The universe, animate and inanimate, is His body. The universe, animate and inanimate, is His play. The universe, animate and inanimate, is He. The whole universe, animate and inanimate, is a wonder.

*Natchintanai, "Who Can Know?" NT, 86*

O Transcendent One extending through both Earth and Heaven! Ever bright with glory! The King of Śivaloka! The Lord Śiva presiding at *Tiruperunturai!* I have no sustenance other than You.

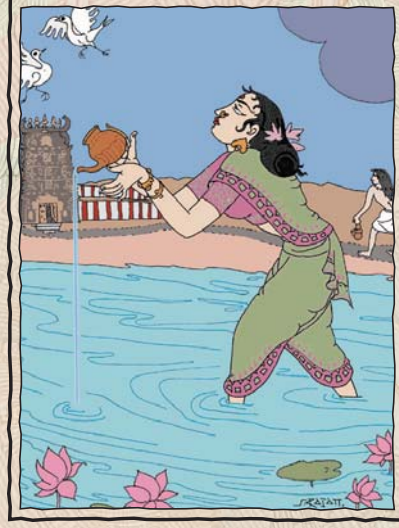
*Tirumurai 8. TT, 159*

There is no baser folly than the infatuation that looks upon the ephemeral as if it were everlasting.

*Tirukural 331. ww*



Sarvabhadrah  
सर्वभद्रः



## The Goodness of All

In him who is pure of mind, intellect and ego, the senses and their perceptions are pure, in fact, and he finds everything pure as well.

*Sarvajñānottara Āgama, Ātma Sakshatkara 62. RM, 110*



## Are Souls and World Essentially Good?

### ŚLOKA 46

The intrinsic and real nature of all beings is their soul, which is goodness. The world, too, is God's flawless creation. All is in perfect balance. There are changes, and they may appear evil, but there is no intrinsic evil. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The soul radiates love, is a child of God going through its evolutionary process of growing up into the image and likeness of the Lord. Goodness and mercy, compassion and caring are the intrinsic, inherent or indwelling nature of the soul. Wisdom and pure knowledge, happiness and joy are the intrinsic nature of the soul. Can we believe the soul is anything but goodness itself, purity and all the refined qualities found within superconsciousness? When God is everywhere, how can there be a place for evil? The soul is constantly one with God in its ever-present Satchidānanda state at every point in its evolution. How, then, arises the concept of evil and suffering? *Āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*, the play toys of the soul, are the source of this seeming suffering. Like a child, we play with the toys of *āṇava* in the playground of *māyā*, fall and are bruised by *karma*, then run to our loving Lord for solace and release into spiritual maturity. The *Vedas* pointedly state, "As the sun, the eye of the whole world, is not sullied by the external faults of the eyes, so the one inner soul of all things is not sullied by the sorrow in the world, being external to it." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*At their core, all souls are good. Here devotees approach Śiva. Some are old souls, humble and worshipful. Others are young souls, prideful and destructive. Śiva accepts and loves them all, knowing that experience leads them to the same spiritual destiny.*



## Why Do Some Souls Act in Evil Ways?

### ŚLOKA 47

People act in evil ways who have lost touch with their soul nature and live totally in the outer, instinctive mind. What the ignorant see as evil, the enlightened see as the actions of low-minded and immature individuals. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Evil is often looked upon as a force against God. But the Hindu knows that all forces are God's forces, even the waywardness of *adharmā*. This is sometimes difficult to understand when we see the pains and problems caused by men against men. Looking deeper, we see that what is called evil has its own mysterious purpose in life. Yes, bad things do happen. Still, the wise never blame God, for they know these to be the return of man's self-created *karmas*, difficult but necessary experiences for his spiritual evolution. Whenever we are injured or hurt, we understand that our suffering is but the fulfillment of a *karma* we once initiated, for which our injurer is but the instrument who, when his *karma* cycles around, will be the injured. Those who perform seemingly evil deeds are not yet in touch with the ever-present God consciousness of their immortal soul. The *Vedas* rightly admonish, "Borne along and defiled by the stream of qualities, unsteady, wavering, bewildered, full of desire, distracted, one goes on into the state of self-conceit. In thinking 'This is I' and 'That is mine' one binds himself with himself, as does a bird with a snare." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A marauder kills innocent people and pillages their village. Most would hate and judge him evil. While his acts are despicable, he is not evil. His cruel experiences will mature him, and ultimately, after many births, he will find and follow dharma.*





AKAJAT

## What Is the Source of Good and Evil?

### ŚLOKA 48

**Instead of seeing good and evil in the world, we understand the nature of the embodied soul in three interrelated parts: instinctive or physical-emotional; intellectual or mental; and superconscious or spiritual. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Evil has no source, unless the source of evil's seeming be ignorance itself. Still, it is good to fear unrighteousness. The ignorant complain, justify, fear and criticize "sinful deeds," setting themselves apart as lofty puritans. When the outer, or lower, instinctive nature dominates, one is prone to anger, fear, greed, jealousy, hatred and backbiting. When the intellect is prominent, arrogance and analytical thinking preside. When the superconscious soul comes forth the refined qualities are born—compassion, insight, modesty and the others. The animal instincts of the young soul are strong. The intellect, yet to be developed, is nonexistent to control these strong instinctive impulses. When the intellect is developed, the instinctive nature subsides. When the soul unfolds and overshadows the well-developed intellect, this mental harness is loosened and removed. When we encounter wickedness in others, let us be compassionate, for truly there is no intrinsic evil. The *Vedas* say, "Mind is indeed the source of bondage and also the source of liberation. To be bound to things of this world: this is bondage. To be free from them: this is liberation." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*An assassin attacks a village, only to meet a defender who subdues him. It is ignorant to simply label one man good and the other evil. The mystic sees all men as evolving, some exhibiting instinctive wickedness and others spiritual qualities of the soul.*



## How Can a Benevolent God Permit Evil?

### ŚLOKA 49

Ultimately, there is no good or bad. God did not create evil as a force distinct from good. He granted to souls the loving edicts of *dharma* and experiential choices from very subtle to most crude, thus to learn and evolve. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

From the pinnacle of consciousness, one sees the harmony of life. Similarly, from a mountaintop, we see the natural role of a raging ocean and the steep cliffs below—they are beautiful. From the bottom of the mountain, the ocean can appear ominous and the cliffs treacherous. When through meditation we view the universe from the inside out, we see that there is not one thing out of place or wrong. This releases the human concepts of right and wrong, good and bad. Our benevolent Lord created everything in perfect balance. Good or evil, kindness or hurtfulness return to us as the result, the fruit, of our own actions of the past. The four *dharmas* are God’s wisdom lighting our path. That which is known as evil arises from the instinctive-intellectual nature, which the Lord created as dimensions of experience to strengthen our soul and further its spiritual evolution. Let us be compassionate, for truly there is no intrinsic evil. The *Vedas* admonish, “Being overcome by the fruits of his action, he enters a good or an evil womb, so that his course is downward or upward, and he wanders around, overcome by the pairs of opposites.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*An ascetic does penance to earn the grace of Śiva, who braids His hair, ostensibly indifferent to the yogī’s ordeal. This perplexes Śakti. In fact, Śiva is compassionately aware of all, but granting us free will and self-created experience to guide our evolution.*



## Should One Avoid Worldly Involvement?

### ŚLOKA 50

The world is the bountiful creation of a benevolent God, who means for us to live positively in it, facing *karma* and fulfilling *dharma*. We must not despise or fear the world. Life is meant to be lived joyously. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The world is the place where our destiny is shaped, our desires fulfilled and our soul matured. In the world, we grow from ignorance into wisdom, from darkness into light and from a consciousness of death to immortality. The whole world is an *āśrama* in which all are doing *sādhana*. We must love the world, which is God’s creation. Those who despise, hate and fear the world do not understand the intrinsic goodness of all. The world is a glorious place, not to be feared. It is a gracious gift from Śiva Himself, a playground for His children in which to interrelate young souls with the old—the young experiencing their *karma* while the old hold firmly to their *dharma*. The young grow; the old know. Not fearing the world does not give us permission to become immersed in worldliness. To the contrary, it means remaining affectionately detached, like a drop of water on a lotus leaf, being in the world but not of it, walking in the rain without getting wet. The *Vedas* warn, “Behold the universe in the glory of God: and all that lives and moves on Earth. Leaving the transient, find joy in the Eternal. Set not your heart on another’s possession.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Many seek to avoid the world, judging it fraught with suffering and imperfection. Though the world is not as idyllic as this scene where all live in fabled harmony, when seen in the fullness of time and purpose, it is bountiful and not to be feared.*

As one not knowing that a golden treasure lies buried beneath his feet may walk over it again and again yet never find it—so all beings live every moment in the city of Brahman yet never find Him, because of the veil of illusion by which He is concealed.

*Sāma Veda, Chandogya Upanishad* 8.3.2. UPP, 121

He who knows the fine-drawn thread of which the creatures that we see are spun, who knows the thread of that same thread—he also knows Brahman, the Ultimate.

*Atharva Veda* 10.8.37. VE, 828

O Lord, lead us along the right path to prosperity. O God, You know all our deeds. Take from us our deceitful sin. To you, then, we shall offer our prayers.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Īśa Upanishad* 18. VE, 831

Sin of the mind, depart far away! Why do you utter improper suggestions? Depart from this place! I do not want you! Go to the trees and the forests! My mind will remain here along with our homes and our cattle.

*Atharva Veda* 6.45.1. VE, 489

He who, in the mystery of life, has found the *ātman*, the Spirit, and has awakened to his light, to him, as creator, belongs the world of the Spirit, for he is this world. While we are here in this life, we may reach the light of wisdom; and if we reach it not, how deep is the darkness? Those who see the light enter life eternal; those who live in darkness enter into sorrow. Even by the mind this truth must be seen: there are not many, but only One. Who sees variety and not the Unity wanders on from death to death. Knowing this, let the lover of Brahman follow wisdom. Let him not ponder on many words, for many words are weariness.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 4.4.13-14; 19; 21. UPM, 141-142

As water descending on mountain crags wastes its energies among the gullies, so he who views things as separate wastes his energies in their pursuit. But as pure water poured into pure becomes the self-same, wholly pure—so, too, becomes the self of the silent sage, of the one, O Gautama, who has understanding.

*Krishna Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad* 4.14-15. VE, 861

When he knows the *ātman*—the Self, the inner life, who enjoys like a bee the sweetness of the flowers of the senses, the Lord of what was and of what will be—then he goes beyond fear. This, in truth, is That.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad 4.5. UPM, 62*

Turn away from confusion, ignorance, delusion, dream, sleep or wakefulness, for the Supreme is different from the gross body, from the subtle *prāṇa*, from thought or intellect or ego. Meditate on consciousness and become one with it.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchara-vichara 31. RM, 113*

O, ye, my men! Try to get into the habit of meditating and praying to Śiva, the Supreme. All your old sins will disappear as the filmy dew evaporates as soon as the sun rises.

*Tirumurai 5. HY, 13*

Without virtue and penitence, devoid of love and learning, as a leather puppet I went around and fell. He showed me the love and the path and the way to reach the world wherefrom there is no return.

*Tirumurai 8. HY, 40*

Joy and sorrow—both are *māyā*. The *ātman*, never from love divided, is the very form of knowledge. Therefore, these two will not touch you. Can a mirage wash away the earth? At the gracious, holy feet of the true, all-knowing *guru*, to the limit of your power, let your heart grow soft and melt.

*Natchintanai, “Joy and Sorrow...” NT, 46*

Not one atom can move apart from Him. We do not know. Not all realize the Truth. Only some do. It is all His work. It is everywhere. It supports the thief as well. There is nothing strange. What is above is yourself and what is below also is yourself.

*Words of Our Master. WM, 62*

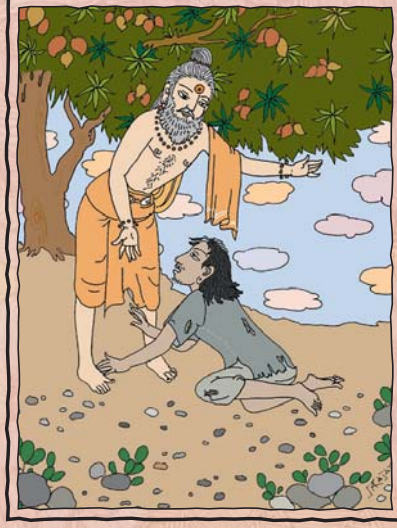
O man! Be a little patient and see! You will understand who you are. Do not grieve over that which does not merit grief. Joy and sorrow are of the world. You are a conscious being. Nothing can affect you. Arise! Be awake! Open the door of heaven with the key of Śivadhyāna and look! Everything will be revealed.

*Natchintanai, “Sivadhyana.” NT, 13*





Pāpa-Duḥkhe  
पापदुःखे



## Sin and Suffering

Loose us from the yoke of the sins of our Fathers  
and also of those we ourselves have committed.  
Release your servant, as a thief is set free from his  
crime or as a calf is loosed from its cord.

*Rig Veda 7.86.5 VE, 516*



## Why Is There Suffering in the World?

### ŚLOKA 51

The nature of the world is duality. It contains each thing and its opposite: joy and sorrow, goodness and evil, love and hate. Through experience of these, we learn and evolve, finally seeking Truth beyond all opposites. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

There is a divine purpose even in the existence of suffering in the world. Suffering cannot be totally avoided. It is a natural part of human life and the impetus for much spiritual growth for the soul. Knowing this, the wise accept suffering from any source, be it hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, famine, wars, disease or inexplicable tragedies. Just as the intense fire of the furnace purifies gold, so does suffering purify the soul to splendence. So also does suffering offer us the important realization that true happiness and freedom cannot be found in the world, for earthly joy is inextricably bound to sorrow, and worldly freedom to bondage. Having learned this, devotees seek a *satguru* who teaches them to understand suffering, and brings them into the intentional hardships of *sādhana* and *tapas* leading to liberation from the cycles of experience in the realm of duality. The *Āgamas* explain, “That which appears as cold or as hot, fresh or spoiled, good fortune and bad, love and hate, effort and laziness, the exalted and the depraved, the rich and the poor, the well-founded and the ill-founded, all this is God Himself; none other than Him can we know.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*This is the dramatic moment in the life of Gautama the Buddha when he saw, for the first time, illness, old age, death and suffering. While Buddhists view suffering as the root obstacle to liberation, Hindus see it as part of God’s divine purpose.*



## What Is Sin? How Can We Atone for It?

### ŚLOKA 52

**Sin is the intentional transgression of divine law. There is no inherent or “original” sin. Neither is there mortal sin by which the soul is forever lost. Through *sādhana*, worship and austerities, sins can be atoned for. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

What men term sin, the wise call ignorance. Man’s true nature is not sullied by sin. Sin is related only to the lower, instinctive-intellectual nature as a transgression of *dharma*. Still, sin is real and to be avoided, for our wrongful actions return to us as sorrow through the law of *karma*. Sin is terminable, and its effects may be compensated for by penance, or *prāyaśchitta*, and good deeds which settle the *karmic* debt. The young soul, less in tune with his soul nature, is inclined toward sin; the old soul seldom transgresses divine law. Sins are the crippling distortions of intellect bound in emotion. When we sin, we take the energy and distort it to our instinctive favor. When we are unjust and mean, hateful and holding resentments year after year and no one but ourselves knows of our intrigue and corruption, we suffer. As the soul evolves, it eventually feels the great burden of faults and misdeeds and wishes to atone. Penance is performed, and the soul seeks absolution from society and beseeches God’s exonerating grace. The *Vedas* say, “Loose me from my sin as from a bond that binds me. May my life swell the stream of your river of Right.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Hindus atone for regrettable deeds through fasts and penances. A woman takes refuge in the forest to perform yogas, shown by the daṇḍa next to the water pot. Standing on one leg for hours, she endures the punishing heat of fires she has built.*



## Does Hell Really Exist? Is There a Satan?

### ŚLOKA 53

**There is no eternal hell, nor is there a Satan. However, there are hellish states of mind and woeful births for those who think and act wrongfully—temporary tormenting conditions that lift the fiery forces within. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Hell, termed Naraka, is the lower astral realm of the seven *chakras* below the *mūlādhāra*. It is a place of fire and heat, anguish and dismay, of confusion, despair and depression. Here anger, jealousy, argument, mental conflict and tormenting moods plague the mind. Access to hell is brought about by our own thoughts, words, deeds and emotions—suppressed, antagonistic feelings that court demons and their aggressive forces. Hell is not eternal. Nor is there a Satan who tempts man and opposes God’s power, though there are devilish beings called *asuras*, immature souls caught in the abyss of deception and hurtfulness. We do not have to die to suffer the Naraka regions, for hellish states of mind are also experienced in the physical world. If we do die in a hellish state of consciousness—burdened by unresolved hatred, remorse, resentment, fear and distorted patterns of thought—we arrive in Naraka fully equipped to join others in this temporary astral purgatory. The *Vedas* say, “Sunless and demonic, verily, are those worlds, and enveloped in blinding darkness, to which all those people who are enemies of their own souls go after death.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Hindus acknowledge no satan, no evil force opposed to God, and no eternal hell. However, there is a dark, miserable state, the Narakaloka, where souls suffer the results of their actions. Even this is not apart from Śiva, who reigns in all worlds.*





## What Is the Consequence of Sinful Acts?

### ŚLOKA 54

When we do not think, speak and act virtuously, we create negative *karmas* and bring suffering upon ourselves and others. We suffer when we act instinctively and intellectually without superconscious guidance. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

We are happy, serene and stable when we follow good conduct, when we listen to our conscience, the knowing voice of the soul. The superconscious mind, the mind of our soul, knows and inspires good conduct, out of which comes a refined, sustainable culture. Wrongdoing and vice lead us away from God, deep into the darkness of doubt, despair and self-condemnation. This brings the *asuras* around us. We are out of harmony with ourselves and our family and must seek companionship elsewhere, amongst those who are also crude, unmindful, greedy and lacking in self-control. In this bad company, burdensome new *karma* is created, as good conduct cannot be followed. This *pāpa* accumulates, blinding us to the religious life we once lived. Penance and throwing ourselves upon the mercy of God and the Gods are the only release for the unvirtuous, those who conduct themselves poorly. Fortunately, our Gods are compassionate and love their devotees. The ancient *Vedas* elucidate, “The mind is said to be twofold: the pure and also the impure; impure by union with desire—pure when from desire completely free!” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A man is brutally wounding himself for his misdeeds as Lord Śiva softly touches the axe blade, indicating this punishment should cease. It is we who cause our own suffering when we act immorally, and we who earn our forgiveness through penance.*



J. RAJAN, 98

## Does God Ever Punish Wrongdoers?

### ŚLOKA 55

God is perfect goodness, love and truth. He is not wrathful or vengeful. He does not condemn or punish wrongdoers. Jealousy, vengefulness and vanity are qualities of man's instinctive nature, not of God. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

There is no reason to ever fear God, whose right-hand gesture, *abhaya mudrā*, indicates “fear not,” and whose left hand invites approach. God is with us always, even when we are unaware of that holy presence. He is His creation. It is an extension of Himself; and God is never apart from it nor limited by it. When we act wrongly, we create negative *karma* for ourselves and must then live through experiences of suffering to fulfill the law of *karma*. Such *karmas* may be painful, but they were generated from our own thoughts and deeds. God never punishes us, even if we do not believe in Him. It is by means of worship of and meditation on God that our self-created sufferings are softened and assuaged. God is the God of all—of the believers within all religions, and of the nonbelievers, too. God does not destroy the wicked and redeem the righteous; but grants the precious gift of liberation to all souls. The *Āgamas* state, “When the soul gradually reduces and then stops altogether its participation in darkness and inauspicious powers, the Friend of the World, God, reveals to the soul the limitless character of its knowledge and activity.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In an old story a king whipped a worker for laxness during the building of a dike. That man was Śiva in disguise, and the blow was felt by everyone, including the king. God never punishes us, for we are He, and He would be hurting Himself.*

When, to a man who knows, all beings have become one with his own Self, when furthermore he perceives this oneness, how then can sorrow or delusion touch him?

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Īśa Upanishad 7. VE, 815*

I glorify Him who is of wonderful radiance like the sun, who is the giver of happiness, lovely, benevolent, and the One whom all welcome like a guest. He bestows vigor upon the worshipers; may He, the fire divine, remove our sorrow and give us heroic strength and all sustaining riches.

*Rig Veda 10.122.1. RVP, 4617*

I go for refuge to God who is One in the silence of eternity, pure radiance of beauty and perfection, in whom we find our peace. He is the bridge supreme which leads to immortality, and the spirit of fire which burns the dross of lower life.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 6.19. UPM, 96*

When a seer sees the creator of golden hue, the Lord, the Person, the source of Brahmā, then being a knower, shaking off good and evil and free from stain, he attains supreme equality with the Lord.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3.1.3. UPR, 686*

Only by a tranquil mind does one destroy all action, good or bad. Once the self is pacified, one abides in the Self and attains everlasting bliss. If the mind becomes as firmly established in Brahman as it is usually attached to the sense objects, who, then, will not be released from bondage?

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 6.34. VE, 422*

Words cannot describe the joy of the soul whose impurities are cleansed in deep contemplation—who is one with his *ātman*, his own Spirit. Only those who feel this joy know what it is.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 6.34. UPM, 103*

Even though he causes pain to his patient by applying certain remedies, the physician is not taken to be the cause of the suffering, because in the final analysis he has produced the good that was sought after.

*Mṛigendra Āgama, Jñāna Pāda 7.A.18. MA, 184*

If we have sinned, awake, asleep, knowing, unknowing, through evil nature, may Agni banish far from us all such hateful wicked deeds.

*Rig Veda* 10.164.3. VE, 488

Disputes, worldly associations and quarrels should be avoided. Not even spiritual disputations should be indulged in, whether good or bad. Jealousy, slander, pomp, passion, envy, love, anger, fear and misery should all disappear gradually and entirely.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna Pāda* 77-78. RM, 116

And even if thou wert the greatest of sinners, with the help of the vessel of wisdom thou shalt cross the sea of evil. Even as a burning fire burns all fuel into ashes, the fire of eternal wisdom burns into ashes all works.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 4.36-37. BGM, 64

The virtuous wife, devotee true and *jñāni* great—those who do exceeding harm to shock these, their life and wealth will in a year disappear.

*Tirumantiram* 532. TM

O, my Lord, the five senses have taken possession of my body and driven me away from your holy feet. I am confused and troubled at heart, like the curd which is being churned. Bestow enlightenment upon me.

*Tirumurai* 4. HY, 11

As the intense fire of the furnace refines gold to brilliance, so does the burning suffering of austerity purify the soul to resplendence.

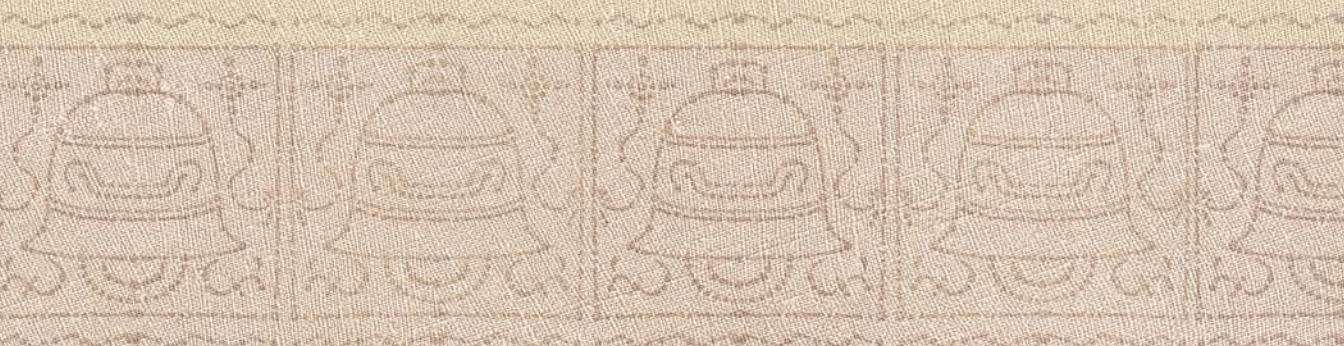
*Tirukural* 267. ww

As a man's shadow follows his footsteps wherever he goes, even so will destruction pursue those who commit sinful deeds.

*Tirukural* 208. ww

A physician takes various roots, mixes them together into one medicine and with it cures the disease. Likewise, the great, All-Knowing Physician, by giving to the soul its body, faculties, the world and all its experiences, cures its disease and establishes it in the bliss of liberation.

*Natchintanai*, "Seek the Profit..." NT, 11-12



Dharmah  
धर्मः

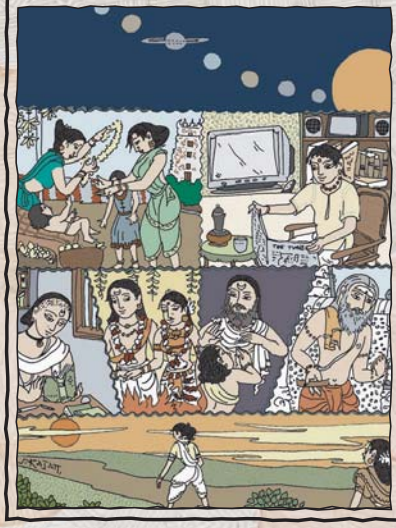


UPANISHAD FIVE  
**Right Living**





## Chaturdharmāḥ चतुर्धर्माः



## Four Dharmas

They say of a man who speaks the truth, “He speaks the *dharma*,” or of a man who speaks the *dharma*, “He speaks the truth.” Verily, both these are the same thing.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 1.4.14. UPH, 84*



राजा

## What Is Dharma? What Are Its Forms?

### ŚLOKA 56

*Dharma* is the law of being, the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature and destiny. *Dharma* is of four main divisions, which are God’s law at work on four levels of our existence: universal, human, social and personal. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

When God created the universe, He endowed it with order, with the laws to govern creation. *Dharma* is God’s divine law prevailing on every level of existence, from the sustaining cosmic order to religious and moral laws which bind us in harmony with that order. We are maintained by *dharma*, held in our most perfect relationship within a complex universe. Every form of life, every group of men, has its *dharma*, the law of its being. When we follow *dharma*, we are in conformity with the Truth that inheres and instructs the universe, and we naturally abide in closeness to God. *Adharma* is opposition to divine law. *Dharma* prevails in the laws of nature and is expressed in our culture and heritage. It is piety and ethical practice, duty and obligation. It is the path which leads us to liberation. Universal *dharma* is known as *ṛita*. Social *dharma* is *varṇa dharma*. Human *dharma* is known as *āśrama dharma*. Our personal *dharma* is *svadharma*. Hinduism, the purest expression of these four timeless *dharmas*, is called Sanātana Dharma. The *Vedas* proclaim, “There is nothing higher than *dharma*. Verily, that which is *dharma* is Truth.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A king’s dharma—his destiny and proper path—is to rule wisely, conscientiously and with honor, as does this noble monarch, served by knowing ministers. Should he lack the strength to rule, or should he govern unrighteously, dharma would suffer.*



172

## What Is Signified by Universal Dharma?

### ŚLOKA 57

Universal law, known in the *Vedas* as *ṛita*, is cosmic order, God’s rule at work throughout the physical province. It is the infinite intelligence or consciousness in nature, the sustaining cosmic design and organizing force. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Ṛita* is the underlying divine principle and universal law regulating nature, from the voyage of stars in vast galactic orbits to the flux of infinitesimal subatomic energies. *Ṛita* is the Tao. It is destiny and the road to destiny. When we are in tune with universal *dharma*, and realize that man is an integral part of nature and not above it or dominating it, then we are in tune with God. All Hindus feel they are guests on the planet with responsibilities to nature, which when fulfilled balance its responsibilities to them. The physical body was gathered from nature and returns to it. Nature is exquisitely complex and orderly. The coconut always yields a coconut tree, a lotus a lotus, a rose a rose, not another species. How constant nature is, and yet how diverse, for in mass producing its creations, no two ever look exactly alike. Yes, the Hindu knows himself to be a part of nature and seeks to bring his life into harmony with the universal path, the sustaining cosmic force. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Earth is upheld by Truth. Heaven is upheld by the sun. The solar regions are supported by eternal laws, *ṛita*. The elixir of divine love is supreme in heaven.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Here the Sun and the Moon move through space together on a fanciful single-wheeled ferry. Even the great celestial bodies—the planets, stars and billions of galaxies and their atomic constituents—follow dharma, called ṛita dharma or universal law.*



## What Is the Nature of Social Dharma?

### ŚLOKA 58

**Social law, or *varṇa dharma*, consists of the occupation, duties and responsibilities we must fulfill as a member of our nation, community and family. An important aspect of this *dharma* is religious and moral law. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Every human society defines a complex stratification of community interaction. Scholarly, pious souls of exceptional learning are the wise *brāhmins*. Lawmakers and law-enforcers are the guardian *kshatriyas*. Bankers and businessmen are merchant *vaiśyas*. Laborers, workers and artisans are *śūdras*. In addition to these four classes, or *varṇas*, are hundreds of castes, or *jātis*. In Hindu societies, class and caste, which dictates one's occupation and community, is largely hereditary. However, these birth-imposed categories can be transcended by the ambitious who enter new careers through education, skill and persistence. Social *dharma* is fulfilled in adherence to the laws of our nation, to our community responsibilities and to our obligations among family and friends. A comprehensive system of duties, morals and religious observances make up God's law at work in our daily life. Rightly followed, *varṇa dharma* enhances individual and family progress and ensures the continuity of culture. The *Vedas* say, "When a man is born, whoever he may be, there is born simultaneously a debt to the Gods, to the sages, to the ancestors and to men." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Social dharma entails our national, societal and occupational responsibilities. Here the loyal subjects of a kindly king bring a portion of their grains, goods and wealth to the palace. The monarch will use it to benefit his people and defend the realm.*





## What Is the Nature of Human Dharma?

### ŚLOKA 59

**Human law, or *āśrama dharma*, is the natural expression and maturing of the body, mind and emotions through four progressive stages of earthly life: student, householder, elder advisor and religious solitaire. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

The four *āśramas* are “stages of striving,” in pursuit of the *purushārthas*: righteousness, wealth, pleasure and liberation. Our first 24 years of life are a time of intense learning. Around age 12, we enter formally the *brahmacharya āśrama* and undertake the study and skills that will serve us in later life. From 24 to 48, in the *grihastha āśrama*, we work together as husband and wife to raise the family, increasing wealth and knowledge through our profession, serving the community and sustaining the members of the other three *āśramas*. In the *vānaprastha āśrama*, from 48 to 72, slowly retiring from public life, we share our experience by advising and guiding younger generations. After age 72, as the physical forces wane, we turn fully to scripture, worship and *yoga*. This is the *sannyāsa āśrama*, which differs from the formal life of ochre-robed monks. Thus, our human *dharma* is a natural awakening, expression, maturing and withdrawal from worldly involvement. The *Vedas* say, “Pursuit of the duties of the stage of life to which each one belongs—that, verily, is the rule! Others are like branches of a stem. With this, one tends upwards; otherwise, downwards.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Two daughters, in the brahmacharya āśrama, are learning to weave, grind flour and make baskets for the family. Mother and father are in the grihastha āśrama, raising children and supporting society. They are preparing soma, the Vedic elixir.*



## What Is the Nature of Personal Dharma?

### ŚLOKA 60

Personal law, or *svadharma*, is our own perfect individual pattern in life. It is the sum of our accumulated seed karmas as they relate to the collective effect on us of *ṛita*, *āśrama* and *varṇa dharma*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Each human being has an individual, personal *dharma*. This *dharma* is determined by two things: the *karmas*, both good and bad, from past lives; and the three *dharma*s of this life—universal, human and social. *Svadharma*, “one’s own law,” is molded by our background and experiences, tendencies and desires—indicated by astrology—all of which determine our personality, profession and associations. The key to discovering and understanding personal *dharma* is the worship of Lord Gaṇeśa, the God of memory, time and wisdom, who knows our past lives and can clarify our most perfect pattern, our right path in life. When we follow this unique pattern—guided by *guru*, wise elders and the knowing voice of our soul—we are content and at peace with ourselves and the world. *Dharma* is to the individual what its normal development is to a seed—the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature and destiny. A Vedic prayer implores, “That splendor that resides in an elephant, in a king, among men, or within the waters, with which the Gods in the beginning came to Godhood, with that same splendor make me splendid, O Lord.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A man is carried on an elaborate chariot with massive wooden wheels, a Śiva-Śakti mūrti and two guardian lions. Similarly, each human’s personal dharma conveys him through life. Listening to the voice of his soul, he follows his truest path.*

We all have various thoughts and plans, and diverse are the callings of men. The carpenter seeks out that which is cracked; the physician, the ailing; the priest, the *soma* press. *Rig Veda* 9.112. VE, 279-280

The daughter of heaven has revealed Herself in the eastern region, all clothed in light. Faithfully She follows the path of *ṛita dharma*; well understanding, She measures out the regions. *Rig Veda* 1.124.3. VE, 808

The hands are alike but in their work they differ. So also, two cows, offspring of a single mother, may yet give differing yields of milk. Even twins are not the same in strength, or kinsmen in bounty.

*Rig Veda* 10.117.9. VE, 851

A man should think on wealth and strive to win it by adoration on the path of Order, counsel himself with his own mental insight, and grasp still nobler vigor with his spirit. *Rig Veda* 10.31.2. RVG, 459

Who, weary of Brahman studentship, having fully learnt the *Vedas*, is discharged by the teacher he had ever obeyed, such a one is called the *āśramin*. Choosing a wife of equally high birth, he should deposit the sacred fires, and bring to those Deities the Brahman sacrifice day and night until, dividing among the children his property, abstaining from conjugal pleasures, he gives himself to the forest life, wandering in a pure region. Living on water and on air, and on such fruit as proper, fire within body, he abides on Earth without obligations, without tears.

*Atharva Veda, Sannyāsa Upanishad* 2.1-4. UPB, 735-36

In how many parts was He transformed when they cut the Purusha in pieces? What did His mouth become? What His arms, what His thighs, what His feet? His mouth then became the *brāhmaṇa*, from the arms the *rājanya* was made, the *vaiśya* from the thighs, from the feet the *śūdra* came forth. *Rig Veda* 10.90.11-12. UPB, 894

A hundred uninitiated are equal to one *brahmachārī*. A hundred *brahmachārīs* are equal to one *grihastha*. A hundred *grihasthas* are equal to one *vānaprastha*. A hundred *vānaprasthas* are equal to one *sannyāsin*.

*Atharva Veda, Narasiṅha Upanishad* 5.10. UPB, 832

The works of *brāhmins*, *kshatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* are different, in harmony with the three powers of their born nature. The works of a *brāhmin* are peace, self-harmony, austerity and purity, loving forgiveness and righteousness, vision, wisdom and faith. These are the works of a *kshatriya*: a heroic mind, inner fire, constancy, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and noble leadership. Trade, agriculture and the rearing of cattle is the work of a *vaiśya*. And the work of the *śūdra* is service. They all attain perfection when they find joy in their work.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 18.41-45. BGM, 118-19

A man attains perfection when his work is worship of God, from whom all things come and who is in all. Greater is thine own work, even if this be humble, than the work of another, even if this be great. When a man does the work God gives him, no sin can touch this man.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 18.45-47. BGM, 119

A *sattvic* he is, his thoughts centered on Paratattva, his vision clear through conflicting faiths, abhorrent of recurring cycles of births, straight in *dharma's* path he easy walks. He, sure, is disciple good and true.

*Tirumantiram* 1696. TM

He who casts out love and *dharma* and chooses self-denial so wealth can pile high will see it seized by strangers. He who understands the duty of giving truly lives. All others shall be counted among the dead.

*Tirukural* 214 & 1009. WW

More imposing than a mountain is the greatness of a man who, steadfast in domestic life, has mastered self-control. Morality is the birthright of high families, while immoral conduct's legacy is lowly birth.

*Tirukural* 124 & 133. WW

By the laws of *dharma* that govern body and mind, you must fear sin and act righteously. Wise men, by thinking and behaving in this way, become worthy to gain bliss both here and hereafter. God lives in this house built of earth, water, fire, air and ether. Therefore, keep the house clean and the mind pure, and conduct yourself with calmness.

*Natchintanai*, Letter 7. NT, 20



Sadāchārah  
सदाचारः



## Good Conduct

The one who has not turned away from wickedness, who has no peace, who is not concentrated, whose mind is restless—he cannot realize the *ātman*, who is known by wisdom.

*Krishna Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad 2.24. VE, 710*





## What Is the Meaning of Good Conduct?

### ŚLOKA 61

**Good conduct is right thought, right speech and right action. It is virtuous deeds in harmony with divine law, reflecting the soul's innate purity. As a staff is used to climb a mountain, so must virtue be used in life. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Good conduct, *sadāchāra*, determines our behavior in day-to-day life. We should be uplifting to our fellow man, not critical or injurious. We should be loving and kind, not hateful or mean. We should express the soul's beautiful qualities of self-control, modesty and honesty. We should be a good example to others and a joy to be around, not a person to be avoided. Good conduct is the sum of spiritual living and comes through keeping good company. When heart and mind are freed of baseness, when desires have been tempered and excesses avoided, *dharma* is known and followed, and good conduct naturally arises. The Hindu fosters humility and shuns arrogance, seeks to assist, never to hinder, finds good in others and forgets their faults. There is no other way to be called a true devotee, but to conduct ourself properly within ourself and among our fellow men. The *Vedas* say, "Let there be no neglect of Truth. Let there be no neglect of *dharma*. Let there be no neglect of welfare. Let there be no neglect of prosperity. Let there be no neglect of study and teaching. Let there be no neglect of the duties to the Gods and the ancestors." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A young saint sits beneath the ceremonial umbrella in a temple corridor, singing to Lord Śiva while keeping the tāla with cymbals. A woman, full of purity and goodness, humbly kneels to offer fresh fruits, a traditional gift to holy men and women.*



RAJATI

## What Are Good Conduct's Four Keys?

### ŚLOKA 62

Purity, devotion, humility and charity are the four keys to good conduct. Of these, purity is the cardinal virtue. We cultivate purity by thinking, speaking and doing only that which is conceived in compassion for all. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Purity is the pristine and natural state of the soul. We cultivate purity by refraining from anger and retaliation, by maintaining a clean and healthy body, and by guarding our virginity until marriage. We cultivate purity by seeking good company and by living a disciplined life. Devotion is love of God, Gods and *guru*, and dedication to family and friends. We cultivate devotion through being loyal and trustworthy. We cultivate devotion through worship and selfless service. Humility is mildness, modesty, reverence and unpretentiousness. We cultivate humility by taking the experiences of life in understanding and not in reaction, and by seeing God everywhere. We cultivate humility through showing patience with circumstances and forbearance with people. Charity is selfless concern and caring for our fellow man. It is generous giving without thought of reward, always sharing and never hoarding. We cultivate charity through giving to the hungry, the sick, the homeless, the elderly and the unfortunate. The *Vedas* explain, “As to a mountain that’s enflamed, deer and birds do not resort—so, with knowers of God, sins find no shelter.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In a South Indian Śaivite monastery a satguru is seated in his reception chamber with his pūjā items nearby. A devotee bows to reverently touch the preceptor’s feet. His selfless act reflects all four key virtues: purity, devotion, humility and charity.*



## From Whom Is Good Conduct Learned?

### ŚLOKA 63

The first teacher in matters of good conduct is our conscience. To know what is right and what is wrong we can also turn to God, to our *satguru* and *swāmīs*, to scripture and to our elders, family and trusted friends. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Divine laws cannot be avoided. They do not rule us from above but are wrought into our very nature. Even death cannot efface the *karma* created by evil deeds. Good conduct alone can resolve woeful *karmas*. Therefore, it is essential that we learn and adhere to good conduct. Good people are the best teachers of good conduct, and should be sought out and heeded when we need help or advice. Talk with them, the wise ones, and in good judgment be guided accordingly. Ethical scriptures should be read and studied regularly and their wisdom followed. The loud voice of our soul, ever heard within our conscience, is a worthy guide. When we grasp the subtle mechanism of *karma*, we wisely follow the good path. Good conduct, or *sadāchāra*, for the Hindu is summarized in five obligatory duties, called *pañcha nitya karmas*: virtuous living, *dharma*; worship, *upāsanā*; holy days, *utsava*; pilgrimage, *tīrthayātrā*; and sacraments, *samskāras*. The *Vedas* offer this guidance, “If you have doubt concerning conduct, follow the example of high souls who are competent to judge, devout, not led by others, not harsh, but lovers of virtue.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Saint Sambandar, of the seventh century, composed many hymns to Śiva. Here he sings to a husband and wife who have approached him for guidance. Hindus keep on the virtuous path by seeking and following the wisdom of holy men and women.*



## What Are the Ten Classical Restraints?

### ŚLOKA 64

Hinduism's ethical restraints are contained in ten simple precepts called *yamas*. They define the codes of conduct by which we harness our instinctive forces and cultivate the innate, pristine qualities of our soul. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The *yamas* and *niyamas* are scriptural injunctions for all aspects of thought and behavior. They are advice and simple guidelines, not commandments. The ten *yamas*, defining the ideals of *charyā*, are: 1) *ahimsā*, “noninjury,” do not harm others by thought, word or deed; 2) *satya*, “truthfulness,” refrain from lying and betraying promises; 3) *asteya*, “nonstealing,” neither steal nor covet nor enter into debt; 4) *brahmacharya*, “divine conduct,” control lust by remaining celibate when single, leading to faithfulness in marriage; 5) *kshamā*, “patience,” restrain intolerance with people and impatience with circumstances; 6) *dhṛiti*, “steadfastness,” overcome nonperseverance, fear, indecision and changeableness; 7) *dayā*, “compassion,” conquer callous, cruel and insensitive feelings toward all beings; 8) *ārjava*, “honesty,” renounce deception and wrongdoing; 9) *mitāhāra*, “moderate appetite,” neither eat too much, nor consume meat, fish, fowl or eggs; 10) *śaucha*, “purity,” avoid impurity in body, mind and speech. The *Vedas* proclaim, “To them belongs yon stainless Brahma world in whom there is no crookedness and falsehood, nor trickery.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A woman sits beside a lotus pond under a full moon. A pair of lovebirds sing and enjoy ripe mangos. She seeks the path of soulful virtue, knowing the first step is self-control, restraint of mind, body and emotions, capsulated in the ten yamas.*





## What Are the Ten Classical Observances?

### ŚLOKA 65

Hinduism's religious tenets are contained in ten terse precepts called *niyamas*. They summarize the essential practices that we observe and the soulful virtues and qualities we strive daily to perfect. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Good conduct is a combination of avoiding unethical behavior and performing virtuous, spiritualizing acts. The accumulated wisdom of thousands of years of Hindu culture has evolved ten *niyamas*, or religious observances. These precepts defining the ideals of *kriyā* are: 1) *hrī*, “remorse,” be modest and show shame for misdeeds; 2) *santoshā*, “contentment,” seek joy and serenity in life; 3) *dāna*, “giving,” tithe and give creatively without thought of reward; 4) *āstikya*, “faith,” believe firmly in God, Gods, *guru* and the path to enlightenment; 5) *Īśvarapūjana*, “worship,” cultivate devotion through daily *pūjā* and meditation; 6) *siddhānta śravaṇa*, “scriptural listening,” study the teachings and listen to the wise of one's lineage; 7) *mati*, “cognition,” develop a spiritual will and intellect with a *guru*'s guidance; 8) *vrata*, “sacred vows,” fulfill religious vows, rules and observances faithfully; 9) *japa*, “recitation,” chant holy *mantras* daily; 10) *tapas*, “austerity,” perform *sādhana*, penance, *tapas* and sacrifice. The *Vedas* state, “They indeed possess that Brahma world who possess austerity and chastity, and in whom the truth is established.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Kneeling on a marble balcony, a woman offers heartfelt songs to her Lord. She holds hand bells and strums a four-string taṁbūra. Her offering of song is a vital part of religious culture, developed through fulfilling the ten observances called *niyamas*.*

You are in truth the visible Brahman. I will proclaim you as the visible Brahman. I will speak the right. I will speak the truth. May this protect me. May it protect my teacher! May this protect me. May it protect my teacher! Aum, peace, peace, peace!

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Upanishad 1.1.1. VE, 757*

The one who has not turned away from wickedness, who has no peace, who is not concentrated, whose mind is restless—he cannot realize the *ātman*, who is known by wisdom.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad 2.24. VE, 710*

The ten abstinences are nonviolence, truth, nonstealing, chastity, kindness, rectitude, forgiveness, endurance, temperance in food and purity.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Trisīkhi Brāhmaṇa Upanishad 32-33. YM, 19*

May He protect us both. May He be pleased with us both. May we work together with vigor; may our study make us illumined. May there be no dislike between us. Aum, peace, peace.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Upanishad 2.1. Invocation. UPR, 541*

I walk with those who go after God. I live with those who sing His praise. The Lord blesses those who seek Him. With those who unite in Him, I unite in their feet.

*Tirumantiram 543. TM*

Rescue the mind from qualities, make it pure and fix it in the heart. That consciousness which manifests clearly thereafter must alone be aimed at and striven for. One who has recoiled from sensual pleasures and devoted himself to undefiled, pure wisdom is sure to achieve everlasting *moksha*, even if he does not consciously seek it. Let the aspirant for liberation behave in an unselfish and kind way and give aid to all, let him undergo penance, and let him study this *Āgama*.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchāra-vichāra 41, 12 & 5. RM, 111, 112; 14*

*Tapas, japa*, serenity, belief in God, charity, vows in Śaiva way and Sid-dhānta learning, sacrificial offerings, Śiva *pūjā* and speech pure—with these ten the one in *niyama* perfects his way.

*Tirumantiram 557. TM*

Truth obtains victory, not untruth. Truth is the way that leads to the regions of light. Sages travel therein free from desires and reach the supreme abode of Truth. He is immeasurable in His light and beyond all thought, and yet He shines smaller than the smallest. Far, far away is He, and yet He is very near, resting in the inmost chamber of the heart. He cannot be seen by the eye, and words cannot reveal Him. He cannot be reached by the senses, or by austerity or sacred actions. By the grace of wisdom and purity of mind, He can be seen, indivisible, in the silence of contemplation. This invisible *ātman* can be seen by the mind wherein the five senses are resting. All mind is woven with the senses; but a pure mind shines the light of the Self. Whatever regions the pure in heart may see in his mind, whatever desires he may have in his heart, he attains those regions and wins his desires. Let one who wishes for success reverence the seers of the Spirit.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3.1.6-10. UPM, 80*

More precious than life itself is rectitude. Those who practice rectitude possess everything that is worthwhile. Humility, truthfulness, avoidance of killing and stealing, refraining from slandering others, absence of covetousness and so forth—these are the characteristics of a life of rectitude. Whatever the work may be, a man should train himself to carry it out with perseverance, devotion and joy. By disciplining himself in this way he will acquire steadiness of mind; that is to say, the mind will become one-pointed. This will allow the *ātman* increasingly to manifest its power. What one thinks will take place immediately, and the differentiation that arises from calling this man a friend and that man an enemy will not enter the mind and give room for care and worry.

*Natchintanai, "The True Path." NT, 4*

Virtue yields Heaven's honor and Earth's wealth. What is there then that is more fruitful for a man? Be unremitting in the doing of good deeds; do them with all your might and by every possible means.

*Tirukural 31 & 33. WW*

Keep the mind free of impurity. That alone is the practice of virtue. All else is nothing but empty display. Purity of mind and purity of conduct—these two depend upon the purity of a man's companions.

*Tirukural 34 & 455. WW*



## Ahimsā अहिंसा



## Noninjury

To the heavens be peace, to the sky and the Earth;  
to the waters be peace, to plants and all trees; to the  
Gods be peace, to Brahman be peace, to all men  
be peace, again and again—peace also to me!

*Sukla Yajur Veda 36.17. VE, 306*





## What Is the Great Virtue Called Ahimsā?

### ŚLOKA 66

*Ahimsā*, or noninjury, is the first and foremost ethical principle of every Hindu. It is gentleness and nonviolence, whether physical, mental or emotional. It is abstaining from causing hurt or harm to all beings. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

To the Hindu the ground is sacred. The rivers are sacred. The sky is sacred. The sun is sacred. His wife is a Goddess. Her husband is a God. Their children are *devas*. Their home is a shrine. Life is a pilgrimage to liberation from rebirth, and no violence can be carried to the higher reaches of that ascent. While nonviolence speaks only to the most extreme forms of wrongdoing, *ahimsā*, which includes not killing, goes much deeper to prohibit the subtle abuse and the simple hurt. Rishi Patanjali described *ahimsā* as the great vow and foremost spiritual discipline which Truth-seekers must follow strictly and without fail. This extends to harm of all kinds caused by one's thoughts, words and deeds—including injury to the natural environment. Even the intent to injure, even violence committed in a dream, is a violation of *ahimsā*. Vedic *ṛishis* who revealed *dharma* proclaimed *ahimsā* as the way to achieve harmony with our environment, peace between peoples and compassion within ourselves. The Vedic edict is: “*Ahimsā* is not causing pain to any living being at any time through the actions of one's mind, speech or body.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*It is the early Vedic era and priests worshipping Agni are blessed by the devas. From long ago, souls have followed the yamas and niyamas, whose first principle is noninjury, ahimsā. Not threatened by humans, animals feel safe and draw near.*





## What Is the Inner Source of Noninjury?

### ŚLOKA 67

Two beliefs form the philosophical basis of noninjury. The first is the law of *karma*, by which harm caused to others unfailingly returns to oneself. The second is that the Divine shines forth in all peoples and things. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The Hindu is thoroughly convinced that violence he commits will return to him by a cosmic process that is unerring. He knows that, by *karma's* law, what we have done to others will be done to us, if not in this life then in another. He knows that he may one day be in the same position of anyone he is inclined to harm or persecute, perhaps incarnating in the society he most opposed in order to equalize his hates and fears into a greater understanding. The belief in the existence of God everywhere, as an all-pervasive, self-effulgent energy and consciousness, creates the attitude of sublime tolerance and acceptance toward others. Even *tolerance* is insufficient to describe the compassion and reverence the Hindu holds for the intrinsic sacredness within all things. Therefore, the actions of all Hindus living in the higher nature are rendered benign, or *ahimsā*. One would not hurt that which he reveres. The *Vedas* pronounce, “He who, dwelling in all things, yet is other than all things, whom all things do not know, whose body all things are, who controls all things from within—He is your soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti* reposes beneath a sprawling banyan tree, in silent communion with His creation. Hinduism stresses noninjury to all creatures because Divinity is the Life of all life, and to injure or kill is to dishonor God's presence in all.



## What Is the Inner Source of Violence?

### ŚLOKA 68

**Violence is a reflection of lower, instinctive consciousness—fear, anger, greed, jealousy and hate—based in the mentality of separateness and unconnectedness, of good and bad, winners and losers, mine and yours. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Every belief creates certain attitudes. Attitudes govern our actions. Our actions can thus be traced to our inmost beliefs about ourself and the world around us. If those beliefs are erroneous, our actions will not be in tune with the universal *dharma*. For instance, the beliefs in the duality of self and other, of eternal heaven and hell, victors and vanquished, white forces and dark forces create the attitudes that we must be on our guard, and are justified in giving injury, physically, mentally and emotionally, to those whom we judge as bad, pagan, alien or unworthy. Such thinking leads to rationalizing so-called righteous wars and conflicts. As long as our beliefs are dualistic, we will continue to generate antagonism, and that will erupt here and there in violence. Those living in the lower, instinctive nature are society's antagonists. They are self-assertive, territorial, competitive, jealous, angry, fearful and rarely penitent of their hurtfulness. Many take sport in killing for the sake of killing, thieving for the sake of theft. The *Vedas* indicate, "This soul, verily, is overcome by nature's qualities. Now, because of being overcome, he goes on to confusedness." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Soldiers meet at a bivouac, weapons drawn, the battle nigh. Minions serve refreshments as generals work on tactics. There is a dharmic place for battle, as when armies defend their nation. Nevertheless, violence is mankind's lowest experience.*



## Is Vegetarianism Integral to Noninjury?

### ŚLOKA 69

**Hindus teach vegetarianism as a way to live with a minimum of hurt to other beings, for to consume meat, fish, fowl or eggs is to participate indirectly in acts of cruelty and violence against the animal kingdom. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

The abhorrence of injury and killing of any kind leads quite naturally to a vegetarian diet, *śākāhāra*. The meat-eater's desire for meat drives another to kill and provide that meat. The act of the butcher begins with the desire of the consumer. Meat-eating contributes to a mentality of violence, for with the chemically complex meat ingested, one absorbs the slaughtered creature's fear, pain and terror. These qualities are nourished within the meat-eater, perpetuating the cycle of cruelty and confusion. When the individual's consciousness lifts and expands, he will abhor violence and not be able to even digest the meat, fish, fowl and eggs he was formerly consuming. India's greatest saints have confirmed that one cannot eat meat and live a peaceful, harmonious life. Man's appetite for meat inflicts devastating harm on the Earth itself, stripping its precious forests to make way for pastures. The *Tirukural* candidly states, "How can he practice true compassion who eats the flesh of an animal to fatten his own flesh? Greater than a thousand *ghee* offerings consumed in sacrificial fires is not to sacrifice and consume any living creature." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A devotee is honored with a visit by a sage, seated in the next room. The host prepares his finest lunch on a simple wood stove. The meal of rice, dal, eggplant and drumsticks is entirely vegetarian, for the holy man will never consume flesh.*



JKS/AT/66

## How Can Peace on Earth Be Achieved?

### ŚLOKA 70

Peace is a reflection of spiritual consciousness. It begins within each person, and extends to the home, neighborhood, nation and beyond. It comes when the higher nature takes charge of the lower nature. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Until we have peace in our own heart, we can't hope for peace in the world. Peace is the natural state of the mind. It is there, inside, to be discovered in meditation, maintained through self-control, and then radiated out to others. The best way to promote peace is to teach families to be peaceful within their own homes by settling all conflicts quickly. At a national and international level, we will enjoy more peace as we become more tolerant. Religious leaders can help by teaching their congregations how to live in a world of differences without feeling threatened, without forcing their ways or will on others. World bodies can make laws which deplore and work to prevent crimes of violence. It is only when the higher-nature people are in charge that peace will truly come. There is no other way, because the problems of conflict reside within the low-minded group who only know retaliation as a way of life. The *Vedas* beseech, "Peace be to the Earth and to airy spaces! Peace be to heaven, peace to the waters, peace to the plants and peace to the trees! May all the Gods grant to me peace! By this invocation of peace may peace be diffused!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Having discovered a prized parijatam tree, Nyctanthus arbortristis, in the forest, a young woman plucks two baskets of the intoxicating blooms for her morning pūjā. A man watches clandestinely, admiring her peaceful and calming demeanor.*



Nonviolence is all the offerings. Renunciation is the priestly honorarium. The final purification is death. Thus all the Divinities are established in this body.

*Krishna Yajur Veda, Prāṇāgnihotra Upanishad 46-8. VE, 413-14*

Peaceful be to us the signs of the future, peaceful what is done and undone, peaceful to us be what is and what will be. May all to us be gracious. These five sense organs, with the mind as the sixth, within my heart, inspired by Brahman, by which the awe-inspiring is created, through them to us be peace.

*Atharva Veda 19.9.2; 5 ;9. VE, 305*

If we have injured space, the Earth or Heaven, or if we have offended mother or father, from that may Agni, fire of the house, absolve us and guide us safely to the world of goodness.

*Atharva Veda 6.120.1. VE, 636*

You must not use your God-given body for killing God's creatures, whether they are human, animal or whatever.

*Yajur Veda 12.32. FS, 90*

Protect both our species, two-legged and four-legged. Both food and water for their needs supply. May they with us increase in stature and strength. Save us from hurt all our days, O Powers!

*Rig Veda 10.37.11. VE, 319*

May the wind fan us with blissful breezes! May the Sun warm us with delightful rays! May the rain come to us with a pleasant roar! May days come and go for us with blessings! May nights approach us benignly! O earthen vessel, strengthen me. May all beings regard me with friendly eyes! May I look upon all creatures with friendly eyes! With a friend's eye may we regard each other!

*Śukla Yajur Veda 36.10, 11 & 8. VE, 342*

No pain should be caused to any created being or thing.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchara-vichara 69-70. RM, 116*

When mindstuff is firmly based in waves of *ahimsā*, all living beings cease their enmity in the presence of such a person.

*Patañjali Yoga Sūtras 2.35. YP, 205*

*Himsā* is to act against the spirit divine of the *Vedas*. It is to act against the dictates of *dharma*. *Ahimsā* is the understanding of the fundamental truth that the *ātman* is imperishable, immutable and all-pervading.

*Suta Saṁhitā, Skanda Purāṇa, 4-5. FF, 113*

He who sees that the Lord of all is ever the same in all that is—immortal in the field of mortality—he sees the truth. And when a man sees that the God in himself is the same God in all that is, he hurts not himself by hurting others. Then he goes, indeed, to the highest path.

*Bhagavad Gītā 13.27-28. BGM, 101*

The purchaser of flesh performs *himsā* (violence) by his wealth; he who eats flesh does so by enjoying its taste; the killer does *himsā* by actually tying and killing the animal. Thus, there are three forms of killing: he who brings flesh or sends for it, he who cuts off the limbs of an animal, and he who purchases, sells or cooks flesh and eats it—all of these are to be considered meat-eaters.

*Mahābhārata, Anu. 115.40. FS, 90*

Nonviolence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, serenity, aversion to fault-finding, sympathy for all beings, peace from greedy cravings, gentleness, modesty, steadiness, energy, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, a good will, freedom from pride—these belong to a man who is born for heaven.

*Bhagavad Gītā 16.2-3. BGM, 109*

Meat can never be obtained without injury to living creatures, and injury to sentient beings is detrimental to the attainment of heavenly bliss; let him therefore shun meat.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras 5.48. LM, 176*

Worthless are those who injure others vengefully, while those who stoically endure are like stored gold. Let one who hopes for freedom from affliction's pain avoid inflicting harm on others.

*Tirukural 155, 206, ww*

For the worship of the Lord, many flowers are available, but the best is not killing even an atom of life. The best steady flame is the tranquil mind; the best place for worship is the heart, where the soul resides.

*Tirumantiram 197, TMR, 30*



Grihastha Dharmah  
गृहस्थधर्मः



UPANISHAD SIX

**Family Life**



## Dampati दम्पती



## Husband and Wife

O Divines, may the husband and wife who with one accord offer the elixir of dedication with pure heart and propitiate you with the milk of sweet devotional prayers, constantly associated—may they acquire appropriate food, may they be able to offer sacrifice, and may they never fail in strength and vigor.

*Rig Veda 8.31.5-6. RVP, 3,015*



## What Is the Central Purpose of Marriage?

### ŚLOKA 71

**The two purposes of marriage are: the mutual support, both spiritual and material, of man and wife; and bringing children into the world. Marriage is a religious sacrament, a human contract and a civil institution. Aum.**

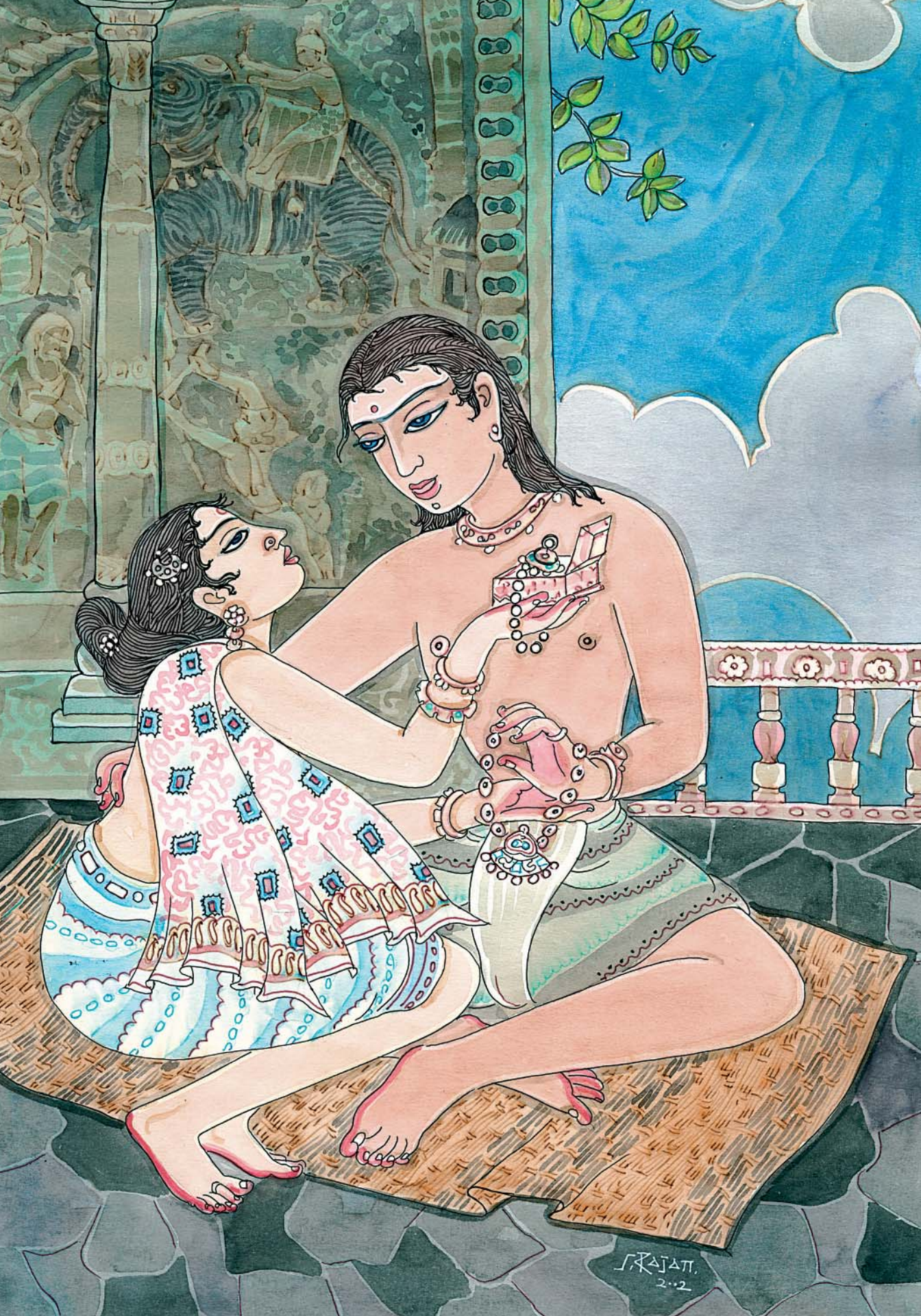
### BHĀSHYA

Through marriage, a man and a woman each fulfill their *dharma*, becoming physically, emotionally and spiritually complete. He needs her tenderness, companionship and encouragement, while she needs his strength, love and understanding. Their union results in the birth of children and the perpetuation of the human race. Marriage is a three-fold state: it is a sacrament, a contract and an institution. As a sacrament, it is a spiritual union in which man and woman utter certain vows one to another and thus bind themselves together for life and for their souls' mutual benefit. As a contract, it is a personal agreement to live together as husband and wife, he to provide shelter, protection, sustenance, and she to care for the home and bear and nurture their children. As an institution, marriage is the lawful custom in society, bringing stability to the family and the social order. Marriage is a *jīvayajña*, a sacrifice of each small self to the greater good of the family and society. The *Vedas* exclaim, "I am he, you are she, I am song, you are verse, I am Heaven, you are Earth. We two shall here together dwell, becoming parents of children." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In their elaborately decorated home, a man arranges flowers in his beloved wife's hair. Marriage, the pillar of culture, fulfills each partner's needs, as they discharge their dharma and support one another physically, intellectually and spiritually.*





## What Are the Duties of the Husband?

### ŚLOKA 72

It is the husband's duty, his *purusha dharma*, to protect and provide for his wife and children. He, as head of the family, *griheśvara*, is responsible for its spiritual, economic, physical, mental and emotional security. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

By their physical, mental and emotional differences, the man is suited to work in the world and the woman to bear and raise their children in the home. The husband is, first, an equal participant in the procreation and upbringing of the future generation. Second, he is the generator of economic resources necessary for society and the immediate family. The husband must be caring, understanding, masculine, loving, affectionate, and an unselfish provider, to the best of his ability and through honest means. He is well equipped physically and mentally for the stress and demands placed upon him. When he performs his *dharma* well, the family is materially and emotionally secure. Still, he is not restricted from participation in household chores, remembering that the home is the wife's domain and she is its mistress. The *Vedas* implore, "Through this oblation, which invokes prosperity, may this bridegroom flourish anew; may he, with his manly energies, flourish the wife they have brought to him. May he excel in strength, excel in royalty! May this couple be inexhaustible in wealth that bestows luster a thousand fold!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A young couple sit together on their secluded veranda. The husband has brought gifts for his wife—an opulent pendant and a box of jewels. Arm affectionately on her back, he offers the presents with candid words of love and appreciation.*



## What Are Special Duties of the Wife?

### ŚLOKA 73

It is the wife's duty, her *strī dharma*, to bear, nurse and raise the children. She is the able homemaker, standing beside her husband as the mother and educator of their children and the home's silent leader, *gṛihīṇī*. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The biological differences between man and woman are part of their human *dharma*. The two together constitute a whole. They are equal partners in joy and sorrow, companions and helpmates, yet their functions differ. The Hindu home and family is the fortress of the Sanātana Dharma, which the wife and mother is duty-bound to maintain and thus to perpetuate the faith and create fine citizens. As long as the husband is capable of supporting the family, a woman should not leave the home to work in the world, though she may earn through home industry. The spiritual and emotional loss suffered by the children and the bad *karma* accrued from having a wife and mother work outside the home is never offset by the financial gain. The woman's more intuitive and emotional qualities of femininity, gentleness, modesty, kindness and compassion are needed for the children's proper care and development. The *Vedas* encourage, "May happiness await you with your children! Watch over this house as mistress of the home. Unite yourself wholly with your husband. Thus authority in speech till old age will be yours." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*With child at her knee, a woman lights an oil lamp, passing the light of culture to the next generation. Having drawn kolams on the floor, she prepares for evening pūjā, anticipating her husband's return from work. He arrives with a garland for the Deity.*



## What Is the Hindu View of Sexuality?

### ŚLOKA 74

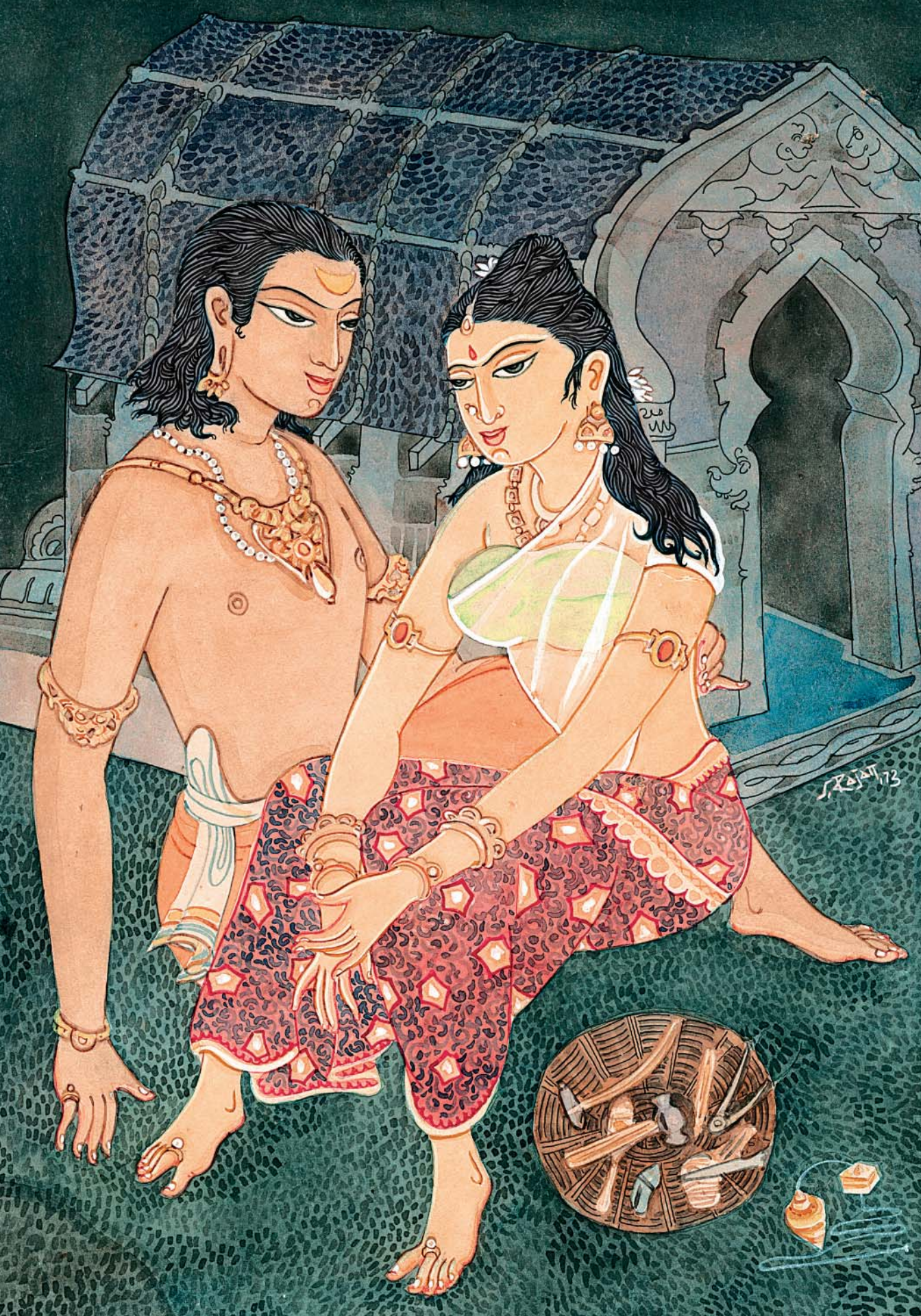
**The purpose of sexual union is to express and foster love's beautiful intimacy and to draw husband and wife together for procreation. While offering community guidance, Hinduism does not legislate sexual matters. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Sexual intercourse is a natural reproductive function, a part of the instinctive nature, and its pleasures draw man and woman together that a child may be conceived. It also serves through its intimacy to express and nurture love. It is love which endows sexual intercourse with its higher qualities, transforming it from an animal function to a human fulfillment. Intensely personal matters of sex as they affect the family or individual are not legislated, but left to the judgment of those involved, subject to community laws and customs. Hinduism neither condones nor condemns birth control, sterilization, masturbation, homosexuality, petting, polygamy or pornography. It does not exclude or draw harsh conclusions against any part of human nature, though scripture prohibits adultery and forbids abortion except to save a mother's life. Advice in such matters should be sought from parents, elders and spiritual leaders. The only rigid rule is wisdom, guided by tradition and virtue. The *Vedas* beseech, "May all the divine powers together with the waters join our two hearts in one! May the Messenger, the Creator and holy Obedience unite us." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A romantic full moon and starry sky above, a man and wife meet intimately on their balcony. Sexual union gives profound expression to their love and brings forth children to carry forth the culture, ideals, faith and resources of the family.*



13

## What Is the Relation of Sex to Marriage?

### ŚLOKA 75

**Wisdom demands that the intimacies of sexual intercourse be confined to marriage. Marriages that are free of prior relationships are the truest and strongest, seldom ending in separation or divorce. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.**

### BHĀSHYA

When a virgin man and woman marry and share physical intimacy with each other, their union is very strong and their marriage stable. This is because their psychic nerve currents, or *nāḍīs*, grow together and they form a one body and a one mind. Conversely, if the man or woman has had intercourse before the marriage, the emotional-psychic closeness of the marriage will suffer, and this in proportion to the extent of promiscuity. For a marriage to succeed, sexual intercourse must be preserved for husband and wife. Each should grow to understand the other's needs and take care to neither deny intercourse to the married partner nor make excessive demands. A healthy, unrepressed attitude should be kept regarding sexual matters. Boys and girls must be taught to value and protect their chastity as a sacred treasure, and to save the special gift of intimacy for their spouse. They should be taught the importance of loyalty in marriage and to avoid even the thought of adultery. The *Vedas* intone, "Sweet be the glances we exchange, our faces showing true concord. Enshrine me in your heart and let one spirit dwell with us." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A craftsman, with plumb bob and basket of tools nearby, talks with his wife outside their dwelling. Because each was a virgin when they married, their psychic bond is strong and enduring, and they will be able to weather life's storms together.*



O man and woman, having acquired knowledge from the learned, proclaim amongst the wise the fact of your intention of entering the married life. Attain to fame, observing the noble virtue of nonviolence, and uplift your soul. Shun crookedness. Converse together happily. Living in a peaceful home, spoil not your life. Spoil not your progeny. In this world, pass your life happily, on this wide Earth full of enjoyment!

*Śukla Yajur Veda* 5.17. १५, 44

Husband and wife in sweet accord give milk oblations to the Gods and press and strain the Soma. They acquire a plenteous store of food. They come united to the altar. Their rewards never lessen. They do not wander from the Gods or seek to hide their favors granted. Thus they acquire great glory. With sons and daughters at their side, they live a good long span of years, both decked with precious gold.

*Rig Veda* 8.31.5-8. १६, 265

Have your eating and drinking in common. I bind you together. Assemble for worship of the Lord, like spokes around a hub. Of one mind and one purpose I make you, following one leader. Be like the Gods, ever deathless! Never stop loving.

*Atharva Veda* 3.30.6-7. १६, 857

Many are the paths of the Gods winding heavenward. May they stream for me with favors, bringing me milk and butter! Thus in my business may I succeed and accumulate treasure. I offer this wood and this butter in your honor, O Lord, with a prayer for energy and strength. These sacred words I now chant with all my devotion, to win by this hymn a hundredfold. Thus, steadfast and firm as a horse, we shall offer our praises, Omniscient Lord, forever. Replete with food and with riches, being close to you always, may we never suffer reverses!

*Atharva Veda* 3.15.2-3; 8. १६, 295

May Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman grant us freedom and space enough for us and for our children! May we find pleasant pathways, good to travel! Preserve us evermore, O Gods, with blessings!

*Rig Veda* 7.63.6. १६, 822

Divine Architect of the universe, well pleased, may you give us procreant vigor, whence a brave son—skilled in action, lover of divine powers and resolute like grinding stones—be born. *Rig Veda* 7.2.9. RVB, 2,355

Unite, O Lord, this couple like a pair of lovebirds. May they surrounded by children be, living both long and happily.

*Atharva Veda* 14.2.64. VE, 259

May the Lord of the clouds protect our stores, piled high in our homes! May the Lord of the clouds give us vitality in our homes, granting goods and riches! O generous God, Lord of thousandfold abundance impart to us now a share of abundance; may we have a share in prosperity!

*Atharva Veda* 6.79.1-3. VE, 274

Let there be faithfulness to each other until death. This, in short, should be known as the highest duty of husband and wife. So let husband and wife ever strive, doing all their duties, that they may not, separated from each other, wander apart.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras* 9.101-2. SD, 161

Family life, however full, remains empty if the wife lacks the lofty culture of the home. It is said a worthy wife is the blessing of a home, and good children are its precious adornments.

*Tirukural* 52; 60. ww

No greater dignity exists than when a man resolutely declares, “I will never cease in laboring to fulfill my *karmas*.” The posterity of householders who gather wealth without misdeeds and share meals without miserliness will never perish.

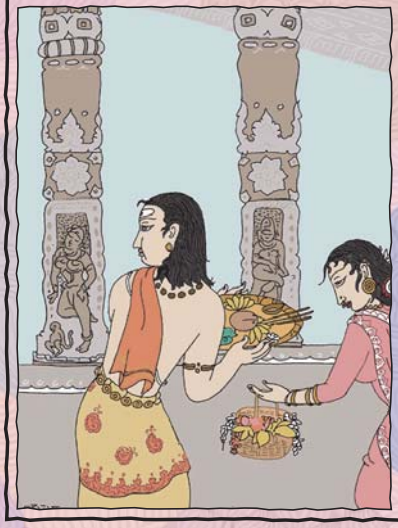
*Tirukural* 45; 1021; 44. ww

Whether he be a *sannyāsin* or a householder, he who is devoid of both affection and hatred is a superman. Great souls speak of him as a *jīvan-mukta*. To live in communion with one’s true nature is the greatest bliss. That does not entail conformity with any external pattern—it is a real feeling. Everything will become clear if one is true to oneself. To love others as oneself is *tapas*. That is *dharma*. Everywhere is Śiva.

*Natchintanai*, Letter 6. NT, 19



Vivāhaḥ  
विवाहः



## Marriage

Agni has now returned the bride endowed with splendors and length of life. May she live a lengthy span of days and may her husband live a hundred autumns.

*Rig Veda 10.85.39. VE, 256*



SRAJAT

## What Is the Basis for a Happy Marriage?

### ŚLOKA 76

**A happy marriage is based first and foremost on a mature love, not a romantic ideal of love. It requires selflessness and constant attention. A successful marriage is one which both partners work at making successful. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

While not all marriages must be arranged, there is wisdom in arranged marriages, which have always been an important part of Hindu culture. Their success lies in the families' judgment to base the union on pragmatic matters which will outlast the sweetest infatuation and endure through the years. The ideal age for women is from 18 to 25, men from 21 to 30. Stability is enhanced if the boy has completed his education, established earnings through a profession and is at least five years older than the girl. Mature love includes accepting obligations, duties and even difficulties. The couple should be prepared to work with their marriage, not expecting it to take care of itself. It is good for bride and groom to write out a covenant by hand, each pledging to fulfill certain duties and promises. They should approach the marriage as holy, advancing both partners spiritually. It is important to marry a spouse who is dependable, chaste and serious about raising children in the Hindu way, and then worship and pray together. The *Vedas* say, "Devoted to sacrifice, gathering wealth, they serve the Immortal and honor the Gods, united in mutual love." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A woman finishes painting her eyebrows as her sister adjusts a sash. She is preparing for her husband's return from tending sheep. He brings a garland and places it around her neck. The Gods look on, subtly guiding their maturing marriage.*



## Must We Marry Within Our Religion?

### ŚLOKA 77

Tradition requires that the wife adopt the religion and lifestyle of her husband. Thus, Hindu women wanting to continue their family culture and religion will, in wisdom, marry a spouse of the same sect and lineage. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The mutual spiritual unfoldment of man and wife is a central purpose of marriage. When we marry outside our religion, we create disharmony and conflict for ourselves and our children. Such a marriage draws us away from religious involvement instead of deeper into its fulfillment. For marriage to serve its spiritual purpose to the highest, husband and wife should hold the same beliefs and share the same religious practices. Their harmony of minds will be reflected in the children. A man's choice of spouse is a simple decision, because his wife is bound to follow him. For a woman, it is a far more important decision, because her choice determines the future of her religious and social life. While his lifestyle will not change, hers will. Should a Hindu marry a non-Hindu, traditional wisdom dictates that the wife conform to her husband's heritage, and that the children be raised in his faith, with no conflicting beliefs or customs. The husband may be invited to convert to her faith before marriage. The *Vedas* pray, "United your resolve, united your hearts, may your spirits be one, that you may long together dwell in unity and concord!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Two priests conduct the vivāha saṁskāra, sacred Hindu marriage rites. Bride and groom offer handfuls of grains into the fire to invoke abundance. By marrying within their faith, they ensure that their children will continue their tradition.*





## How Are Hindu Marriages Arranged?

### ŚLOKA 78

**Marriage is a union not only of boy and girl, but of their families, too. Not leaving such crucial matters to chance, all family members participate in finding the most suitable spouse for the eligible son or daughter. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

In seeking a bride for a son, or a groom for a daughter, the goal is to find a mate compatible in age, physique, education, social status, religion, character and personality. Elders may first seek a partner among families they know and esteem for the kinship bonds the marriage would bring. Astrology is always consulted for compatibility. Of course, mutual attraction and full consent of the couple are crucial. Once a potential spouse is selected, informal inquiries are made by a relative or friend. If the response is encouraging, the father of the girl meets the father of the boy and presents a proposal. Next, the families gather at the girl's home to get acquainted and to allow the couple to meet and discuss their expectations. If all agree to the match, the boy's mother adorns the girl with a gold necklace, or gifts are exchanged between families, signifying a firm betrothal. Rejoicing begins with the engagement ceremony and culminates on the wedding day. The *Vedas* say, "Straight be the paths and thornless on which our friends will travel to present our suit! May Aryaman and Bhaga lead us together! May heaven grant us a stable marriage!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A man promises before his kinsmen and hers to care for his new wife, make her secure, give her all she wants and all she needs for a rewarding life. Lord Śiva witnesses his vow, blessing the marriage which was arranged by community elders.*



RAJAT '95

## What Is the Hindu Family Structure?

### ŚLOKA 79

The main Hindu social unit is the joint family, usually consisting of several generations living together under the guidance of the father and mother. Each joint family is part of a greater body called the extended family. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

A joint family lives under one roof. It includes a father and mother, their sons, grandsons and great-grandsons and all their spouses, as well as all daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters until they are married. The head of the family is the father, assisted by his wife, or in his absence the eldest son, encouraged by his mother, and in his absence, the next eldest brother. The family head delegates responsibilities to members according to their abilities. The mother oversees household activities, nurturance, hospitality and gift-giving. Religious observances are the eldest son's responsibility. The joint family is founded on selfless sharing, community ownership and the fact that each member's voice and opinion is important. The extended family includes one or more joint families, community elders, married daughters and their kindred, close friends and business associates. It is headed by the family *guru*, priests and *paṇḍitas*. The *Vedas* offer blessings: "Dwell in this home; never be parted! Enjoy the full duration of your days, with sons and grandsons playing to the end, rejoicing in your home to your heart's content." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A large family of brothers and their wives, living in a single compound, gather for an evening of socializing. One woman strums the taṁbūra, another plays the vīṇā, as others ślap in approval. Joint families give support and rich relationships.*



## How Are Marital Problems Reconciled?

### ŚLOKA 80

When problems arise in marriage, Hindus study the scriptures and seek advice of family, elders and spiritual leaders. A good marriage requires that the husband be masculine and the wife feminine. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Success in marriage depends on learning to discuss problems with each other freely and constructively. Criticizing one another, even mentally, must be strictly avoided, for that erodes a marriage most quickly. Under no circumstance should a husband hit or abuse his wife, nor should a wife dominate or torment her husband. It is important to not be jealous or overly protective, but to have trust in one another and live up to that trust. Problems should be resolved daily before sleep. If inharmony persists, advice of elders should be sought. A reading and reaffirmation of original marriage covenants and an astrological assessment may provide a common point of reference and a foundation for mutual sacrifice and understanding. The husband who does not take the lead is not fulfilling his duty. The wife who takes an aggressive lead in the marriage makes her husband weak. She must be shy to make him bold. Couples keep a healthy attitude toward sex, never offering it as reward or withholding it as punishment. The *Vedas* say, “Be courteous, planning and working in harness together. Approach, conversing pleasantly, like-minded, united.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A swāmī sits in his monastery, holding a daṇḍa, symbol of renunciation, holy texts near his wooden platform. A young couple approach to share their spousal challenges. The wife reads from their marriage vows as they invite the swāmī’s counsel.*

May the Provident One lead you, holding your hand! May the two Aśvins transport you on their chariot! Enter your house as that household's mistress. May authority in speech ever be yours! Signs of good fortune attend the bride. Congregate, one and all, to see her! Wish her joy and return to your homes.

*Rig Veda* 10.85.26 & 33. VE, 255-256

We offer praise to the Friend, the kindly marriage arranger. Like one who plucks a cucumber, I release you from here, not from yonder. Love, children, happiness and wealth will come to answer your hopes. Devoted to your husband's needs, be girded for immortality!

*Atharva Veda* 14.1.17 & 42. VE, 259

Here do I fix my dwelling. May it stand firm, flowing with melted butter! May we approach you, O House, with all our people, sound in heart and limb. Here do you stand, firm dwelling, rich in horses and cattle, pleasantly resounding, wealthy in food abundant, *ghee* and milk. Stand erect for great good fortune!

*Atharva Veda* 3.12.1-2. VE, 288-289

May Prajāpati grant to us an issue, Aryaman keep us till death in holy marriage! Free from ill omens, enter the home of your husband. Bring blessing to both humans and cattle. Not evil-eyed nor harmful to your husband, kind to dumb beasts, radiant, gentle-hearted, pleasing, beloved by the Gods, bring forth heroes. To menfolk and beasts alike bring blessing. Bless now this bride, O bounteous Lord, cheering her heart with the gift of brave sons. Grant her ten sons; her husband to make the eleventh.

*Rig Veda* 10.85.43-44. VE, 257

Act like a queen to your husband's father, to your husband's mother likewise, and his sister. To all your husband's brothers be queen.

*Rig Veda* 10.85.46. VE, 257

I hold your heart in serving fellowship; your mind follows my mind. In my word you rejoice with all your heart. You are joined to me by the Lord of all creatures. You are firm and I see you. Be firm with me, O flourishing one! Bṛihaspati has given you to me, so live with me a hundred years bearing children by me, your husband.

*Pāraskara Gṛiyha Sūtra* 1.8.8; 19. VE, 263-264

The Lord brings us riches, food in daily abundance, renown and heroes to gladden our hearts. So, like a father to his sons, be to us easy of entreaty. Stay with us, O Lord, for our joy. *Rig Veda* 1.1.3 & 9. VE, 329

May our minds move in accord. May our thinking be in harmony—common the purpose and common the desire. May our prayers and worship be alike, and may our devotional offerings be one and the same. *Rig Veda* 10.191.3. RVP, 4739

With seven steps we become friends. Let me reach your friendship. Let me not be severed from your friendship. Let your friendship not be severed from me. *Hiranyakeśi Grihya Sūtra* 1.6.21.2.; VE, 263

The gift of a daughter, after decking her with costly garments and honoring her by presents of jewels, to a man learned in the *Veda* and of good conduct whom the father himself invites, is called the Brāhma rite. *Manu Dharma Śāstras* 3.27. LM, 80

Endowed with the qualities of beauty and goodness, possessing wealth and fame, obtaining as many enjoyments as they desire and being most righteous, they will live a hundred years. *Manu Dharma Śāstras* 3.40. LM, 82

Women must be honored and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, who desire their own welfare. Where women are honored, there the Gods are pleased. But where they are not honored, no sacred rite yields rewards.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras* 3.55-56. LM, 85

The foremost duty of family life is to serve duly these five: God, guests, kindred, ancestors and oneself. When family life possesses love and virtue, it has found both its essence and fruition. *Tirukural* 43; 45. ww

Father and mother are Śiva. Dear brothers and sisters are Śiva. Matchless wife is Śiva. Precious children are Śiva. Rulers and kings are Śiva. All the Gods are Siva. The whole universe is Śiva.

*Natchintanai*, "All Is Śiva" NT, 237





## Apatyam अपत्यम्



## Children

O Lord of the home, best finder of riches for  
our children are you. Grant to us splendor  
and strength, O Master of our home.

*Sukla Yajur Veda 3.39. VE, 343*



## What Is the Fulfillment of a Marriage?

### ŚLOKA 81

**Children are the greatest source of happiness in marriage. Householder life is made rich and complete when sons and daughters are born, at which time the marriage becomes a family and a new generation begins. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

The total fulfillment of the *grihastha dharma* is children. Marriage remains incomplete until the first child is born or adopted. The birth of the first child cements the family together. At the birth itself, the community of guardian *devas* of the husband, wife and child are eminently present. Their collective vibration showers blessings upon the home, making of it a full place, a warm place. It is the duty of the husband and wife to become father and mother. This process begins prior to conception with prayer, meditation and a conscious desire to bring a high soul into human birth and continues with providing the best possible conditions for its upbringing. Raising several children rewards the parents and their offspring as well. Large families are more cohesive, more stable, and are encouraged within the limits of the family's ability to care for them. Parents, along with all members of the extended family, are responsible to nurture the future generation through childhood into puberty and adulthood. The *Vedas* exclaim, "Blessed with sons and daughters, may they enjoy their full extent of life, decked with ornaments of gold." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A proud father, his wife at his side, holds their dear son. It is the child's birthday. Sacralizing the event, a paṇḍita chants from the Vedas. An uncle showers the family with flowers, celebrating the moment and acknowledging the joy shared by all.*



## What Are the Main Duties of Parents?

### ŚLOKA 82

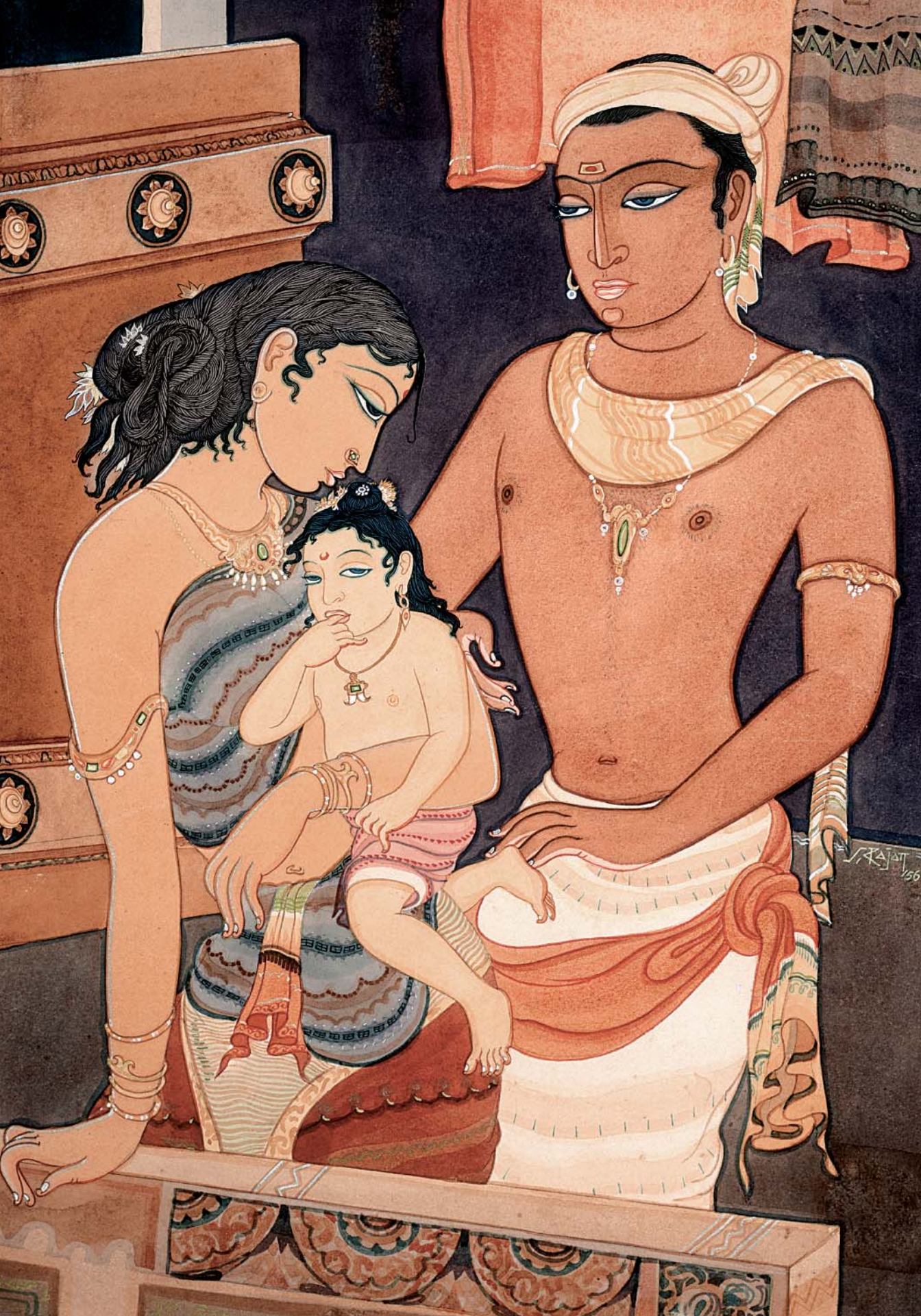
The fundamental duty of parents is to provide food, shelter and clothing and to keep their children safe and healthy. The secondary duty is to bestow education, including instruction in morality and religious life. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Assuring the health and well-being of their offspring is the most essential duty of parents to their children, never to be neglected. Beyond this, parents should provide a good example to their children, being certain that they are taught the Hindu religious heritage and culture along with good values, ethics, strength of character and discipline. Sons and daughters should worship regularly at *pūjā* with the parents, and the Hindu sacraments should all be provided. Education in all matters is the duty of the parents, including teaching them frankly about sex, its sacredness and the necessity to remain chaste until marriage. Children must learn to respect and observe civil law and to honor and obey their elders. Parents must love their children dearly, and teach them to love. The best way to teach is by example: by their own life, parents teach their children how to live. The *Vedas* declare, “Of one heart and mind I make you, devoid of hate. Love one another as a cow loves the calf she has borne. Let the son be courteous to his father, of one mind with his mother. Let the wife speak words that are gentle and sweet to her husband.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*Mother prepares dinner for her children and husband. Two sisters and a brother play a game, taking a break from their schoolwork. As the repository of culture and religion, the wise family brings Śiva's presence into their home and daily activities.*



## How Strictly Must Children Be Guided?

### ŚLOKA 83

Parents should be most diligent in guiding their children toward virtue, protecting them from all bad company and influences, being strict yet never harsh or mean, allowing them prudent freedom in which to grow. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Children are constantly learning, and that learning must be guided carefully by the parents. The young's education, recreation and companions must be supervised. They should be taught the scriptures of their lineage. Their religious education is almost always in the hands of the parents. They should be disciplined to study hard, and challenged to excel and fulfill their natural talents. They should be praised and rewarded for their accomplishments. Children need and seek guidance, and only the parents can truly provide it. In general, it is the mother who provides love and encouragement, while the father corrects and disciplines. A child's faults if not corrected will be carried into adult life. Still, care should be taken to not be overly restrictive either. Children should never be struck, beaten, abused or ruled through a sense of fear. Children, be they young or old, have a *karma* and a *dharma* of their own. Their parents have a debt to pay them; and they have a debt to return later in life. The *Vedas* plead, "O friend of men, protect my children. O adorable one, protect my cattle. O sword of flame, protect my nourishment." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Parents affectionately nurture their daughter in the family compound. Mother gently kisses her head, while father caresses her back and playfully tickles her foot. The child, happy and secure, will develop wholesomely under such protective guidance.*





## Should All Youths Be Urged to Marry?

### ŚLOKA 84

All but the rare few inclined to monastic life should be encouraged to marry and schooled in the skills they will need to fulfill *dharma*. Young boys destined to be monastics should be raised as their *satguru's* progeny. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Traditionally, boys with monastic tendencies are encouraged and provided special training under their *satguru's* direction. It is considered a great blessing for the family to have a son become a monastic and later a *swāmī*. Generally, children should be taught to follow and prepare themselves for the household-er path. Most boys will choose married life, and should be schooled in professional, technical skills. Girls are taught the refinements of household culture. Both girls and boys should be trained in the sacred Vedic arts and sciences, including the sixty-four crafts and social skills, called *kalās*. Boys benefit greatly when taught the profession of their father from a very young age. The mother is the role model for her daughters, whom she raises as the mothers of future families. Sons and daughters who are gay may not benefit from marriage, and should be taught to remain loyal in relationships and be prepared to cope with community challenges. The *Vedas* pray, “May you, O love divine, flow for the acquisition of food of wisdom and for the prosperity of the enlightened person who praises you; may you grant him excellent progeny.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A young woman has called a jeweler to her parent's home to make selections for her wedding: tali, necklaces, bracelets, pendants, rings and ornaments of various kinds. Her sisters chaperone, for they would never leave one another alone with a man.*



## How Is Family Harmony Maintained?

### ŚLOKA 85

**In the Hindu family, mutual respect, love and understanding are the bedrock of harmony. By not fighting, arguing or criticizing, members cultivate a spiritual environment in which all may progress. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.**

### BHĀSHYA

For a harmonious joint family, it is vital to make the home strong, the center of activity and creativity, kept beautiful and clean, a sanctuary for each member. While striving to increase wealth, the wise families live within their means, content with what they have. Activities are planned to bring the family close through shared experiences. A gentle but firm hierarchy of respect for elders is maintained throughout the family. In general, the younger, in humility, defers to the elder, allowing him or her the last word. The elder is equally obliged to not misuse authority. Older children are responsible for the safety and care of their younger brothers and sisters. Disputes among children are settled by their mother, but not kept a secret from the father. Actual discipline in the case of misconduct is carried out by the father. When disputes arise in the extended family, responsibility for restoring harmony falls first to the men. However, any concerned member can take the lead if necessary. The *Vedas* say of *grihastha* life, “I will utter a prayer for such concord among family members as binds together the Gods, among whom is no hatred.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A family gathers in the compound of their simple thatched home, which displays a swastika, sign of auspiciousness, above the door. The husband composes a musical piece which wife and daughter play, one on the vīṇā and the other on the drum.*

I am inclined to adore you, the two sages, the ministrants at the places of work and worship of men, from whom all the prosperity is derived. May you raise our offspring to a higher stature and help us to acquire precious treasures preserved amongst nature's bounties, when the worship is being conducted.

*Rig Veda* 7.2.7. RVP, 2355

I know not how to stretch the threads or weave or discern the pattern of those who weave in the contest. Whose son will be the one to speak so well as to surpass, advancing from below, his father?

*Rig Veda* 6.9.2. VE, 331-332

Keen of mind and keen of sight, free from sickness, free from sin, rich in children, may we see you rise as a friend, O Sun, till a long life's end!

*Rig Veda* 10.37.7. VE, 319

Never may brother hate brother or sister hurt sister. United in heart and in purpose, commune sweetly together.

*Atharva Veda* 3.30.3. VE, 857

To you, O Lord, the Priest, beloved of all men, we bring our praise with reverence. Keep watch over our children and ourselves, we pray. Guard both our lives and our cattle.

*Atharva Veda* 3.15.7. VE, 295

Let there be no neglect of the duties to the Gods and the fathers. Be one to whom the mother is a God. Be one to whom the father is a God. Be one to whom the teacher is a God. Be one to whom the guest is a God.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Upanishad* 1.11.1-2. UPR, 537-8

If he should desire, "Let me be born here again," in whatever family he directs his attention, either the family of a *brāhmin* or the family of a king, into that he will be born.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa Upanishad* 3.28.3-4. VO, 115

By honoring his mother he gains this world, by honoring his father the middle sphere; but by obedience to his teacher, the world of Brahman. All duties have been fulfilled by him who honors those three.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras* 2.232-3. LM, 72

“Sweet are the sounds of the flute and the lute,” say those who have not heard the prattle of their own children. *Tirukural 66. ww*

A father benefits his son best by preparing him to sit at the forefront of learned councils. The son’s duty to his father is to make the world ask, “By what great austerities did he merit such a son?”

*Tirukural 67, 70. ww*

Of all blessings we know of none greater than the begetting of children endowed with intelligence. What pleasure it is to human beings everywhere when their children possess knowledge surpassing their own!

*Tirukural 61, 68. ww*

Study well. Be obedient. Hear and follow the advice of your father, mother, brothers and sisters, and your aunt and uncle. You alone always set a good example in obedience.

*Natchintanai, Letter 10. NT, 22*

Meditate, meditate, on God’s name in five letters. Eagerly come forward to serve Sivathondan. Grow and grow, the path of *tapas* ne’er leaving. Live in concord with parents and other relations. Conquer, conquer the wayward mind little by little. Offer your worship to the feet of Gurunathan. Abandon, abandon sin with contrition. Have love and affection for all. Moderately, moderately eat for your sustenance. Take pains at all time to assimilate knowledge. In your youth, in your youth, learn the arts and the sciences. To the mean and the miserly be not attached. Foster, foster the friendship of well-nurtured people. Live in happiness, saying you are lacking nothing. Look after, look after your brothers and kinsfolk. Inwardly and outwardly let your life be the same. Be firm, be firm in grace—yourself quite forgetting. Annihilate ego, forbidding doubt to arise. Then speak and speak of the greatness of the *guru*.

*Natchintanai, “Our Duty” NT, 178*

Blessing and joy to our mother and father! Joy to cattle, to beasts, and to men! May all well-being and graces be ours! Long may we see the sun! May the wind blow us joy, may the sun shine down joy on us.

*Atharva Veda 7.69.6.4-5. VE 302*



Maṅgala Kriyā  
मंगलक्रिया



UPANISHAD SEVEN  
**Sacred Culture**





## Bodhi Tantraḥ बोधितन्त्रः



## Ways of Wisdom

Perform noble deeds, good *karma* to shape.  
Praise the Holy One, the Holy Land to reach.  
This is the law we need, this is the law for men,  
who, blessed with earthly life, seek the life eternal.

*Tirumantiram* 195. TM



## How Do We Overcome Life's Obstacles?

### ŚLOKA 86

Just as a small leaf can obscure the sun when held before our eyes, so can the past cloud the present and hide our divinity. With Vedic methods, or *tantras*, we remove impediments to reveal the ever-present inner light. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

An ancient *Upanishad* defines twenty obstacles, *upasarga*, to spiritual progress: hunger, thirst, laziness, passion, lust, fear, shame, anxiety, excitement, adversity, sorrow, despair, anger, arrogance, delusion, greed, stinginess, ambitiousness, death and birth. Another obstacle is the intellect which, unguided by intuition, merely juggles memory and reason as a way of life. The experience of these impediments creates reactions that combine with the sum of all past impressions, *samskāras*, both positive and negative. Residing in the subconscious mind, these are the source of subliminal traits or tendencies, called *vāsanās*, which shape our attitudes and motivations. The troublesome *vāsanās* clouding the mind must be reconciled and released. There are beneficial *tantras* by which absolution can be attained for unhindered living, including *āyurveda*, *jyotisha*, daily *sādhana*, temple worship, selfless giving, the creative arts and the several *yogas*. The *Vedas* explain, “Even as a mirror covered with dust shines brightly when cleaned, so the embodied soul, seeing the truth of *ātman*, realizes oneness, attains the goal of life and becomes free from sorrow.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Mythologically, Lord Skanda was born to protect the world. With peacock and fighting rooster in support, He confronts the demon Surapadma with His vel, then hurls His vajra, lightning bolt. We, too, must bravely face adversities on our path.*



## What Are the Hindu's Daily Yoga Practices?

### ŚLOKA 87

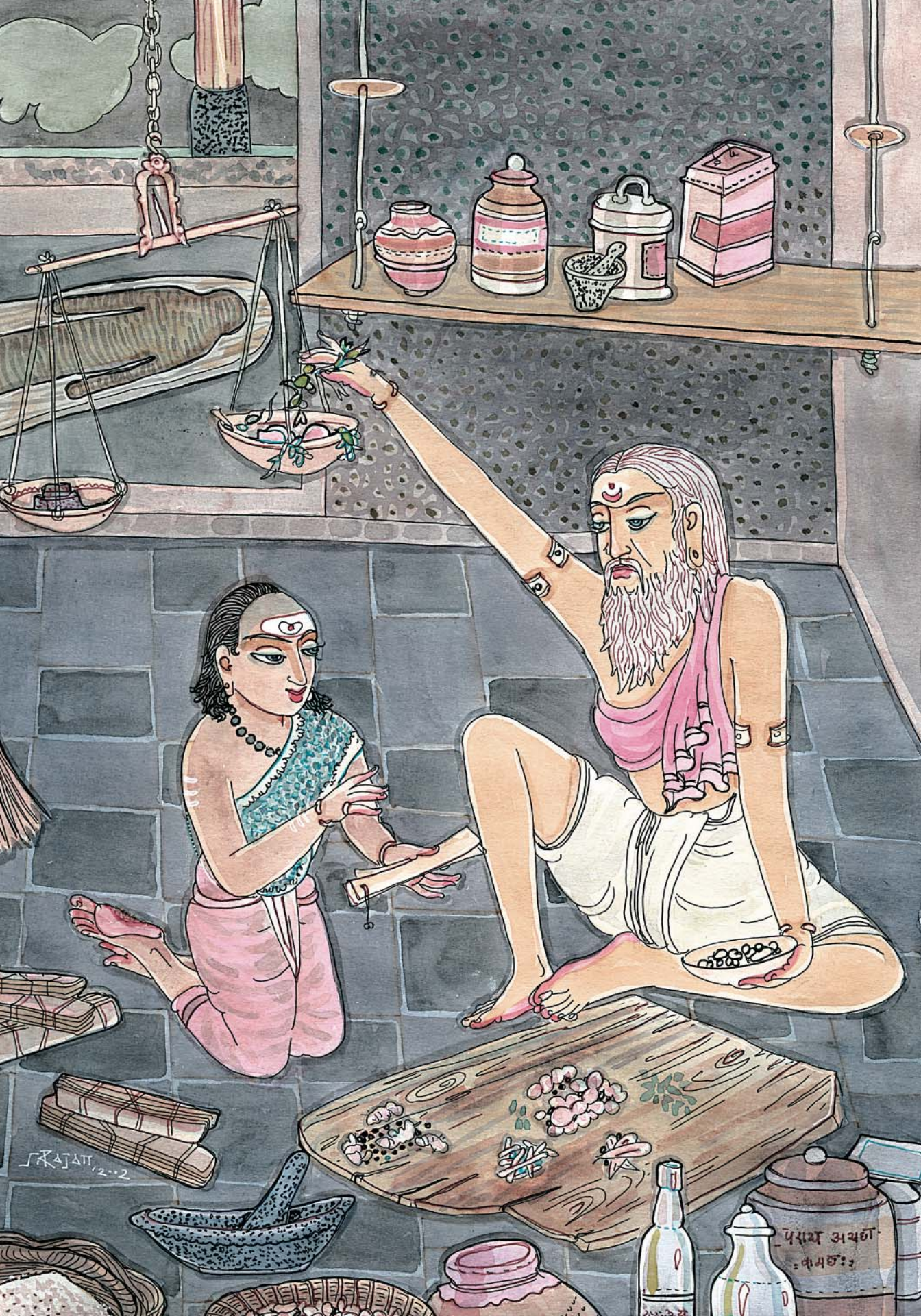
Devout Hindus perform daily vigil, called *sandhyā upāsanā*, usually before dawn. This sacred period of *pūjā*, *japa*, chanting, singing, *haṭha yoga*, meditation and scriptural study is the foundation of personal life. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Each day hundreds of millions of Hindus awaken for the last fifth of the night, bathe, don fresh clothing, apply sectarian marks, called *tilaka*, and sit in a clean, quiet place for religious disciplines. Facing east or north, the devotional *pūjā* rites of *bhakti yoga* are performed. *Haṭha yoga*, hymn singing, *japa* and chanting are often included. Then follows scriptural study and meditation, listening to the sound current and contemplating the moonlike inner light during *brāhma muhūrta*, the auspicious hour-and-a-half period before dawn. The duly initiated practice advanced *yogas*, such as those revealed in *Merging with Śiva*—but only as directed by their *guru*, knowing that unless firmly harnessed, the *kuṇḍalinī* can manifest uncontrollable desires. Through the day, *karma yoga*, selfless religious service, is performed at every opportunity. Besides these *yogas* of doing, Hindus practice the central *yoga* of being—living a joyful, positive, harmonious life. The *Vedas* declare, “The mind, indeed, is this fleeting world. Therefore, it should be purified with great effort. One becomes like that which is in one’s mind—this is the everlasting secret.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A priest performs the daily pre-dawn ablution of the Śivaliṅga in a temple sanctum lit by a ghee lamp and decorated with Deities and animals on the wall. Having removed his upper garment in respect, he pours fresh milk on the holy, aniconic stone.*



KJAT, 2002

पुस्तक अर्थात्  
- कृपया -

## How Are Āyurveda and Jyotisha Used?

### ŚLOKA 88

**Āyurveda** is the Hindu science of life, a complete, holistic medical system. **Jyotisha**, or Vedic astrology, is the knowledge of right timing and future potentialities. Both are vital tools for happy, productive living. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Āyurveda*, rooted in the *Atharva Upaveda*, deals with both the prevention and cure of disease. Its eight medical arts, with their *mantras*, *tantras* and *yogas*, are based on spiritual well-being and encompass every human need, physical, mental and emotional. *Āyurveda* teaches that the true healing powers reside in the mind at the quantum level. Wellness depends on the correct balance of three bodily humors, called *doshas*, maintained by a nutritious vegetarian diet, *dharmic* living and natural healing remedies. The kindred science of Vedic astrology, revealed in the *Jyotisha Vedāṅga*, likewise is vital to every Hindu's life. It propounds a dynamic cosmos of which we are an integral part, and charts the complex influence on us of important stars and planets, according to our birth chart. Knowing that the stars enliven positive and negative *karmas* we have brought into this life, in wisdom we choose an auspicious time, *śubha muhūrta*, for every important event. An orthodox Hindu family is not complete without its *jyotisha śāstrī* or *āyurveda vaidya*. The *Vedas* beseech, "Peaceful for us be the planets and the Moon, peaceful the Sun and Rāhu." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Surrounded by jars of healing botanicals, an āyurvedic doctor gathers and prepares numerous herbs and roots on a wooden tray. As he weighs one herb, his apprentice reads an ancient Sanskrit text giving exact proportions for the concoction.*





## How Do Hindus Regard Art and Culture?

### ŚLOKA 89

Hindus of every sect cherish art and culture as sacred. Music, art, drama and the dance are expressions of spiritual experience established in *śāstras* by God-inspired *rishis* as an integral flowering of temple worship. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Art and culture, from the Hindu perspective, are the sublime fruits of a profound civilization. Every Hindu strives to perfect an art or craft to manifest creative benefits for family and community. The home is a spiritual extension of the temple. Graced with the sounds of Indian sacred music, it is adorned with religious pictures, symbols and icons. The shrine is the most lavish room. Children are raised to appreciate Hindu art, music and culture, carefully trained in the sixty-four *kalās* and protected from alien influences. Human relationships are kept harmonious and uplifting through the attitudes, customs and refinements of Asian protocol, as revealed in *Living with Śiva*. Hindu attire is elegantly modest. Sectarian marks, called *tilaka*, are worn on the brow as emblems of sectarian identity. *Mantra* and prayer sanctify even simple daily acts—awakening, bathing, greetings, meals, meetings, outings, daily tasks and sleep. Annual festivals and pilgrimage offer a complete departure from worldly concerns. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Let the drum sound forth and let the lute resound, let the strings vibrate the exalted prayer to God.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Hindu temples are centers of learning and culture as well as worship. Here, undeterred by tropical rains, musicians perform on a platform. The leader sings with animated devotion, accompanied by a taṃbūra, a bamboo flute and mṛidaṅga.*



## What Is the Hindu Outlook on Giving?

### ŚLOKA 90

Generous, selfless giving is among *dharma's* central fulfillments. Hospitality, charity and support of God's work on Earth arises from the belief that the underlying purpose of life is spiritual, not material. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Nowhere is giving better unfolded than in the ancient *Tirukural*, which says, "Of all duties, benevolence is unequalled in this world, and even in celestial realms. It is to meet the needs of the deserving that the worthy labor arduously to acquire wealth." Even the poorest Hindu practices charity according to his means. In this unselfish tradition, guests are treated as God. Friends, acquaintances, even strangers, are humbled by the overwhelming hospitality received. We share with the less fortunate. We care for the aged. We honor *swāmīs* with gifts of food, money and clothes. We encourage the spirit of helping and giving, called *dāna*, within the family, between families and their monastic and priestly communities. Many devout Hindus take the *daśama bhāga vrata*, a vow to pay ten percent of their income each month to an institution of their choice to perpetuate Sanātana Dharma. This centuries-old tithing practice is called *daśamāṁśa*. The *Vedas* wisely warn, "The powerful man should give to one in straits; let him consider the road that lies ahead! Riches revolve just like a chariot's wheels, coming to one man now, then to another." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Two tattered sādhus approach the home of a weaver, Nesan of Kampili, whose day's work is being dried and folded. Though poor himself, Nesan brings newly made vesṭi cloth for the holy men. It is said he attained Śiva's feet by his selfless giving.*

May the Goddess of culture, associated with the models of other cultures, may the Goddess of wisdom in company with men, ordinary and intellectual, may the fire divine, and may the Goddess of divine speech with masters of language come to bless us and enshrine our hearts.

*Rig Veda* 7.2.8. RVP, 2355

In vain the foolish man accumulates food. I tell you, truly, it will be his downfall! He gathers to himself neither friend nor comrade. Alone he eats; alone he sits in sin. The ploughshare cleaving the soil helps satisfy hunger. The traveler, using his legs, achieves his goal. The priest who speaks surpasses the one who is silent. The friend who gives is better than the miser.

*Rig Veda* 10.117. 6-7. VE, 851

*Śilpani*, works of art of man, are an imitation of divine forms. By employing their rhythms, a metrical reconstitution is effected of the limited human personality.

*Rig Veda, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 6.5.27. EI, 60

There are five great sacrifices, namely, the great ritual services: the sacrifice to all beings, sacrifice to men, sacrifice to the ancestors, sacrifice to the Gods, sacrifice to Brahman.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.5.6.1. VE, 394

Find a quiet retreat for the practice of *yoga*, sheltered from the wind, level and clean, free from rubbish, smoldering fires and ugliness, and where the sound of waters and the beauty of the place help thought and contemplation.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 2.10. UPM, 88

Lightness, healthiness, steadiness, clearness of complexion, pleasantness of voice, sweetness of odor, and slight excretions—these, they say, are the first results of the progress of *yoga*.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 2.13. UPR, 723

*Vāsanā* is divided into two, the pure and the impure. If thou art led by the pure *vāsanās*, thou shalt thereby soon reach by degrees My Seat. But should the old, impure *vāsanās* land thee in danger, they should be overcome through efforts.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Mukti Upanishad* 2. UPA, 7

Gracious be the constellations struck by the meteor, gracious incantations and all magic! Gracious to us be buried charms, the meteors and plagues that afflict us. Gracious to us be the stars and the moon, gracious the sun and Rāhu, gracious be Death with his banner of smoke, gracious the powerful Rudras. *Atharva Veda* 19,9.9-10. VE, 305-306

Works of sacrifice, gift and self-harmony should not be abandoned, but should indeed be performed, for these are works of purification. But even these works, Arjuna, should be done in the freedom of a pure offering, and without expectation of a reward. This is My final word.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 18.5-6. BGM, 115

Easy for all to offer in worship a green leaf to the Lord. Easy for all to give a mouthful to the cow. Easy for all to give a handful when sitting down to eat. Easy for all to speak pleasant words to others.

*Tirumantiram* 252. TM

So let my star be the sun or the moon, Mars or Mercury or Jupiter; let it be Venus or Saturn or the two snakes! All the planets and stars are good stars for us, all bring good luck to Śiva's devotees!

*Tirumurai* 2.221.1. PS, 109

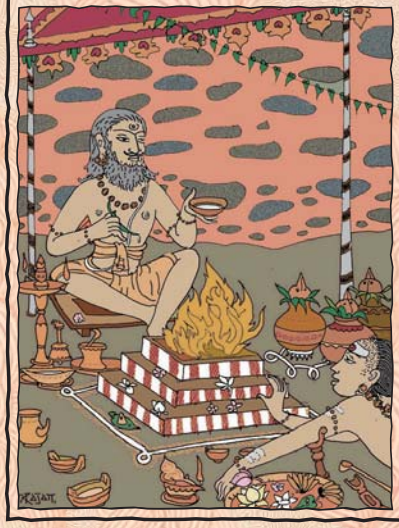
Plough with truth. Plant the seed of desire for knowledge. Weed out falsehood. Irrigate the mind with the water of patience. Supervise your work by introspection and self-analysis. Build the fence of *yama* and *niyama*, or right conduct and right rules. You will soon attain Śivānanda, or eternal bliss of Śiva.

*Tirumurai (Appar)*. SW, 191

Moderately, moderately eat for your sustenance. Take pains at all times to assimilate knowledge. In your youth, learn the arts and the sciences. To the mean and the miserly be not attached. Foster, foster the friendship of well-nurtured people. Live in happiness, saying you are lacking in nothing. Look after, look after your brothers and kinfolk. Inwardly and outwardly let your life be the same. *Natchintanai "Our Duty."* NT, 178



## Saṃskārah संस्काराः



## Sacraments

As days follow days in orderly succession, as seasons  
faithfully succeed one another, so shape the lives of these,  
O Supporter, that the younger may not forsake his elder.

*Rig Veda* 10.18.5. VE, 609





## What Are Hinduism's Rites of Passage?

### ŚLOKA 91

Hindus celebrate life's crucial junctures by holy sacraments, or rites of passage, called *samskāras*, which impress the subconscious mind, inspire family and community sharing and invoke the Gods' blessings. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

For the Hindu, life is a sacred journey in which each milestone, marking major biological and emotional stages, is consecrated through sacred ceremony. Family and friends draw near, lending support, advice and encouragement. Through Vedic rites and *mantras*, family members or priests invoke the Gods for blessings and protection during important turning points, praying for the individual's spiritual and social development. There are many sacraments, from the rite of conception to the funeral ceremony. Each one, properly observed, empowers spiritual life and preserves Hindu culture, as the soul consciously accepts each succeeding discovery and duty in the order of God's creation. The essential *samskāras* are the rites of conception, the three-month blessing, hair-parting, birth, name-giving, head-shaving, first feeding, ear-piercing, first learning, puberty, marriage, elders' vows and last rites. The holy *Vedas* proclaim, "From Him come hymns, songs and sacrificial formulas, initiations, sacrifices, rites and all offerings. From Him come the year, the sacrificer and the worlds in which the Moon shines forth, and the Sun." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Sacred rites of passage mark the changes of life from birth to death. At center a boy studies for his sacred thread ceremony. Clockwise from upper left: first feeding, head-shaving, first learning, cremation rites, preparation for death, and marriage.*



## What Are the Sacraments of Childhood?

### ŚLOKA 92

The essential religious sacraments of childhood are the *nāmakaraṇa*, name-giving; *chūḍākaṛaṇa*, head-shaving; *annaprāśana*, first solid food; *karṇavedha*, ear-piercing; and *vidyārambha*, commencement of formal study. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Samskāras* impress upon a child its holiness and innate possibilities for spiritual advancement. The *nāmakaraṇa* occurs in the temple or home, eleven to forty-one days after birth. The baby's name, astrologically chosen, is whispered in the right ear by the father, marking the formal entry into Hinduism. The head-shaving, *chūḍākaṛaṇa*, is performed at the temple between the thirty-first day and the fourth year. The *annaprāśana* celebrates the child's first solid food, when sweet rice is fed to the baby by the father or the family *guru*. Ear-piercing, *karṇavedha*, held for both girls and boys during the first, third or fifth year, endows the spirit of health and wealth. Girls are adorned with gold earrings, bangles and anklets; boys with two earrings and other gold jewelry. The *vidyārambha* begins formal education, when children write their first letter in a tray of rice. The *upanayana* begins, and the *samāvartana* ends, a youth's religious study. The *Vedas* beseech, "I bend to our cause at this solemn moment, O Gods, your divine and holy attention. May a thousand streams gush forth from this offering, like milk from a bountiful, pasture-fed cow." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*At top a mother offers her son sweet rice, his first solid food, in the annaprāśana home ritual. She is wealthy enough to have her own elephant! Two years later she and her husband hire a professional to pierce the boy's ears as Hanuman looks on.*



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय  
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## What Are the Sacraments of Adulthood?

### ŚLOKA 93

The most important sacrament of adulthood is the *vivāha saṁskāra*, or marriage rite, preceded by a pledge of betrothal. A boy's or girl's coming of age is also consecrated through special ceremony in the home. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

As puberty dawns, the *ṛitu kāla* home-ceremony acknowledges a girl's first menses, and the *keśānta kāla* celebrates a boy's first beard-shaving. New clothing and jewelry fit for royalty are presented to and worn by the youth, who is joyously welcomed into the young adult community. Girls receive their first *sārī*, boys their first razor. Chastity is vowed until marriage. The next sacrament is the betrothal ceremony, called *nīśchitārtha* or *vāgdāna*, in which a man and woman are declared formally engaged by their parents with the exchange of jewelry and other gifts. Based on this commitment, they and their families begin planning a shared future. In the marriage sacrament, or *vivāha*, seven steps before God and Gods and tying the wedding pendant consecrate the union of husband and wife. This sacrament is performed before the *homa* fire in a wedding hall or temple and is occasioned by elaborate celebration. The *Gṛihya Sūtras* pronounce, "One step for strength, two steps for vitality, three steps for prosperity, four steps for happiness, five steps for cattle, six steps for seasons, seven steps for friendship. To me be devoted." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A man and woman marry during the vivāha saṁskāra. A priest chants the Vedas; another pours ghee on the sacred fire. He holds her hand, and they take seven steps around the fire. The Gods behind portend an auspicious, divinely guided life.*



## What Are the Child-Bearing Sacraments?

### ŚLOKA 94

The essential child-bearing *saṁskāras* are the *garbhādhāna*, rite of conception; the *punsavana*, third-month blessing; the *sīmantonṇaya*, hair-parting ceremony; and the *jātakarma*, welcoming the newborn child. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Conception, pregnancy's crucial stages and birth itself are all sanctified through sacred ceremonies performed privately by the husband. In the rite of conception, *garbhādhāna*, physical union is consecrated through prayer, *mantra* and invocation with the conscious purpose of bringing a high soul into physical birth. At the first stirring of life in the womb, in the rite called *punsavana*, special prayers are intoned for the protection and safe development of child and mother. Between the fourth and seventh months, in the *sīmantonṇaya*, or hair-parting sacrament, the husband lovingly combs his wife's hair, whispers sweet words praising her beauty and offers gifts of jewelry to express his affection and support. Through the *jātakarma saṁskāra*, the father welcomes the newborn child into the world, feeding it a taste of honey and clarified butter and praying for its long life, intelligence and well-being. The *Vedas* proclaim, "That in which the prayers, the songs and formulas are fixed firm like spokes in the hub of a cartwheel, in which are interwoven the hearts of all beings—may that spirit be graciously disposed toward me!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A man and woman prepare to conceive a child. In their shrine room, they purify themselves before union, worship together and seek God Śiva within their own and each other's hearts, lifting consciousness so as to attract a high soul into their life.*





## Are There Rites for the Wisdom Years?

### ŚLOKA 95

Entrance into the elder advisor stage at age 48, the marriage renewal at age 60, and the dawn of renunciation at 72 may be signified by ceremony. Funeral rites, *antyeshtī*, solemnize the transition called death. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Hindu society values and protects its senior members, honoring their experience and heeding their wise advice. Age 48 marks the entrance into the *vānaprastha āśrama*, celebrated in some communities by special ceremony. At age 60, husband and wife reaffirm marriage vows in a sacred ablution ceremony called *shashtyābda pūrṭi*. Age 72 marks the advent of withdrawal from society, the *sannyāsa āśrama*, sometimes ritually acknowledged but never confused with *sannyāsa dīkshā*. The *antyeshtī*, or funeral ceremony, is a home sacrament performed by the family, assisted by a priest. Rites include guiding the individual's transition into the higher planes, preparing the body, cremation, bone-gathering, dispersal of ashes, home purification and commemorative ceremonies, *śrāddha*, one week, one month and one year from the day of death, and sometimes longer, according to local custom. Through the *antyeshtī*, the soul is released to the holy feet of Śiva. The *Vedas* counsel, "Attain your prime; then welcome old age, striving by turns in the contest of life. May the Ordainer, maker of good things, be pleased to grant you length of days." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A feeble elder, supported on the shoulders of two granddaughters, approaches a nobleman. Not there to seek aid, he has been called forth to an important council where his hard-earned wisdom will be respectfully sought and his advice followed.*

When a man is born, whoever he may be, there is born simultaneously a debt to the Gods, to the sages, to the ancestors and to men. When he performs sacrifice it is the debt to the Gods which is concerned. It is on their behalf, therefore, that he is taking action when he sacrifices or makes an oblation. And when he recites the *Vedas* it is the debt to the sages which is concerned. It is on their behalf, therefore, that he is taking action, for it is said of one who has recited the *Vedas* that he is the guardian of the treasure store of the sages. And when he desires offspring, it is the debt to the ancestors which is concerned. It is on their behalf, therefore, that he is taking action, so that their offspring may continue without interruption. And when he entertains guests, it is the debt to man which is concerned. It is on their behalf, therefore, that he is taking action if he entertains guests and gives them food and drink. The man who does all these things has performed a true work; he has obtained all, conquered all.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.7.2.1-5. VE, 393

With holy rites prescribed by the *Veda* must the ceremony on conception and other sacraments be performed for twice-born men, which sanctify the body and purify in this life and after death.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras* 2.26. LM, 33

Let the father perform or cause to be performed the *nāmadheya*, the rite of naming the child, on the tenth or twelfth day after birth, or on a lucky lunar day, in a lucky *muhūrta* under an auspicious constellation. The names of women should be easy to pronounce, not imply anything dreadful, possess a plain meaning, be pleasing and auspicious, end in long vowels and contain a word of benediction.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras* 2.30; 33. LM, 35

When the son is one year old, the *chūḍākaraṇa*, the tonsure of his head, should be performed, or before the lapse of the third year. When he is sixteen years old, the *keśānta*, the shaving of his beard, is to be done, or according as it is considered auspicious by all.

*Pāraskara Griya Sūtra* 2.1.1-4. GS, VOL. 29, 301

Life universal shall guard and surround you. May Pūshan protect and precede you on the way! May Sāvitrī, the God, to that place lead you where go and dwell the doers of good deeds!

*Rig Veda* 10.17.4. VE, 608

I take thy hand in mine for happy fortune that thou may reach old age with me, thy husband. “This woman, strewing grains, prays thus, ‘May I bring bliss to my relations. May my husband live long. Svāhā!’”

*Rig Veda* 10.85.36. RVG, VOL. 2, 544 & *Sāṅkhāyana Gṛīya Sūtra* 1.14.1. SB, VOL. 29, P. 37

That the father and mother give birth to him from mutual desire, so that he is born from the womb; let this be known as his physical birth. But that birth which is given, according to the ordinance, through the Sāvitrī, by the preceptor who has mastered the *Vedas*, that is the true birth, the unaging and immortal.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras* 2.147-8. SD, 156

After completing the life of a student, let a man become a householder. After completing the life of a householder, let him become a forest dweller, let him renounce all things. Or he may renounce all things directly from the student state or from the householder’s state, as well as from that of the forest dweller.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Jābāla Upanishad* 4. VE, 440

Having reached the last order of life, one should sit in a solitary place in a relaxed posture, with pure heart, with head, neck and body straight, controlling all the sense organs, having bowed with devotion to the master.

*Atharva Veda, Kaivalya Upanishad* 5. VE, 442

Having studied the *Vedas* in accordance with the rule, having begat sons according to the sacred law and having offered sacrifices according to his ability, he may direct his mind to final liberation.

*Manu Dharma Śāstras* 6.36. LM, 205

Knowingly or even unknowingly, intentionally or even unintentionally, a mortal, having gone to death in the Gaṅgā, obtains heaven and *moksha*.

*Pādma Purāṇa, Śṛishṭi*, 60.65. HE, 105

The boy grows to youth and youth as surely to old age decays. But time’s changes teach them not that nothing abides. He pervades this Earth and the space beyond. I long for His feet and desire there to remain.

*Tirumantiram* 181. TM



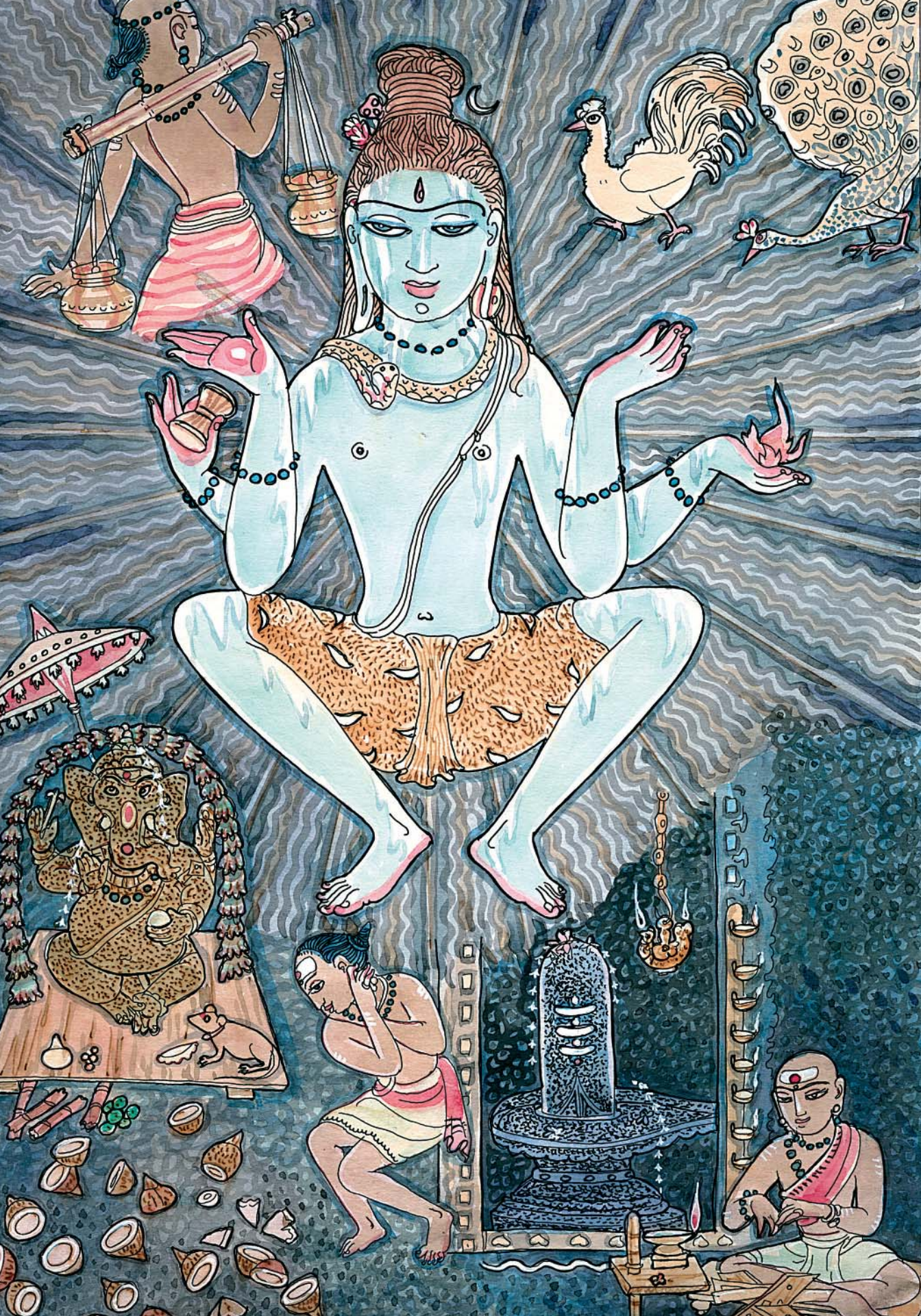
Utsavāḥ  
उत्सवाः



## Festivals

Praise our Lord in devotion congregational. Sing His  
praise within, and His feet adore. Dance within and know  
Him. Then He yearns after you, like the cow after its calf.

*Tirumantiram 2109. TM*



## What Are the Festival Days of Śaivism?

### ŚLOKA 96

Festivals are special times of communion with God and Gods, of family and community sharing and *sādhana*. Śaivites observe numerous festivals in the temple and the home, and special holy days each week and month. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Monday is the Hindu holy day in the North of India, and Friday in the South, set aside each week for attending the temple, cleaning and decorating the home shrine, devout prayer, *japa* and scriptural study. These are not days of rest, for we carry on our usual work. Among the major Deity festivals are Mahāśivarātri, Vaikāsi Viśākhā, Gaṇeśa Chaturthī, Skanda Shashṭhī, Kṛittikā Dipam, Vināyaka Vratam, Ārdra Darśanam and Tai Pusa. Temples also hold a ten-day annual festival called Brahmotsava, often on the Uttarāphalgunī *nakshatra* in March-April, as well as honor the anniversary day of their founding. Festivals are auspicious and sacred days of family and community togetherness, and of *sādhana*, fasting, meditation, worship and retreat from worldly concerns. Śaivites offer special prayers to Śiva, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya on propitious days each month according to the Hindu sacred calendar. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Behold now a man who unwinds and sets the thread, a man who unwinds it right up to the vault of heaven. Here are the pegs; they are fastened to the place of worship. The *Sāma Veda* hymns are used for weaving shuttles.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord Śiva radiates love at three popular festivals: upper left, a devotee carries kavadi at Skanda Shashṭhī as Muruga’s peacock and rooster look on; another observes all-night Śivarātri vigil; a third breaks coconuts during Gaṇeśa Chaturthī.*





## What Are the Primary Festivals to Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 97

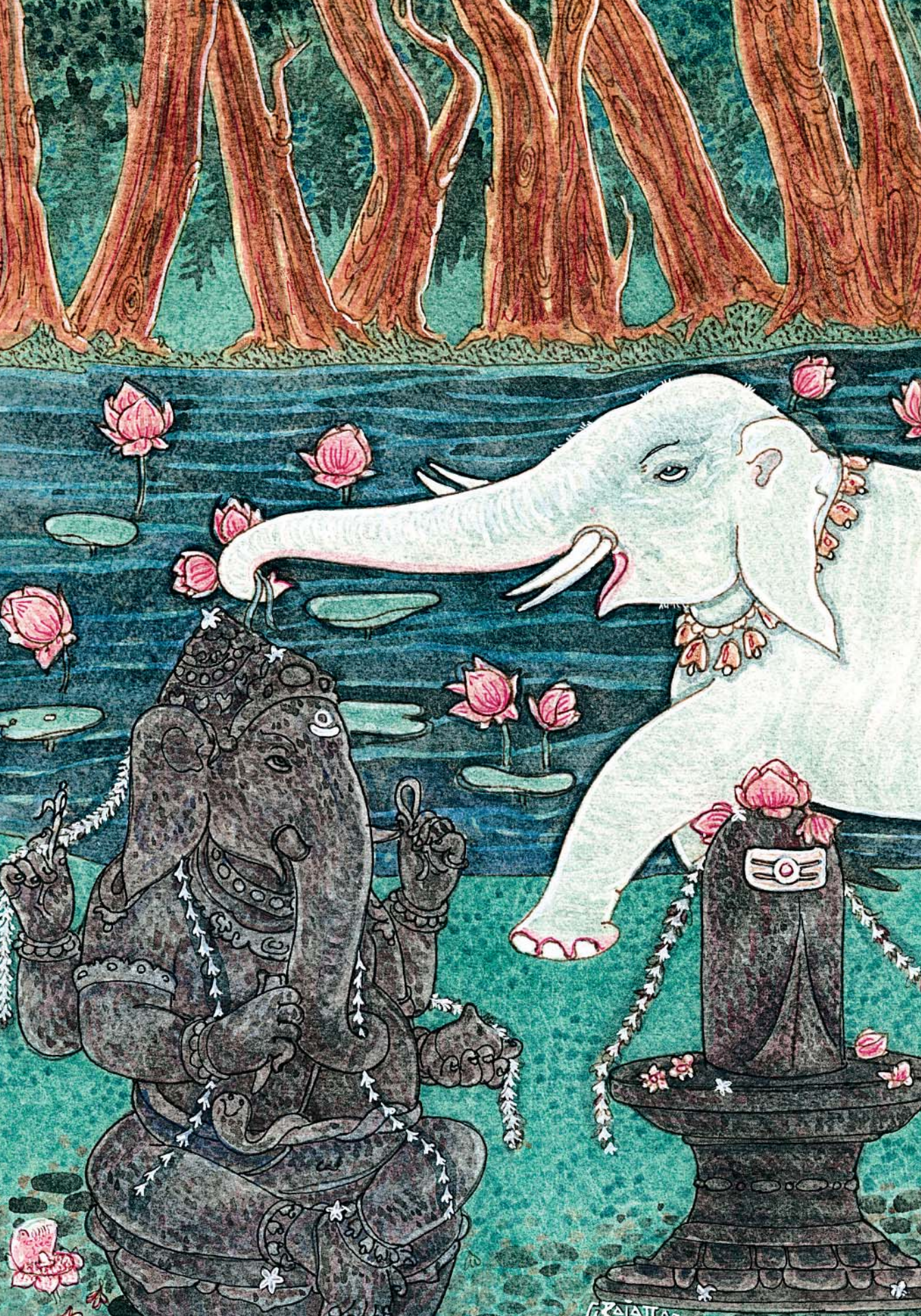
**Mahāśivarātri, Śiva's great night, venerates Paraśiva. Kṛittikā Dīpam celebrates the infinite light of Parāśakti. Ārdṛā Darśanam invokes the blessings of Parameśvara— Lord Śiva Naṭarāja in His blissful Cosmic Dance. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Mahāśivarātri is the night before the new-moon day in February-March. We observe it both as a discipline and a festivity, keeping a strict fast and all-night vigil, meditating, intoning Śiva's 1,008 names, singing His praise, chanting Śrī Rudram, bathing the Śivaliṅga and being near the *vairāgīs* as they strive to realize Paraśiva. On Kṛittikā Dīpam, the Kṛittikā *nakshatra* in November-December, we honor—with oil lamps everywhere, village bonfires and special temple *āratī*—God Śiva as an infinite pillar of light. This is an important festival in Murugan temples. On Ārdṛā Darśanam, during the Ārdṛā *nakshatra* of December-January, Lord Naṭarāja receives elaborate *abhisheka* and is beseeched for *yogic* union, prosperity and matrimonial success. He is again lavishly invoked on the Uttarāphalgunī *nakshatra* in June-July and on four other days each year. Special monthly days for Śiva worship are the two 13th *tithis*, called *pradosha*. The *Vedas* proclaim, “The Lord, God, all-pervading and omnipresent, dwells in the heart of all beings. Full of grace, He ultimately gives liberation to all creatures by turning their faces toward Himself.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*During Śivarātri, a devotee grows doubtful if he can keep his vow not to sleep or eat on this holy night. A friend offers encouragement, pointing to the Śivaliṅga and reminding him that Śiva lives in the heart, where all strength to endure can be found.*



## What Are the Major Gaṇeśa Festivals?

### ŚLOKA 98

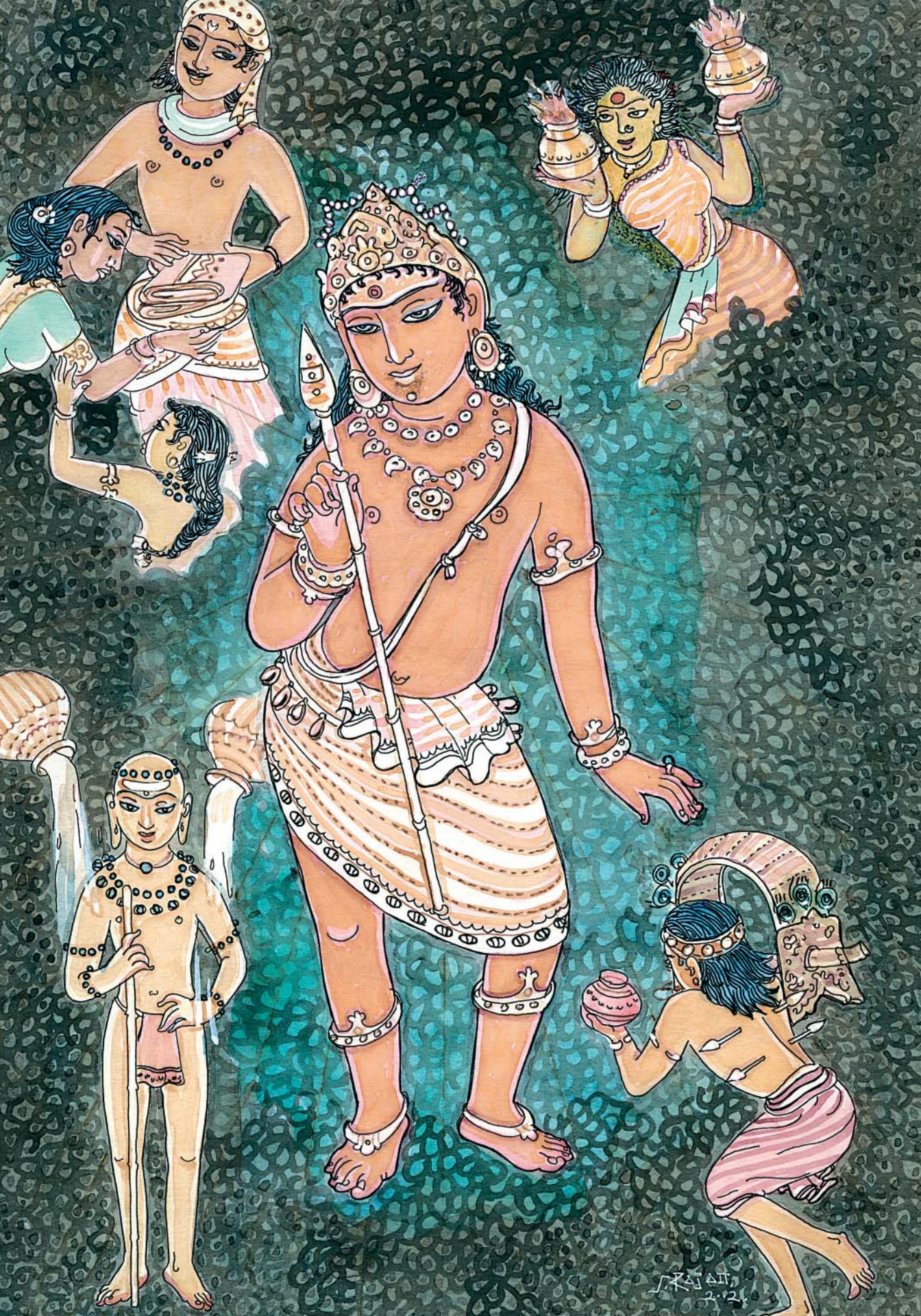
**Gaṇeśa Chaturthī is a joyous celebration of Gaṇeśa's birthday. Vināyaka Vratam is twenty-one days of fasting and daily temple worship. Pañcha Gaṇapati is a five-day family festival of harmony and gift-giving. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

On Gaṇeśa Chaturthī, in August-September, elaborate temple *pūjās* are held. Worship is also given in the home shrine to a clay image of Gaṇeśa that we make or obtain. At the end of the day, or after ten days, we join others in a grand parade, called *visarjana*, to a river, temple tank, lake or seashore, where we immerse the image, symbolizing Gaṇeśa's release into universal consciousness. During the twenty-one days of Vināyaka Vratam, in November-December, devotees vow to attend daily Gaṇeśa *pūjā*, fasting on water and taking a full meal after sunset. Pañcha Gaṇapati, December 21 to 25, is a modern five-day festival of gift-giving, dear to children. Families invoke His five *śaktis*, one on each day—creating harmony in the home, concord among relatives, neighbors and friends, good business and public relations, cultural upliftment and heartfelt charity. Gaṇeśa's monthly holy day is Chaturthī, the fourth *tithi* after the new moon. The *Vedas* implore, "O Lord of Categories, thou art the Lord, the seer of seers, unrivaled in wealth, king of elders, lord of the principle of principles. Hear us and take thy place, bringing with thee all enjoyments." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*While Gaṇeśa worships His father as the Śivaliṅga, an elephant offers homage to Lord Gaṇeśa, plucking and offering lotuses from the jungle pool. The elephant-faced Deity is Hinduism's most popular God, worshiped by all denominations equally.*



राजश्री  
2021

## What Are the Main Kārttikeya Festivals?

### ŚLOKA 99

**Vaikāsi Viśākhā celebrates the anniversary of Lord Kārttikeya's creation. Skanda Shashṭhī is a six-day festival honoring His conquest of light over darkness. Tai Pusam is a time of *sādhana* and public penance. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

On Vaikāsi Viśākhā day, Lord Kārttikeya's birthstar, Viśākhā *nakshatra*, in May-June, elaborate *abhisheka* is conducted in all His temples. It is a time of gift-giving to *paṇḍitas* and great souls, weddings, feedings for the poor, caring for trees, spiritual initiation, *dīkshā*, and conclaves of holy men. Skanda Shashṭhī is celebrated on the six days after the new moon in October-November with festive processions and *pūjās* invoking His protection and grace. It honors Kārttikeya's receiving the *vel*, His lance of spiritual illumination, *jñāna śakti*, and culminates in a dramatic victory celebration of spiritual light over *asuric* darkness. Tai Pusam occurs on Pushya *nakshatra* in January-February. During this festival we fast and perform public penance, called *kavadi*, seeking Kārttikeya's blessings to dispel our selfishness, pride and vanity. His special monthly days are Kṛittikā *nakshatra* and Shashṭhī, the sixth *tithi* after the new moon. The *Vedas* say, "Like the cry of watchful birds swimming in water, like the loud claps of thundering rain clouds, like the joyful streams gushing from the mountain, so have our hymns sounded forth to the Lord." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord Skanda, vel in hand, is surrounded by his festivals. From upper left: Vaikāsi Viśākhā is a time of gift-giving; at Tai Pusam a woman holds pots of fire and a man does kavadi penance; Skanda Shashṭhī honors the victory of light over darkness.*



## What Are Other Important Festivals?

### ŚLOKA 100

Besides the temple festivals, there is a multitude of home, community and national celebrations, notably Dīpāvalī, Hindu New Year, Tai Pongal, *guru pūjā* days, *kumbha melas*, Jayantī and Guru Pūrṇimā. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Dīpāvalī, the “festival of lights” in October-November, is a most popular festival, esteemed as a day of Hindu solidarity, when all sects gather in love and trust. It begins the financial year and is celebrated by opening new accounts, giving greeting cards, clothing and other gifts and by lighting rows of oil lamps. Family bonds are strengthened and forgivenesses sought. The several Hindu New Years are important observations. Tai Pongal, in January-February, is a harvest thanksgiving and invocation for prosperity. God Sūrya, the Sun, is honored, and daughters are presented with gifts. We venerate saints and sages by conducting *guru pūjā* on the anniversary of their passing, or *mahāsamādhi*. We celebrate our *satguru*’s birthday, or *jayantī*, with special *pūjā* to his *śrī pādukā*, “sandals,” or holy feet. We honor him again on Guru Pūrṇimā, the full moon of July. *Kumbha melas*, humanity’s largest gatherings, are held at four pilgrimage centers in India every three years. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Thus have we now approached the All-Knower, the one who is the best procurer of good things. Endow us, O Majesty, with strength and glory.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A pavilion has been erected for a village festival, festooned with flowers and bedecked with kolam designs. Suddenly Śiva appears in the dais. Devotees quickly gather to receive Him, one with a fly whisk, others with trays of cloth and coconuts.*



Supported by whose protection Heaven and Earth, shining brightly and inspired in their spirit, manifest this glory, with whose effulgence does the risen sun shine forth? To whom else, besides that giver of happiness, can we offer all our devotion? *Rig Veda* 10.121.6. RVP, 4615

Let us now invoke for our aid the Lord of Speech, the Designer of all things that are, the inspirer of wisdom! May He, the ever-kindly, be well disposed to our summons, and may He, whose work is goodness, grant us His blessing! *Rig Veda* 10.81.7. VE, 808

The gift of wealth and victory in deeds, sweetest of garlands, honor and fame, too, love and esteem are His bounties—so even *devas* adore the elephant-faced One, in devotion sweet with cooped hands.

*Tirumurai* 11 (*Kapiladeva*). AG, 159

Wherever I hear the sound of drums, the music of hymns, the *Vedas* chanted, there my heart remembers God our Master, the Lord who dwells in Itaimarutu.

*Tirumurai* 5.129.1. PS, 180

The Lord of Citticcaram shrine in Naraiyur, who has the river in His hair, the poison stain on His throat and the *Veda* on His tongue, goes resplendent in ceremonial dress as His devotees and perfected sages sing and dance His widespread fame, and the sound of festival drums beaten on the streets, where the temple car is pulled, spreads on every side.

*Tirumurai* 1.71.5. PS, 183

Pumpavai, O beautiful girl! Would you go without having seen, on the streets of great Mayilai, always busy with festive crowds, the festival of Uttarāphalgunī with its great sound of celebration, at which beautiful women sing and distribute alms, at the Lord's Kapaliccaram shrine, center of many festivals?

*Tirumurai* 2.183.7. PS, 188

As the blare of the moon-white conch, the *parai* drum's beat and the jingle of the cymbals of dancing devotees spread everywhere, peacocks, thinking that the rains have come, dance in delight. Such is the splendor of Ādrā day in Arur town!

*Tirumurai* 4.21.5. PS, 185

You took for your shrine the good temple at Itaimarutu where, for the blessing of the world, scholars praise you with the Vedic chant, and great seers and Gods gather to bathe on the day of the Pusam festival in the month of Tai.

*Tirumurai* 2.192.5. PS, 183

Folk from far and near, good men and rogues and those who pray every day for an end to disease—our Lord of Arur is kinsman to all those who cry, “O my jewel, golden one, dear husband! My son!” Such is the splendor of Ārdṛā day in Arur town!

*Tirumurai* 4.21.2. PS, 184

Hail! Śaṅkara, Dispenser of Bliss! Hail! The oldest in Śivaloka! Hail! Our youngest youth appearing to extricate us from affliction! Hail! Matchless One! Hail! The Lord of *devas*! Hail!

*Tirumurai* 8. TT, 151

By drinking the water after washing the holy feet of the *guru* and sprinkling the remains on the head, man attains the fruit of bathing in all the sacred waters of all sacred rivers and of all pilgrimages.

*Guru Gītā* 29. GG, 10

I'll wreath Him in garland. I'll hug Him to heart. I'll sing Him His name and dance with gifts of flowers. Singing and dancing, seek the Lord. This alone I know.

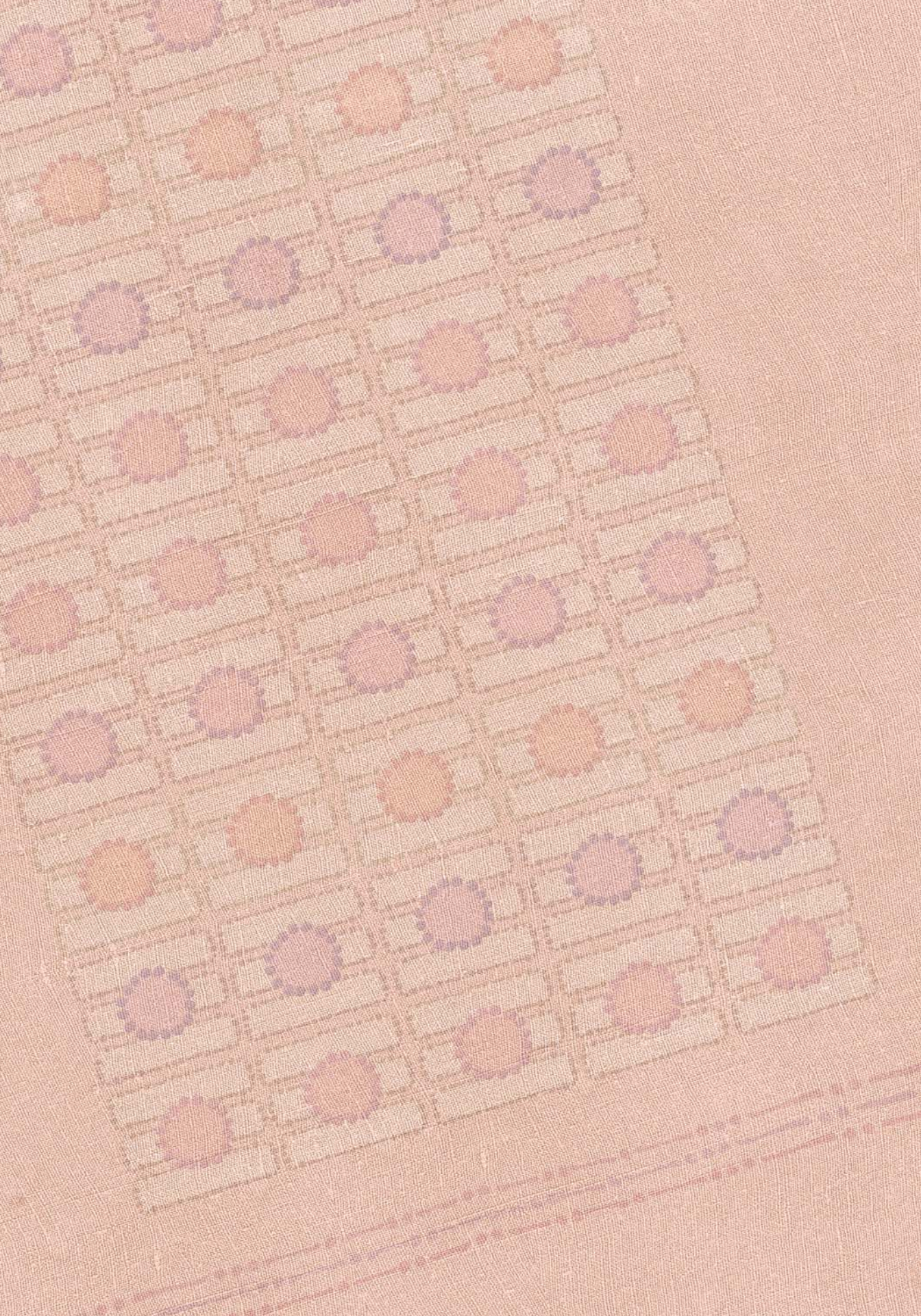
*Tirumantiram* 50. TM

The golden emblems of Śiva and the smear of holy ashes are apt insignia of the Śaiva path. This path of *jñāna* is San Mārga, which no evil can obstruct. It is the beloved way of Śuddha Śaivam. The blemishless *jñānī* is king of the entire realm of wisdom. He is the sun whose beams illumine the massive lore of Vedānta-Siddhānta. He remains immortal, ever devoted to the Śuddha Śaiva way.

*Tirumantiram* 1427-1428. TMR, 221

Why think and suffer further for the insubstantial body, that is transient as a dew drop on a blade of grass? While on this Earth, extol with love the holy feet of Him who has six faces.

*Natchintanai*, “Give Praise...” NT, 199



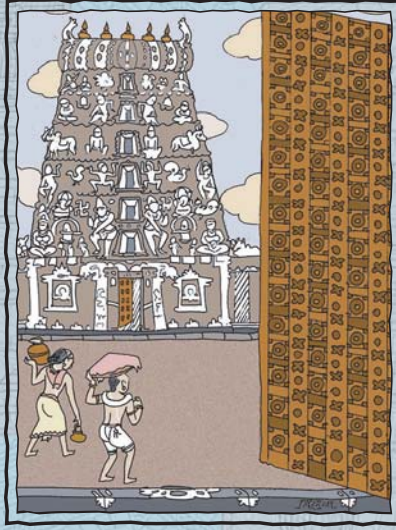
Upāsana  
उपासना



UPANISHAD EIGHT  
**Sacred Worship**



Śivālayaḥ  
शिवालयः



## Śiva Temples

Of what use is the body that never walked  
around the temple of Śiva, offering Him flowers  
in the worship rite? Of what use is this body?

*Tirumurai 4.9.8. ps, 44*



## What Is the Nature of the Śiva Temple?

### ŚLOKA 101

The Śiva temple is the abode of God Śiva and Gods and the precinct in which the three worlds consciously commune. It is specially sanctified, possessing a ray of spiritual energy connecting it to the celestial worlds. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The three pillars of Śaivism are the temples, the scriptures and the *satgurus*. These we revere, for they sustain and preserve the ancient wisdom. Śiva temples, whether they be small village sanctuaries or towering citadels, are esteemed as God's home and consecrated abode. In the Śiva temple we draw close to God Śiva and find a refuge from the world. His grace, permeating everywhere, is most easily known within the precincts of the Śiva temple. It is in the purified milieu of the temple that the three worlds commune most perfectly, that devotees can establish harmony with inner-plane spiritual beings. When the spiritual energy, *śakti*, invoked by the *pūjā* permeates the sanctum sanctorum and floods out to the world, Śaivites know they are in a most holy place where God and the Gods commune with them. Within most Śiva temples are private rooms, sanctums, for Lord Gaṇeśa and Lord Kārttikeya, and shrines for the many Gods and saints. The *Vedas* explain, "Even as the radiance of the sun enlightens all regions, above, below, and slantwise, so that only God, glorious and worthy of worship, rules over all His creation." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Three bhaktas worship a large, black granite Śivaliṅga. A portly sage expounds on metaphysics, and a pandit scribes his words on palm leaves. Suddenly he drops the stylus to the floor and prays, overwhelmed by the palpable presence of Śiva-Śakti.*





## How Are Temples Founded and Built?

### ŚLOKA 102

Śiva temples are founded by God Himself, often designated in a vision or dream of a devout Śaivite, then erected by temple craftsmen usually following Āgamic law. In such a holy place, holiness itself can reside. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Because of its holiness, a Śiva temple is most often and properly established by God Śiva through His devotees and not founded by men. Once the site is known, hereditary temple architects, known as *sthapatis*, are commissioned to design and construct the temple. By tradition, every stone is set in place according to the sacred architecture found in the Āgamic scriptures. When properly consecrated, the temple becomes a place upon the Earth in which the three worlds can communicate for the upliftment of mankind and the fulfillment of Śiva's *dharmaic* law. Śiva has deliberately established many temples to communicate His love to His children throughout the world, who live in every country of the world and long for their Lord's ever-present love. They build temples in His name and install His image, chant His praises and thus invoke His presence. Lord Śiva accepts all these temples as His own and sends a divine ray to vivify and vitalize them. Śiva's *Vedas* annunciate, "Brahman is the priest, Brahman the sacrifice; by Brahman the posts are erected. From Brahman the officiating priest was born; in Brahman is concealed the oblation." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*An illumined sage sits with arms outstretched in enstatic awe at a vision of a Śiva temple, its gopura and golden cupola. This intuitive flash is the grace of Lord Śiva, whose hair encircles the sage. A temple so mystically begun is revered as especially holy.*



## When Should One Attend the Temple?

### ŚLOKA 103

**We attend the temple to commune with God Śiva, Kārtikeya or Gaṇeśa at least once each week and additionally on auspicious days of the month, yearly festival days and on the holiest day of the year, Mahāśivarātri. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Śaivites consider it most important to live near a Śiva temple, and we build one wherever we find ourselves in the world. This is a most meritorious act, earning blessings in this life and the next. Religious life centers around the temple. It is here, in God's home, that we nurture our relationship with the Divine. Not wanting to stay away too long, we visit the temple weekly, though women never go during their monthly period. We strive to attend each major festival, when the *śakti* of the Deity is most powerful, and pilgrimage to a far-off temple annually. Devout Śiva *bhaktas* attend daily *pūjā* in the temple. All Śaivites visit the temple on Śiva's most sacred day of the year, Mahāśivarātri. Śaivite temples are the most ancient of all. Being the homes of the Gods and God, they are approached with great reverence and humility. Draw near the temple as you would approach a king, a governor, a president of a great realm, anticipating with a little trepidation your audience with him. The *Vedas* say, "May the Lord find pleasure in our song of praise! Priest among men, may he offer due homage to the heavenly beings! Great, O Lord, is your renown." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*At the heart of every Hindu temple is a cave-like sanctum within which God abides, as He abides in the cranial cave of every soul. A devotee approaches a Śivaliṅga, hands outstretched imploringly as he seeks Śiva's blessings during pūjā.*



RAJAT  
2020

## How Does One Attend a Śiva Temple?

### ŚLOKA 104

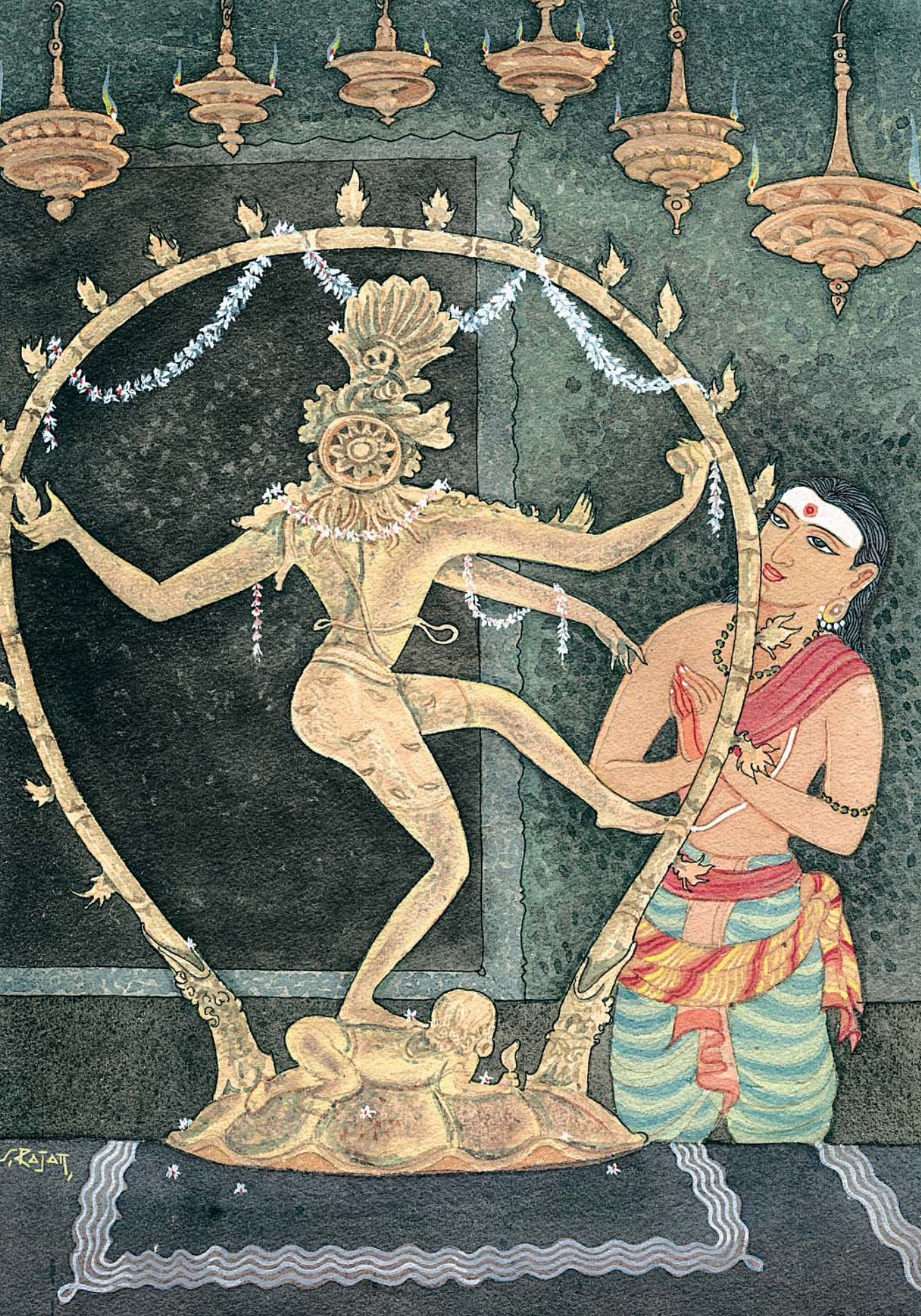
Approaching with deep reverence, we begin our worship with Gaṇeśa, circumambulate the temple and proceed to the main sanctum for *pūjā*. After receiving the sacraments, we sit quietly before taking our leave. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

With offerings in hand, leaving our shoes outside, we enter through the *gopura*, or temple tower, wash hands, feet and mouth, and seek blessings at Lord Gaṇeśa's shrine. Next we follow the outer *prakara*, or hallway, clockwise around the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, central chambers. Inside we leave our worldly thoughts at the *balipīṭha*, or offering place, then prostrate before the *dhvajastambha*, temple flagpole, and worship Nandi, the sacred bull. Next we circumambulate the central sanctum, *garbhagrīha*, usually three times, returning to its entrance for worship. During *pūjā*, we stand with hands folded or in *añjali mudrā*, though according to temple custom, it may be proper to sit quietly or sing devotional hymns. After the *āratī*, or waving of the camphor light before the Deity, we prostrate (*ashṭāṅga praṇāma* for men, and *pañchāṅga praṇāma* for women) and rise to receive the *prasāda*, accepting them in the right hand. We walk around the *garbhagrīha* one final time before taking our leave. The *Vedas* affirm, "If a man first takes firm hold on faith and then offers his sacrifice, then in that man's sacrifice both Gods and men place confidence." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*With Śiva watching, devotees approach a temple. Leaving shoes and possessions at the gate, they bring offerings of flowers, water and an āratī tray. The man prostrates at the flagpole. Mother and child seek blessings by touching Nandi, Śiva's bull.*



## What Occurs Within the Śiva Temple?

### ŚLOKA 105

Activities within a Śiva temple vary from the daily round of *pūjās* to the elaborate celebrations on annual festival days. Even amid large crowds, our worship is personal and individual, not congregational. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Besides the daily round of *pūjās*, many other events take place within the temple: pilgrims offering vows, priests chanting the *Vedas*, processions, elephants giving blessings, garlands being woven, weddings or philosophical discourses in pillared halls, devotional singing, feedings for the impoverished, dance and cultural performances, ritual bath in the stone tank, meditation, religious instruction, and many festival-related events. Generally, there are seven times when *pūjās* are held: at five, six and nine in the morning, at noon, and at six, eight and ten in the evening. The outer worship is approaching God properly, presenting ourselves acceptably. It is to offer our love, our adoration and then to speak out our prayer, our petition. The inner worship is to enjoy God's presence and not rush away, to stay, to sit, to meditate awhile and bask in the *śakti*, endeavoring to realize the Self within. The *Vedas* say, " 'Come, come!' these radiant offerings invite the worshiper, conveying him thither on the rays of the sun, addressing him pleasantly with words of praise, 'This world of Brahman is yours in its purity, gained by your own good works.' " Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Having purified himself and pilgrimaged to the temple, which in itself is regarded as worshipful, a pilgrim stands at last before Śiva Naṭarāja, Lord of Dance. Hands held reverently in añjali mudrā, he humbly offers prayers, thanks and adoration.*



You who are worthy of men's prayers, our leader, our God, rich in heroes—may we install you glowing and glistening! Shine forth at night and at morn! Your favor has kindled our hearths! By your favor we shall be great!

*Rig Veda* 7.15.7-8. VE, 846

Of lords the Lord Supreme, of kings the King, of Gods the God, Him let us worship—transcendent, Lord of all worlds and wholly worthy of worship.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 6.7. VE, 156

A man comes to Thee in fearful wonder and says: “Thou art God who never was born. Let thy face, Rudra, shine upon me, and let thy love be my eternal protection.”

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 4.21. UPM, 93

For the purpose of protection of all, a Liṅga is variously caused to be built in villages by Gods, by seers and by ordinary men.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 10. MT, 66

Cutting all the stones to be cut, carving all the stones to be carved, boring all the stones to be bored, such are the three aspects of the *śilpi*'s art. The architect and the *sūtragrāhin* build the temples and craft the images, but it is with the *takshaka* that the architect effects the opening of the eyes of these images, and similar rites.

*Suprabheda Āgama* 21.28-29. SA, 180

Having worshiped Nandi in the Southeast—two-eyed, two-armed, black in color, having the formidable three-pointed trident of Śiva, with a crest and twisted locks of hair—in the Southwest, he should especially worship Mahākāla, black in color, two-eyed, two-armed, with white garment, two-legged, having an awesome form, equipped with a noose and a tusk, and endowed with all ornaments.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 323-325. MT, 200

He should repeat the Śiva *mantra* according to his ability, and (there should be) circumambulation, obeisance and surrender of the self.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 446. BO MT, 226

I bow before that Sadāśivaliṅga which is worshiped by the multitude of Gods with genuine thoughts, full of faith and devotion, and whose splendor is like that of a million suns.

*Liṅgāshṭakam. sw, 8*

The Pati is the blessed Śivaliṅga. The *paśu* is the mighty bull standing in front. The *pāśa* is the altar. Thus, in the temple, the Lord stands for those who, searching, see.

*Tirumantiram 2411. TM*

When in Śiva's temple worship ceases, harm befalls the ruler, scanty are the rains, theft and robbery abound in the land. Thus did my holy Nandinatha declare.

*Tirumantiram 518. TM*

The unholy town where no temple stands, the town where men do not wear the holy ash, the town which does not resound with sacred song, the town which is not resplendent with many shrines, the town where the white conch is not reverently blown, the town where festive canopies and white flags are not seen, the town where devotees do not gather flowers for the worship rite, that town is no town. It is a mere wilderness.

*Tirumurai 6.309.5. PS, 149*

He approached and entered the temple where the Lord who has the golden mountain for His bow dwells in delight. He circumambulated it, prostrated himself at the sacred courtyard, entered the presence of the three-eyed God, the bull-rider crowned with matted, red hair.

*Periyapurānam 5.21.252. PS, 49*

Gather flowers and carry water pure; bathe Him and lay the flowers at His radiant Feet; stand and pray and adore Him in unflinching piety. Forever prosperous you shall be. Subdue the senses, hasten towards Him; surrender in totality and worship the Lord daily, offering water and flowers. He will surely accept your heart's offering.

*Tirumantiram 1840-1841. TM*

For the bounteous Lord, this heart is the sanctum holy, the fleshy body is temple vast, the mouth is the tower gate. To them that discern, *jīva* is Śivaliṅga; the deceptive senses are but lights that illumine.

*Tirumantiram 1823. TM*



## Pūjā पूजा



## Temple Rites

Offerings of perfumed substances, flowers, incense, lamps and fresh fruits—these are the five elements of the traditional *pūjā*, which culminates with the offering of the lamps.

*Kāmika Āgama* 4.374. sA, 248



## What Is the Inner Importance of Pūjā?

### ŚLOKA 106

The traditional rite of worship, called *pūjā*, is a sanctified act of the highest importance for the Hindu. It is the invoking of God Śiva and the Gods and the heartfelt expression of our love, devotion and surrender. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Pūjā* is a ceremony in which the ringing of bells, passing of flames, presenting of offerings and chanting invoke the *devas* and Mahādevas, who then come to bless and help us. *Pūjā* is our holy communion, full of wonder and tender affections. It is that part of our day which we share most closely and consciously with our beloved Deity; and thus it is for Śaivites the axis of religious life. Our worship through *pūjā*, outlined in the *Śaiva Āgamas*, may be an expression of festive celebration of important events in life, of adoration and thanksgiving, penance and confession, prayerful supplication and requests, or contemplation at the deepest levels of superconsciousness. *Pūjā* may be conducted on highly auspicious days in a most elaborate, orthodox and strict manner by the temple *pūjārīs*, or it may be offered in the simplest form each morning and evening in the home shrine by any devotee. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Sacrifice resembles a loom with threads extended this way and that, composed of innumerable rituals. Behold now the fathers weaving the fabric; seated on the outstretched loom. ‘Lengthwise! Crosswise!’ they cry.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A devotee sits inside the garbhagriha, the inner chamber enshrining the Śivaliṅga. Having fasted and chanted for days to gain spiritual purity, he has grown thin, but his spirit soars as he offers flowers and mantras to his Lord in the simplest of pūjās.*



## What Is the Special Rite Called Archana?

ŚLOKA 107

*Archana* is an abbreviated form of temple *pūjā* in which the name, birth star and spiritual lineage of a devotee are intoned to the God by the priest to invoke special, individual, family or group blessings and assistance. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

If we wish to receive the Deity's blessing for something special that is happening in our life, we may request an *archana*. This is arranged and paid for within the temple itself. We give a basket or tray to the priest, or *pujārī*, upon which have been placed certain articles to be offered to the Deity: usually a flower garland, bananas and a coconut (carefully washed and not even breathed upon), holy ash, incense, camphor, rosewater and a contribution for the *pujārī*. The *pujārī* asks for our name, which we tell him aloud, and our *nakshatra*, or birth star. Then he asks for our *gotra*—the name of the *rishi* with which our family is associated. He then intones these, our credentials, before the Deity along with a Sanskrit verse. A brief *pūjā*, in which the 108 names of the God are chanted, is then performed specifically on our behalf and special blessings received. At the end, the *pujārī* will return most of the offerings as *prasāda*. The *Vedas* implore, "By your favors granted enable us, O Lord, once again to leap over the pitfalls that face us. Be a high tower, powerful and broad, for both us and our children. To our people bring well-being and peace." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A man gracefully offers flowers to a small crystal Śivaliṅga during a pūjā in his home shrine. So sincere and one-pointed is the worship that Lord Śiva appears in His subtle, spiritual body and touches the devotee's head in a life-transforming blessing.*





## What Is the Nature of Image Worship?

ŚLOKA 108

We worship God Śiva and the Gods who by their infinite powers spiritually hover over and indwell the image, or *mūrti*, which we revere as their temporary body. We commune with them through the ritual act of *pūjā*. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The stone or metal Deity images are not mere symbols of the Gods; they are the form through which their love, power and blessings flood forth into this world. We may liken this mystery to our ability to communicate with others through the telephone. We do not talk to the telephone; rather we use a telephone as a means of communication with another person who is perhaps thousands of miles away. Without the telephone, we could not converse across such distances; and without the sanctified *mūrti* in the temple or shrine we cannot easily commune with the Deity. His vibration and presence can be felt in the image, and He can use the image as a temporary physical-plane body or channel. As we progress in our worship, we begin to adore the image as the Deity's physical body, for we know that He is actually present and conscious in it during *pūjā*, aware of our thoughts and feelings and even sensing the *pūjārī*'s gentle touch on the metal or stone. The *Vedas* exclaim, "Come down to us, Rudra, who art in the high mountains. Come and let the light of thy face, free from fear and evil, shine upon us. Come to us with thy love." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A youth enters the sanctum, drawing closed the curtain which conceals the Deity. He has placed a rudrāksha mālā on the Liṅga and arranged clay ghee lamps around the mūrti. Śiva blesses the soulful devotee with a gentle touch on the shoulder.*



## Who Are the Priests of Śiva Temples?

### ŚLOKA 109

Ādiśaiva priests are the hereditary *pujārīs* who care for the temple and conduct its varied rites and rituals as humble servants of God. They are trained in the complex arts of worship, generally from a young age. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Every temple has its own staff of priests. Some temples appoint only one, while others have a large extended family of priests to take care of the many shrines and elaborate festivals. Most are well trained from early childhood in the intricate liturgy. Śiva temple *pujārīs* are usually *brāhmīns* from the Ādiśaiva lineage, though in certain temples they are not. These men of God must be fully knowledgeable of the metaphysical and ontological tenets of the religion and learn hundreds of *mantras* and chants required in the ritual worship. When fully trained, they are duly ordained as Śivāchāryas to perform *parārtha pūjā* in a consecrated Śiva temple. Generally, *pujārīs* do not attend to the personal problems of devotees. They are God's servants, tending His temple home and its related duties, never standing between the devotee and God. Officiating priests are almost always married men, while their assistants may be *brahmachārīs* or widowers. The Āgamas explain, "Only a well-qualified priest may perform both *ātmārtha pūjā*, worship for one's self, and *parārtha pūjā*, worship for others. Such an Ādiśaiva is a Śaiva *brāhmin* and a teacher." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A Śaivite priest stands before the Śivaliṅga. The sandalwood doors are open and the cloth curtain drawn. With head shaved in South Indian style, he wears red and white cotton, symbolizing Śiva-Śakti, and holds a censer of fragrant frankincense.*



## What Does the Pujārī Do During Pūjā?

### ŚLOKA 110

During the *pūjā*, through *mantras*, *mudrās* and mystical ritual, the priest invokes the Deity. All observances are precisely detailed in the *Āgamas*; every act, every intoned syllable is rich in esoteric meaning. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The *pujārī* performs strict ablutions and disciplines to prepare himself for his sacred duty. Before the *pūjā*, he ritually purifies the atmosphere. As the *pūjā* begins, he meditates on Lord Gaṇeśa, praying that all obstacles may be removed. He then beseeches the God to indwell the image, to accept the prayers of the votaries, and to shower blessings and love on all. Calling the name of the Deity and chanting *mantras* and hymns from the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, the *pujārī* makes offerings of unbroken rice, burning camphor, incense, holy ash, water, red turmeric powder, flowers and food. Sometimes offerings of milk, rose-water, sandalwood paste and yogurt are poured over the *mūrti* as an oblation, called *abhisheka*. Bells are loudly rung, conch shells sounded, and musicians may play the temple drums and woodwinds. The *pujārī* treats the Deity with utmost care, attending to Him as the King of kings. When the *pūjā* has ended, the *pujārī* passes the now sanctified offerings to those present. The *Vedas* state, “Daily the sacrifice is spread. Daily the sacrifice is completed. Daily it unites the worshiper to heaven. Daily by sacrifice to heaven he ascends.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A priest sits before a large Śivaliṅga, showing the hand gestures, mudrās, that are a vital part of his ritual. Mystical priests are trained to make every gesture inwardly profound. They know worship is a yoga which brings one into Śiva consciousness.*

The devout performers of solemn ceremonies, aspiring for chariots, as if, are led to the doors of the chamber of the Lord. Ladles, placed to the East, are plying the fire with melted butter at the fire sacrifice, as the mother cow licks her calf.

*Rig Veda* 7.2.5. RVP, 2353

As hungry children here below sit round about their mother, even so all beings expectantly sit round the *agnihotra*.

*Sāma Veda, Çhandogya Upanishad* 5.24.4. VE, 412

May the forefathers of ancient days protect me in this my prayer, in this my act, in this my priestly duty, in this my performance, in this my thought, in this my purpose and desire, in this my calling on the Gods! All Hail!

*Atharva Veda* 5.24.15. VE, 860

At the time of the sacrifice, O Lord of the wood [Agni], the worshipers smear you with sacred oil. When you stand upright or when you repose on Earth's bosom, you still will grant us good fortune. Set up to the East of the sacred fire, you accept our prayer, intense and unflagging. Hold yourself high to bring us prosperity. Drive far away dearth of inspiration. Lord of the wood, take now your stance on this, the loftiest spot of all Earth. Well-fixed and measured one, give to the worshiper, who brings a sacrifice, honor and glory.

*Rig Veda* 3.8.1-3. VE 373-374

A Liṅga sprung up by itself and an image in the shape of a God are said to be intended for worship for the purpose of others. The merit to the worshiper of worship for all others is the same as the merit of worship for oneself. The worship rites from the very beginning, worship of the Liṅga and its support, must be done by an Ādiśaiva in the manner described in the *Āgamas*.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 11. MT, 67; 76

The twice-born *gurukal* should twice place the triple sectarian marks of ash mixed with water. Having scattered all sins by this twofold protection of his body, the *gurukal* should now be competent to perform all the sacrificial rites. As fire in a basin flames by means of air, thus Lord Śiva is born, is made manifest before the eyes of the devotee, by *mantra*, in the Liṅga.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 64. MT, 111; 164

In the beginning of worship, at the conclusion of the rite, in the offering of water, in the anointing of the image, in the bathing of the image, in the offering of light, in the sprinkling of the image with sandal, in the bathing of the image with consecrated liquids, in the offering of incense, in the act of worship, and in all other things to be done, the Śivāchārya should strike the great bell.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 190-191. MT, 160

He should bathe the Liṅga, repeating the Vyoma-Vyāpi Mantra, and with sesame oil, and with curd, milk and *ghee*, with coconut water, with honey, repeating the Pañchabrahman, he should carefully rub the Liṅga with fine rice-flour paste, repeating the Hṛidayā Mantra.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 274. MT, 188

First there is the invocation; second, the establishing of the God; third, water for washing the feet should be offered; fourth, water for sipping; fifth, the placing of *ārghya*, water; sixth, sprinkling water as ablution; seventh, garment and sandal; eighth, worship with flowers; ninth, incense and light should be offered; tenth, offering of food; eleventh, oblation should be performed; twelfth, the holy fire, an oblation of clarified butter; thirteenth, an oblation; fourteenth, song and music; fifteenth, dancing; and sixteenth, the act of leaving.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 423-426. MT, 222

Seers can reach Him because He is visible; worshipers, too, can see Him. But if they possess love for Him, Hara, who is the first cause of the ancient universe, will manifest Himself to their mind as light.

*Tirumurai, Arputat Tiruvantati* 17. AT, 18

If he is but a priest in name only who Lord's temple *pūjā* performs, deathly wars rage in fury, fell diseases spread, famine stalks the land. Thus did the great Nandi in truth declare.

*Tirumantiram* 519. TM

The devout are they who with flowers and water pray. The Lord, seeing that, bestows His grace on them. The undevout do not know how to approach Him, and thus slip by in ignorance deep.

*Tirumantiram* 1828. TM





**Bhaktih  
भक्तिः**



**Love of God**

They labor hard and gather flowers and carry  
water pure. They adore the Lord in unflinching  
piety and at His shining Feet lay flowers and  
stand and pray, and, unto the rain-laden clouds,  
forever prosperous shall they be.

*Tirumantiram 1839. TM*



## Is Temple Worship Only for Beginners?

### ŚLOKA 111

Temple worship is for all men and women at every level of spiritual development. Its meaning and experience deepen as we unfold spiritually through the stages of service, devotion, *yoga* and enlightened wisdom. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

We never outgrow temple worship. It simply becomes more profound and meaningful as we progress through four spiritual levels. In the *charyā pāda*, the stage of selfless service, we attend the temple because we have to, because it is expected of us. In the *kriyā pāda*, the stage of worshipful *sādhana*s, we attend because we want to; our love of God is the motivation. In the *yoga pāda*, we worship God internally, in the sanctum of the heart; yet even the *yogī* immersed in the superconscious depths of mind has not outgrown the temple. It is there—God’s home on the Earth plane—when the *yogī* returns to normal consciousness. So perfect is the temple worship of those who have traversed the *jñāna pāda* that they themselves become worship’s object—living, moving temples. Yea, temple worship is never outgrown. The *Vedas* give praise, “Homage to Him who presides over all things, that which was and that which shall be; to whom alone belongs the heaven, to that all-powerful Brahman be homage! From Fullness He pours forth the full; the full spreads, merging with the full. We eagerly would know from whence He thus replenishes Himself.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In a temple carved from solid rock, a woman falls on her knees in chaste surrender. She has sacrificially shaven her beautiful long tresses, dressed in white and removed all jewelry to approach God in as pure a state of consciousness as possible.*



## How Do Devotees Prepare for Worship?

### ŚLOKA 112

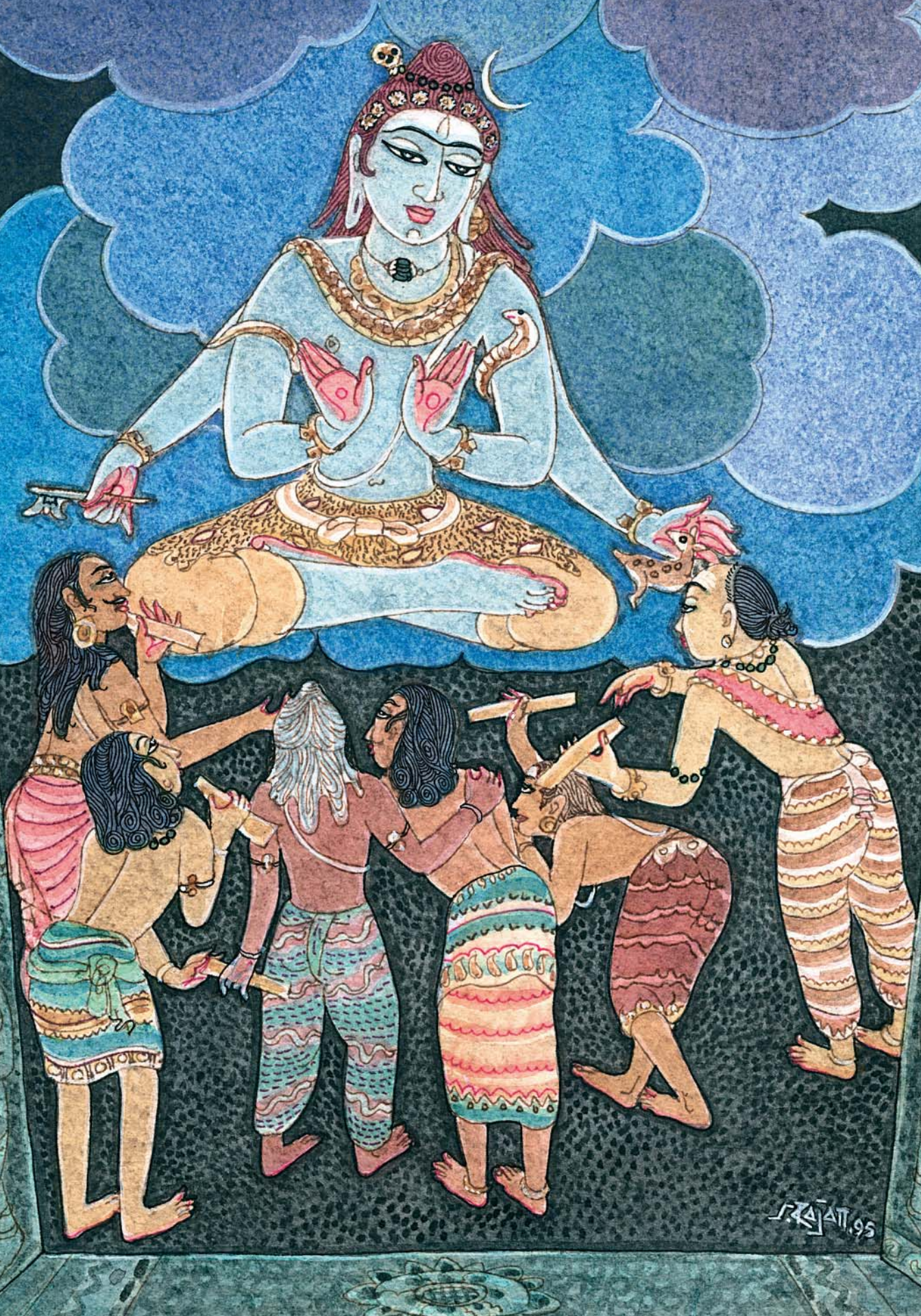
We visit a Śiva temple after bathing, dressing in clean clothes and preparing an offering, which can be as simple as a few flowers or fruits. We bring the mind to the holy feet of the Deity even as preparations begin. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Visiting the home of God Śiva or of a God, the temple, is not without its trepidation, protocol and proper conduct, preceded by preparation that we administrate ourselves. Our worship is only as meaningful and effective as we make it. Before we attend or conduct a *pūjā*, we should carefully bathe the body, rinse the mouth and dress in fresh clothing—*sārīs* for women and *dhotīs* or *veshtis* and shawls for men where this is the custom. Throughout these preparations we may sing hymns or chant *mantras* or God's holy names silently or aloud, taking care to keep the mind free from worldly matters. We then gather offerings for the Deity. If mealtime is near, we eat only after *pūjā* has been concluded. Although the outer details of our worship are important, it is our inner feelings and thoughts, our love and devotion, which are the truest offering we can make. The *Vedas* testify, "The Gods, led by the spirit, honor faith in their worship. Faith is composed of the heart's intention. Light comes through faith. Through faith men come to prayer, faith in the morning, faith at noon and at the setting of the sun. O faith, give us faith!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*A man and his wife have bathed and dressed in clean clothing to approach God for worship. He carries a bowl of offerings and she holds a tray with items needed for pūjā. Escorted by a temple guide, they pass Deities and guardians carved in stone.*



## How Do Our Prayers Reach the Gods?

### ŚLOKA 113

Through temple worship, the three worlds become open to one another, and the beings within them are able to communicate. By means of the mystical arts of *pūjā*, the worlds act in concert, and prayers are received. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The three worlds are connected when *pūjā* is performed and worship is begun. There are certain rites that can be performed to enable individuals to communicate directly with beings in the inner worlds. Prayers are given and received in many ways. Among the most intimate, personal forms of communication is the written prayer to the *devas* or to God. Burned in Agni's sacred fire, it disintegrates in the physical world and quickly reforms in the astral world. When a prayer is burned in a temple wherein this practice is consecrated, its astral image is received and read by the *devas*, and properly dispatched and answered, within the confines of our *karmic* pattern. Prayers may also be conveyed by slowly, mentally enunciating the words, visualizing them rising up the spine, through the top of the head, reaching beyond to the feet of God. The *devas* will not intervene unless asked. This is the inner law. The *Vedas* avow, "He shines forth at dawn like the sunlight, deploying the sacrifice in the manner of priests unfolding their prayerful thoughts. Agni, the God who knows well all the generations, visits the Gods as a messenger, most efficacious." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Lord Śiva sits in the deepest ākāśic world as devotees approach with prayers, petitions and queries written on ancient palm leaves, called olai in Tamil. Śiva offers benedictions through two hands, blessings that accord with their karmas.*





RAJATI 95

## Do Śaivites Worship Only in Temples?

ŚLOKA 114

One can worship God anywhere and be in contact with the inner worlds—in the temple, in the home shrine and in the *yogī*'s contemplation. However, in the holy Śiva temple the three worlds most perfectly commune. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

In the shrine room gather messengers of the Mahādeva being worshiped to hear the prayers of the devotee and carry them to their Master. The Gods can be worshiped anywhere when the proper *saṅkalpa*, preparation, has been performed. God's presence is everywhere, through everything, in everything, for Śiva is the creator of all things, the manifestor of time, form and the space between forms. Śiva is worshiped in the mind, in the heart, through the throat, in the head of the *yogī* locked in *yoga*. So great is the power of worship, communion and communication with the centillion *devas*, that when a little bell is rung, a flame appears in the lamp, the vermilion spot is placed, the flower appears and is offered, God Śiva and the Gods are invoked. Contemplating the aftermath of *pūjā* or *abhisheka*, we feel the *sānnidhya* or divine presence of Parāśakti, tender motherly love, permeating to the outer walls around the temple. The *Vedas* proclaim, "Assemble all, with prayer to the Lord of Heaven, He is the One, the all-pervading, the guest of men. He, the ancient of days, abides in the present. Him, the One, the many follow on their path." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A woman kneels to supplicate Śiva who sits beneath a tree, a yogabandha supporting His legs in yogic pose. Knowing that God Śiva can be worshiped anywhere, she closes her eyes above and pours forth adoration to her beloved Lord.*



S. RAJAT,

## What Is the Home Shrine's Significance?

### ŚLOKA 115

Every Śaivite maintains a home shrine. It is the most beautiful room in the house, an extension of the temple, the abode for Deities and *devas*, and a holy refuge for daily worship and meditation. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Every Śaivite home centers around the home shrine, a special room set aside and maintained to create a temple-like atmosphere in which we conduct *pūjā*, read scripture, perform *sādhana*, meditate, sing *bhajana* and do *japa*. Here the presence of the Gods is always felt, and we remember them especially morning and evening and before meals, which we offer to them before we partake. Worship traditionally begins before dawn, with the simple act of dedication for the coming day. After a bath, morning *pūjā* is performed which includes the repetition of the Gāyatri or other *mantras* and is followed by *sādhanas* given by one's *guru*. The form of home worship, *ātmārtha pūjā*, is simple: the Deities are invoked and offerings are made. After the final *āratī*, or offering of the light, we supplicate them to bestow their grace on us, our family and all devotees. Evening devotionals include a simple *āratī*, *bhajana*, meditation and reading of scripture, which carries one to lofty celestial realms during sleep. The *Āgamas* affirm, "Worship of one's chosen Liṅga by anyone in their own home for divine protection is called *ātmārtha pūjā*." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A man and wife perform pūjā together in their shrine room. Having ground fresh paste from a sandalwood block and taken their small Śivaiṅga from its finely tooled casket, he places it on the base while she stands ready to offer fresh water.*

Yes, may the man who within his home pleases you all his days with songs and with offerings receive a rich reward, be loaded with your gifts! To him be happiness! This is our prayer. *Rig Veda* 4.4.7. VE, 845

Aum. O terrestrial sphere! O sphere of space! O celestial sphere! Let us contemplate the splendor of the Solar Spirit, the Divine Creator. May He guide our minds. *Rig Veda (Gāyatrī Mantra)* 3.62.10. HP, 345

For you is my offering, to you I will pray, to you who are worthy of homage and worship. You, O God, are a spring in the desert for the man who is thirsty for you, O Everliving. *Rig Veda* 10.4.1. VE, 302

All that God does shall win our praise. We magnify His name with hymns, seeking boons from the Mighty. *Rig Veda* 1.42.10. VE, 805

The rites of oblation, O lovers of truth, which the sages divined from the sacred verses, were variously expounded in the threefold *Veda*. Perform them with constant care. This is your path to the world of holy action. *Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad* 1.2.1. VE, 414

Whatever the merit in any sacrifice, austerity, offering, pilgrimage or place, the merit of worship of the Śivaliṅga equals that merit multiplied by hundreds of thousands. *Kāraṇa Āgama* 9. MT, 66

In the forenoon with a white garment, in midday with a red garment, with a yellow garment in the evening, and with any of them in the night, the worshiper, drawing the God near with the Sadyojāta Mantra, should cause Him to be firmly established by means of the Vāma Mantra and the Aghora Mantra. *Kāraṇa Āgama* 269-270. MT, 186

First there should be purification of one's self; secondly, purification of the site; thirdly, there should be the cleansing of the worship materials, fourthly, purification of the Liṅga; fifthly, purification of the *mantras* should be done. Thus there is the five-fold purification.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 46. MT, 100

Even the incompetent, indeed, should worship, ending with the offering of sacrificial food, ending with light. He who daily does this shall obtain progress toward the Auspicious.

*Kāraṇa Āgama* 450. MT, 227

There is no difference between devotion and perfect knowledge. A person who is engrossed in devotion enjoys perpetual happiness. And perfect knowledge never descends in a vicious person averse to devotion.

*Śiva Purāṇa, Rudra S.* 23.16. AI, VOL. I 380

He folded his hands in adoration and praised the Lord's feet. His deep love melted in a stream, the flood from his eyes gushed out and spread over his body.

*Periyapurānam* 5.21.253. PS, 49

What has learning profited a man, if it has not led him to worship the good feet of Him who is pure knowledge itself? They alone dispel the mind's distress who take refuge at the feet of the Incomparable One.

*Tirukural* 2, 7. WW

They who walk the twin paths of *charyā* and *kriyā* ever praise the twin feet of the Lord. They wear holy emblems—the twin rings in earlobes, the twin *rudrāksha* garland around the neck—and adopt the twin *mudrās*, all in amiable constancy.

*Tirumantiram* 1423. TM

It is devotion to God, Śiva *bhakti*, alone that makes a man blessed. Everything else is useless. Therefore, without break, practice Śivadhyāna. Do not be afraid of anything. Victory is yours! Body, soul, possessions—surrender all three to God. Thereafter give up everything that concerns yourself and see that all is He and He alone.

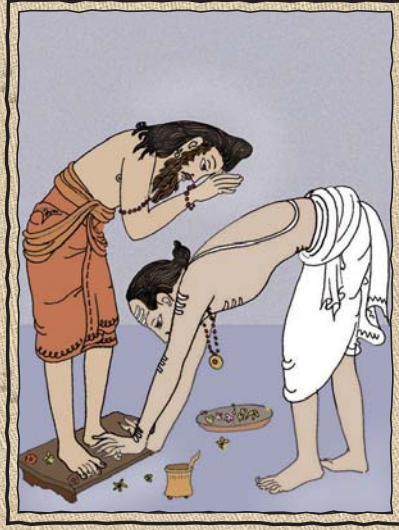
*Natchintanai, "Sivabhakti."* NT, 7

Have faith in God. Believe in Him with all your heart. Think that in the world He is for you the sweetest of all sweet things. Think that there is nothing other than God. Sitting or standing, walking or lying down, think of Him. Let the thought of Him permeate your nerves, flesh and blood. Think that you are nonexistent and that He alone exists. Let the aim of your life be to worship Him. What one thinks, that one becomes. Have God in your heart and bring Him up there. Let all actions be His action. Finally all will be seen as He.

*Natchintanai, "Let God Be..."* NT, 7



**Mahātmā**  
**महात्मा**



**UPANISHAD NINE**

**Holy Men and Women**





## Sannyāsa Dharmah संन्यासधर्मः



## Monastic Life

Having transcended the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, the desire for worlds, they go about as mendicants. For the desire for sons is the desire for wealth, and the desire for wealth is the desire for worlds. All these are nothing but desires. He, the *ātman*, is not this, not this.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 4.4.22. VE, 717*



SAJAT,

## What Is the Hindu Monastic Tradition?

### ŚLOKA 116

In the Hindu tradition there have always existed among men a few for whom the world held no attraction and *karmas* were on the wane. Some are solitary mendicants. Others reside with their brothers in monasteries. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Certain men are by nature inclined toward realization of the Self, and disinclined toward desires of family, wealth and property. Some among them are *sādhus* dressed in white. They are anchorites living in the seclusion of distant caves and remote forests or wandering as homeless mendicants, itinerant pilgrims to the holy sanctuaries of Hinduism. Others dwell as cenobites assembled with fellow monastics, often in the *āśrama*, *aadheenam* or *maṭha* of their *satguru*. These monks, both anchorite and cenobite, may live with no formal vows or take certain simple vows. When initiated into the order of *sannyāsa*, they don the saffron robes and bind themselves to a universal body of Hindu renunciates whose existence has never ceased. Scriptural doctrine states that the two paths, householder and renunciate, are distinct in their *dharmas* and attainments, affirming that true renunciation may not be achieved by those in the world even by virtue of a genuine attitude of detachment. The holy *Vedas* declare, “The man who has found Him becomes a silent monk. Desiring Him alone as their world, ascetics leave their homes and wander about.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*An elder sādhu, grown gaunt by austerities, wearing but a loincloth and rudrāksha beads, sits outside a monastery in India. A young monk, early in his spiritual life, serves other sannyāsins by doing laundry, hanging and laying out pieces to dry.*



S. RAJAT 95

## What Are the Goals of Renunciate Life?

### ŚLOKA 117

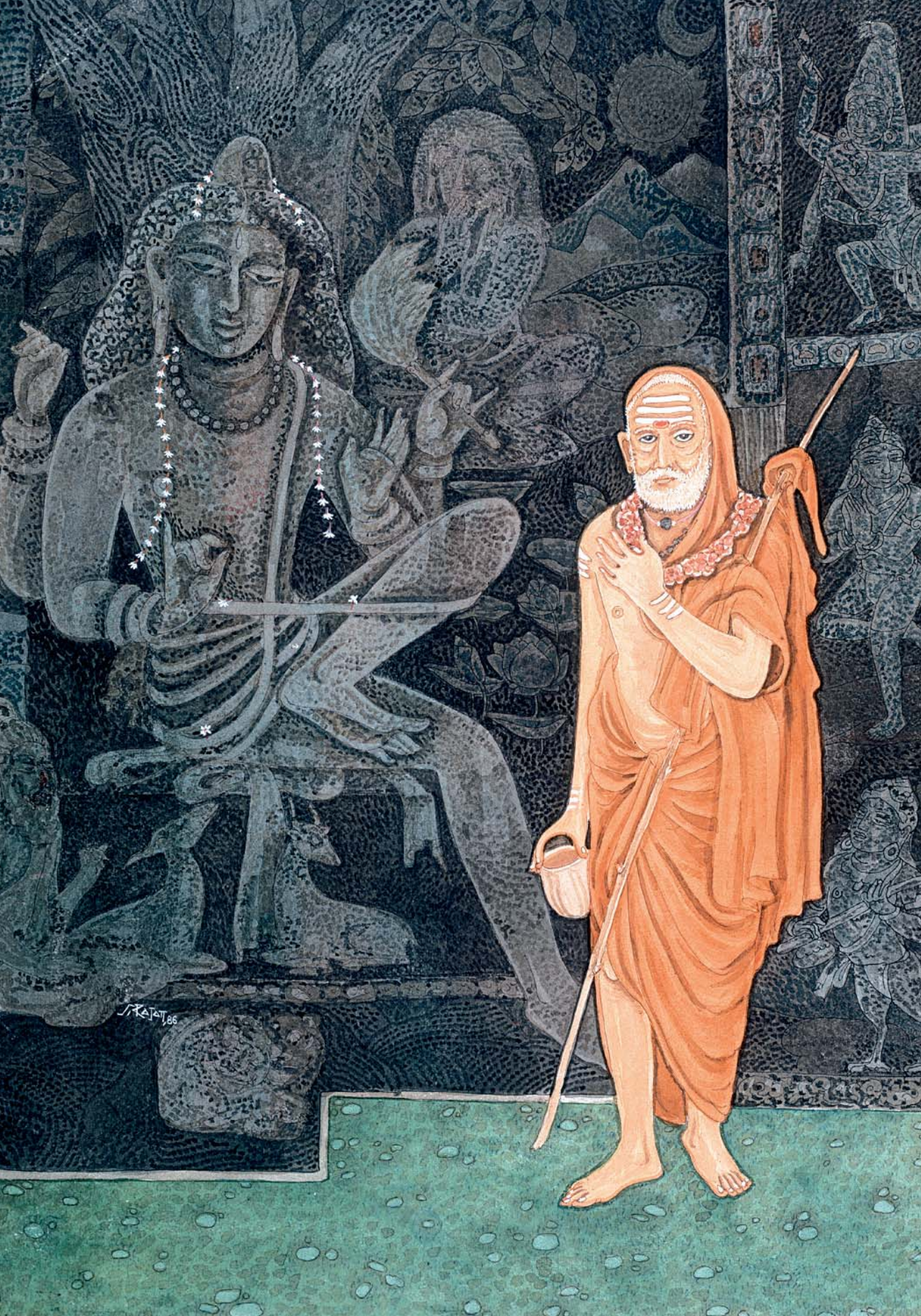
The two fundamental objectives of *sannyāsa* are to promote the spiritual progress of the individual, bringing him into God Realization, and to protect and perpetuate the religion through his illumined leadership. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Renunciation and asceticism have been an integral component of Vedic culture from the earliest days, the most highly esteemed path of the Hindu Dharma. Monastic life has both an individual and a universal objective. At the individual level, it is a life of selflessness in which the monastic has made the supreme sacrifice of renouncing all personal ambition, all involvement in worldly matters, that he might direct his consciousness and energies fully toward God Śiva. Guided by the *satguru* along the *sādhana mārga*, the initiated *sannyāsin* unfolds through the years into deeper and deeper realizations. Ultimately, if he persists, he comes into direct knowing of Paraśiva, Transcendent Reality. At the universal level, Hindu monasticism fosters the religion by preserving the truths of the Sanātana Dharma. Competent *swāmīs* are the teachers, the theologians, the exemplars of their faith, the torchbearers lighting the way for all. The ancient *Vedas* elucidate, “The ascetic who wears discolored robes, whose head is shaved, who does not possess anything, who is pure and free from hatred, who lives on alms, he becomes absorbed in Brahman.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*This sannyāsin has renounced personal ambition, symbolized by the bow and quiver, and turned his back on women and the world, represented by the couple. His goal is Self Realization, guided by the sage and the devotion of Nandi, Lord Śiva’s bull.*



## What Is the Sannyāsin's Kuṇḍalinī Path?

ŚLOKA 118

The *sannyāsin* balances within himself both the male and female energies. Complete unto himself, he is whole and independent. Having attained an equilibrium of *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, he becomes a knower of the known. Aum.

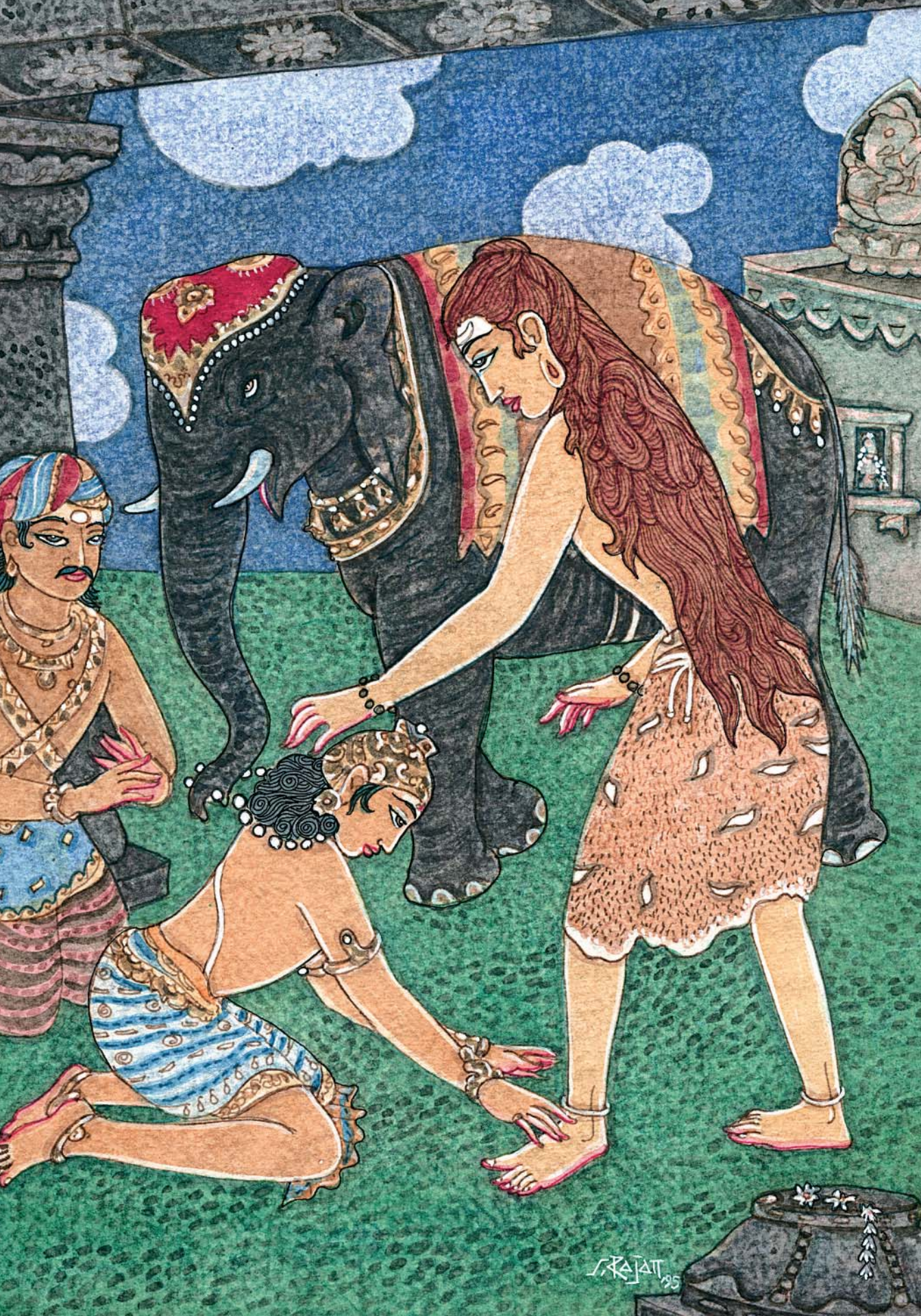
BHĀSHYA

There arises within the *sannyāsin* a pure energy, neither masculine nor feminine. This is the *sushumṇā* current coming into power through which he gains control of the *kuṇḍalinī* force and eventually, after years of careful guidance, attains *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Eventually, in one life or another, all will turn to the renunciate path. However, it would be equally improper for a renunciate-minded soul to enter family life as for a householder to seek to be a *sannyāsin*. A word of warning. Be cautious of those who promise great *kuṇḍalinī* awakenings and spiritual rewards from severe practices without preparation, initiation and renunciation. Those entering the serious life of *sannyāsa* must be prepared to follow the traditional path of unrewarded *sādhana* through the years, apart from dear family and friends. Such is the way to reach the truth of *yoga*. It takes many, many years for the soul to thus ripen and mature. The *Tirumantiram* affirms, “Many are the births and deaths forgotten by souls shrouded in ignorance, enveloped in *mala*'s darkness. At the moment Great Śiva's grace is gained, the renunciate attains the splendorous light.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*With Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the silent guru, behind him, this sannyāsin balances the iḍā and piṅgalā forces to live in perfect equipoise. He is Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi (1894-1994), 68TH Pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.*





RAJAT '25

## What Is the Sannyāsin's Initiation Rite?

### ŚLOKA 119

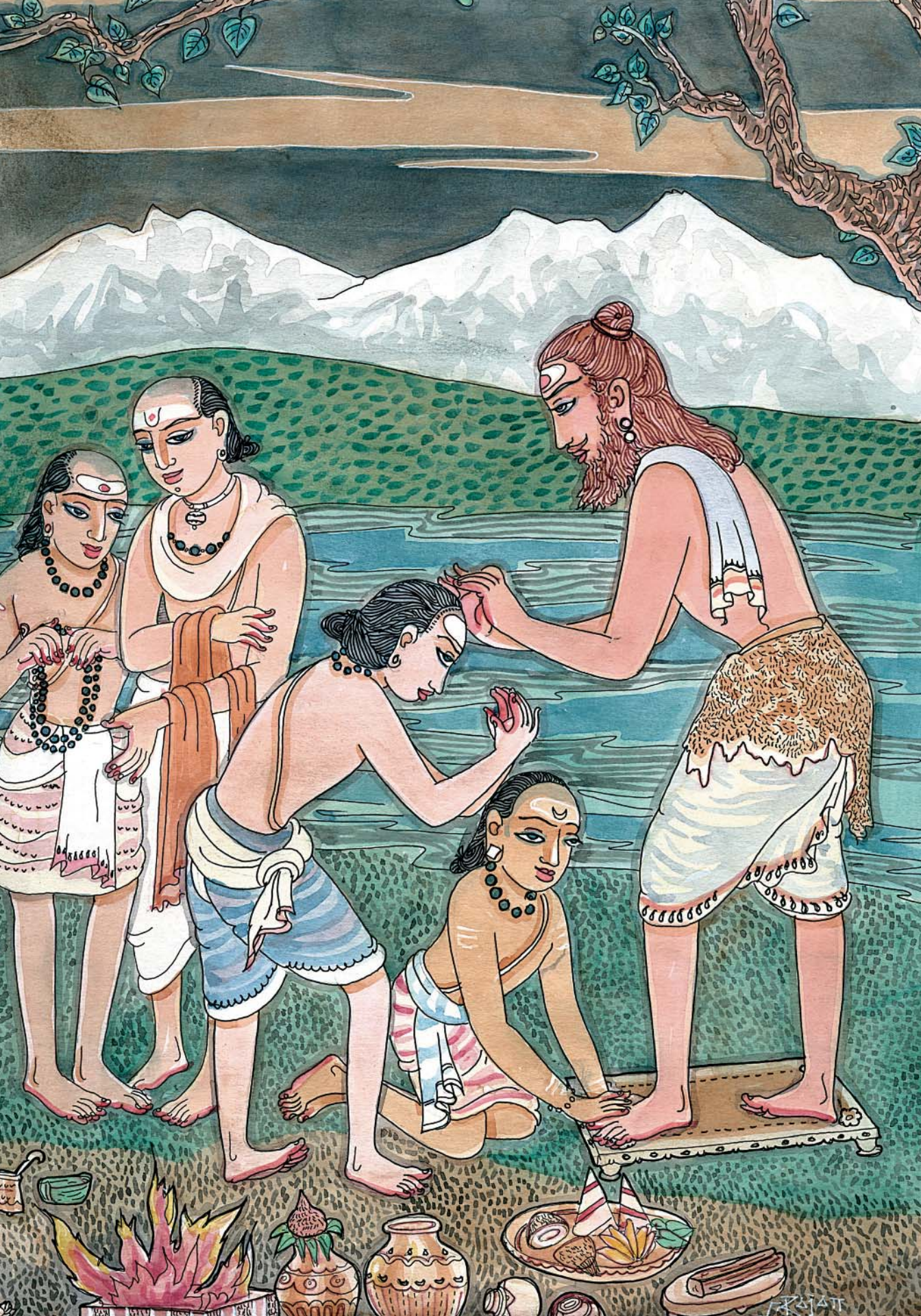
Young, unmarried men of the Hindu religion may qualify for renunciation, called *sannyāsa dīkshā*, which may be conferred by any legitimate *sannyāsin*. But the most spiritually potent initiation comes from a *satguru*. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Traditionally, *sannyāsa dīkshā* is restricted to unmarried men, though some modern orders have accepted qualified women. As a rule in most orders, if a candidate enters monastic training before age twenty-five and meets other qualifications, he may, generally after a minimum of twelve years of preparation and training, take the *sannyāsin's* lifetime vows, called holy orders of *sannyāsa*. Only a *sannyāsin* can bring another into the ancient order of *sannyāsa*. However, since the purpose is God Realization, most candidates seek initiation from a spiritually advanced knower of God who can bring them into Paraśiva. *Sannyāsa dīkshā* is given in simple or most formal ways. The formal rites include the shaving of the head, conveyance of certain esoteric teachings, abjuration of the worldly life and *dharma*, administration of monastic vows, conducting of the novitiate's funeral rites and the giving of the *kavi* vestments. The *Vedas* proclaim, "The Self within the body, pure and resplendent, is attained through the cultivation of truth, austerity, right knowledge and chastity. When their impurities dwindle, the ascetics behold Him." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A young aristocrat falls to his knees and surrenders the world upon encountering his satguru outside a Gaṇeśa temple. Claspng the preceptor's feet, he receives the initiatory touch that will grace and empower his life as a true and worthy sannyāsin.*



## What Are the Holy Orders of Sannyāsa?

### ŚLOKA 120

The holy orders of *sannyāsa* are lifetime vows of poverty, obedience and chastity, never to be relinquished or rescinded. The *sannyāsins* are the religious leaders, the bedrock of the Sanātana Dharma. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The *sannyāsin's* first sacred vow is renunciation, the surrendering of the limited identity of the ego that the soul may soar to the depths of impersonal Being. It is a repudiation of worldly *dharma* and involvement, and thus includes poverty and simplicity. The *sannyāsin* owns nothing, not even the robes he is given to wear. The second vow is obedience—a pledge to follow the traditional ways of the *sannyāsa dharma* and the specific directions of his *satguru*. It embraces obedience to his own conscience, to scripture, to God and the Gods and to his illustrious *guru paramparā*. The third vow is purity—a pledge to remain pure in thought, word and deed, to be continent throughout life, to protect the mind from all lower instincts: deceit, hatred, fear, jealousy, anger, pride, lust, covetousness and so forth. It includes the observance of *ahimsā*, noninjuriousness, and adherence to a vegetarian diet. Some orders also give vows of humility and confidentiality. The *Vedas* elucidate, “Henceforth being pure, clean, void, tranquil, breathless, selfless, endless, undecaying, steadfast, eternal, unborn, independent, he abides in his own greatness.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*On the banks of the Gaṅgā, a Śivaguru places his hands on the head of a swāmī candidate. A homa fire burns where the initiation rites will occur, after which the youth will don the orange cloth and holy beads being held by his spiritual brothers.*

Within him is fire, within him is drink, within him both Earth and Heaven. He is the sun which views the whole world, he is indeed light itself—the long-haired ascetic. Girded by the wind, they have donned ochre mud for a garment. So soon as the Gods have entered within them, they follow the wings of the wind, these silent ascetics. “Intoxicated,” they say, “by our austerities, we have taken the winds for our steeds. You ordinary mortals here below see nothing except our bodies.” He flies through midair, the silent ascetic, beholding the forms of all things. To every God he has made himself a friend and collaborator. Ridden by the wind, companion of its blowing, pushed along by the Gods, he is at home in both seas, the East and the West—this silent ascetic.

*Rig Veda* 10.136.1-5. VE, 436

A mighty weapon, the *Upanishad*. Take it as a bow. Affix an arrow sharpened by devotion. Bend the bow by a thought concentrated on That. Hit the target, my dear—the Imperishable. *Aum* is the bow, the *ātman* is the arrow; Brahman, they say, is the target to be pierced by concentration. Thus one become, united with Brahman as an arrow with the target.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad* 540-541. VE, 774

Having realized with mind and heart, having become wise, you will no longer move on the path of death. Therefore, they call renunciation the ardor surpassing all others.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad* 537-8. VE, 439

What people call salvation is really continence. For through continence man is freed from ignorance. And what is known as the vow of silence, that too is really continence. For a man through continence realizes the Self and lives in quiet contemplation.

*Sāma Veda, Chandogya Upanishad* 8.5.1. UPP, 123

Know, Arjuna, that what men call renunciation is the authentic *yoga*, for without renouncing all desire no man becomes a *yogin*. The silent sage climbing toward *yoga* uses work as a means. Quiescence and serenity are the proper course for one who has attained.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 6.2-3. VE, 445

In the one who has conquered his self and is peaceful, the Supreme Self, in heat or cold, joy or pain, honor or disgrace, abides in serenity. He who is full of wisdom and understanding, calm and controlled, to whom a clod, a stone and gold are the same, is in truth a *yogin*.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 6.7-8. VE, 445

Beyond birth and death, reached by renunciate *tapas* is He, my Lord of resplendent glory! Sing His praise! Incessantly pray! Heaven's Lord shall show you the land of *dharma*.

*Tirumantiram* 1614. TM

A myriad times are they born and die. In a million follies they forget this; and in the darkness of *mala* are enveloped. When at last the hidden Grace of Śiva bursts forth and chases the night away, then is the moment for the soul to renounce. When it does, a radiant light it becomes.

*Tirumantiram* 1615. TM

The *tapasvins* many that live by alms have no life hereafter. On them shall be showered all blessings of spiritual wealth. They that perform *tapas* incessant attain the power to end all births to be.

*Tirumantiram* 1803. TM

The scriptures exalt above every other good the greatness of virtuous renunciates. Those who perfectly renounce attain the highest peak; the rest remain ensnared in delusion's net.

*Tirukural* 21; 348. WW

Hail, O *sannyāsin*, you who knows no guile! Establish in your heart and worship there that Taintless One—Pañchākshara's inmost core, whom neither Vishṇu nor Brahmā had power to comprehend. You who regards all others as yourself—who in this world can be compared with you? The powerful *karma* your past deeds have wrought will vanish without trace. Daily, on the thought "Is not this *jīva* Śiva?" you must meditate.

*Natchintanai*, "O Sannyasin!" NT, 146

On those who wholeheartedly surrender their possessions, souls and bodies, Naṭarāja, the Gracious Giver, will at once bestow His golden lotus feet. That is the truth!

*Natchintanai*, "Body Is a Temple." NT, 99



Jñānī  
ज्ञानी

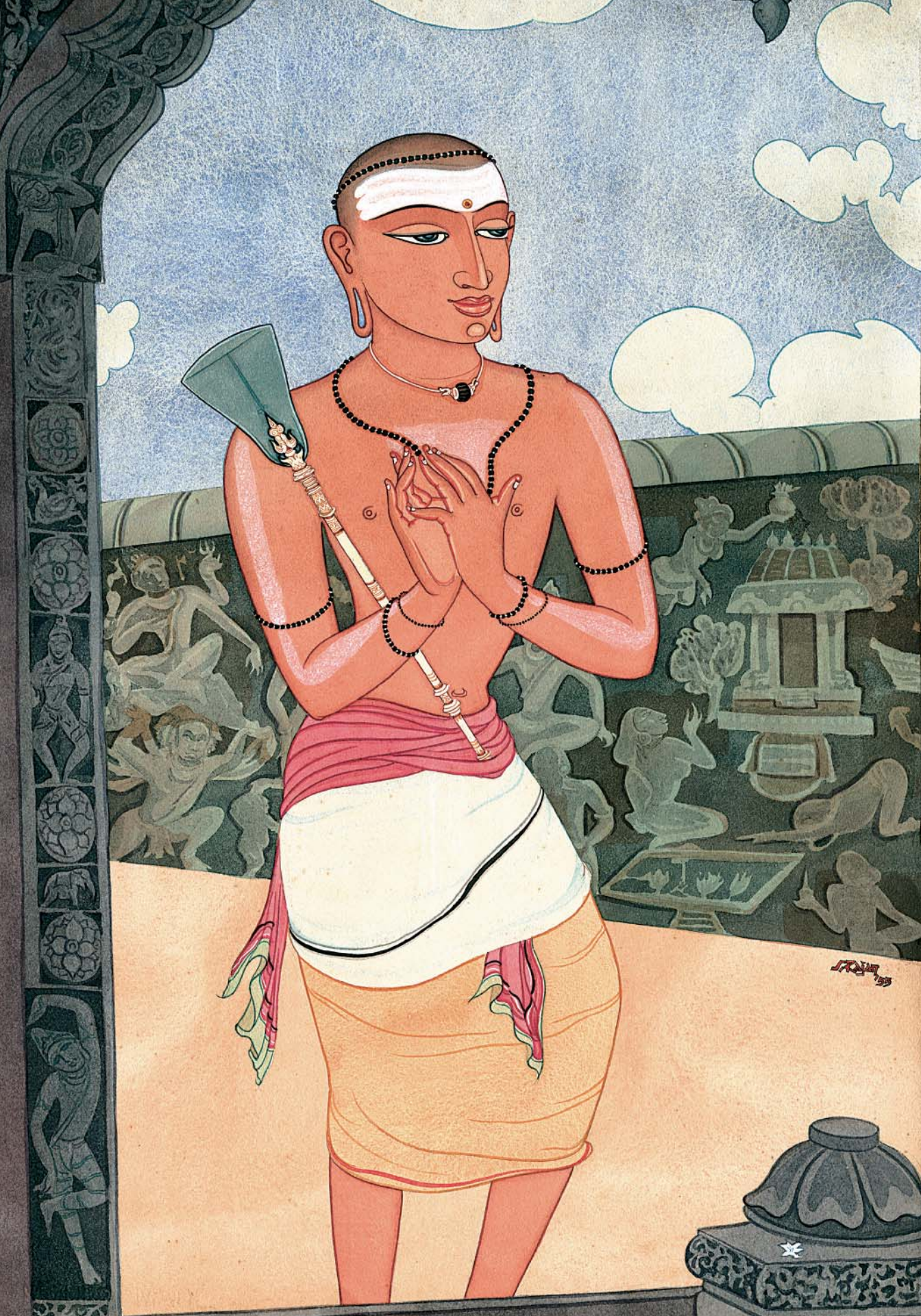


## Knowers of God

Purified, empty, peaceful, breathless, selfless, infinite, indestructible, stable, eternal, unborn, free, he is established in his own glory. Having seen the Self who is established in His own glory, he looks upon the wheel of life as a wheel that rolls on.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 6.28. ve, 440*





## Who Are Hinduism’s Spiritual Leaders?

### ŚLOKA 121

The saints, sages and *satgurus* who commune with God and Gods through devotion and meditation are Hinduism’s holy men and women. We revere them and strive to follow their example and words of wisdom. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

There are and have always been many holy men and women within the Sanātana Dharma. They are considered holy because of their loving surrender to God and the Gods, their dedication to our faith, their accomplishments and profound realizations. Their knowing is more important than their learning, their purity more essential than their position. It is very difficult to be so disciplined and devoted, and so we honor and love those who have attained God’s grace, and worship the Divine within them, not their personality or humanness. Because of Hinduism’s great diversity and decentralized organization, holy ones are not universally canonized, for there is no single ecclesiastical hierarchy to do this. Still, saints, sages and *satgurus* are sanctified by followers within their own *sampradāya*. Each within his or her own sphere of devotees is the authority on religious matters, listened to and obeyed as such. The *Vedas* declare, “Not understanding, and yet desirous to do so, I ask the wise who know, myself not knowing: ‘Who may He be, the One in the form of the Unborn, who props in their place the six universal regions?’” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Saint Tirunavukarasar lived in South India in the eighth century. Calling himself the servant of the servants of Śiva, he loved to clean the paths in front of temples and carried a tool for the task. He wrote holy hymns that are sung today by millions.*



## What Is a Saint, a Sage and a Satguru?

### ŚLOKA 122

Saints, devoid of ego, reflect the peace, humility and purity of a devout life. Sages, though perfectly liberated, may outwardly appear detached and ordinary. *Satgurus*, also fully enlightened, guide others on the path. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The saints, or *sants*, of Hinduism are honored as exemplars of our faith. Often living the householder *dharma*, they teach us how to act and how to serve the Gods. The purity of the saint's heart is evident in his or her words and deportment. There are others in our religion who are inwardly pure and awakened, but who do not outwardly display their attainment. These are known as sages and often live as secluded *munis* or wander as homeless mendicants, remaining aloof from the world. *Satgurus* are the masterful guides and mystical awakeners who bring us into the fullness of spiritual life. They are initiated *swāmīs* of recognized spiritual lineages. Sages and *satgurus* are the most honored among holy men, beings of the highest attainment. Both are unmarried renunciates. Sages are generally *nirvāṇīs*, reposing within their realization; *satgurus* are *upadeśīs*, actively guiding others to Truth. The *Vedas* offer this praise, "We celebrate with dedicated acts the greatness of the illustrious supermen amidst enlightened persons, who are pure, most wise, thought-inspirers, and who enjoy both kinds of our oblations—physical and spiritual." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The Vedas speak of 108 Maruts, a devonic troop who assist Vayu with clouds and rain. When Indra offended them, Sage Agastya came to their aid. Indra attacked the fire-worship with His vajra. Agastya, father of the Tamil language, prevailed.*



## Are There Other Terms for Holy Ones?

### ŚLOKA 123

Many terms name Hindu masters, teachers and aspirants including: *jīvanmukta*, *ṛishi*, *muni*, *siddha*, *mahātma*, *guru*, *swāmī*, *sannyāsin*, *tapasvin*, *yogī*, *sādhu*, *sādhaka*, *paṇḍita*, *āchārya*, *śāstrī*, *pujārī*, *śishya* and *brahmachārī*. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

A *jīvanmukta* is a liberated soul. *Ṛishi* refers to a venerated sage or seer. A *muni* is an ecstatic mystic, especially one living in seclusion or vowed to silence. *Siddha* refers to a perfected being or one who has attained magical powers. *Mahātma* denotes a great soul or renowned *guru*. The term *guru* usually describes a spiritual master, but can connote a teacher of any subject. A *sannyāsin*, or *swāmī*, is a formally ordained renunciate monk. A *tapasvin* is an ascetic seeking purification through rigorous disciplines. The *yogī* is dedicated to intense meditation for inner attainment. *Sādhu* is a general term for a holy man or wandering mendicant. A *sādhaka* is a serious seeker of the Self, and is often a monk. The *āchārya*, like the *paṇḍita*, is a respected teacher and advisor. *Śāstrī* refers to an expert in scripture. A *pujārī* is a temple priest. A *śishya* is a formal disciple. A *brahmachārī* is a celibate student, often under simple vows. Some titles have feminine equivalents, such as *sādhvī*, *yogīnī* and *brahmachārīnī*. The *Vedas* explain, “The *brahmachārī* moves, strengthening both the worlds. In him the *devas* meet in concord; he upholds Earth and Heaven.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*As Viṣṇu reclines behind upon the great serpent, Vaiṣṇava philosopher Ramanuja worships the Lord's jeweled crown, insignia of His rule. Ramanuja wears the distinctive Y-shaped mark, ūrdhvapuṇḍra tilaka, representing Viṣṇu's lotus feet.*



S. RAJAT,

## What Is the Nature of Guru Protocol?

### ŚLOKA 124

*Guru* protocol, as outlined in the *Kulārṇava Tantra* and *Guru Gītā*, defines the traditional ways of relating to one’s spiritual preceptor to draw forth his wisdom and blessings and fully understand his inner nature. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Guru* protocol can be understood in three parts: devotional acts, codes of harmony and prohibitions. Devotional acts include serving the *guru*, prostrating daily and offering a gift in love, chanting his name and meditating on his inner form as the embodiment of the Divine, partaking of *uc̥chishṭa*—waters from his holy sandals, and his food leavings—emulating his awakened qualities, seeking initiation and striving for Self Realization as he directs. Codes of harmony include seeking his blessings, obeying his directions, keeping no secrets and honoring his lofty presence. Prohibitions include never contradicting or arguing with the *guru*, never criticizing him, nor listening to criticism by others, not imitating his dress or deportment, not standing or sitting above him, nor walking or driving ahead of him; not assuming authority in his presence, nor uttering words of falsehood or contempt, and not initiating conversation or asking questions unless invited. The *Kulārṇava Tantra* explains, “Be always in service of the *guru*, ever in his presence, giving up desire and anger, humble and devoted, lauding in spirit, upright in doing his work.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The Vedic brāhmin Somasimarar enters the hermitage of his satguru, Tīru Sambandar, offering fruits and touching the grace-giving feet of this illumined soul. Gurus may be solitary wandering swāmīs or heads of populous monastery complexes.*





## What Is the Satguru's Unique Function?

### ŚLOKA 125

To transcend the mind and reach the ultimate goal, seekers need the guidance of a *satguru*, an enlightened master who has followed the path to its natural end and can lead them to the Divine within themselves. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The *satguru* is the devotee's spiritual guide and preceptor, friend and companion on the path. Having become religion's consummation, the *satguru* can see where others are and know what their next step should be. Nothing is more precious than the first soul-quickenning, life-changing *śaktipāta* from a *guru*. Nothing is more central to spiritual awakening than the progressive *dīkshās*, or initiations, he bestows. A *satguru* is needed because the mind is so cunning and the ego is a self-perpetuating mechanism. It is he who inspires, assists, guides and impels the *śishya* toward the Self of himself. The *satguru*, perfected in his relationship with Śiva, administrates the *sādhana* and *tapas* that slowly incinerate the seeds of *sañchita karmas*. It is his task to preside over the annihilation of the *śishya's* ego and subconscious dross, all the while guiding the awakened *kuṇḍalinī* force so that safe, steady progress can be made from stage to stage. The *Āgamas* affirm, "Individuals who become, by the grace of Śiva, eager to extricate themselves from worldly fetters, obtain initiation from a competent preceptor into the path that leads to Śivasāyujya." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Outside a bucolic town, a satguru, holding the yogadaṇḍa, lifts his hand to bless a sincere seeker, then lightly places his foot on the devotee's head. Such rare benediction confers immense grace and dispels the dross of ego and the thralldom of māyā.*

He should be known as one liberated while alive. He is blessed and is of fulfilled duties. After giving up the state of being liberated while alive, when the time arrives for his quitting the body, he enters the state of disembodied liberation, even as the air attains the state of nonmovement.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Paiṅgala Upanishad* 3.5. UPR, 918

He should fulfill, according to the rules ordained, for twelve years the observance of *brahmacharya*, such as the service of the *guru*.

*Atharva Veda, Naraḍaparivrājaka Upanishad* 1. UPA, 135

The Self resides within the lotus of the heart. Knowing this, consecrated to the Self, the sage enters daily that holy sanctuary. Absorbed in the Self, the sage is freed from identity with the body and lives in blissful consciousness.

*Sāma Veda, Çhandogya Upanishad* 8.3.3-4. UPP, 122

Let him approach him properly, with mind and senses tranquil and peaceful. Then will this master disclose the essence of the knowledge of Brahman whereby may be known the imperishable Real, the Person.

*Atharva Veda, Muṅḍaka Upanishad* 1.2.13. VE, 415

Without regard for themselves, without urges and efforts, absorbed in contemplation and established in the higher Self, they endeavor to remove evil deeds and surrender their bodies by renunciation. Such is a *paramahaṁsa*, such indeed is a *paramahaṁsa*!

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Jābāla Upanishad* 6. VE, 441

Earnest seekers who worship enlightened ones at sight—with perfume, flowers, water, fruits, incense, clothing and food, or by word, deed and thought—are absolved then and there.

*Devikālottara Āgama, Jñāna-āchara-vichara* 83. RM, 117

The *guru* who has attained Self Realization can alone help the aspirant in acquiring it.

*Śiva Sūtras* 2.6. YS, 102

Those who themselves have seen the Truth can be thy teachers of wisdom. Ask from them, bow unto them, be thou unto them a servant.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 4.34. BGM, 64

One should worship his *guru* by daily performing full prostrations to him. By worship, one attains steadiness and ultimately realizes one's own true nature.

*Guru Gītā* 97. GG, 37

At the root of *dhyāna* is the form of the *guru*. At the root of *pūjā* are the feet of the *guru*. At the root of *mantra* is the word of the *guru*, and at the root of all liberation is the grace of the *guru*.

*Kulārṇava Tantra* 8.1. KT, 77

Where there is a holy man of divine worth who pursues the Lord, that all space embraces; there enemies are none. Rains in abundance fall. Full is the people's contentment. No evil befalls that land.

*Tirumantiram* 1868. TM

The heart of the holy trembles not in fear. All passions stilled, it enjoys calm unruffled. Neither is there death nor pain, nor night nor day, nor fruits of *karma* to experience. That, truly, is the state of those who have renounced desire.

*Tirumantiram* 1624. TM

One who has realized by himself his soul's Self will be worshiped by all other souls.

*Tirukural* 268. ww

God is the Life of our lives. Therefore, we are His possessions. We are His bondsmen. All our movements are His movements. We can never forget Him. We are lacking in nothing. We are forever. We are everywhere. We know everything. By ceaselessly meditating and contemplating in this way, let us eliminate baser qualities and attain the higher, divine reality.

*Natchintanai*, "God Is Our All." NT, 8

A hundred times greater than the joy of the heaven of the ancestors is the joy of the heaven of the celestial beings. A hundred times greater than the joy of the heaven of the celestial beings is the joy of the *devas* who have attained divinity through holy works. A hundred times greater than the joy of the *devas* who have attained divinity through holy works is the joy of the Gods who were born divine, and of him who has sacred wisdom, who is pure and free from desire.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* 4.4.33. UPM, 137



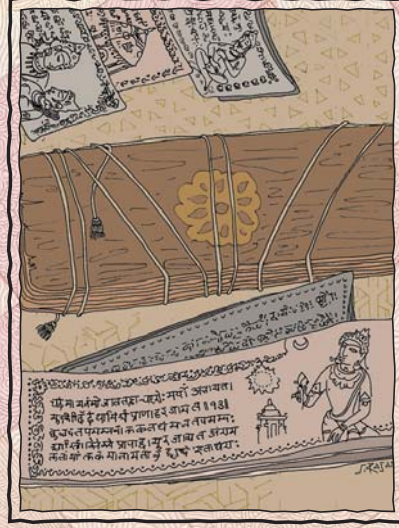
Śāstram  
शास्त्रम्



UPANISHAD TEN  
**Sacred Scripture**



Śrutih  
श्रुतिः



## Revealed Scripture

As when a fire is lit with damp fuel, different clouds of smoke come forth, in the same way from this great Being are breathed forth the *Ṛig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*.

*Sukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2.4.10. VE, 691*





## What Are Hindu Revealed Scriptures?

### ŚLOKA 126

The *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, revealed by God, are Hinduism’s sovereign scriptures, called *śruti*, “that which is heard.” Their timeless truths are expressed in the most extraordinarily profound mystical poetry known to man. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Veda*, from *vid*, “to know,” means “supreme wisdom or science.” Similarly, *Āgama*, which names the sacred sectarian revelations, means “descent of knowledge.” The *Vedas* and *Āgamas* are eternal truths transmitted by God through great clairaudient and clairvoyant *ṛishis*. They are Hinduism’s primary and most authoritative scriptures, expounding life’s sacredness and man’s purpose on the planet. These psalms of wisdom were disclosed over many centuries, memorized and orally conveyed from generation to generation within priestly families, then finally written down in Sanskrit in the last few millennia. The subtly symbolic language of *śruti*, the cherished word of God, is lyrical and lofty. In imparting religious practice, rules and doctrine, the *Vedas* are general and the *Āgamas* specific. The *Vedas* extol and invoke a multiplicity of Gods through elaborate fire rituals called *yajña*. The *Āgamas* center around a single Deity and His worship with water, flowers and lights in sanctified temples and shrines. The *Tirumantiram* lauds, “Two are the scriptures that Lord Śiva revealed—the primal *Vedas* and the perfect *Āgamas*.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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A *ṛishi*, his knotted hair high on his head, scribes verses on a palm leaf. Sitting before a *Śivaliṅga*, he listens intently to the divine voice within, writing down all he hears. The source is none other than Lord Śiva, whose hand and noose are barely visible.



சென்னை நகரில் உள்ள பழைய கல்வெட்டு

RAJAT

## What Is the Nature of the *Veda* Texts?

### ŚLOKA 127

The holy *Vedas*, man's oldest scripture, dating back 6,000 to 8,000 years, are a collection of four books: the *Rig*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*. Each has four sections: hymns, rites, interpretation and philosophical instruction. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The oldest and core portions of the *Vedas* are the four *Samhitās*, “hymn collections.” They consist of invocations to the One Divine and the Divinities of nature, such as the Sun, the Rain, the Wind, the Fire and the Dawn—as well as prayers for matrimony, progeny, prosperity, concord, domestic rites, formulas for magic, and more. They are composed in beautiful metrical verses, generally of three or four lines. The heart of the entire *Veda* is the 10,552-verse *Rig Samhitā*. The *Sāma* and *Yajur Samhitās*, each with about 2,000 verses, are mainly liturgical selections from the *Rig*; whereas most of the *Atharva Samhitā*'s nearly 6,000 verses of prayers, charms and rites are unique. The *Sāma* is arranged for melodious chanting, the *Yajur* for cadenced intonation. Besides its *Samhitā*, each *Veda* includes one or two *Brāhmaṇas*, ceremonial handbooks, and *Āraṇyakas*, ritual interpretations, plus many inestimable *Upanishads*, metaphysical dialogs. In all there are over 100,000 Vedic verses, and some prose, in dozens of texts. The *Tirumantiram* confirms, “There is no *dharma* other than what the *Vedas* say. *Dharma*'s central core the *Vedas* proclaim.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Using the traditional elutani tool, a paṇḍita scribes memorized Vedic verses. His work is illumined by an oil lamp and relieved by tea and sweets his wife has left at his side. For centuries the Vedas were passed on orally, then finally transcribed.*



JKAJAT 202

## How Are the *Vedas* Significant Today?

ŚLOKA 128

The *Vedas*, the ultimate scriptural authority, permeate Hinduism's thought, ritual and meditation. They open a rare window into ancient Bharata society, proclaiming life's sacredness and the way to oneness with God. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Like the Taoist *Tao te Ching*, the Buddhist *Dhammapada*, the Sikh *Ādi Granth*, the Jewish *Torah*, the Christian *Bible* and the Muslim *Koran*—the *Veda* is the Hindu holy book. For untold centuries unto today, it has remained the sustaining force and authoritative doctrine, guiding followers in ways of worship, duty and enlightenment—*upāsanā*, *dharma* and *jñāna*. The *Vedas* are the meditative and philosophical focus for millions of monks and a billion seekers. Their stanzas are chanted from memory by priests and laymen daily as liturgy in temple worship and domestic ritual. All Hindus wholeheartedly accept the *Vedas*, yet each draws selectively, interprets freely and amplifies abundantly. Over time, this tolerant allegiance has woven the varied tapestry of Bharata Dharma. Today the *Vedas* are published in Sanskrit, English, French, German and other languages. But it is the metaphysical and popular *Upanishads* which have been most amply and ably translated. The *Vedas* say, “Just as the spokes are affixed to the hub of a wheel, so are all things established in life, the *Ṛig* and *Yajur* and *Sāma Veda*, sacrifice, the nobility and also the priesthood.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A father and his sons chant Vedic mantras together outside their adobe dwelling. The boys struggle earnestly to master the Sanskrit verses, as father patiently repeats them again and again in daily practice sessions. Lord Śiva listens from the Śivaloka.*



## What Is the Nature of the Holy *Āgamas*?

ŚLOKA 129

The *Āgamas*, Sanātana Dharma's second authority, are revelations on sacred living, worship, *yoga* and philosophy. Śaivism, Śāktism and Vaishṇavism each exalts its own array of *Āgamas*, many over 2,000 years old. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

In the vast Āgamic literature, tradition counts 92 main *Śaiva Āgamas*—10 Śiva, 18 Rudra and 64 Bhairava—77 *Śākta Āgamas* and 108 *Vaishṇava Pañcharātra Āgamas*. Most *Āgamas* are of four parts, called *pādas*, and possess thousands of metered Sanskrit verses, usually of two lines. The *charyā pāda* details daily religious observance, right conduct, the *guru-śishya* relationship, community life, house design and town planning. The *kriyā pāda*, commonly the longest, extols worship and temples in meticulous detail—from site selection, architectural design and iconography, to rules for priests and the intricacies of daily *pūjā*, annual festivals and home-shrine devotionals. The *yoga pāda* discloses the interior way of meditation, of *rāja yoga*, *mantra* and *tantra* which stimulates the awakening of the slumbering serpent, *kuṇḍalinī*. The *jñāna pāda* narrates the nature of God, soul and world, and the means for liberation. The *Tirumantiram* declares, “*Veda* and *Āgama* are Irai-*van's* scriptures. Both are truth: one is general, the other specific. While some say these words of God reach two different conclusions, the wise see no difference.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*As two sentinels stand guard, a king in his throne room listens as a paṇḍita reads from the Āgamas, Hinduism's primary source of authentic spiritual guidance in matters of worship, yoga, festivals, community life, housing and temple building.*





SRJAT

## How Are the *Āgamas* Significant Today?

ŚLOKA 130

While the *Vedas*, with myriad Deities, bind all Hindus together, the *Āgamas*, with a single supreme God, unify each sect in a oneness of thought, instilling in adherents the joyful arts of divine adoration. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

God is love, and to love God is the pure path prescribed in the *Āgamas*. Veritably, these texts are God's own voice admonishing the *samsārī*, reincarnation's wanderer, to give up love of the transient and adore instead the Immortal. How to love the Divine, when and where, with what *mantras* and visualizations and at what auspicious times, all this is preserved in the *Āgamas*. The specific doctrines and practices of day-to-day Hinduism are nowhere more fully expounded than in these revelation hymns, delineating everything from daily work routines to astrology and cosmology. So overwhelming is Āgamic influence in the lives of most Hindus, particularly in temple liturgy and culture, that it is impossible to ponder modern Sanātana Dharma without these discourses. While many *Āgamas* have been published, most remain inaccessible, protected by families and guilds who are stewards of an intimate hereditary knowledge. The *Tirumantiram* says, "Nine are the *Āgamas* of yore, in time expanded into twenty-eight, they then took divisions three, into one truth of Vedānta-Siddhānta to accord. That is Śuddha Śaiva, rare and precious." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Holding a Śivaliṅga, Basavanna, a prime minister and Vira Śaiva reformer, offers flowers for pūjā. The Āgamas expound on worship, astrology, cosmology and more. Behind, a man chases a serpent and a woman asks a beggar to return after her pūjā.*

The efforts of man are stated to be of two kinds, those that transcend scriptures and those that are according to scriptures. Those that transcend scriptures tend to harm, while those that are according to scriptures tend to Reality.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Mukti Upanishad 2. UPA, 7*

There, where there is no darkness, nor night, nor day, nor being, nor nonbeing, there is the Auspicious One, alone, absolute and eternal. There is the glorious splendor of that Light from whom in the beginning sprang ancient wisdom.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 4.18. VE, 83-84*

Taking as a bow the great weapon of the *Upanishad*, one should put upon it an arrow sharpened by meditation. Stretching it with a thought directed to the essence of That, penetrate that Imperishable as the mark, my friend.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2.2.3. UPH, 372*

By the power of inner harmony and by the grace of God, Śvetāśvatara had the vision of Brahman. He then spoke to his nearest hermit-students about the supreme purification, about Brahman, whom the seers adore.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 6.21. UPM, 97*

*Aum.* One should meditate on this syllable as the Udgītha chant, for every chant starts with *Aum*. Of this the explanation is as follows. The essence of all beings is earth; the essence of earth is water; the essence of water is plants; the essence of plants is man; the essence of man is speech; the essence of speech is the *Ṛig Veda*; the essence of the *Ṛig Veda* is the *Sāma Veda*, and the essence of the *Sāma Veda* is the Udgītha chant.

*Sāma Veda, Çhandogya Upanishad 1.1.1-2. VE, 772*

The Śaivism of Siddhānta is the Śaivism of the *Āgamas*, the first of which is the *Kāmika*.

*Kāraṇa Āgama 65. SA, 158*

Riches from obloquy free, the spreading sky and Earth, the directions all, and the godly hosts who there hold sway, all flourish in victory's wake when *brahmins* true, with *Vedas* commencing, pursue the sacrificial way.

*Tirumantiram 214. TM*

In the beautiful *Veda*, aptly named the *Ṛig*, as the moving mood behind He stood. In the trembling chant of the Vedic priests He stood, Himself the eye of vision central.

*Tirumantiram* 53. TM

By the grace of the Lord I came to realize the inner meaning of the *Āgamas*, which are on par with the *Vedas*, the greatest of the scriptures that thrill the heart. All the world may well attain the bliss I have—who hold firmly to the heavenly secret the books impart, who chant the hymns that thrill the flesh and swell the heart. Strive, always strive, then it will come.

*Tirumantiram* 84-85. TM

Behold the father of the elephant-faced Gaṇapati who dons the *konrai* garland and has matted locks, the author of the ageless *Vedas*, the Auspicious One. He is ours by virtue of spiritual efforts (*tapas*). He abides in the hallowed temple of Ramesvaram.

*Tirumurai*

A thousand scriptures speak of His attributes and signs, His shrines, His paths, His greatness—O witless people, that your hearts have not been won!

*Tirumurai* 5.204.6. PS, 95

As heaven resounded with Hara's name, with the chants of the *Veda* and *Āgama*, and the hymns of the learned *brāhmins*, the Highest God in Notittanmalai showed me the path, the Lord who gives all blessings gave me a splendid elephant to ride.

*Tirumurai* 7.100.8. PS, 322

May the sun and moon be my protection! May all beings everywhere be my protection! May *mantras* and *tantras* be my protection! May the four *Vedas*, the *Śaiva Āgamas* and the whole world be my protection!

*Natchintanai*, "My Protection." NT, 239

The body is a temple, the controlled mind the acolyte. Love is the *pūjā*. Know that! Through this device you'll find that naught is lacking. That is what the *Vedas* declare. The Lord, who not a whit is separated from you, those of impure mind can never see. The mind is a temple; the soul is its lamp. Meditate, meditate! Then Truth will dawn for you.

*Natchintanai*, "The Body Is a Temple." NT, 98



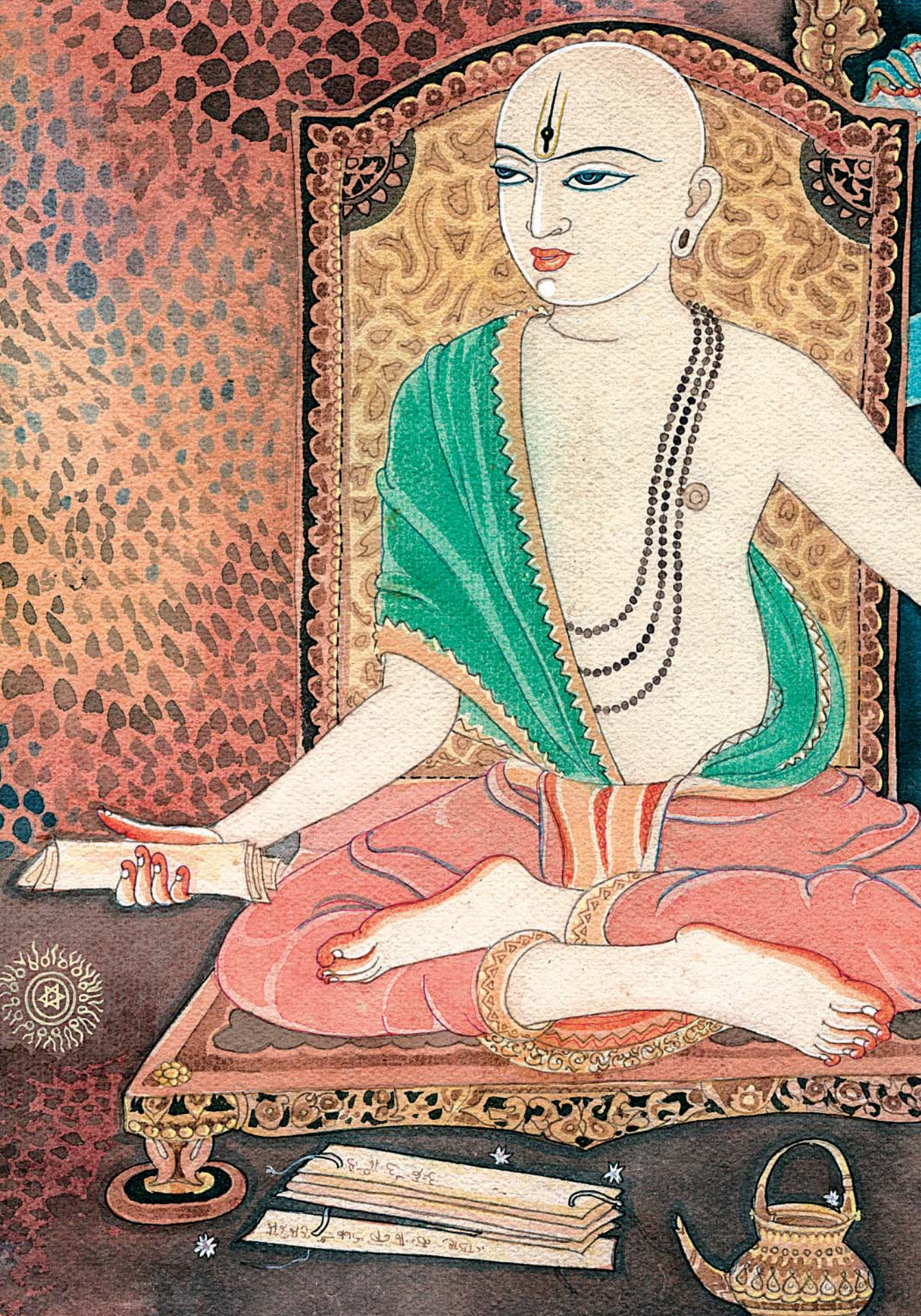
Smṛitiḥ  
स्मृतिः



## Secondary Scripture

The Word, verily, is greater than name. The Word, in fact, makes known the *Rig Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the *Atharva Veda* as the fourth, and the ancient lore as the fifth: the *Veda of Vedas*, the ritual for ancestors, calculus, the augural sciences, the knowledge of the signs of the times, ethics, political science, sacred knowledge, theology, knowledge of the spirits, military science, astrology, the science of snakes and of celestial beings.

*Sāma Veda, Çhandogya Upanishad 7.2.1. VE, 111*



## Do Smṛiti and Sacred Literature Differ?

ŚLOKA 131

Hindu sacred literature is a treasury of hymns, legend, mythology, philosophy, science and ethics. From among this vast body of writings, each lineage recognizes a select portion as its secondary scripture, called *smṛiti*. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

While the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* are shared as part of every Hindu's primary scripture, *śruti*, each sect and lineage defines its own unique set of *smṛiti*. The sacred literature, *punya śāstra*, from which *smṛiti* is drawn consists of writings, both ancient and modern, in many languages. Especially central are the ancient Sanskritic texts, such as the *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and *Dharma Śāstras*, which are widely termed the classical *smṛiti*. In reality, while many revere these as *smṛiti*, others regard them only as sacred literature. *Smṛiti* means “that which is remembered” and is known as “the tradition,” for it derives from human insight and experience and preserves the course of culture. While *śruti* comes from God and is eternal and universal, the ever-growing *smṛiti* canon is written by man. Hinduism's sacred literature is the touchstone of theater and dance, music, song and pageantry, *yoga* and *sādhana*, metaphysics and ethics, exquisite art and hallowed sciences. The *Vedas* inquire, “In whom are set firm the firstborn seers, the hymns, the songs and the sacrificial formulas, in whom is established the single seer—tell me of that support—who may He be?” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*A scholar, tulsi beads around his neck and the Vaishṇava tilaka on his forehead, holds a smṛiti text in his hand. Every Hindu sect has a vast sacred literature that guides daily life, tells stories, inspires theater, defines music and uplifts the spirit.*





## What Texts Amplify *Vedas* and *Āgamas*?

ŚLOKA 132

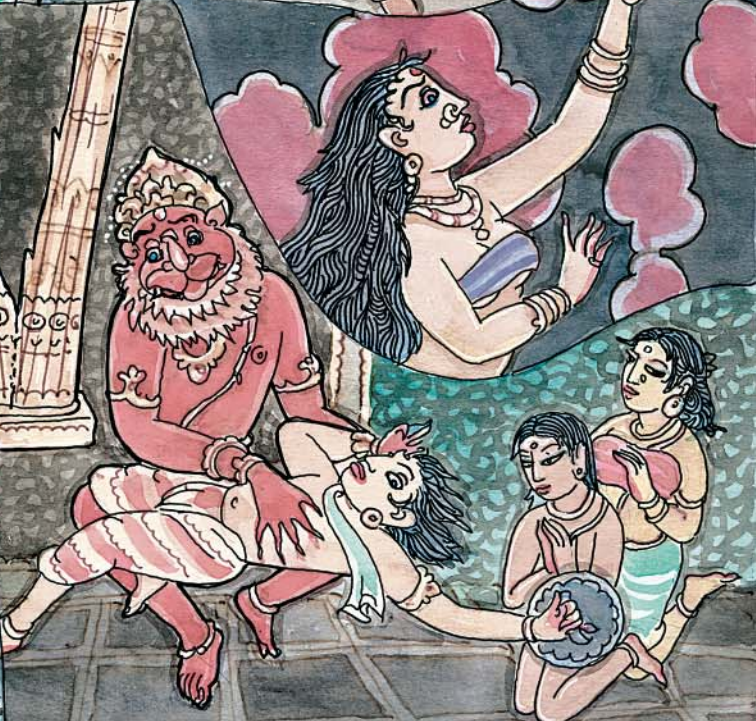
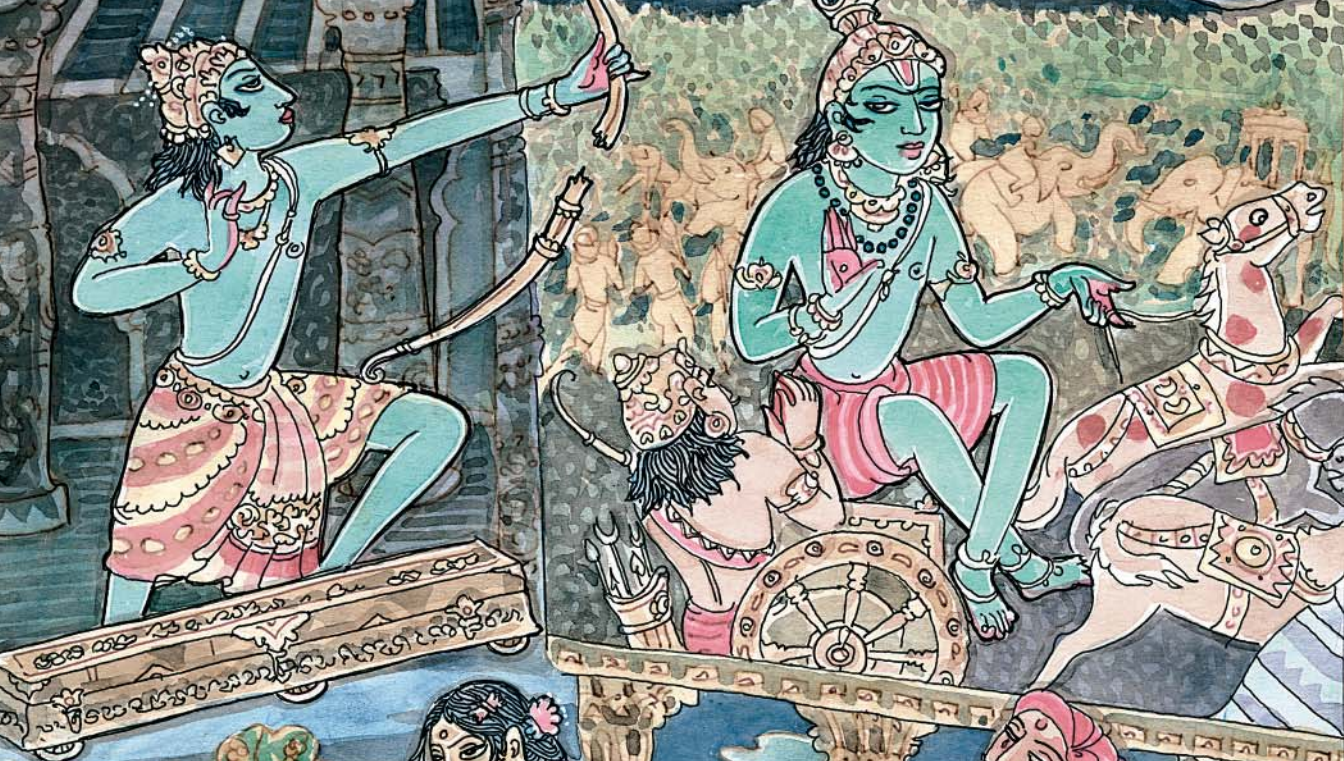
Many texts support the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. *Vedāṅgas* detail conduct, astrology, language and etymology. *Upavedas* unfold politics, health, warfare and music. *Upāgamas* and *Paddhatis* elaborate the *Āgamic* wisdom. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Much of Hinduism's practical knowledge is safeguarded in venerable texts which amplify *śruti*. The *Vedāṅgas* and *Upavedas* are collections of texts that augment and apply the *Vedas* as a comprehensive system of sacred living. *Jyotisha Vedāṅga* delineates auspicious timing for holy rites. *Kalpa Vedāṅga* defines public rituals in the *Śrauta* and *Śulba Sūtras*, domestic rites in the *Gṛihya Sūtras* and religious law in the *Dharma Śāstras*. Four other *Vedāṅgas* ensure the purity of *mantra* recitation, through knowledge of phonetics, grammar, poetry and the way of words. The *Upavedas* expound profound sciences: *Arthaveda* unfolds statecraft; *Āyurveda* sets forth medicine and health; *Dhanurveda* discusses military science; *Gāndharvaveda* illumines music and the arts; and *Sthāpatyaveda* explains architecture. In addition, the *Kāma Sūtras* detail erotic pleasures. The *Āgamas*, too, have ancillary texts, such as the *Upāgamas* and *Paddhatis*, which elaborate the ancient wisdom. The *Jñāneśvarī* says, "The *Vedas* in their perfection are as the beautiful image of the God of which the flawless words are the resplendent body. The *smṛitis* are the limbs thereof." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In the center, Śiva's holds the holiest of scriptures, the Vedas and Āgamas. Around these evolved an array of texts which guide statecraft, astrology, religious law, chanting, arts and more, seen here encribed on stone, wood, skins, pillars and scrolls.*



## Does Hinduism Have Epics and Myths?

ŚLOKA 133

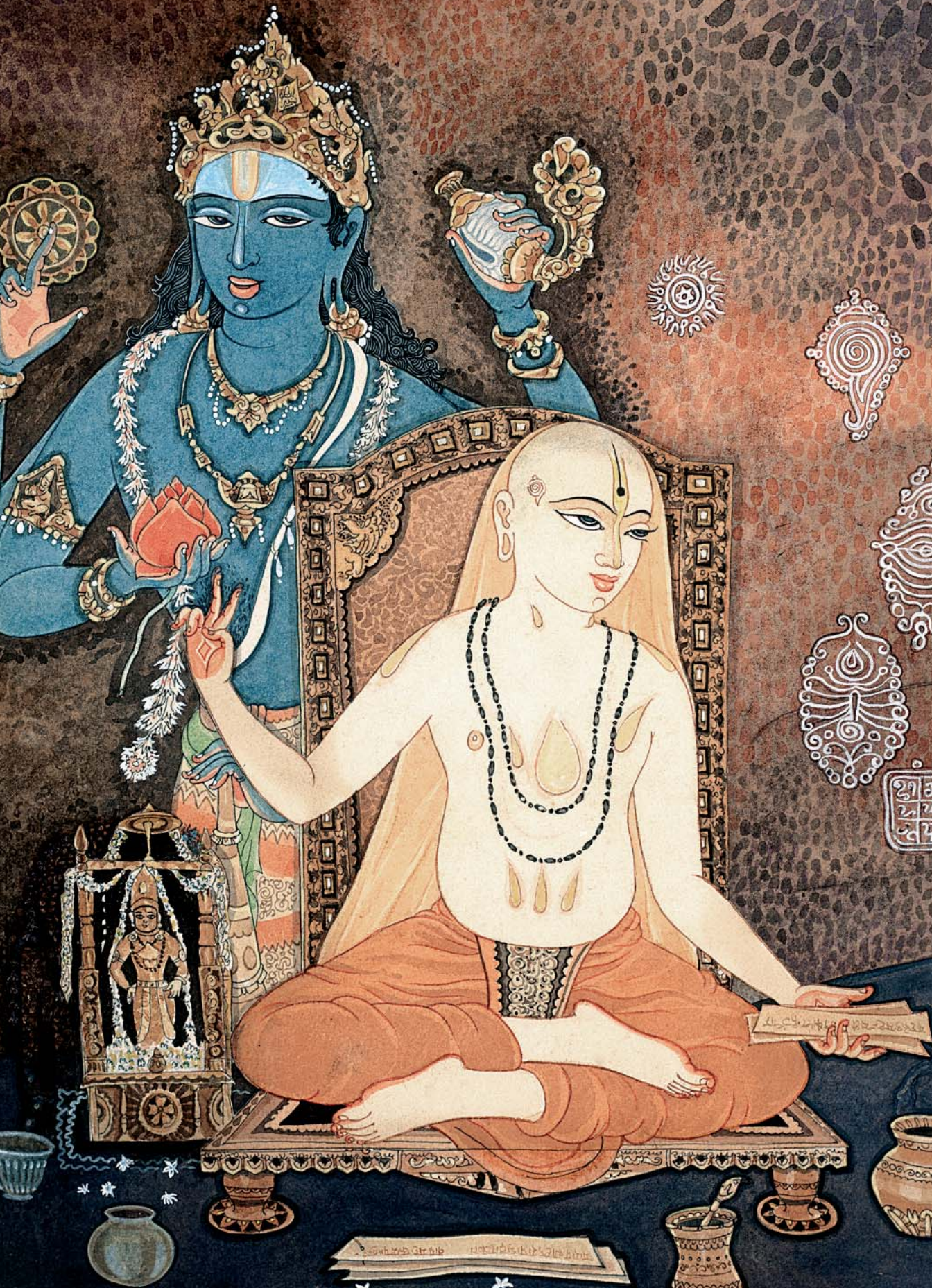
The *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* are Hinduism's most renowned epic histories, called *Itihāsa*. The *Purāṇas* are popular folk narratives, teaching faith, belief and ethics in mythology, allegory, legend and symbolism. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Hinduism's poetic stories of *ṛishis*, Gods, heroes and demons are sung by gifted *paṇḍitas* and traveling bards, narrated to children and portrayed in dramas and festivals. The *Mahābhārata*, the world's longest epic poem, is the legend of two ancient dynasties whose great battle of Kurukshetra is the scene of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the eloquent spiritual dialog between Arjuna and Kṛishṇa. The *Rāmāyaṇa* relates the life of Rāma, a heroic king revered as the ideal man. The *Purāṇas*, like the *Mahābhārata*, are encyclopedic in scope, containing teachings on *sādhana*, philosophy, *dharma*, ritual, language and the arts, architecture, agriculture, magic charms and more. Of eighteen principal *Purāṇas*, six honor God as Śiva, six as Viṣṇu and six as Brahmā. The witty *Pañchatantra*, eminent among the "story" literature, or *kathā*, portrays wisdom through animal fables and parables. The *Bhagavad Gītā* proclaims, "He who reads this sacred dialog of ours, by him I consider Myself worshiped through the sacrifice of knowledge. And the man who listens to it with faith and without scoffing, liberated, he shall attain to the happy realm of the righteous." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Clockwise, from smṛiti: Rāma breaks the bow to win Sita's hand; Kṛishṇa counsels Arjuna; Kannappan sacrifices his eyes; Kannagi burns Madurai; Viṣṇu as Narasiṃha; elephant king Gajendra beseeches Vishnu's help; Mareecha as a golden deer.*



## Are There Other Types of Sacred Texts?

### ŚLOKA 134

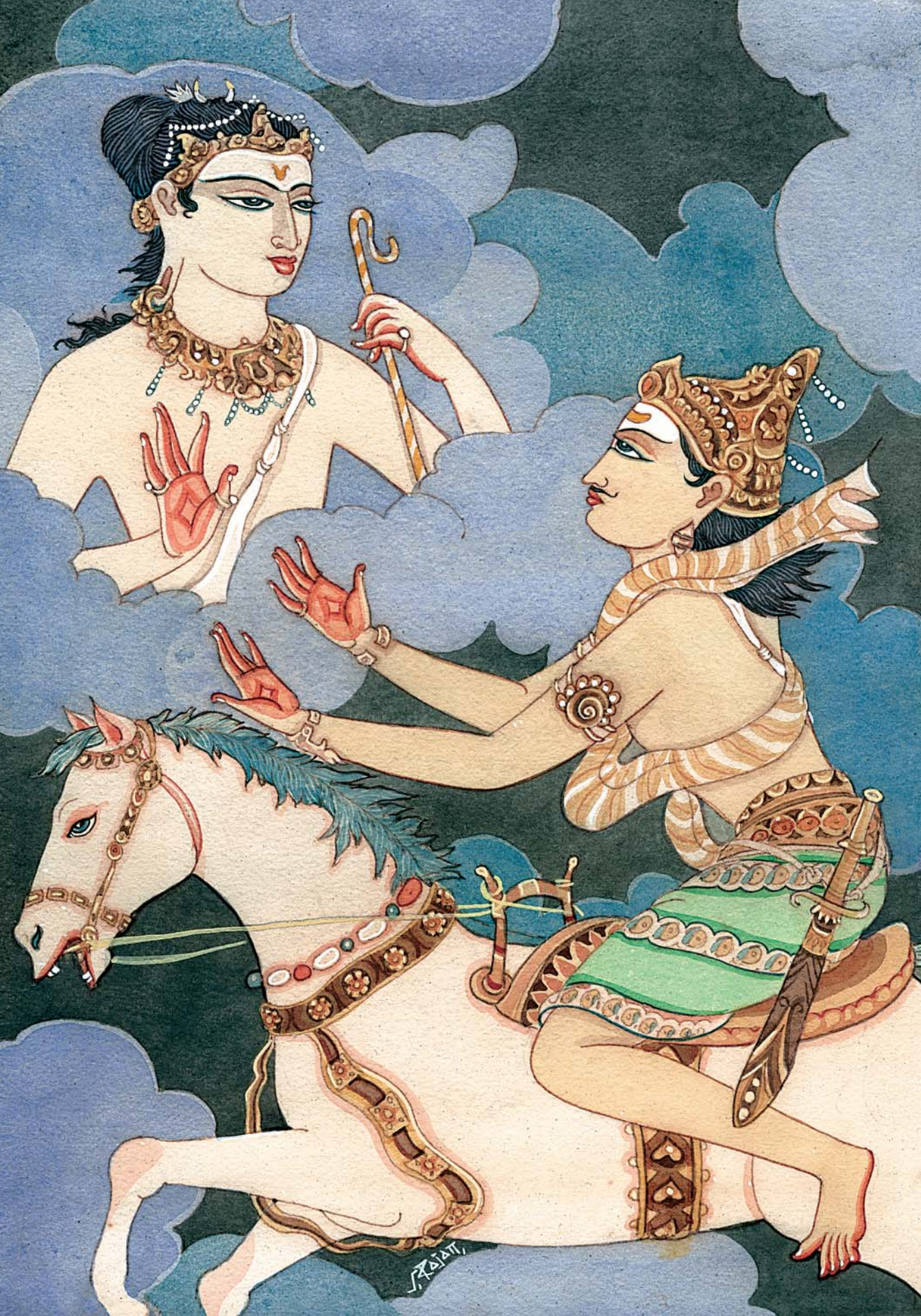
India's lofty philosophical texts expound diverse views in exacting dialectics. *Yoga* treatises unveil the mysterious path to ultimate *samādhis*. Intimate devotional hymns disclose the raptures of consummate Divine love. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

In addition to the epics, legends and supplements to the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, there is a wealth of Hindu metaphysical, *yogic* and devotional writings. Considered foundational are the early texts defining the six philosophical *darśanas*: the *sūtras* by Kapila, Patanjali, Jaimini, Badarayana, Kanada and Gautama. Hailed as leading occult works on *yoga*, *āsanas*, *nāḍīs*, *chakras*, *kuṇḍalinī* and *samādhi* are the *Yoga Sūtras*, *Tirumantiram*, *Yoga Vāsishṭha*, *Śiva Sūtras*, *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati*, *Jñāneśvarī*, *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* and *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā*. Widely extolled among the *bhakti* literature are the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Nārada Sūtras*, *Tiruvāṣaṅgam*, the *Vachanas* of the Śivaśaraṅās and the hymns of mystic poets like Surdas, Tukaram, Ramprasad, Mirabai, Andal, Vallabha, Tulasidasa, Tayumanavar, Lalla, Tagore, Auvaiyar and the saintly Nayanars and Alvars. The *Bhagavad Gītā* explains, “As a blazing fire reduces the wood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all activity to ashes. There is nothing on Earth which possesses such power to cleanse as wisdom. The perfect *yogin* finds this knowledge in himself by himself in due time.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*With Kṛishṇa behind, the staunchly dualistic, thirteenth-century Vedantin Madhva basks in the aftermath of his personal pūjā. He sits in the teaching pose, offering upadeśa on the Bhagavad Gītā. Madhva introduced sacred tattooing practices.*



ARTIST

## What Is the Source of This Catechism?

### ŚLOKA 135

The philosophical basis of this catechism is the monistic Śaiva Siddhānta of the Kailāsa Paramparā as expressed in the *Vedas*, *Śaiva Āgamas*, *Tirukural*, *Tirumurai*, *Tirumantiram* and contemporary scripture. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

This catechism, *praśnottaram*, is the creation of the living lineage of seers known as the Kailāsa Paramparā, of the South Indian Śaivite school called Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta, Advaita Siddhānta or monistic Śaiva Siddhānta. It reflects the teachings of the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*, the profound Tamil scriptures *Tirumurai* and *Tirukural* and the revelations of contemporary Kailāsa *gurus*. The *Tirumurai* is a twelve-book collection of hymns of numerous Śaivite saints. Most important among these is the *Tirumantiram*, a *siddha yoga* treatise by Rishi Tirumular, recording the Śaiva tenets in 3,047 verses. It is prized as the confluence of Siddhānta and Vedānta. The *Tirukural*, containing 1,330 couplets by the weaver saint Tiruvalluvar, is among the world's greatest ethical scriptures, sworn on in South Indian courts of law. *Natchintanai* are the sacred hymns of Sri Lanka's Sage Yogaswami. Tayumanavar says, "I meditate on the great light of the Siddhānta, the thought of all thoughts, the life of all life, which, existing in all objects without distinction, causes a spring of inestimably pure and happy nectar to flow for the good of its followers." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*This catechism derives from the Śaiva Siddhānta lineage. In this tradition, Saint Sambandar ascended to Mount Kailasa on an elephant. Hearing of this, a king whispered "Namaḥ Śivāya" in his horse's ear and rode to meet Sambandar in the Śivaloka.*



Just as the luminous day is born from light, so may the radiant singers shine far and wide! Truly, the poet's wisdom enhances the glory of the Ordinance decreed by God, the Powerful, the Ancient.

*Atharva Veda* 4.1.5-6. VE, 105

The Word also makes known Heaven, Earth, wind, space, the waters, fire, the Gods, men, animals, birds, grass and trees, all animals down to worms, insects and ants. It also makes known what is right and wrong, truth and untruth, good and evil, what is pleasing and what is unpleasing. Verily, if there were no Word, there would be knowledge neither of right and wrong, nor of truth and untruth, nor of the pleasing and unpleasing. The Word makes all this known. Meditate on the Word.

*Sāma Veda, Çhandogya Upanishad* 7.2.1. VE, 111

The man who rejects the words of the scriptures and follows the impulse of desire attains neither his perfection, nor joy, nor the Path Supreme. Let the scriptures be, therefore, thy authority as to what is right and what is not right.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 16.23-24. BGM, 111

Just as gold is freed from its dross only by fire, and acquires its shining appearance from heat, so the mind of a living being, cleansed from the filth of his actions and his desires through his love for Me, is transformed into My transcendent likeness. The mind is purified through the hearing and uttering of sacred hymns in My praise.

*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 11.14.25. HP, 378

If daily to his home the friends who love him come, and coming, bring delight to eyes that kindle bright, a man has found the whole of life within his soul.

*Pañchatantra*. PN, 218

He who worships the Liṅga, knowing it to be the first cause, the source of consciousness, the substance of the universe, is nearer to Me than any other being.

*Śiva Purāna* 1.18.159. HP, 227

With the help of the gardeners called Mind and Love, plucking the flower called Steady Contemplation, offering the water of the flood of the Self's own bliss, worship the Lord with the sacred formula of silence!

*Lalla.* IT, 360

Who will finish this suffering of mine? Who will take my burden on himself? Thy name will carry me over the sea of this world. Thou dost run to help the distressed. Now run to me, Nārāyaṇa, to me, poor and wretched as I am. Consider neither my merit nor my faults. Tukaram implores thy mercy.

*Tukaram.* TU, 114-115

The pot is a God. The winnowing fan is a God. The stone in the street is a God. The comb is a God. The bowstring is also a God. The bushel is a God and the spouted cup is a God. Gods, Gods, there are so many, there's no place left for a foot. There is only one God. He is our Lord of the meeting rivers.

*Vachana, Basavanna* 563. SO, 84

They will find enduring joy who praise the auspicious God who knows the four *Vedas* and the six sacred sciences, who is Himself the sacred Word recited by scholars of the scripture.

*Tirumurai* 2.147.1. PS, 110

The eighteen *Purāṇas* are the rich ornaments, and the theories propounded in them are the gems for which the rhythmic style provides the settings.

*Jñāneśvarī* 1.5. JN, 25

He has become earth, water, fire, air and ether. He has become the sun and moon. He has become the constellations of the stars. *Mantra* and *tantra* has He become. He has become the medicine and those who swallow it. He has become the Gods—Indra and all the rest. He has Himself become the universe entire. This soul and body, too, has He become. He has become the four *Vedas*. It is He who creates bondage and liberation, and it is He who destroys bondage and liberation. In the mornings and in the evenings, do this worship and know Siva!

*Natchintanai*, "Do This Worship and Know Śiva." NT, 144



## Mantrah मंत्रः



## Affirmations of Faith

By means of the hymns, one attains this world, by the sacrificial formulas, the space in-between, by holy chant, the world revealed by the sages. With the syllable *Aum* as his sole support, the wise man attains that which is peaceful, unaging, deathless, fearless—the Supreme.

*Atharva Veda, Prasna Upanishad 5.7. vE, 775*



## What Is the Holy Namaḥ Śivāya Mantra?

ŚLOKA 136

Namaḥ Śivāya is among the foremost Vedic *mantras*. It means “adoration to Śiva” and is called the Pañchākshara, or “five-letters.” Within its celestial tones and hues resides all of the intuitive knowledge of Śaivism. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Namaḥ Śivāya is the most holy name of God Śiva, recorded at the very center of the *Vedas* and elaborated in the *Śaiva Āgamas*. *Na* is the Lord’s concealing grace, *Ma* is the world, *Śi* stands for Śiva, *Vā* is His revealing grace, *Ya* is the soul. The five elements, too, are embodied in this ancient formula for invocation. *Na* is earth, *Ma* is water, *Śi* is fire, *Vā* is air, and *Ya* is ether, or *ākāśa*. Many are its meanings. Namaḥ Śivāya has such power, the mere intonation of these syllables reaps its own reward in salvaging the soul from bondages of the treacherous instinctive mind and the steel bands of a perfected externalized intellect. Namaḥ Śivāya quells the instinct, cuts through the steel bands and turns this intellect within and on itself, to face itself and see its ignorance. Sages declare that *mantra* is life, that *mantra* is action, that *mantra* is love and that the repetition of *mantra*, *japa*, bursts forth wisdom from within. The holy *Natchintanai* proclaims, “Namaḥ Śivāya is in truth both *Āgama* and *Veda*. Namaḥ Śivāya represents all *mantras* and *tantras*. Namaḥ Śivāya is our souls, our bodies and possessions. Namaḥ Śivāya has become our sure protection.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*God Śiva dances His dance of creation, preservation and dissolution within the five elements. Namaḥ Śivāya holds the secret of transformation, a power so perfect it can turn the instinctive nature, depicted as a ruffian, toward superconsciousness.*



RAJAT '86

## How Is Namaḥ Śivāya Properly Chanted?

ŚLOKA 137

The Pañchākshara Mantra, Namaḥ Śivāya, is repeated verbally or mentally, often while counting a *mālā* of *rudrāksha* beads, drawing the mind in upon itself to cognize Lord Śiva's infinite, all-pervasive presence. Aum.

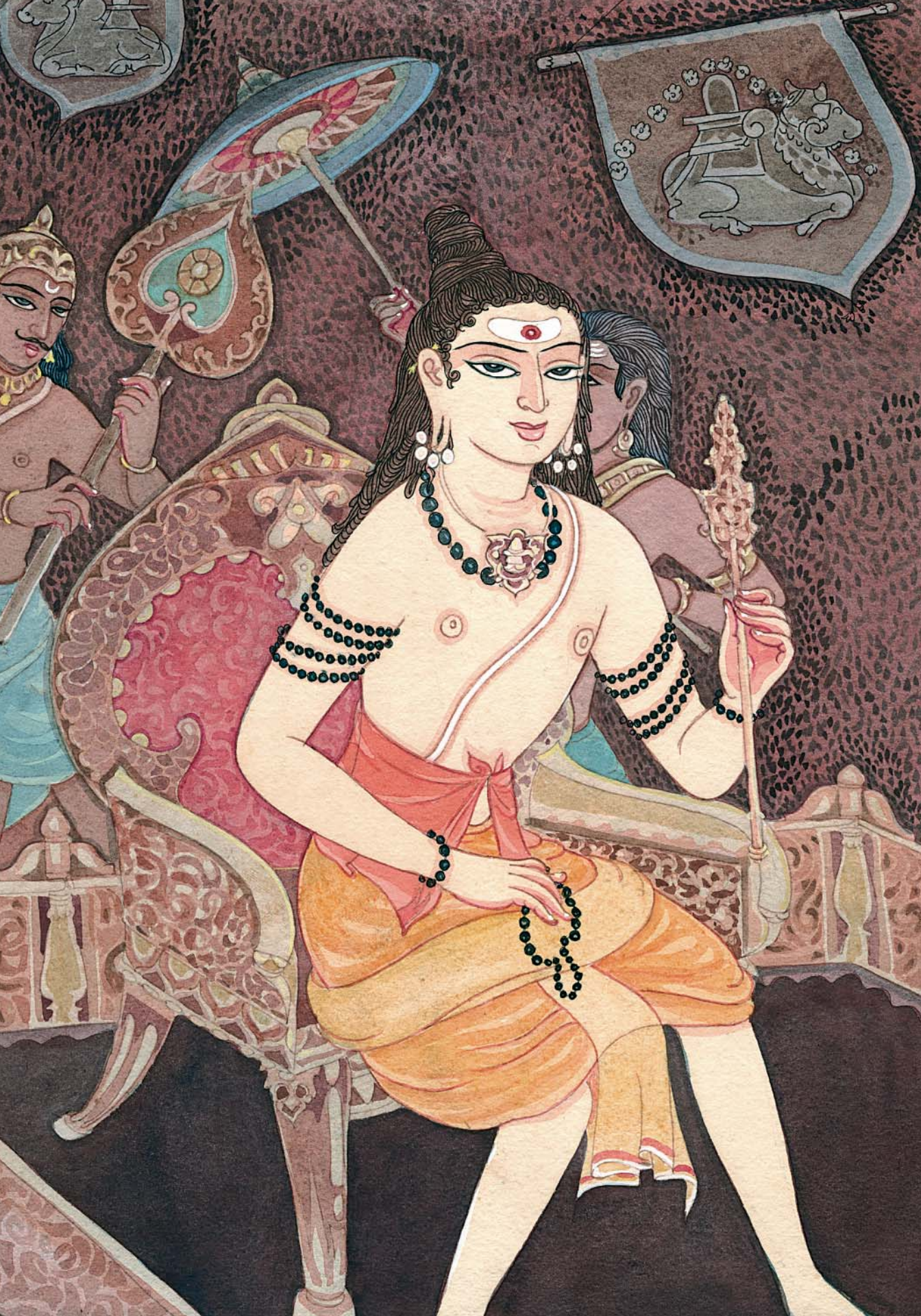
BHĀSHYA

*Japa yoga* is the first *yoga* to be performed toward the goal of *jñāna*. In the temple perform *japa*. Under your favorite tree perform *japa*. Seated in a remote cave perform *japa*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya can be performed on *rudrāksha* beads over and over when the sun is setting, when the sun is rising or high noon lights the day. “Aum Namaḥ Śivāya,” the Śaivite chants. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya feeds his soul, brightens his intellect and quells his instinctive mind. Take the holy tears of Śiva, the auburn *rudrāksha* beads, into your hands. Push a bead over the middle finger with your thumb and hold as the intonation marks its passage. The duly initiated audibly repeats “Namaḥ Śivāya,” and when *japa* is performed silently, mentally chants “Śivāya Namaḥ.” There are many ways to chant this *mantra*, but perform it as you were initiated. Unauthorized experimentation is forbidden. Those prone to angry rage should never do *japa*. The *Tirumantiram* announces, “His feet are the letter *Na*. His navel is the letter *Ma*. His shoulders are the letter *Śi*. His mouth, the letter *Vā*. His radiant cranial center aloft is *Ya*. Thus is the five-lettered form of Śiva.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*A mystical solitaire sits deep in a forest, with only his kamaṇḍalu, water pot, and a yogadaṇḍa on which to rest his arm. With rudrāksha mālā in his right hand, he chants “Aum Namaḥ Śivāya,” drawing awareness to Śiva’s all-pervasive presence.*





## Is Initiation Necessary to Perform Japa?

ŚLOKA 138

The most precious of all Śaivite *mantras*, Namaḥ Śivāya is freely sung and chanted by one and all. *Mantra dīkshā* bestows the permission and power for *japa yoga*. Without this initiation, its repetition bears lesser fruit. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The Pañchākshara Mantra is the word of God, the name and total essence of Śiva. But to chant Namaḥ Śivāya and to be empowered to chant Namaḥ Śivāya is likened to the difference between writing a check without money in the bank and writing a check with money in the bank. Namaḥ Śivāya is the gateway to *yoga*. Initiation from an orthodox *guru* is given after preparation, training and attaining a certain level of purity and dedication. The *guru* bestows the authority to chant Namaḥ Śivāya. After initiation, the devotee is obligated to intone it regularly as instructed. This forges the *śishya's* permanent bond with the *guru* and his spiritual lineage, *sampradāya*, and fires the process of inner unfoldment. From the lips of my Satguru-nātha I learned Namaḥ Śivāya, and it has been the central core of my life, strength and fulfillment of destiny. The secret of Namaḥ Śivāya is to hear it from the right lips at the right time. Then, and only then, is it the most powerful mantra for you. The *Śiva Samhitā* affirms, “Only the knowledge imparted by a *guru*, through his lips, is powerful and useful; otherwise it becomes fruitless, weak and very painful.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*A young king, wishing to rule dharmically under divine guidance, has been initiated into the Namaḥ Śivāya mantra. Even amid royal duties, he holds holy beads and wordlessly chants the Five Letters, his mind on Śiva, symbolized by the Nandi flags.*



## What Is Śaivism's Affirmation of Faith?

ŚLOKA 139

The proclamation “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality” is a potent affirmation of faith. Said in any of Earth's 3,000 languages, it summarizes the beliefs and doctrines of the Śaivite Hindu religion. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

An affirmation of faith is a terse, concise statement summarizing a complex philosophical tradition. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality,” is what we have when we take the milk from the sacred cow of Śaivism, separate out the cream, churn that cream to rich butter and boil that butter into a precious few drops of *ghee*. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality” is the sweet *ghee* of the Śaivite Hindu religion. In the Sanskrit language it is *Premaiva Śivamaya, Satyam eva Paraśivaḥ*. In the sweet Tamil language it is even more succinct and beautiful: *Anbe Sivamayam, Satyame Parasivam*. In French it is *Dieu Śiva est Amour Omniprésent et Réalité Transcendante*. We strengthen our mind with positive affirmations that record the impressions of the distilled and ultimate truths of our religion so that these memories fortify us in times of distress, worldliness or anxiety. The *Tirumantiram* proclaims, “Transcending all, yet immanent in each He stands. For those bound in the world here below, He is the great treasure. Himself the Parapara Supreme, for all worlds He gave the way that His greatness extends.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*Philosophy is a common subject at village gatherings. One man, seated, reads from a palm leaf the Śaivite affirmation, “Anbe Sivamayam, Satyame Parasivam.” It provokes profound discussion, moderated by an articulate and animated preacher.*



## How Is the Affirmation of Faith Used?

### ŚLOKA 140

**Intoning the affirmation of faith, we positively assert that God is both manifest and unmanifest, both permeating the world and transcending it, both personal Divine Love and impersonal Reality. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.**

### BHĀSHYA

On the lips of Śaivites throughout the world resounds the proclamation “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality.” It is a statement of fact, a summation of truth, even more potent when intoned in one’s native language. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality,” we repeat prior to sleep. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality,” we say upon awakening as we recall the transcendent knowledge gained from the *rishis* during sleep. These sacred words we say as we bathe to prepare to face the day, God Śiva’s day, reminding ourselves that His immanent love protects us, guides us, lifting our mind into the arena of useful thoughts and keeping us from harm’s way. Devotees write this affirmation 1,008 times as a *sahasra lekhana sādhana*. It may be spoken 108 times daily in any language before initiation into Namaḥ Śivāya. Yea, the recitation of this affirmation draws devotees into Śiva consciousness. The *Tirumantiram* says, “The ignorant prate that love and Śiva are two. They do not know that love alone is Śiva. When men know that love and Śiva are the same, love as Śiva they ever remain.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*With reliefs of Śiva, Pārvatī and Gaṇeśa behind them, two bhaktas offer hymns to God. One, a minstrel bearing a wayfarer’s bundle, plays a lute. The other is a brahmachārī. They have composed a song derived from the Śaivite affirmation of faith.*

Homage to the source of health, and to the source of delight.

Homage to the maker of health and to the maker of delight.

Homage to the Auspicious and to the more Auspicious.

(*Namastārāya namaḥ śambhave cha mayobhave cha, namaḥ śaṅkarāya cha mayaskarāya cha, namaḥ śivāya cha śivatarāya cha.*)

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Saṁhitā 4.5.8. YVK, 359*

*(Namaḥ Śivaya, at the center of the Vedas)*

From all knowledge, *yoga* practice and meditation, all that relates to the *Aum* sound is to be meditated on as the only blissful (Śiva). Indeed, the *Aum* sound is Śiva.

*Atharva Veda, Atharvaśikhā Upanishad 2. UPB, 782*

*Mantra* yields early success due to practice done in previous life. Self-fulfilling, too, is the *mantra* which is received according to the line of tradition, with due *dīkshā*, obtained in the right way. Innumerable are the *mantras*; they but distract the mind. Only that *mantra* which is received through the grace of the *guru* gives all fulfillment.

*Kulārṇava Tantra 11.3. KT, 112*

*Japa* is the happy giver of enjoyment, salvation, self-fulfilling wish. Therefore, practice the *yoga* of *japa* and *dhyāna*. All blemishes due to transgressions of rule, from the *jīva* up to the Brahman, done knowingly or unknowingly, are wiped away by *japa*.

*Kulārṇava Tantra 11.1. KT, 111*

There are two ways of contemplation of Brahman: in sound and in silence. By sound we go to silence. The sound of Brahman is *Aum*. With *Aum* we go to the End, the silence of Brahman. The End is immortality, union and peace. Even as a spider reaches the liberty of space by means of its own thread, the man of contemplation by means of *Aum* reaches freedom. The sound of Brahman is *Aum*. At the end of *Aum* is silence. It is a silence of joy. It is the end of the journey, where fear and sorrow are no more: steady, motionless, never-falling, everlasting, immortal. It is called the omnipresent Vishṇu. In order to reach the Highest, consider, in adoration, the sound and the silence of Brahman. For it has been said: "God is sound and silence. His name is *Aum*. Attain, therefore, contemplation, contemplation in silence on Him.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 6.22-23. UPM, 102*

The bank of a river, the cave, the summit of a hill, the place of holy bath, the confluence of rivers, the holy forest, the vacant garden, the root of the *bilva* tree, the slope of the hill, the temple, the coast of the sea, one's own house—these are the places lauded for the *sādhana* of *mantra japa*.

*Kulārṇava Tantra* 11.4. KT, 112

Letters five are the Lord's gift. Centered in them, He dances, night and day, in endearment eternal, He that assumed forms eight. Realize the truth of blissful Letters Five; the transcendent Reality fills your heart, immortal you will be. Pañchākshara is your refuge, none other, I emphatically say.

*Tirumantiram* 974, 980. TM

Thinking of Him, great love welling up in their heart, if they finger the *rudrāksha* beads, it will bring them the glory of the Gods. Chant our naked Lord's name. Say, “Namaḥ Śivāya!”

*Tirumurai* 3.307.3. PS, 217

The mystic expression “Namaḥ Śivāya” is the sacred name of Lord Śiva, is the sum and substance of the four *Vedas* and conveys in the sacred path souls which are full of devotion and do utter it with a melting heart and tears trickling from their eyes.

*Tirumurai* 3.307.1. TT, 61

The Lord of Appati is both inside and outside, form and no form. He is both the flood and the bank. He is the broad-rayed sun. Himself the highest mystery, He is in all hidden thoughts. He is thought and meaning, and embraces all who embrace Him.

*Tirumurai* 4.48.7. PS, 114

Let not the effect of past deeds rise in quick succession and overpower you. Chant the Pañchākshara—the *mantra* of the five letters.

*Yogaswami, Grace Ambrosia* 5. SY, 407

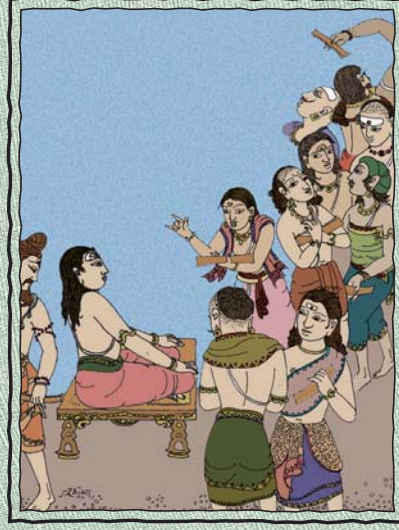
Through the Letters Five, all sorrow was erased. Through the Letters Five, all want has disappeared. Through the Letters Five, true happiness arose. Within the Letters Five I stayed contained. Through the Letters Five can God's holy feet be seen. Through the Letters Five, the whole world you can rule. Through the Letters Five, mind's action can be stilled. The Letters Five have come and entered my heart.

*Natchintanai, “Adoration...”* NT, 224





Advaita Īśvaravādaḥ  
अद्वैत-ईश्वरवादः

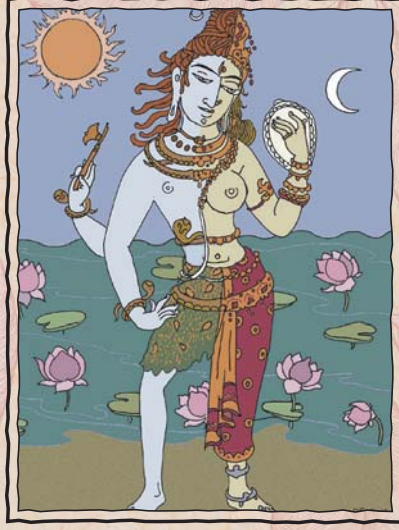


UPANISHAD ELEVEN

**Monistic Theism**



Advaita-Dvaitau  
अद्वैत-द्वैतौ



## Monism and Dualism

When the Great Being is seen as both the higher and the lower, then the knot of the heart is rent asunder, all doubts are dispelled and *karma* is destroyed.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2.2.8. EH, 170*



## What Are the Many Hindu Philosophies?

### ŚLOKA 141

From time immemorial, India's sages and philosophers have pondered the nature of reality. Out of their speculations have blossomed hundreds of schools of thought, all evolving from the rich soil of village Hinduism. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

At one end of Hinduism's complex spectrum is monism, *advaita*, which perceives a unity of God, soul and world, as in Sankara's acosmic pantheism and Kashmīr Śaiva monism. At the other end is dualism, *dvaita*—exemplified by Madhva and the early Pāśupatas—which teaches two or more separate realities. In between are views describing reality as one and yet not one, *dvaita-advaita*, such as Ramanuja's Vaishṇava Vedānta and Srikantha's Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita. Hindu philosophy consists of many schools of Vedic and Āgamic thought, including the six classical *darśanas*—Nyāya, Vaiśeṣhika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. Each theology expresses the quest for God and is influenced by the myth, mystery and cultural syncretism of contemporary, tribal, shamanic Hinduism alive in every village in every age. India also produced views, called *nāstika*, that reject the *Vedas* and are thus not part of Hinduism, such as Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Chārvāka materialistic atheism. The *Vedas* state, "Theologians ask: What is the cause? Is it Brahmā? Whence are we born? Whereby do we live? And on what are we established?" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Followers of a Śaivite lineage, a Vaiṣṇavite heritage and the Sikh tradition assemble at an outdoor pavilion. Though their paths and philosophies differ, they live in harmony and mutual respect, here keeping time with their hands as they sing in unison.*



## How Do Monism and Dualism Differ?

ŚLOKA 142

**To most monists, God is immanent, temporal, becoming. He is creation itself, material cause, but not efficient cause. To most dualists, God is transcendent, eternal, Creator—efficient cause but not material cause. Aum.**

BHĀSHYA

To explain creation, philosophers speak of three kinds of causes: efficient, instrumental and material. These are likened to a potter's molding a pot from clay. The potter, who makes the process happen, is the *efficient cause*. The wheel he uses to spin and mold the pot is the *instrumental cause*, thought of as God's power, or *śakti*. The clay is the *material cause*. Theistic dualists believe in God as Lord and Creator, but He remains ever separate from man and the world and is not the material cause. Among the notable dualists have been Kapila, Madhva, Meykandar, Chaitanya, Aristotle, Augustine, Kant and virtually all Jewish, Christian and Muslim theologians. The most prevalent monism is pantheism, "all is God," and its views do not permit of a God who is Lord and Creator. He is immanent, temporal—material cause but not efficient cause. History's pantheists include Sankara, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Plotinus, the Stoics, Spinoza and Asvaghosha. The *Vedas* proclaim, "As a thousand sparks from a fire well blazing spring forth, each one like the rest, so from the Imperishable all kinds of beings come forth, my dear, and to Him return." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*With Śiva-Śakti at the center, women polish pots to brilliance. In philosophy, a pot, like cosmic creation, has three causes: material (clay or brass); instrumental (the potter's wheel) and efficient (the craftsman). For monistic theists, God is all three.*





## Are Monism and Dualism Reconcilable?

### ŚLOKA 143

**Monists, from their mountaintop perspective, perceive a one reality in all things. Dualists, from the foothills, see God, souls and world as eternally separate. Monistic theism is the perfect reconciliation of these two views. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Visualize a mountain and the path leading to its icy summit. As the climber traverses the lower ranges, he sees the meadows, the passes, the giant boulders. This we can liken to dualism, the natural, theistic state where God and man are different. Reaching the summit, the climber sees that the many parts are actually a one mountain. This realization is likened to pure monism. Unfortunately, many monists, reaching the summit, teach a denial of the foothills they themselves climbed on the way to their monistic platform. However, by going a little higher, lifting the *kuṇḍalinī* into the space above the mountain's peak, the entire Truth is known. The bottom and the top are viewed as a one whole, just as theism and monism are accepted by the awakened soul. Monistic theism, Advaita Īśvara-vāda, reconciles the dichotomy of being and becoming, the apparent contradiction of God's eternity and temporal activity, the confusion of good and evil, the impasse of one and two. The *Vedas* affirm, "He who knows this becomes a knower of the One and of duality, he who has attained to the oneness of the One, to the self-same nature." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*A reflective saint has reached, through yoga, a mountaintop consciousness which reconciles the differing views of monism and theism. His state of grace is blessed by Śiva, who wraps a garland around his head, and Śakti, who holds him in Her lap.*



## What Is the View of Monistic Theism?

ŚLOKA 144

**Monistic theism is the synthesis of monism and dualism. It says God is transcendent and immanent, eternal and temporal, Being and becoming, Creator and created, Absolute and relative, efficient and material cause. Aum.**

BHĀSHYA

Both strict monism and dualism are fatally flawed, for neither alone encompasses the whole of truth. In other words, it is not a choice between the *God-is-man-and-world* view of pantheistic monism and the *God-is-separate-from-man-and-world* view of theistic dualism. It is both. *Panentheism*, which describes “all in God, and God in all,” and monistic theism are Western terms for Advaita Īśvaravāda. It is the view that embraces the oneness of God and soul, monism, and the reality of the Personal God, theism. As panentheists, we believe in an eternal oneness of God and man at the level of Satchid-ānanda and Paraśiva. But a difference is acknowledged during the evolution of the soul body. Ultimately, even this difference merges in identity. Thus, there is perfectly beginningless oneness and a temporary difference which resolves itself in perfect identity. In the acceptance of this identity, monistic theists differ from most *viśiṣṭādvaitins*. The *Vedas* declare, “He moves and He moves not; He is far, yet is near. He is within all that is, yet is also outside. The man who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings is free from all fear.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Two mighty dvārapālakas guard the sanctum, pointing devotees toward Śiva within. A bhakta approaches in enstatic joy, having experienced his oneness with all, realizing that God Śiva is both in this world and beyond it, both Creator and created.*



S. RAJAT

## Is Monistic Theism Found in the *Vedas*?

### ŚLOKA 145

Again and again in the *Vedas* and from *satgurus* we hear “Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi,” “I am God,” and that God is both immanent and transcendent. Taken together, these are clear statements of monistic theism. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Monistic theism is the philosophy of the *Vedas*. Scholars have long noted that the Hindu scriptures are alternately monistic, describing the oneness of the individual soul and God, and theistic, describing the reality of the Personal God. One cannot read the *Vedas*, *Śaiva Āgamas* and hymns of the saints without being overwhelmed with theism as well as monism. Monistic theism is the essential teaching of Hinduism, of Śaivism. It is the conclusion of Tirumular, Vasugupta, Gorakshanatha, Bhaskara, Srikantha, Basavanna, Vallabha, Ramakrishna, Yogaswami, Nityananda, Radhakrishnan and thousands of others. It encompasses both Siddhānta and Vedānta. It says, God is and is in all things. It propounds the hopeful, glorious, exultant concept that every soul will finally merge with Śiva in undifferentiated oneness, none left to suffer forever because of human transgression. The *Vedas* wisely proclaim, “Higher and other than the world-tree, time and forms is He from whom this expanse proceeds—the bringer of *dharma*, the remover of evil, the lord of prosperity. Know Him as in one’s own Self, as the immortal abode of all.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

---

*A devotee holds hands high above his head in the mudrā of elevated homage. Śiva Naṭarāja, the Divine Dancer, stands on Apasmārapurusha, the “forgetful person” who represents human heedlessness and ignorance, needful of divine guidance.*

There is on Earth no diversity. He gets death after death who perceives here seeming diversity. As a unity only is It to be looked upon—this indemonstrable, enduring Being, spotless, beyond space, the unborn Soul, great, enduring.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 4.4.19-20. UPH, 143*

Contemplating Him who has neither beginning, middle, nor end—the One, the all-pervading, who is wisdom and bliss, the formless, the wonderful, whose consort is Umā, the highest Lord, the ruler, having three eyes and a blue throat, the peaceful—the silent sage reaches the source of Being, the universal witness, on the other shore of darkness.

*Atharva Veda, Kaivalya Upanishad 7. VE, 764*

Where there is duality, there one sees another, one smells another, one tastes another, one speaks to another, one hears another, one knows another. But where everything has become one's own Self, with what should one see whom, with what should one smell whom, with what should one taste whom, with what should one speak to whom, with what should one hear whom, with what should one think of whom, with what should one touch whom, with what should one know whom? How can He be known by whom all this is made known?

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 4.5.15. VE, 420-21*

Into deep darkness fall those who follow the immanent. Into deeper darkness fall those who follow the transcendent. One is the outcome of the transcendent and another is the outcome of the immanent. Thus have we heard from the ancient sages who explained this truth to us. He who knows both the transcendent and the immanent, with the immanent overcomes death and with the transcendent reaches immortality.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Īśa Upanishad 12-14. UPM, 49-50*

Than whom there is naught else higher, than whom there is naught smaller, naught greater, the One stands like a tree established in heaven. By Him, the Person, is this whole universe filled.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 3.9. UPR, 727*

Even as water becomes one with water, fire with fire, and air with air, so the mind becomes one with the Infinite Mind and thus attains final freedom.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 6.34.11. TU, 103*

One who is established in the contemplation of nondual unity will abide in the Self of everyone and realize the immanent, all-pervading One. There is no doubt of this.

*Sarvajñanottara Āgama, Ātma Sakshatkara 14. RM, 107*

O Six-Faced God! What is the use of putting it in so many words? Multiplicity of form exists only in the self, and the forms are externalized by the confused mind. They are objectively created simultaneously with thoughts of them.

*Sarvajñanottara Āgama, Ātma Sakshatkara 20-21. RM, 107*

The luminous Being of the perfect I-consciousness, inherent in the multitude of words, whose essence consists in the knowledge of the highest nondualism, is the secret of *mantra*.

*Śiva Sūtras 2.3. YS, 88*

I sought Him in terms of I and you. But He who knows not I from you taught me the truth that I indeed am you. And now I talk not of I and you.

*Tirumantiram 1441. TM*

O thou who pervades all space, both now and hereafter, as the Soul of souls! The *Vedas, Āgamas, Purāṇas, Itihāsas* and all other sciences inculcate fully the tenet of nonduality. It is the inexplicable duality that leads to the knowledge of nonduality. This is consonant with reason, experience, tradition, and is admitted by the dualists and nondualists.

*Tayumanavar, 10.3. PT, 44*

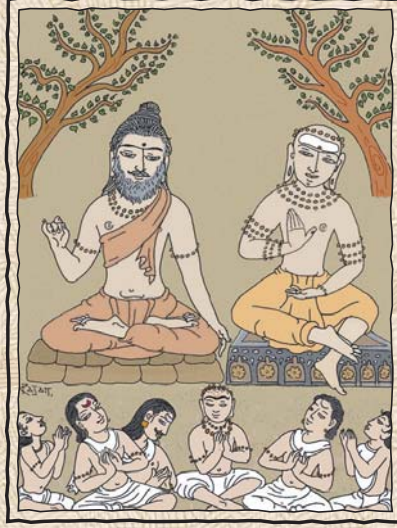
When the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* all proclaim that the whole world is filled with God and that there is nothing else, how can we say that the world exists and the body exists? Is there anything more worthy of reproach than to attribute an independent reality to them? Everything is His doing—He who never forgets, He who does nothing while doing everything, He who acts without acting. Love is Śiva. Love is you. Love is I. Love is everything. “All speech is silence. All activity is silence. All is the fullness of blessed silence” [Tayumanavar].

*Natchintanai, Letter 2. NT, 16*





## Śaiva Siddhāntah शैवसिद्धान्तः



## Views of Reality

Whoever has found and has awakened to the Self that has entered into this perilous inaccessible place, the body, he is the maker of the universe, for he is the maker of all. His is the world. Indeed, he is the world itself.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 4.4.13. UPR, 276*



## What Are Śaiva Siddhānta's Two Schools?

### ŚLOKA 146

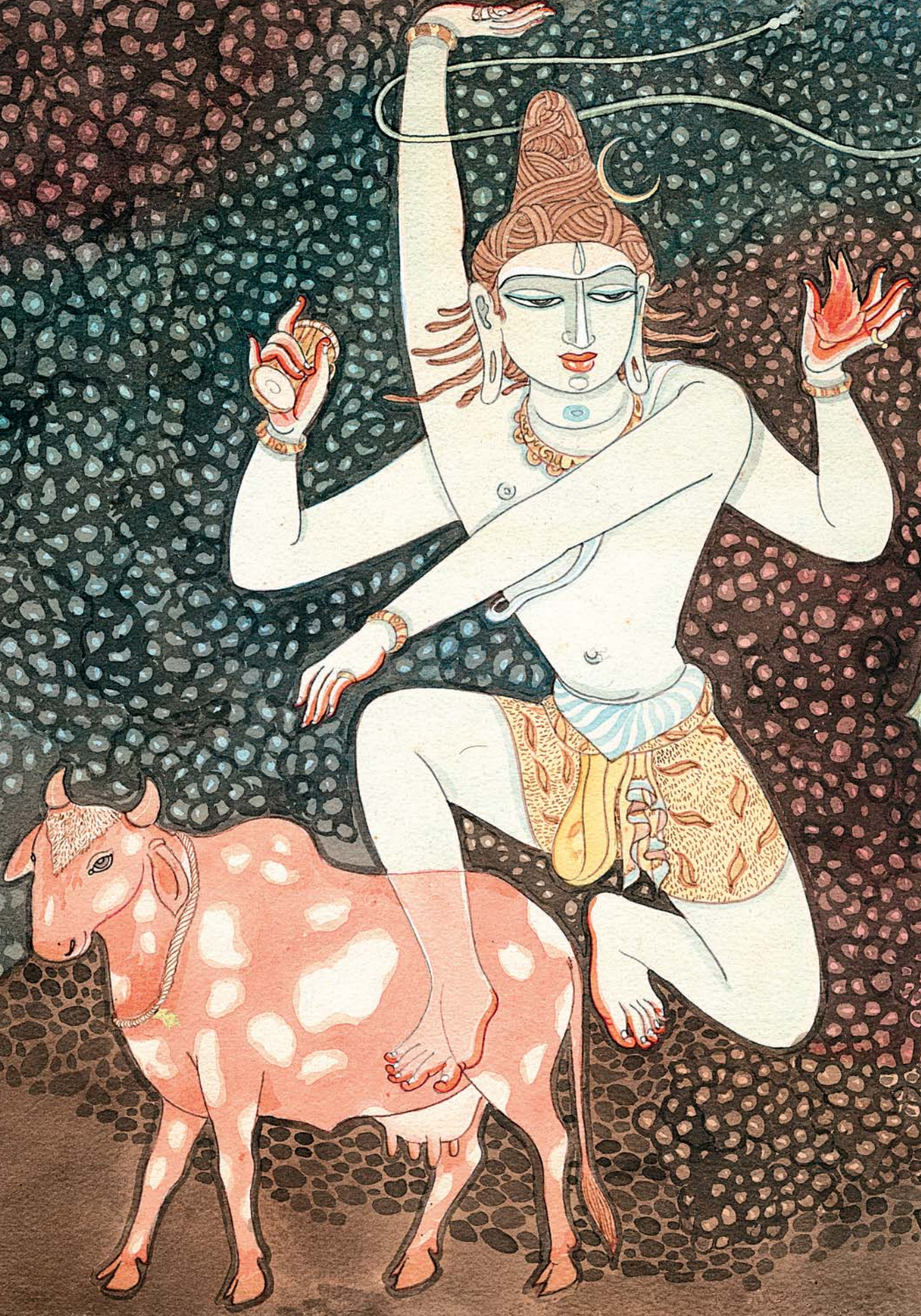
**There are two Śaiva Siddhānta schools: pluralistic theism, in the lines of Aghorasiva and Meykandar, and Tirumular's monistic theism. While differing slightly, they share a religious heritage of belief, culture and practice. Aum.**

### BHĀSHYA

Here we compare the monistic Siddhānta of Rishi Tirumular that this catechism embodies and the pluralistic realism expounded by Meykandar and his disciples. They share far more in common than they hold in difference. In South India, their points of agreement are summarized as *guru*, preceptor; *Liṅga*, holy image of Śiva; *saṅga*, fellowship of devotees; and *valipadu*, ritual worship. Both agree that God Śiva is the efficient cause of creation, and also that His Śakti is the instrumental cause. Their differences arise around the question of material cause, the nature of the original substance, whether it is one with or apart from God. They also differ on the identity of the soul and God, evil and final dissolution. While monistic theists, Advaita Īśvaravādins, view the 2,200-year-old *Tirumantiram* as Siddhānta's authority, pluralists, Anekavādins, rely mainly on the 800-year-old *Aghoraśiva Paddhatis* and *Meykandar Śāstras*. The *Tirumantiram* inquires: "Who can know the greatness of our Lord? Who can measure His length and breadth? He is the mighty nameless Flame of whose unknown beginnings I venture to speak." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Saint Tirumular sits in the Himalayas, his hand in chin or jñāna mudrā, betokening wisdom, urging all to cling to the feet of the satguru. Saint Meykandar sits below, at his southern aadheenam, with his forty-verse Śivajñānabodham in hand.*



## What Are the Two Views on Creation?

ŚLOKA 147

Monistic theists believe that Śiva creates the cosmos as an emanation of Himself. He is His creation. Pluralistic theists hold that Śiva molds eternally existing matter to fashion the cosmos and is thus not His creation. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins hold that God, souls and world—*Pati*, *paśu* and *pāśa*—are three eternally coexistent realities. By creation, this school understands that Śiva fashions existing matter, *māyā*, into various forms. In other words, God, like a potter, is the efficient cause of the cosmos. But He is not the material cause, the “clay” from which the cosmos is formed. Pluralists hold that any reason for the creation of *pāśa*—*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*—whether it be a divine desire, a demonstration of glory or merely a playful sport, makes the Creator less than perfect. Therefore, *pāśa* could never have been created. Monistic Siddhāntins totally reject the potter analogy. They teach that God is simultaneously the efficient, instrumental and material cause. Śiva is constantly emanating creation from Himself. His act of manifestation may be likened to heat issuing from a fire, a mountain from the earth or waves from the ocean. The heat is the fire, the mountain is the earth, the waves are not different from the ocean. The *Vedas* proclaim, “In That all this unites; from That all issues forth. He, omnipresent, is the warp and woof of all created things.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*God, soul and world are the sum of existence. In Śaiva Siddhānta, God is called Pati, meaning lord or master, shown as an animated Śiva. Paśu, meaning cow or beast, is the soul. Pāśa, the world which binds the soul, is the rope in Śiva’s hand.*



## What Are the Views on God and Soul?

### ŚLOKA 148

For the monistic theist, the soul is an emanation of God Śiva and will merge back in Him as a river to the sea. For pluralists, God pervades but did not create the soul; thus, God and soul remain separate realities forever. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins teach that Śiva pervades the soul, yet the soul is uncreated and exists eternally. It is amorphous, but has the qualities of willing, thinking and acting. It does not wholly merge in Him at the end of its evolution. Rather, it reaches His realm and enjoys the bliss of divine communion eternally. Like salt dissolved in water, soul and God are not two; neither are they perfectly one. For monistic Siddhāntins the soul emerges from God like a rain cloud drawn from the sea. Like a river, the soul passes through many births. The soul consists of an uncreated divine essence and a beautiful, effulgent, human-like form created by Śiva. While this form—called the *ānandamaya kośa* or soul body—is maturing, it is distinct from God. Even during this evolution, its essence, Satchidānanda and Paraśiva, is not different from Śiva. Finally, like a river flowing into the sea, the soul returns to its source. Soul and God are perfectly one. The *Vedas* say, “Just as the flowing rivers disappear in the ocean, casting off name and shape, even so the knower, freed from name and shape, attains to the Primal Soul, higher than the high.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*A monistic theist explains to a pluralist that the soul emerges from Śiva just as a cloud arises from the sea. Below the river of life sweeps all things along, into and out of existence. Ultimately, the soul merges with God, like the river rejoining the ocean.*





## What Are the Differing Views on Evil?

ŚLOKA 149

For monistic theists, the world of *māyā* is Śiva's perfect creation, containing each thing and its opposite. For pluralistic theists, the world is tarnished with evil; thus *māyā* could not be the creation of a perfect God. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins hold that the world of *māyā* is intrinsically evil and imperfect, for it is clearly full of sorrow, injustice, disease and death. The soul, too, is beginninglessly tainted with *āṇava*, or limitation. Pluralists contend that if God had created *māyā*—the material of the world—or the soul, surely He would have made them flawless, and there would be no evil, for imperfection cannot arise out of Perfection. Therefore, they conclude that *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* have always existed and the soul has been immersed in darkness and bondage without beginning. Monistic Siddhāntins hold that when viewed from higher consciousness, this world is seen as it truly is—perfect. There is no intrinsic evil. God Śiva has created the principle of opposites, which are the means for the soul's maturation—beauty and deformity, light and darkness, love and hate, joy and sorrow. All is God Śiva Himself, in Him and of Him. A perfect cosmos has issued forth from a perfect Creator. The *Tirumantiram* says, "All manifestations of nature are His grace. All animate and inanimate are His pure grace. As darkness, as light, the Lord's grace pervades." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Nothing is more heinous than brutal killing, and Hindus know that all violence committed against others will return, like a purifying fire, to those who cause pain and suffering. We know that everything and its opposite is part of Śiva's perfect universe.*



## What Are the Views on Mahāpralaya?

### ŚLOKA 150

Monistic theists hold that at *mahāpralaya*, cosmic dissolution, all creation is withdrawn into Śiva, and He alone exists. Pluralistic theists hold that world and souls persist in seed form and will later reemerge. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins contend that after *mahāpralaya*—the withdrawal of time, form and space into Śiva—souls and world are so close to Śiva that, for all practical purposes, He alone exists. Actually, they say, both world and souls continue to exist, not as things, but as “potentialities.” As if in a deep sleep, souls, now in a bodiless state, rest. Individual *karmas* lie dormant to germinate later when creation again issues forth and nonliberated souls are re-embodied to continue their spiritual journey. Monistic Siddhāntins believe that souls persist through the lesser *pralayas* of the cosmic cycle, but hold that only Śiva exists following *mahāpralaya*. There is no “other,” no separate souls, no separate world. The universe and all souls are absorbed in Śiva. *Pāśa*—*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*—is annihilated. In the intensity of pre-dissolution, when time itself is accelerated, all souls attain complete maturation, losing separateness through fulfilled merger with Śiva. Yea, *jīva* becomes Śiva. The *Vedas* boldly decree, “By His divine power He holds dominion over all the worlds. At the periods of creation and dissolution of the universe, He alone exists.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The extinction of the cosmos is often regarded as an act of destruction, with volcanos erupting, planets crumbling and oceans churning. It is, in fact, an act of supreme grace, for when outer forms dissolve, all souls, all worlds, merge fully in Śiva.*

Meditate on the Lord as the object of meditation, for by the Lord the whole world is set to activity. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Indra have been brought forth by Him; similarly, all faculties along with creatures. His divine majesty has become the Cause, the Universe, the Blissful, as the ether standing unshaken in the mid-air.

*Atharva Veda, Atharvaśikhā Upanishad 2. UPB, 782*

All the sacred books, all holy sacrifice and ritual and prayers, all the words of the *Vedas*, and the whole past and present and future, come from the Spirit. With *māyā*, His power of wonder, He made all things, and by *māyā* the human soul is bound. Know, therefore, that nature is *māyā*, but that God is the ruler of *māyā*, and that all beings in our universe are parts of His infinite splendor.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 4.9-10. UPM, 92*

The seer sees not death, nor sickness, nor any distress. The seer sees only the All, obtains the All entirely. For the sake of experiencing the true and the false, the great Self has a dual nature. Yea, the great Self has a dual nature. Yea, the great Self has a dual nature!

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 7.11.6 & 8. UPH, 458*

Inconceivable is this supreme *ātman*, immeasurable, unborn, inscrutable, unthinkable, He whose Self is infinite space. He alone remains awake when the universe is dissolved, and out of this space He awakens the world consisting of thought.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 6.17. VE, 667*

He Himself fashions all worlds in minute detail. He fashions life, conferring birth. He fashions things big and small—the cauldron, the pitcher and the pot. He fashions these and more—He, the Architect Almighty.

*Tirumantiram 417. TM*

The Primal One, the indivisible great, Himself into several divided. As form, formless and form-formless, and as *guru* and as Śakti's Lord. In forms numerous He immanent in *jīvas* became. *Tirumantiram 2481. TM*

That intelligence which incites the functions into the paths of virtue or vice am I. All this universe, moveable and immoveable, is from Me. All things are preserved by Me. All are absorbed into Me at the time of *pralaya*. Because there exists nothing but Spirit, and I am that Spirit, there exists nothing else.

*Śiva Saṁhitā* 1.34. ss, 6

You and He are not two separate; you and He are but one united; thus do you stand, freed of all sectarian shackles; adore the feet of Parapara and with Śiva become One—that the way Siddhānta fulfills.

*Tirumantiram* 1437. TM

Always my action is your action. I am not other than you, because the essence of myself which I call “I” does not exist apart from you. Herein lies the natural harmony between Vedānta and Siddhānta.

*Tayumanavar* 2.5. NT, 8

As wide Earth, as fire and water, as sacrificer and wind that blows, as eternal moon and sun, as ether, as the eight-formed God, as cosmic good and evil, woman and man, all other forms and His own form, and all these as Himself, as yesterday and today and tomorrow, the God of the long, red hair stands, O Wonder!

*Tirumurai* 6.308.1. PS, 113

It cannot be seen by the eye, and yet it is the eye within the eye. It cannot be heard by the ear, and yet it is the ear within the ear. It cannot be smelt by the nose, and yet it is that which makes the nose to smell. It cannot be uttered by the mouth, and yet it is that which makes the mouth to speak. It cannot be grasped by the hand, and yet it is that which makes the hand to grasp. It cannot be reached by the feet, and yet it is that which makes the feet to walk. It cannot be thought by the mind, and yet it is the mind within the mind. It is the Primal One without past or future. Its form is free from age and sickness. It manifests as father and mother. It blossoms as the Self-Existent. It cannot be described as one or two. No artist can portray It. It is that which lies ’twixt good and evil. It ever abides in the hearts of the wise. It permits no distinction between Vedānta and Siddhānta. It is That which dances at the zenith beyond the realm of sound.

*Natchintanai*, “That.” NT, 87



Sampradāyah  
संप्रदायः



UPANISHAD TWELVE

**Passing on the Power**





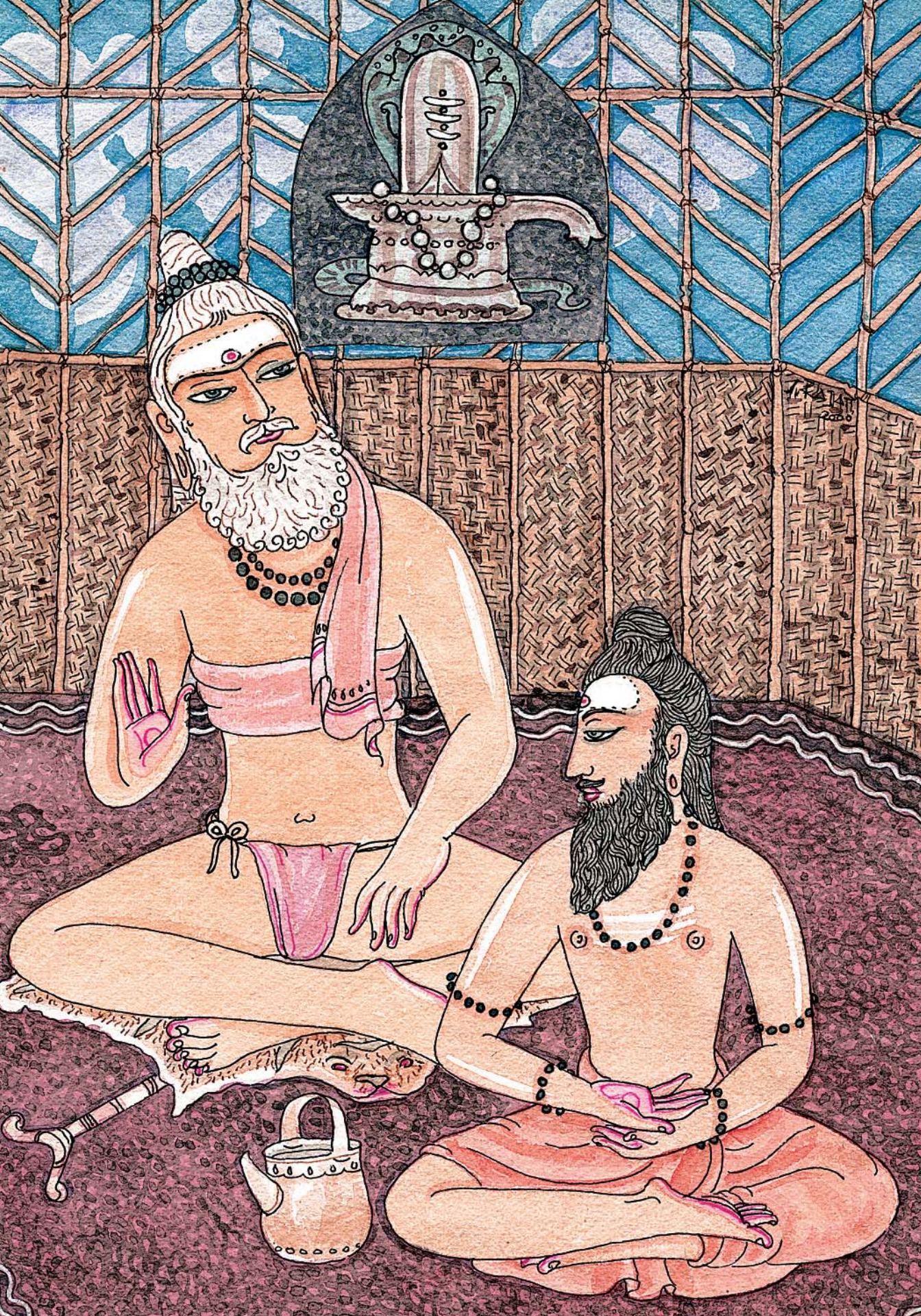
## Kailāsa Paramparā कैलासपरंपरा



## Himalayan Lineage

Seek the Nāthas who Nandinatha's grace received.  
First the *rishis* four, Sivayoga the holy next, then  
Patanjali, who in Sabhā's holy precincts worshiped.  
Vyaghra and I complete the number eight. Through  
instruction imparting, Malangan, Indiran, Soman  
and Brahman, Rudran, Kalangi and Kanchamalayam  
come as my disciples in succession.

*Rishi Tirumular, Tirumantiram 67. TM*



## What Is Hinduism's Nātha Sampradāya?

### ŚLOKA 151

The Nātha Sampradāya, “the masters’ way,” is the mystical fountainhead of Śaivism. The divine message of the eternal truths and how to succeed on the path to enlightenment are locked within the Nātha tradition. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Nātha* means “lord or adept,” and *sampradāya* refers to a living theological tradition. The roots of this venerable heritage stretch back beyond recorded history, when awakened Nātha mystics worshiped the Lord of lords, Śiva, and in *yogic* contemplation experienced their identity in Him. The Nātha Sampradāya has revealed the search for the innermost divine Self, balanced by temple worship, fueled by *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, charted by monistic theism, illumined by a potent *guru-śishya* system, guided by soul-stirring scriptures and awakened by *sādhana* and *tapas*. Thus has it given mankind the mechanics for moving forward in evolution. Today two main Nātha streams are well known: the Nandinātha Sampradāya, made famous by Maharishi Nandinatha (ca 250 BCE), and the Ādinātha Sampradāya, carried forth by Siddha Yogi Gorakshanatha (ca 900). Yea, there is infinitely more to know of the mysterious Nāthas. The *Tirumantiram* states, “My peerless *satguru*, Nandinatha, of Śaivism honored high, showed us a holy path for soul’s redemption. It is Śiva’s divine path, San Mārga, for all the world to tread and forever be free.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*In a thatched pavilion, over 2,200 years ago, sits the great Himalayan guru Nandinatha. His disciple Tirumular receives the master’s transmission of wisdom and perfect union with the Absolute. Śiva is present in the form of the aniconic Śivaliṅga.*



## What Is the Lofty Kailāsa Paramparā?

### ŚLOKA 152

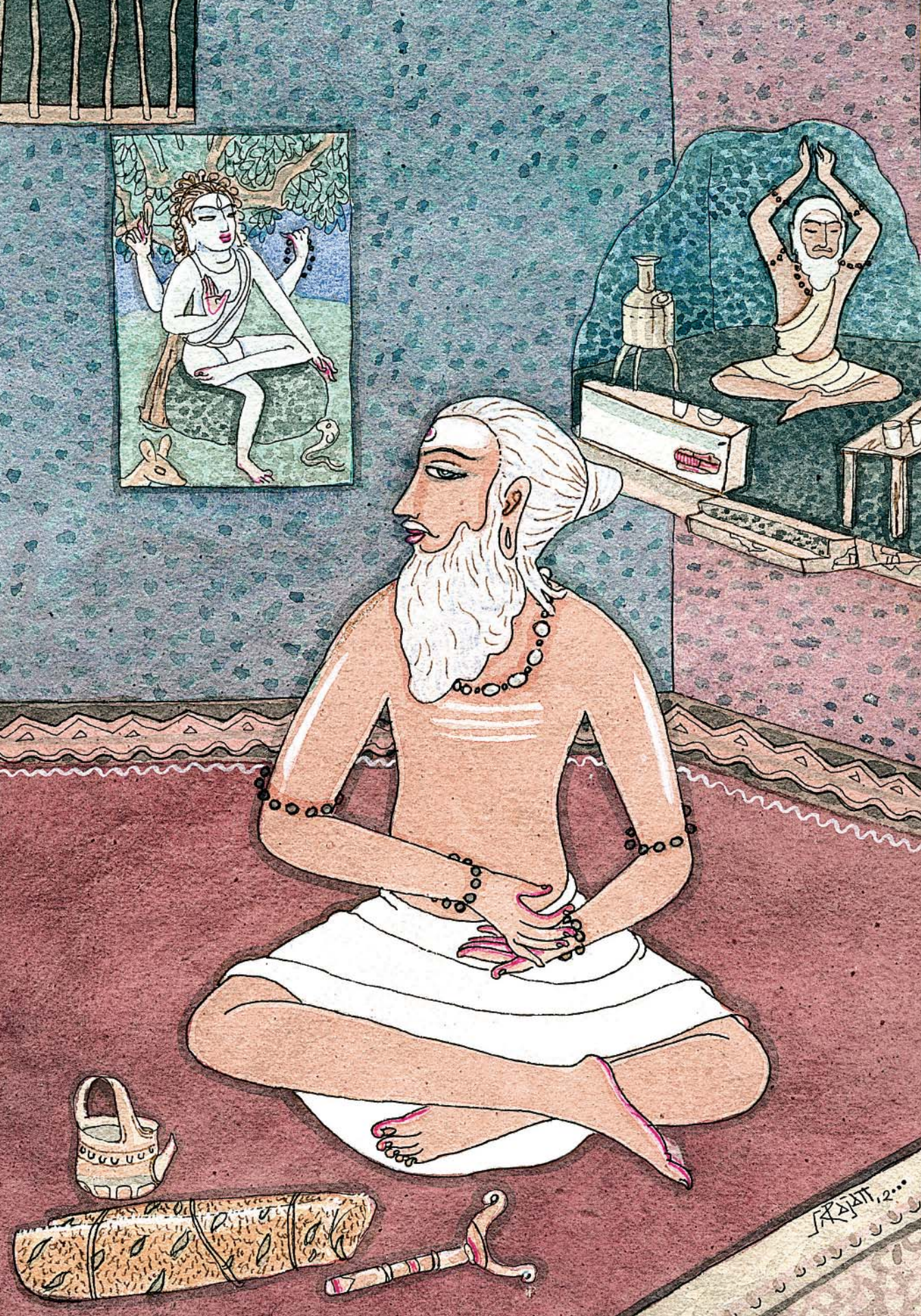
The Kailāsa Paramparā is a millennia-old *guru* lineage of the Nandinātha Sampradāya. In this century it was embodied by Sage Yogaswami, who ordained me in Sri Lanka in 1949 to carry on the venerable tradition. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The authenticity of Hindu teachings is perpetuated by lineages, paramparā, passed from *gurus* to their successors through ordination. The Kailāsa Paramparā extends back to, and far beyond, Maharishi Nandinatha and his eight disciples—Sanatkumara, Sanakar, Sanadanar, Sananthanar, Sivayogamuni, Patanjali, Vyaghrapada and Tirumular. This succession of *siddha yoga* adepts flourishes today in many streams, most notably in the Śaiva Siddhānta of South India. Our branch of this *paramparā* is the line of Rishi Tirumular (ca 200 BCE), of which the first known *satguru* in recent history was the Rishi from the Himalayas (ca 1770–1840). From him the power was passed to Siddha Kadaitswami of Bangalore (1804–1891), then to Satguru Chellappaswami (1840–1915), then to Sage Yogaswami (1872–1964) of Sri Lanka, and finally to myself, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927–). The *Tirumantiram* states, “Thus expounding, I bore His word down Kailāsa’s unchanging path—the word of Him, the eternal, the truth effulgent, the limitless great, Nandinatha, the joyous one, He of the blissful dance that all impurity dispels.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, Gurudeva, sits on the pīṭha, the ecclesiastical seat of authority at Kauai Aadheenam in Hawaii, sharing the path of the Nandinātha Sampradāya with his four āchāryas. Śiva is present as Naṭarāja, the cosmic dancer.*



12...

## Who Were the Early Kailāsa Preceptors?

### ŚLOKA 153

Among its ancient *gurus*, the Kailāsa Paramparā honors the illustrious Rishi Tirumular and his generations of successors. In recent history we especially revere the silent *siddha* called “Rishi from the Himalayas.” Aum.

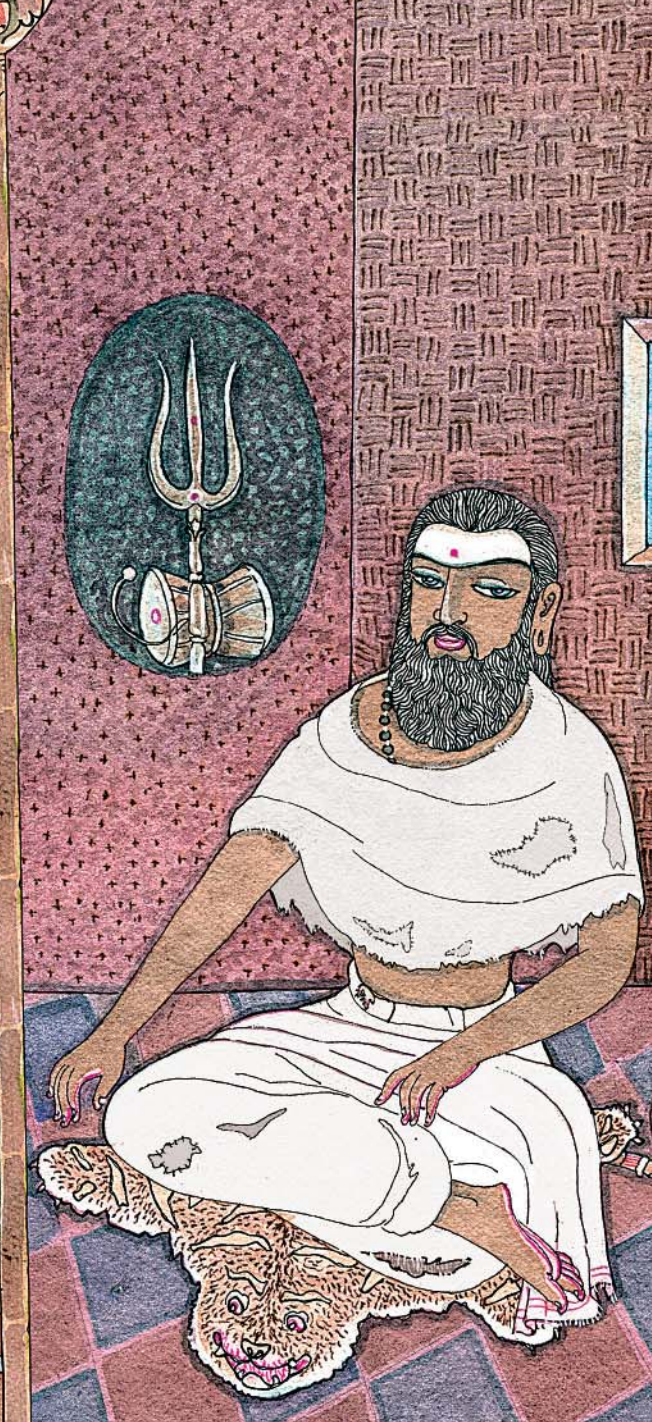
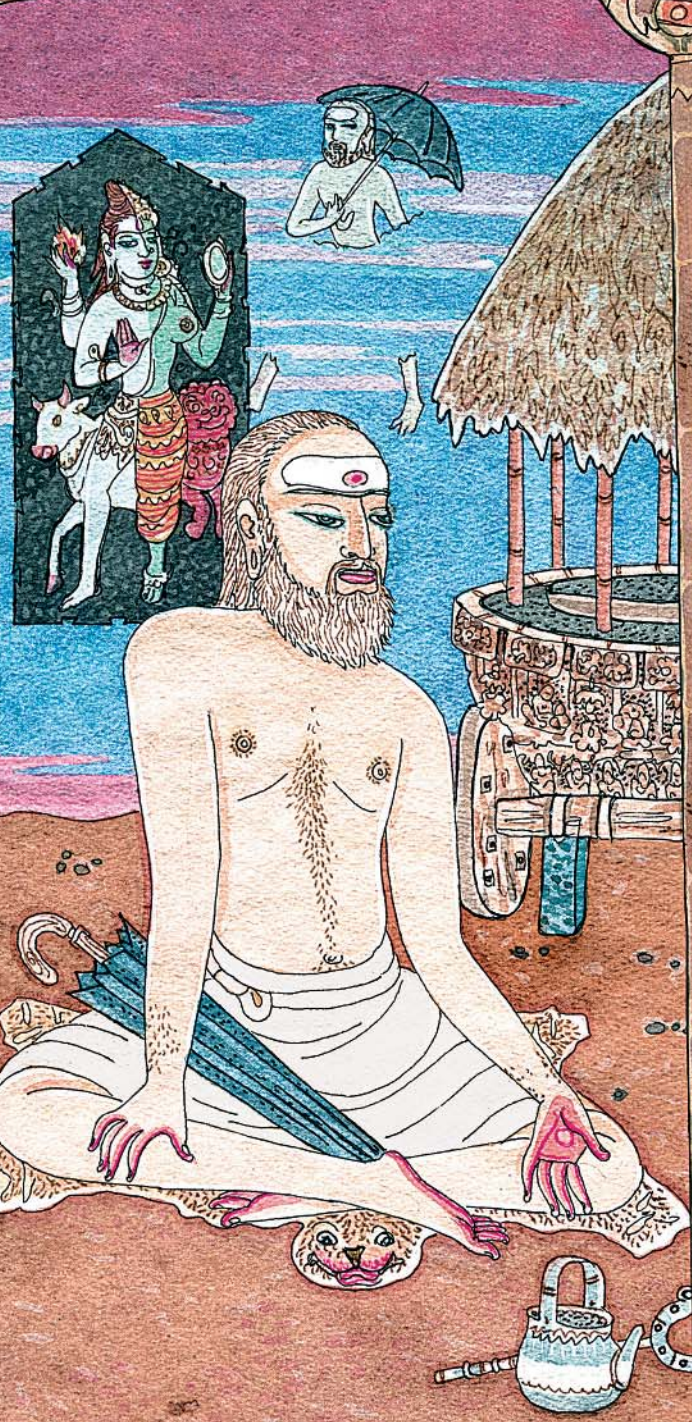
### BHĀSHYA

Having achieved perfect enlightenment and the eight *siddhis* at the feet of Maharishi Nandinatha in the Himalayas, Rishi Tirumular was sent by his *satguru* to revive Śaiva Siddhānta in the South of India. Finally, he reached Tiruvavaduthurai, where, in the Tamil language, he recorded the truths of the Śaiva Āgamas and the precious *Vedas* in the *Tirumantiram*, a book of over 3,000 esoteric verses. Through the centuries, the Kailāsa mantle was passed from one *siddha yogī* to the next. Among these luminaries was the nameless Rishi from the Himalayas, who in the 1700s entered a teashop in a village near Bangalore, sat down and entered into deep *samādhi*. He did not move for seven years, nor did he speak. Streams of devotees came for his *darśana*. Their unspoken prayers and questions were mysteriously answered in dreams or in written, paper messages that manifested in the air and floated down. Then one day Rishi left the village, later to pass his power to Kadaitswami. The *Tirumantiram* expounds, “With Nandi’s grace I sought the primal cause. With Nandi’s grace I Sadāśiva became. With Nandi’s grace truth divine I attained.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*The nameless siddha called Rishi from the Himalayas sits in his hermitage, his daṇḍa and tiger skin nearby. Inset, he remained in silent samādhi for seven years in a Bangalore tea shop. Śiva is present as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the silent, universal teacher.*





## Who Were Kadaitswami and Chellappan?

### ŚLOKA 154

Kadaitswami was a dynamic *satguru* who revived Śaivism in Catholic-dominated Jaffna, Sri Lanka, in the 1800s. Chellappaswami was an ardent sage, ablaze with God consciousness, immersed in divine soliloquy. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Kadaitswami was a powerful *siddha*, standing two meters tall, whose fiery marketplace talks converted thousands back to Śaivism. It is said he was a high court judge who refused to confer the death penalty and renounced his career at middle age to become a *sannyāsin*. Directed by his *satguru* to be a worker of miracles, he performed *siddhis* that are talked about to this day—turning iron to gold, drinking molten wax, disappearing and appearing elsewhere. Chellappaswami, initiated at age nineteen, lived alone in the *teradi* at Nallur temple. Absorbed in the inner Self, recognizing no duality, he uttered *advaitic* axioms in constant refrain: “There is no intrinsic evil. It was all finished long ago. All that is, is Truth. We know not!” The *Natchintanai* says, “Laughing, Chellappan roams in Nallur’s precincts. Appearing like a man possessed, he scorns all outward show. Dark is his body; his only garment, rags. Now all my sins have gone, for he has burnt them up! Always repeating something softly to himself, he will impart the blessing of true life to anyone who ventures to come near him. And he has made a temple of my mind.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Kadaitswami sits near a Jaffna temple chariot with his sun-protecting umbrella. His reclusive disciple, Chellappaswami, abides in his hut, with the Nallur Murugan temple festival icons above. Śiva is present as Ardhanārīśvara and the triśūla.*



## Who Are the Most Recent Kailāsa Gurus?

### ŚLOKA 155

Sage Yogaswami, source of *Natchintanai*, protector of *dharma*, was *satguru* of Sri Lanka for half a century. He ordained me with a slap on the back, commanding, “Go round the world and roar like a lion!” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Amid a festival crowd outside Nallur temple, a disheveled *sādhu* shook the bars from within the chariot shed, shouting, “Hey! Who are you?” and in that moment Yogaswami was transfixed. “There is not one wrong thing!” “It is as it is! Who knows?” Sage Chellappan said, and suddenly the world vanished. After Chellappan’s *mahāsamādhi* in 1915, Yogaswami undertook five years of intense *sādhana*. Later, people of all walks of life, all nations, came for his *darśana*. He urged one and all to “Know thy Self by thyself.” It was in his thatched, dung-floor hermitage in 1949 that we first met. I had just weeks before realized Paraśiva with his inner help while meditating in the caves of Jalani. “You are in me,” he said. “I am in you,” I responded. Later he ordained me “Subramuniyaswami” with a tremendous slap on the back, and with this *dīkshā* sent me as a *sannyāsin* to America, saying, “You will build temples. You will feed thousands.” I was 22 at the time, and he was 77. In fulfillment of his orders have I, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, composed these 155 *ślokas* and *bhāshyas*, telling an infinitesimal fraction of all that he infused in me. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

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*Satguru Yogaswami sits in deep contemplation in his Colombuthurai hut. In meditation and when composing his Natchintanai hymns, he clairaudiently heard the ringing anklets of Goddess Tāiyilnaiaki, Śakti. Śiva is present in the form of the tiruvadi.*

There is no one greater in the three worlds than the *guru*. It is he who grants divine knowledge and should be worshiped with supreme devotion.

*Atharva Veda, Yoga-Śikha Upanishad 5.53. YU, 26*

Abiding in the midst of ignorance, but thinking themselves wise and learned, fools aimlessly go hither and thither, like blind led by the blind.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1.2.8. UPM, 77*

Truth is the Supreme, the Supreme is Truth. Through Truth men never fall from the heavenly world, because Truth belongs to the saints. Therefore, they rejoice in Truth.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad 505. VE, 439*

The supreme mystery in the *Veda's* end, which has been declared in former times, should not be given to one not tranquil, nor again to one who is not a son or a pupil. To one who has the highest devotion for God, and for his spiritual teacher even as for God, to him these matters which have been declared become manifest if he be a great soul—yea, become manifest if he be a great soul!

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Svetāśvatara Upanishad 6.22-23. UPH, 411*

Disciples get, by devotion to the *guru*, the knowledge which the *guru* possesses. In the three worlds this fact is clearly enunciated by divine sages, the ancestors and learned men.

*Guru Gītā 43. GG, 14*

I adore the lotus feet of the teachers who have shown to us the source of the eternal ocean of bliss, born of the Self within, who have given us the remedy for the *hālā-hala* poison of *saṁsāra*.

*Guru Gītā 115. GG, 47*

What is needful? Righteousness and sacred learning and teaching. Truth and sacred learning and teaching. Meditation and sacred learning and teaching. Self-control and sacred learning and teaching. Peace and sacred learning and teaching. Ritual and sacred learning and teaching. Humanity and sacred learning and teaching.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Upanishad 1.9. UPM, 109*

Though himself unattached, the *guru*, after testing him for some time, on command of the Lord, shall deliver the Truth to his disciple in order to vest him with authority. Of him who is so invested with authority, there is verily union with the Supreme Śiva. At the termination of the bodily life, his is the eternal liberation—this is declared by the Lord. Therefore, one should seek with all effort to have a *guru* of the unbroken tradition, born of Supreme Śiva himself. It is laid down by the Lord that there can be no *moksha*, liberation, without *dīkshā*, initiation; and initiation cannot be there without a teacher. Hence, it comes down the line of teachers, *paramparā*. Without a teacher, all philosophy, traditional knowledge and *mantras* are fruitless. Him alone the Gods laud who is the *guru*, keeping active what is handed down by tradition.

*Kulārṇava Tantra* 10.1. कृ०, 101

Nandinatha accepted the offering of my body, wealth and life. He then touched me, and his glance dispelled my distressful *karma*. He placed his feet on my head and imparted higher consciousness. Thus, he severed my burdensome cycle of birth.

*Tirumantiram* 1778. TM

Night and day in Nallur's precincts, Chellappan danced in bliss. Even holy *yogīs* merged in silence do not know him. He keeps repeating, "All is truth," with radiant countenance. Night and day in Nallur's precincts, Chellappan danced in bliss. To end my endless turning on the wheel of wretched birth, he took me 'neath his rule and I was drowned in bliss. "There is nothing in the objective. All is truth"—His grace made *māyā's* shrouding darkness to depart. In that state, my body and soul were his possessions. O wonder! Who in the world is able to know this? Night and day in Nallur's precincts, Chellappan danced in bliss.

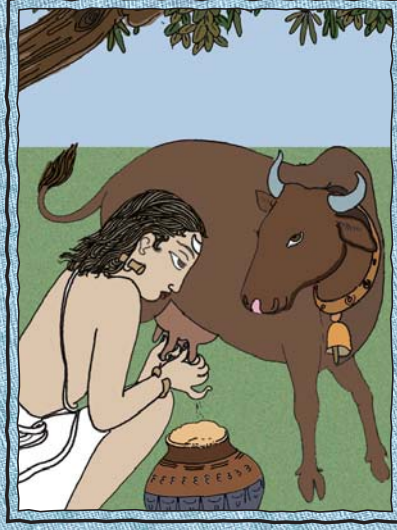
*Natchintanai*, "Chellappan Danced." NT, 88

The silent sage proclaimed that day that all that is is truth. Do Sivathondu with the thought that defect there is none. Birth will cease to be. All sins will be destroyed. Arise and be awake! All victory is yours! The silent sage proclaimed that day that all that is is truth. Be not faint in heart! That "Jīva is Śiva" is clear, if the *guru's* word of truth you come to understand. The silent sage proclaimed that day that all that is is truth.

*Natchintanai*, "The Silent Sage..." NT, 77



Upagranthāḥ  
उपग्रन्थाः



Resources





# Śaiva Śraddhā Dhāraṇā शैवश्रद्धा-धारणा

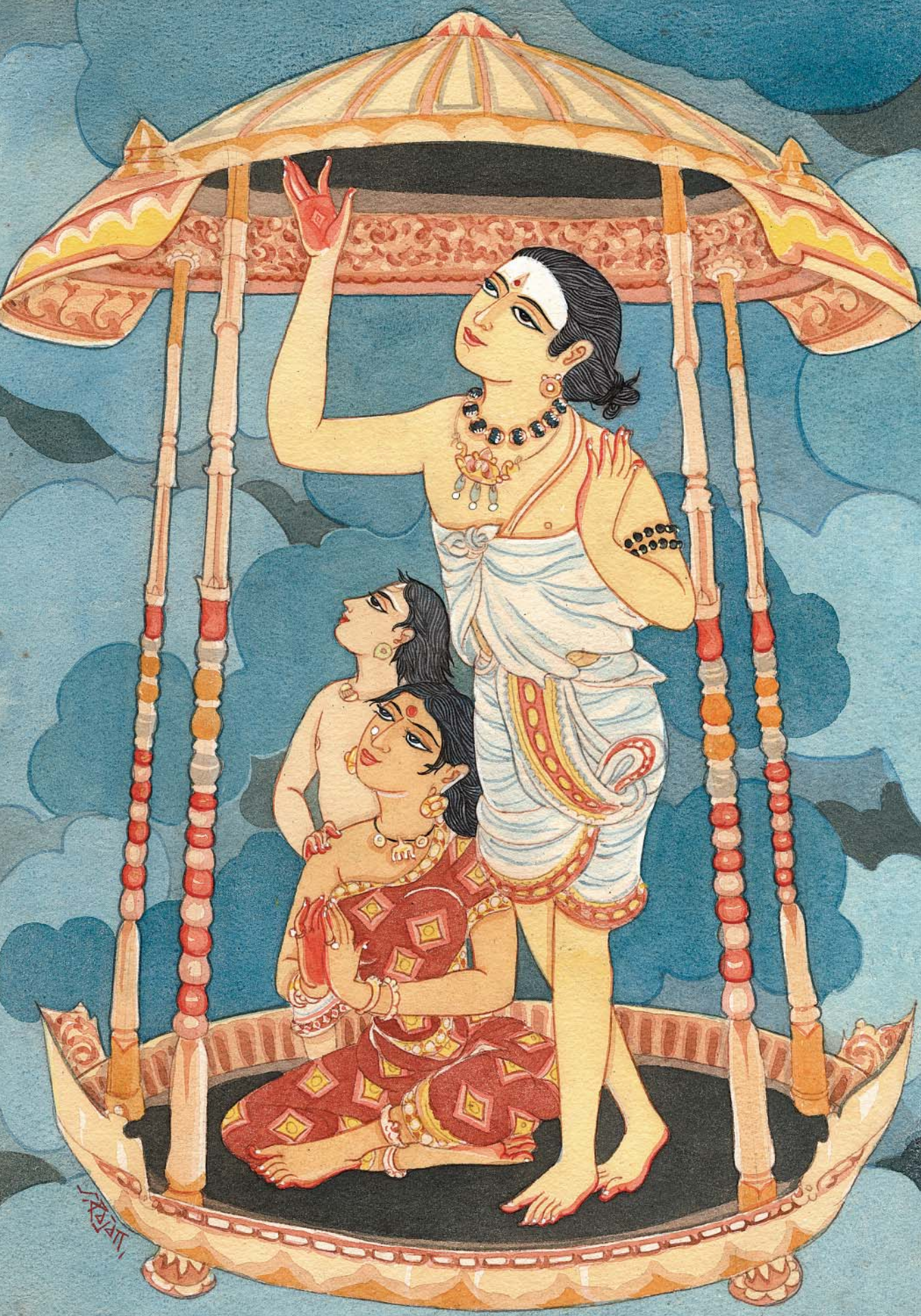


## RESOURCE ONE

# A Śaivite Creed

If a man yearns wholeheartedly for victory in subduing the mind, let him practice Śivadhyāna daily. Then he will see for himself that, step by step, his mind will become one-pointed. Serenity, forbearance, control and other such good qualities will arise in him. His mind will be always full of joy. He will not be dragged down by praise or blame, but will enjoy happiness in his inmost soul, and the thought that the well-being of others is his own will flood his heart.

*Natchintanai, "Seek the Profit of the Soul," NT, P. 10*





VERY RELIGION HAS A CREED OF ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, AN AUTHORITATIVE FORMULATION OF ITS BELIEFS. HISTORICALLY, CREEDS HAVE DEVELOPED WHENEVER RELIGIONS MIGRATE FROM THEIR HOMELANDS. UNTIL THEN, THE BELIEFS ARE FULLY contained in the culture and taught to children as a natural part of growing up. But when followers settle in other countries where alien faiths predominate, the necessity of a simple statement of faith arises. A creed is the distillation of volumes of knowledge into a series of easy-to-remember beliefs, or *śraddhā*. A creed is meant to summarize the explicit teachings or articles of faith, to imbed and thus protect and transmit the beliefs. Creeds give strength to individuals seeking to understand life and religion. Creeds also allow members of one faith to express, in elementary and consistent terms, their traditions to members of another. Though the vast array of doctrines within the Sanātana Dharma has not always been articulated in summary form, from ancient times unto today we have the well-known creedal *mahāvākya*, “great sayings,” of the Vedic *Upanishads*. Now, in this technological age in which village integrity is being replaced by worldwide mobility, the importance of a creed becomes apparent if religious identity is to be preserved. We need two kinds of strength—that which is found in diversity and individual freedom to inquire and that which derives from a union of minds in upholding the universal principles of our faith. The twelve beliefs on the following pages embody the centuries-old central convictions of Śaivism, especially as postulated in the Advaita Iśvaravāda philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta. Yea, this *Śaiva Dharma Śraddhā Dhāraṇā* is a total summation of *Dancing with Śiva, Hinduism’s Contemporary Catechism*. Aum Namaḥ Śivaya.

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*A Śaivite family, father, mother and child, gather in a garden pavilion to enjoy one another’s company and offer prayers to Lord Śiva. Hearts lift and eyes turn to the blue canopy above as they intone together the creed which sums their beliefs in perfect simplicity.*



*For untold thousands of years the Sivalingam has represented God in His unmanifest Reality, termed Nirguṇa Brahman. The aniconic form of the Liṅgam alludes subtly to That which is beyond description or portrayal, depicted here as the core of existence—within, not above, the phenomenal world and its vast, galactic and subatomic contents.*

## Belief Number One

### REGARDING GOD'S UNMANIFEST REALITY

Śiva's followers all believe that Lord Śiva is God, whose Absolute Being, Paraśiva, transcends time, form and space. The *yogī* silently exclaims, "It is not this. It is not that." Yea, such an inscrutable God is God Śiva. Aum.



*As Satchidānanda, pure consciousness, God Śiva permeates all of existence as its very ground and energy. Some liken this ubiquitous substratum of Divinity to a cinema screen, which is real but unnoticed as the images of relative reality dance upon its surface. Here the natural world, with its groves, mountains and intergalactic spaces, is depicted as the body of Śiva. He is in all, and all is in Him.*

## Belief Number Two

REGARDING GOD'S MANIFEST NATURE OF ALL-PERVADING LOVE

Śiva's followers all believe that Lord Śiva is God, whose immanent nature of love, Parāśakti, is the substratum, primal substance or pure consciousness flowing through all form as energy, existence, knowledge and bliss. Aum.





*From left to right, Brahmā, Rudra and Viṣṇu form the renowned Trimūrti. As Brahmā, God Śiva is creator, maker of all things. His creative force is depicted here as birds' eggs in spring, a newborn child and the rising sun. As Viṣṇu, He is preserver, sustaining life's summer and its harvest. As Rudra, He is destroyer, drawing His creations back into Himself, completing the natural cycle, shown here as the death of a cow and natural fires consuming a forest.*

## Belief Number Three

REGARDING GOD AS PERSONAL LORD AND CREATOR OF ALL

Śiva's followers all believe that Lord Śiva is God, whose immanent nature is the Primal Soul, Supreme Mahādeva, Parameśvara, author of *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, the creator, preserver and destroyer of all that exists. Aum.



*Lord Gaṇeśa is the elephant-faced Deity who guides and protects us through His powers to create and remove obstacles from our path. Here a devotee brings a tray of offerings to a small shrine and supplicates His grace before passing through the ornate temple doors behind her. Her earnest prayers have brought Lord Gaṇeśa's affectionate blessings.*

## Belief Number Four

### REGARDING THE ELEPHANT-FACED DEITY

Śiva's followers all believe in the Mahādeva Lord Gaṇeśa, son of Śiva-Śakti, to whom they must first supplicate before beginning any worship or task. His rule is compassionate. His law is just. Justice is His mind. Aum.



*Lord Murugan is God Śiva's Son, variously worshiped as a renunciate, as the King of kings and as Commander in Chief of the celestial armies. Here He is depicted as Skanda, the mighty warrior who fearlessly wields the vel, the lance of light and spiritual knowledge that overcomes demons and forces of darkness for devotees who—like the man prostrating on the lotus—pray to Him.*

## Belief Number Five

### REGARDING THE DEITY KĀRTTIKEYA

Śiva's followers all believe in the Mahādeva Kārttikeya, son of Śiva-Śakti, whose *vel* of grace dissolves the bondages of ignorance. The *yogī*, locked in lotus, venerates Murugan. Thus restrained, his mind becomes calm. Aum.



*God Śiva creates the individual soul in much the same way that we create our thoughts, as a natural and effortless extension of ourselves. Here the soul is seated in Śiva's hair, as a creation of His Divine Mind. The soul evolves, maturing in the fires of experience and ultimately turns within through yoga to realize that it was ever in union with Him, as shown by the soul's meditating on Natarāja.*

## Belief Number Six

REGARDING THE SOUL'S CREATION AND ITS IDENTITY WITH GOD

Śiva's followers all believe that each soul is created by Lord Śiva and is identical to Him, and that this identity will be fully realized by all souls when the bondage of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* is removed by His grace. Aum.





*The three worlds are the three planes of existence: gross, subtle and causal, existing one within the other. Here the material or First World is depicted as a Himālayan valley with a lotus-filled pond. Within each lotus—as within every atom of the universe—is the Second World of astral substance and beings. Deep within the Second World, at the center of the lotus, is the Third World of pure spiritual energy, where Lord Naṭarāja dances and the Gods abide.*

## Belief Number Seven

REGARDING THE GROSS, SUBTLE AND CAUSAL PLANES OF EXISTENCE

Śiva's followers all believe in three worlds: the gross plane, where souls take on physical bodies; the subtle plane, where souls take on astral bodies; and the causal plane, where souls exist in their self-effulgent form. Aum.



*Our individual soul is a body of light which does not die, but takes one body and then another in a succession of births, a process known as reincarnation. Here the soul is depicted as a stream of light flowing through five of its many lives: a peasant, a soldier, a princess, a businessman and a jñāni who has attained enlightenment and will never again be born on Earth.*

## Belief Number Eight

REGARDING KARMA, SAṂSĀRA AND LIBERATION FROM REBIRTH

Śiva's followers all believe in the law of *karma*—that one must reap the effects of all actions he has caused—and that each soul continues to reincarnate until all *karmas* are resolved and *moksha*, liberation, is attained. Aum.



The four pādas are depicted here clockwise from the left. In the charyā pāda, we live virtuously and serve, as is the lady shown feeding a mendicant. In the kriyā pāda, devotion and temple worship are the focus of our life, shown by the devotee bringing flower offerings to the temple. In the yoga pāda, shown by the meditator, we internalize worship under a guru's aegis. The jñāna pāda is the awakened state of the revered holy man, represented by the guru who blesses a devout seeker.

## Belief Number Nine

REGARDING THE FOUR MĀRGAS, STAGES OF INNER PROGRESS

Śiva's followers all believe that the performance of *charyā*, virtuous living, *kriyā*, temple worship, and *yoga*, leading to Paraśiva through the grace of the living *satguru*, is absolutely necessary to bring forth *jñāna*, wisdom. Aum.



*God Śiva created everything and its opposite—joy and sorrow, birth and death, pleasure and pain—all that is seemingly good and bad. Here the artist has drawn two people, one living in darkness and the other in light, yet both are seated in Śiva's gracious palm, illustrating that to Śiva both souls are divine, no matter what they do; one is not damned and the other redeemed. There is no intrinsic evil, no Satan or Devil that opposes His will.*

## Belief Number Ten

### REGARDING THE GOODNESS OF ALL

Śiva's followers all believe there is no intrinsic evil. Evil has no source, unless the source of evil's seeming be ignorance itself. They are truly compassionate, knowing that ultimately there is no good or bad. All is Śiva's will. Aum.





*It is through temple worship that we communicate with the subtle, divine worlds. In this illustration, priests gather about the homa fire within the temple precincts of the First World. Their worship and sacred chants open the inner doors so they may consciously commune with the Third World, whence God Śiva and the Mahādevas Gaṇeśa and Murugaṇ offer blessings.*

## Belief Number Eleven

REGARDING THE ESOTERIC PURPOSE OF TEMPLE WORSHIP

Śiva's followers all believe that religion is the harmonious working together of the three worlds and that this harmony can be created through temple worship, wherein the beings of all three worlds can communicate. Aum.



*The mysteries of the Pañchākshara Mantra are deep and many. It is the most holy name of our God Śiva. Here an earnest devotee, adorned with holy ash, is seated in quiet meditation, silently chanting the sacred Five Letters, Na-Ma-Si-Vā-Ya, which are depicted in Tamil script as five petals within the lotus of his heart. The mantra's spiritual energies radiate out from the lotus, blessing the world.*

## Belief Number Twelve

### REGARDING THE FIVE LETTERS

Śiva's followers all believe in the Pañchākshara Mantra, the five sacred syllables "Namaḥ Śivāya," as Śaivism's foremost and essential *mantra*. The secret of Namaḥ Śivāya is to hear it from the right lips at the right time. Aum.



Shat-Śaiva Sampradāya

षट्शैवसंप्रदाय



RESOURCE TWO

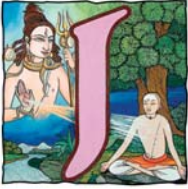
## Six Schools of Śaivism

Love is God. Love is the world. Love is all that lives.  
Love is everything. It is love that appears as becoming  
and dissolution. Who knows the wonder of love? He  
is the One without origin or end. The reason for His  
seeming to have origin and end can only be known by  
the Origin's Pure Grace. No one can know it through  
learning.

*Natchintanai, "Who Can Know." NT, P. 86*



J. K. JAIN, 22



IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE, ENLIGHTENMENT AND LIBERATION, NO PATH IS MORE TOLERANT, MORE MYSTICAL, MORE WIDESPREAD OR MORE ANCIENT THAN ŚAIVITE HINDUISM. THROUGH HISTORY ŚAIVISM HAS DEVELOPED A VAST ARRAY OF LINEAGES and traditions, each with unique philosophic-cultural-linguistic characteristics, as it dominated India prior to 1100 from the Himalayas to Sri Lanka, from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. Here we seek to present the essential features of six major traditions identifiable within the ongoing Śaiva context: Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāśupata Śaivism, Kashmīr Śaivism, Vīra Śaivism, Siddha Siddhānta and Śiva Advaita.

It should be understood that this formal and somewhat intellectual division, however useful, is by no means a comprehensive description of Śaivism, nor is it the only possible list. In practice, Śaivism is far more rich and varied than these divisions imply. Take for instance the Śaivism practiced by thirteen million people in Nepal or three million in Indonesia and fifty-five million Hinduized Javanese who worship Śiva as Batara. Ponder the millions upon millions of Smārtas and other universalists who have taken Gaṇeśa, Murugan or Śiva as their chosen Deity, or the legions of Ayyappan followers who worship devoutly in Lord Murugan's great South Indian sanctuaries. Consider the fact that only a handful of Kashmir's millions of Śiva worshipers would formally associate themselves with the school called Kashmīr Śaivism. Similarly, in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, where there are over fifty million worshipers of Śiva, only a well-informed minority would knowingly subscribe to Śaiva Siddhānta.

Our discussion of these six schools and their related traditions is based upon historical information. There are wide gaps in the record, but we do know that at each point where the veil of history lifts, the worship of Śiva is there. In the 8,000-year-old Indus Valley we find the famous seal of Śiva as Lord Paśupati. The seal shows Śiva seated in a *yogic* pose. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, dated astronomically at 2000 BCE, Lord Rāma worshiped Śiva, as did his rival Ravana. In the *Mahābhārata*, dated at around 1300 BCE we find again the worship of Śiva. Buddha in 624 BCE was born into a Śaivite family, and records of his time talk of the Śaiva ascetics who wandered the hills looking much as they do today.

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*Hands aloft in a gesture of enstatic revelation, a Śivabhakta realizes the Divinity in all things and creatures, seeing God as the all-pervasive energy and substratum of the universe. For the hundreds of millions of Hindus who follow one of the six Śaivite schools, that Divinity is Śiva.*



The *Śaiva Āgamas* form the foundation and circumference of all the schools of Śaivism. The system of philosophy set forth in the *Āgamas* is common to a remarkable degree among all these schools of thought. These *Āgamas* are theistic, that is, they all identify Śiva as the Supreme Lord, immanent and transcendent, capable of accepting worship as the personal Lord and of being realized through *yoga*. This above all else is the connecting strand through all the schools.

Philosophically, the Āgamic tradition includes the following principal doctrines: 1) the five powers of Śiva: creation, preservation, destruction, revealing and concealing grace; 2) The three categories, Pati, *paśu* and *pāśa*: God, souls and bonds; 3) the three bonds: *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*; 4) the three-fold power of Śiva—*icchā*, *kriyā* and *jñāna śakti*; 5) the thirty-six *tattvas*, or categories of existence, from the five elements to God; 6) the need for the *satguru* and initiation; 7) the power of *mantra*; 8) the four *pādas*: *charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*.

As we explore the individual schools and lineages within Śaivism, keep in mind that all adhere to these doctrines. Our discussion necessarily focuses on the differences between one school and another, but this is not meant to obscure the overwhelming similarity of belief and practice among them.

Monism, dualism and philosophies in-between are all conveyed in the *Śaiva Āgamas*. The various schools based on *Āgamas* similarly vary in philosophic stance. Kashmīr Śaivite tradition says that Śiva revealed different philosophies for people of different understanding, so that each could advance on the spiritual path toward the recognition of the innate oneness of man and God.

Few worshippers of Śiva are now or were in the past familiar with the *Āgamas*. Reading and writing were the domain of a few specially trained scribes, and today the *Āgamas* remain mostly on the *olai* leaves upon which they have been transmitted for generations. Āgamic philosophy and practices are conveyed to the common man through other channels, one of which is the *Śaiva Purāṇas*. These oral collections of stories about the Gods are interspersed with Āgamic philosophy. For example, the *Śiva Purāṇa* proclaims: “Śiva is the great *ātman* because He is the *ātman* of all, He is forever endowed with the great qualities. The devotee shall realize the identity of Śiva with himself: ‘I am Śiva alone.’”

A second channel is the Śaivite temple itself, for the construction of the temples and the performance of the rituals are all set forth in the

*Āgamas*—in fact it is one of their main subjects. The priests follow manuals called *paddhati*, which are summaries of the instructions for worship contained in the *Śaiva Āgamas*, specifically the *śoḍaśa upachāras*, or sixteen acts of *pūjā* worship, such as offering of food, incense and water. A third channel is the songs and *bhajanas* of the *sants*, which in their simplicity carry powerful philosophic import. A fourth is the on-going oral teachings of *gurus*, *swāmīs*, *paṇḍitas*, *śāstrīs*, priests and elders.

Such matters of agreement belie the fact that Śaivism is not a single, hierarchical system. Rather, it is a thousand traditions, great and small. Some are orthodox and pious, while others are iconoclastic and even—like the Kāpālikas and the Aghorīs—fiercely ascetic, eccentric or orgiastic. For some, Śiva is the powerful, terrible, awesome destroyer, but for most He is love itself, compassionate and gentle. For nearly all of the millions of Śiva’s devotees, Śaivism is not, therefore, a school or philosophy; it is life itself. To them Śaivism means love of Śiva, and they simply follow the venerable traditions of their family and community. These men and women worship in the temples and mark life’s passages by holy sacraments. They go on pilgrimages, perform daily prayers, meditations and *yogic* disciplines. They sing holy hymns, share Purāṇic folk narratives and recite scriptural verses. Still, it is useful for us all to understand the formal streams of thought which nurture and sustain our faith. Now, in our brief description of these six schools, we begin with today’s most prominent form of Śaivism, Śaiva Siddhānta.

### Śaiva Siddhānta

Śaiva Siddhānta is the oldest, most vigorous and extensively practiced Śaivite Hindu school today, encompassing millions of devotees, thousands of active temples and dozens of living monastic and ascetic traditions. Despite its popularity, Siddhānta’s glorious past as an all-India denomination is relatively unknown and it is identified today primarily with its South Indian, Tamil form. The term *Śaiva Siddhānta* means “the final or established conclusions of Śaivism.” It is the formalized theology of the divine revelations contained in the twenty-eight *Śaiva Āgamas*. The first known *guru* of the Śuddha, “pure,” Śaiva Siddhānta tradition was Maharishi Nandinatha of Kashmir (ca 250 BCE), recorded in Pānini’s book of grammar as the teacher of *ṛishis* Patanjali, Vyaghrapada and Vasishta. The only surviving written work of Maharishi Nandinatha are twenty-six Sanskrit verses, called the *Nandikeśvara Kāśikā*, in which he carried

forward the ancient teachings. Because of his monistic approach, Nandinatha is often considered by scholars as an exponent of the Advaita school.

The next prominent *guru* on record is Rishi Tirumular, a *siddha* in the line of Nandinatha who came from the Valley of Kashmir to South India to propound the sacred teachings of the twenty-eight Śaiva Āgamas. In his profound work the *Tirumantiram*, “Sacred Incantation,” Tirumular for the first time put the vast writings of the Āgamas and the Śuddha Siddhānta philosophy into the melodious Tamil language. Rishi Tirumular, like his *satguru*, Maharishi Nandinatha, propounds a monistic theism in which Śiva is both material and efficient cause, immanent and transcendent. Śiva creates souls and world through emanation from Himself, ultimately reabsorbing them in His oceanic Being, as water flows into water, fire into fire, ether into ether.

The *Tirumantiram* unfolds the way of Siddhānta as a progressive, four-fold path of *charyā*, virtuous and moral living; *kriyā*, temple worship; and *yoga*—internalized worship and union with Paraśiva through the grace of the living *satguru*—which leads to the state of *jñāna* and liberation. After liberation, the soul body continues to evolve until it fully merges with God—*jīva* becomes Śiva.

Tirumular’s Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta shares common distant roots with Mahāsiddhayogi Gorakshanatha’s Siddha Siddhānta in that both are Nātha teaching lineages. Tirumular’s lineage is known as the Nandinātha Sampradāya, Gorakshanatha’s is called the Ādinātha Sampradāya.

Śaiva Siddhānta flowered in South India as a forceful *bhakti* movement infused with insights on *siddha yoga*. During the seventh to ninth centuries, saints Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar pilgrimaged from temple to temple, singing soulfully of Śiva’s greatness. They were instrumental in successfully defending Śaivism against the threats of Buddhism and Jainism. Soon thereafter, a king’s Prime Minister, Manikkavasagar, renounced a world of wealth and fame to seek and serve God. His heart-melting verses, called *Tiruvāṣagam*, are full of visionary experience, divine love and urgent striving for Truth. The songs of these four saints are part of the compendium known as *Tirumurai*, which along with the *Vedas* and Śaiva Āgamas form the scriptural basis of Śaiva Siddhānta in Tamil Nadu.

Besides the saints, philosophers and ascetics, there were innumerable *siddhas*, “accomplished ones,” God-intoxicated men who roamed their way through the centuries as saints, *gurus*, inspired devotees or even despised outcastes. Śaiva Siddhānta makes a special claim on them, but their

presence and revelation cut across all schools, philosophies and lineages to keep the true spirit of Śiva present on Earth. These *siddhas* provided the central source of power to spur the religion from age to age. The well-known names include Sage Agastya, Bhogar Rishi, Tirumular and Gorakshanatha. They are revered by the Siddha Siddhāntins, Kashmīr Śaivites and even by the Nepalese branches of Buddhism.

In Central India, Śaiva Siddhānta of the Sanskrit tradition was first institutionalized by Guhavasi Siddha (ca 675). The third successor in his line, Rudrasambhu, also known as Amardaka Tirthanatha, founded the Āmardaka monastic order (ca 775) in Andhra Pradesh. From this time, three monastic orders arose that were instrumental in Śaiva Siddhānta's diffusion throughout India. Along with the Āmardaka order (which identified with one of Śaivism's holiest cities, Ujjain) were the Mattamayūra Order, in the capital of the Chālukya dynasty, near the Punjab, and the Madhumateya order of Central India. Each of these developed numerous sub-orders, as the Siddhānta monastics, full of missionary spirit, used the influence of their royal patrons to propagate the teachings in neighboring kingdoms, particularly in South India. From Mattamayūra, they established monasteries in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala (ca 800).

Of the many *gurus* and *āchāryas* that followed, spreading Siddhānta through the whole of India, two *siddhas*, Sadyojyoti and Bṛihaspati of Central India (ca 850), are credited with the systematization of the theology in Sanskrit. Sadyojyoti, initiated by the Kashmir *guru* Ugrajyoti, propounded the Siddhānta philosophical views as found in the *Raurava Āgama*. He was succeeded by Ramakantha I, Srikantha, Narayanakantha and Ramakantha II, each of whom wrote numerous treatises on Śaiva Siddhānta.

Later, King Bhoja Paramara of Gujarat (ca 1018) condensed the massive body of Siddhānta scriptural texts that preceded him into a one concise metaphysical treatise called *Tattvaparakāśa*, considered a foremost Sanskrit scripture on Śaiva Siddhānta.

Affirming the monistic view of Śaiva Siddhānta was Srikumara (ca 1056), stating in his commentary, *Tatparyadīpikā*, on Bhoja Paramara's works, that Pati, *paśu* and *pāśa* are ultimately one, and that revelation declares that Śiva is one. He is the essence of everything. Srikumara maintained that Śiva is both the efficient and the material cause of the universe.

Śaiva Siddhānta was readily accepted wherever it spread in India and continued to blossom until the Islamic invasions, which virtually annihilated all traces of Siddhānta from North and Central India, limiting its

open practice to the southern areas of the subcontinent.

It was in the twelfth century that Aghorasiva took up the task of amalgamating the Sanskrit Siddhānta tradition of the North with the Southern, Tamil Siddhānta. As the head of a branch monastery of the Āmardaka Order in Chidambaram, Aghorasiva gave a unique slant to Śaiva Siddhānta theology, paving the way for a new pluralistic school. In strongly refuting any monist interpretations of Siddhānta, Aghorasiva brought a dramatic change in the understanding of the Godhead by classifying the first five principles, or *tattvas* (Nāda, Bindu, Sadāśiva, Īśvara and Śuddhavidyā), into the category of *pāśa* (bonds), stating they were effects of a cause and inherently unconscious substances. This was clearly a departure from the traditional teaching in which these five were part of the divine nature of God. Aghorasiva thus inaugurated a new Siddhānta, divergent from the original monistic Śaiva Siddhānta of the Himalayas.

Despite Aghorasiva's pluralistic viewpoint of Siddhānta, he was successful in preserving the invaluable Sanskritic rituals of the ancient Āgamic tradition through his writings. To this day, Aghorasiva's Siddhānta philosophy is followed by almost all of the hereditary Śivāchārya temple priests, and his *paddhati* texts on the Āgamas have become the standard *pūjā* manuals. His *Kriyākramadyotikā* is a vast work covering nearly all aspects of Śaiva Siddhānta ritual, including *dīkshā*, *saṃskāras*, *ātmārtha pūjā* and installation of Deities.

In the thirteenth century, another important development occurred in Śaiva Siddhānta when Meykandar wrote the twelve-verse *Śivajñāna-bodham*. This and subsequent works by other writers laid the foundation of the Meykandar Sampradāya, which propounds a pluralistic realism wherein God, souls and world are coexistent and without beginning. Śiva is efficient but not material cause. They view the soul's merging in Śiva as salt in water, an eternal oneness that is also twoness. This school's literature has so dominated scholarship that Śaiva Siddhānta is often erroneously identified as exclusively pluralistic. In truth, there are two interpretations, one monistic and another dualistic, of which the former is the original philosophical premise found in pre-Meykandar scriptures, including the *Upanishads*.

Śaiva Siddhānta is rich in its temple traditions, religious festivals, sacred arts, spiritual culture, priestly clans, monastic orders and *guru*-disciple lineages. All these still thrive. Today Śaiva Siddhānta is most prominent among sixty million Tamil Śaivites who live mostly in South India

and Sri Lanka. Here and elsewhere in the world, prominent Siddhānta societies, temples and monasteries abound.

### Pāśupata Śaivism

The Pāśupatas (from *Paśupati*, a name of Śiva meaning “Lord of souls”) are the oldest known sect of Śaivite ascetic monks. They wandered, pounding the dust with iron tridents and stout staffs, their oily hair snarled in unkempt coils or tied in a knot, faces wrinkled with intense devotion, piercing eyes seeing more Śiva than world, loins wrapped in deer skin or bark. The Pāśupatas were *bhaktas* and benign sorcerers of Śiva, estranged from the priest-dominated Vedic society. Religious turbulence in India intensified as the dual waves of Śaivite Āgamic theism and Buddhism washed over the Gangetic plain.

The ways of the Pāśupatas were chronicled by several sometimes hostile contemporary commentators of that distant period, leaving us with a mixed impression of their life and philosophy. They originally allowed anyone to follow their path, which was not caste-discriminative. As the popularity of the Pāśupata lineage rose, high numbers of *brāhmins* defected to it to worship Śiva in unhindered abandon. Eventually it was preferred for a Pāśupata to come from the *brāhmin* caste. The relationship between these Pāśupata monks and the ash-smeared *sādhus* of Buddha’s time, or the makers of the Indus Valley seal depicting Śiva as Pāśupata, is not known. They are perhaps the same, perhaps different.

The Pāśupata *sādhus* evoked sheer religious awe. Theirs was a brave, ego-stripping path meant to infuse the seeker with Lord Śiva’s *kāruṇya*, “compassionate grace.” Their austerity was leavened with *pūjā* rites to Śiva, with a profound awareness of the cosmos as Śiva’s constant becoming and with an almost frolicsome spirit of love toward Him. *Sādhana* began with a strict code of ethics, called *yamas* and *niyamas*, stressing *brahmacharya*, “continence;” *ahiṃsā*, “noninjury;” and *tapas*, “asceticism.” As detailed in their scriptures, their discipline was practiced in stages. First they assumed vows and practiced special disciplines among themselves which included Śiva-intoxicated laughing, singing and dancing.

Next they dispersed into mainstream society, living incognito. Here they perpetrated outrageous acts to purposely invite public censure, such as babbling, making snorting sounds, walking as if crippled, talking nonsense, and wild gesturing. This *sādhana* was a means of self-purification, of rooting out egoism, of getting over the need to be accepted by the

public, by friends or by neighbors, and to fully establish in the subconscious the knowledge that like and dislike, good and bad and all these human ways of thinking and feeling are equal if one's love of Lord Śiva is sufficiently strong. This was designed to break their links with human society and with their own humanness that came with them when they were born.

Returning to overt *sādhana*, they practiced austerities, then abandoned all action to perform *kuṇḍaliṇī yoga* and so to achieve perpetual nearness to God Śiva. When union matured, they acquired supernatural powers such as omniscience. The Pāśupatas believed that when a person is firm in virtue and able to accept with equanimity all abuse and insult, he is well established in the path of asceticism. Sri Kaundinya wrote in his sixth-century commentary, *Pañchārtha Bhāshya*, on the *Pāśupata Sūtra* that the Pāśupata *yogī* "should appear as though mad, like a pauper, his body covered with filth, letting his beard, nails and hair grow long, without any bodily care. Hereby he cuts himself off from the estates (*varṇa*) and stages of life (*āśramas*), and the power of dispassion is produced."

Pāśupatism is primarily an ascetic's path that rejects dialectical logic and prizes *sādhana* as a means to actuate Lord Śiva's *kāruṇya*. Seekers embrace strict *yama-niyama* vows, their *sādhana*s graduating from "action" to "nonaction." Worshipful action includes *pūjā*, penance, *Namaḥ Śivāya japa*, wearing sacred ash and showing abandoned love of God Śiva.

The sect was said to have been founded by Lord Śiva Himself, who imparted the doctrines to certain *mahāriṣhis*. Around 200 CE, Pāśupata's most historically prominent *satguru*, Lakulisa, appeared in what is today India's state of Gujarat. According to the *Kāraṇa Māhātmya*, he was born to a *brāhmin* family, but died in his seventh month, after displaying remarkable spiritual powers. His mother cast his body into a river (a traditional form of infant burial), and a group of tortoises carried it to a powerful Śiva shrine. There the boy returned to life and was raised as an ascetic. By another account, Lakulisa ("lord of the staff") was an anchorite who died and was revived by Lord Śiva, who entered his body to preach the Pāśupata Dharma to the world. The site of his appearance is a town known today as Kayavarohana ("incarnation in another's body"). The miracle is still festively celebrated. Two stone inscriptions in the village honor the names of this *satguru's* four main *śiṣhyas*: Kuśika, Gargya, Maitreya and Kaurusha.

Satguru Lakulisa was a dynamic Pāśupata reformist. In his *sūtras*, out-

lining the bold codes of conduct and *yoga* precepts, he restricted admittance to the three higher castes (*vaiśya*, *kshatriya* and *brāhmin*) in an attempt to link this school with Vedic orthodoxy. A popular householder path arose out of this exclusively ascetic order. Today numerous Pāśupata centers of worship are scattered across India, where Satguru Lakulisa as Śiva is often enshrined, his image on the face of a Śivaliṅga, seated in lotus posture, virilely naked, holding a *daṇḍa* in his left hand and a citron fruit in his right. Their most revered temple, Somanath, is in Gujarat, a powerful, active temple which has endured several cycles of destruction and rebuilding.

A seventh-century Chinese traveler, Hsüen Tsang, wrote that 10,000 Pāśupatas then occupied Varanasi. The Pāśupata tradition spread to Nepal in the eighth century, where the now famous Pāśupatināth Temple became a prime pilgrimage center and remains so to this day. At its medieval zenith, Pāśupatism blanketed Western, Northwestern and South-eastern India, where it received royal patronage. In the fifteenth century, it retreated to its strongholds of Gujarat, Nepal and the Himalayan hills.

Traditionally, the deepest Pāśupata teachings have been kept secret, reserved for initiates who were tried, tested and found most worthy. Central scriptures are the *Pāśupata Sūtras* (ascribed to the venerable Lakulisa), Kaundinya's commentary on them, *Pañchārtha Bhāshya* (ca 500) and the *Mṛigendra Āgama*.

The Pāśupata philosophy prior to Lakulisa was dualistic. Little is known of it, as no writings remain. But scholars have discerned from references to Pāśupata by other ancient writers that it regarded Śiva as only the efficient cause of the universe, not the material. It posited five primary categories—cause, effect, union, ritual and liberation. The latter category was somewhat unusual, as the Pāśupatas believed the soul never merged in Śiva and that liberation was simply a state with no further pain. They taught that God can create changes in the world and in the destinies of men according to His own pleasure. God does not necessarily depend upon the person or his *karma* (actions).

Lakulisa's Pāśupata system retained the idea of five categories, but regarded the goal of the soul as attainment of divine perfection. Further, he put God as the material cause of the universe, effectively moving the philosophy from dualism to dual-nondual. The soul, *paśu*, is prevented from closeness to Śiva by *pāśa*, "fetters." The soul retains its individuality in its liberated state, termed *sāyujya*, defined as closeness to but not complete



union with God. Lord Śiva has no power over liberated souls.

The Kāpālika, “skull-bearers,” sect developed out of the Pāśupatas and were likewise—but perhaps justifiably—vilified by their opponents. At worst, they are portrayed as drunken and licentious, engaged in human sacrifice and practicing the blackest of magic. Other portrayals are more benign. For example, in the early Sanskrit drama *Mālatī-Mādhava*, a Kāpālika says with great insight, “Being exclusively devoted to alms alone, penance alone and rites alone—all this is easy to obtain. Being intent upon the Self alone, however, is a state difficult to obtain.” Even today, followers of this sect are found begging food which they accept in a skull, preferably that of a *brāhmin*. Some scholars see a connection between the Kāpālikas and the later Gorakshanātha *yogīs*.

In the seventh century, another sect developed out of the Pāśupata tradition, the Kālāmukhas, “black-faced,” who established a well-organized social structure with many temples and monasteries in what is now Karnataka and elsewhere. Like the earlier Pāśupatas, they suffered vilification at the hands of hostile commentators. Nothing is left of their scriptures, hence details of their philosophy and life is obscure. However, the esteem in which they were once held is reflected in an 1162 inscription on one of their temples stating, in part, that it was “a place devoted to the observances of Śaiva saints leading perpetually the life of celibate religious students, a place for the quiet study of four *Vedas*,... the *Yoga Śāstras* and the other kinds of learning, a place where food is always given to the poor, the helpless,...the musicians and bards whose duty it is to awaken their masters with music and songs,...and to the mendicants and all beggars,... a place where many helpless sick people are sheltered and treated, a place of assurance of safety for all living creatures.” The Vīra Śaiva school is thought by scholars to have developed out of and eventually replaced the Kālāmukhas, apparently taking over their temples and *āśramas*. Today’s reclusive Pāśupata monks live in Northern India and Nepal and influence followers worldwide.

### Vīra Śaivism

Vīra Śaivism is one of the most dynamic of modern-day Śaivite schools. It was made popular by the remarkable South Indian *brāhmin* Sri Basavanna (1105–1167). Adherents trace the roots of their faith back to the *ṛishis* of ancient times. Vīra, “heroic,” Śaivites are also known as Liṅgāyats, “bearers of the Liṅga.” All members are to constantly wear a Liṅga encased

in a pendant around the neck. Of this practice, Thavathiru Santalinga Ramasamy of Coimbatore recently said, “I can say that Vīra Śaiva worship is the best form of worship because Śivaliṅga is worn on our body and it unites the soul with the Omnipresence. We are always in touch with Lord Śiva, without even a few seconds break.” Followers are also called *Liṅgavāntas* and *Śivaśaraṇas*.

Like the sixteenth-century Protestant revolt against Catholic authority, the Liṅgāyat movement championed the cause of the down-trodden, rebelling against a powerful *brāhminical* system which promoted social inequality through a caste system that branded a whole class of people (*harijans*) as polluted. Going against the way of the times, the Liṅgāyats rejected Vedic authority, caste hierarchy, the system of four *āśramas*, a multiplicity of Gods, ritualistic (and self-aggrandizing) priestcraft, animal sacrifice, *karmic* bondage, the existence of inner worlds, duality of God and soul, temple worship and the traditions of ritual purity-pollution.

Vīra Śaiva tradition states that Basavanna was a reflective and defiant youth who rejected much of the Śaivism practiced in his day, tore off his sacred thread, *yājñopavīta*, at age 16 and fled to Sangama, Karnataka. He received shelter and encouragement from Isanya Guru, a Śaivite *brāhmin* of the prevailing Kālāmukha sect, and studied under him at his monastery-temple complex for twelve years. There he developed a profound devotion to Śiva as Lord Kudalasaṅgama, “Lord of the meeting rivers.” At age 28, Basavanna arrived at the insight that the brotherhood of man rests on the doctrine of a personalized, individual Godhood in the form of *Ishṭaliṅga* (“chosen, or personal Liṅga”). This spiritual realization gave rise to the central Vīra Śaiva belief that the human body is to be revered as a moving temple of the Lord, to be kept in a perpetual state of purity and sublimity.

Near the completion of his studies at Sangama, Basavanna had a vivid dream in which the Lord Kudalasaṅgama touched his body gently, saying, “Basavanna, my son, the time has come at last for your departure from this place. There is Bijjala in Mangalavede. Carry on your work of building a just society from there.” Having received these inner orders, he journeyed to Mangalavede and sought service in the court of Bijjala. He rose to become chief officer of the royal treasury, minister to this *mahārāja* in his troubled Śaivite country at odds with Buddhism and Jainism. This position led to the swift spreading of Basavanna’s revolutionary message of a new, visionary religious society.

Basavanna wedded two wives, taking on the householder *dharma*, exemplifying his teaching that all followers—not only renunciates—can live a holy life. He gave discourses each evening, denouncing caste hierarchy, magical practices, astrology, temple building and more, urging growing crowds of listeners to think rationally and worship Śiva as the God within themselves. Here Basavanna lived and preached for twenty years, developing a large Śaivite religious movement. The function of gathering for discourse became known as Śivānubhava Maṇḍapa, “hall of Śiva experience.”

At age 48 he moved with King Bijjala to Kalyana, where, joined by Allama Prabhu, his fame continued to grow for the next fourteen years. Devotees of every walk of life flocked from all over India to join with him. Through the years, opposition to his egalitarian community grew strong among more conventional citizens. Tensions came to a head in 1167 when a *brāhmin* and *śūdra*, both Liṅgāyats, married. Outraged citizens appealed to King Bijjala, who took ruthless action and executed them both. The unstable political situation further deteriorated, and the King was shortly thereafter murdered by political opponents or possibly by Liṅgāyat radicals. Riots erupted and the Liṅgāyats were scattered far and wide. Basavanna, feeling his mission in the capital had come to an end, left for Sangama, and shortly thereafter died, at the age of 62. Leaders and followers transferred the institutional resources created in the urban Kalyana to the rural localities of Karnataka.

In spite of persecution, successful spiritual leadership left a legacy of sainthood, including many women saints. If Basavanna was the faith’s intellectual and social architect, Allama Prabhu was its austere mystical powerhouse. The doctrines of these two founders are contained in their *Vachanas*, or prose lyrics. Vīra Śaiva spiritual authority derives from the life and writings of these two knowers of Śiva and of numerous other Śivaśaraṇas, “those surrendered to God.” Roughly 450 writers of these scriptures have been identified. The *Vachanas*, “the sayings,” scorn the *Vedas*, mock ritual, and reject the legends of Gods and Goddesses. The authors of these verses saw formal religions as the “establishment,” static institutions that promise man security and predictability, whereas they knew that religion must be dynamic, spontaneous, freed of bargains extracted in exchange for salvation. These scriptures reject “doing good” so that one may go to heaven. Allama wrote, “Feed the poor, tell the truth, make water places for the thirsty and build tanks for a town. You may go to heaven after death, but you’ll be nowhere near the truth of our Lord.

And the man who knows our Lord, he gets no results.” The *Vachanas* are incandescent poetry, full of humor, ridicule and the white heat of Truth-seeking, bristling with monotheism, commanding devotees to enter the awesome realm of personal spirituality.

These poems, written in the Kannada language, are central in the religious life of Liṅgāyats. Here are some samples. Ganachara wrote, “They say I have been born, but I have no birth, Lord! They say I have died, but I have no death, O Lord!” Basavanna exclaimed, “Lord, the *brāhmin* priest does not act as he speaks. How is that? He goes one way, while the official code goes the other!” Allama Prabhu said, “Then, when there was neither beginning nor nonbeginning, when there was no conceit or arrogance, when there was neither peace nor peacelessness, when there was neither nothingness nor nonnothingness, when everything remained uncreated and raw, you, Guheśvara, were alone, all by yourself, present yet absent.”

Ironically, in the centuries following these days of reform, Vīra Śaivism gradually reabsorbed much of what Basavanna had rejected. Thus emerged temple worship, certain traditions of ritual purity, giving gifts to *gurus*, and the stratification of society, headed up by two large hierarchical orders of *jaṅgamas*—resulting in the institutionalization of the crucial *guru*-disciple relationship, which by Vīra Śaiva precept should be very personal. Efforts were made to derive Vīra Śaiva theology from traditional Hindu scriptures such as *Āgamas* and *Sūtras*—a need rejected by the early *śaraṇas*. To this day, by rejecting the *Vedas*, Liṅgāyats continue to put themselves outside the fold of mainstream Hinduism, but in their acceptance of certain Śaiva *Āgamas*, align themselves with the other Śaiva sects. Vīra Śaivites generally regard their faith as a distinct and independent religion.

The original ideals, however, remain embedded in Liṅgāyat scripture, which is of three types: 1) the *Vachanas*, 2) historical narratives and biographies in verse and 3) specialized works on doctrine and theology. Among the most central texts are Basavanna’s *Vachanas*, Allama Prabhu’s *Mantra Gopya*, Chennabasavanna’s *Kāraṇa Hasuge*, and the collected work called *Śūnya Sampādane*.

The monistic-theistic doctrine of Vīra Śaivism is called Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita—a version of qualified nondualism which accepts both difference and nondifference between soul and God, like rays are to the sun. In brief, Śiva and the cosmic force, or existence, are one (“Śiva are you; you shall return to Śiva”). Yet, Śiva is beyond His creation, which is real, not

illusory. God is both efficient and material cause. The soul in its liberated state attains undifferentiated union with Śiva. The Vīra Śaiva saint Renukacharya said, “Like water placed in water, fire in fire, the soul that becomes mingled in the Supreme Brahman is not seen as distinct.”

True union and identity of Śiva (Liṅga) and soul (*āṅga*) is life’s goal, described as *śūnya*, or nothingness, which is not an empty void. One merges with Śiva by *shaṭsthala*, a progressive six-stage path of devotion and surrender: *bhakti* (devotion), *maheśa* (selfless service), *prasāda* (earnestly seeking Śiva’s grace), *prāṇaliṅga* (experience of all as Śiva), *śaraṇa* (egoless refuge in Śiva), and *aikya* (oneness with Śiva). Each phase brings the seeker closer, until soul and God are fused in a final state of perpetual Śiva consciousness, as rivers merging in the ocean.

Vīra Śaivism’s means of attainment depends on the *pañchāchāra* (five codes of conduct) and *ashtāvaraṇa* (eight shields) to protect the body as the abode of the Lord. The five codes are *Liṅgāchāra* (daily worship of the Śivaliṅga), *sadāchāra* (attention to vocation and duty), Śivāchāra (acknowledging Śiva as the one God and equality among members), *bhṛityāchāra* (humility towards all creatures) and *gaṇāchāra* (defense of the community and its tenets).

The eight shields are *guru*, *Liṅga*, *jaṅgama* (wandering monk), *pādukā* (water from bathing the Liṅga or *guru*’s feet), *prasāda* (sacred offering), *vibhūti* (holy ash), *rudrāksha* (holy beads) and *mantra* (Namaḥ Śivāya). One enters the Vīra Śaiva religion through formal initiation called Liṅga Dikshā, a rite for both boys and girls which replaces the sacred thread ceremony and enjoins the devotee to worship the personal Śivaliṅga daily. Liṅgāyats place great emphasis on *this* life, on equality of all members (regardless of caste, education, sex, etc.), on intense social involvement and service to the community. Their faith stresses free will, affirms a purposeful world and avows a pure monotheism.

Today Vīra Śaivism is a vibrant faith, particularly strong in its religious homeland of Karnataka, South-Central India. Roughly forty million people live here, of which perhaps twenty-five percent are members of the Vīra Śaiva religion. There is hardly a village in the state without a *jaṅgama* and a *maṭha* (monastery). On the occasion of birth in a Liṅgāyat family, the child is entered into the faith that same day by a visiting *jaṅgama*, who bestows a small Śivaliṅga encased in a pendant tied to a thread. This same Liṅga is to be worn throughout life.

### Kashmīr Śaivism

Kashmīr Śaivism, with its potent stress on man's recognition of an already existing oneness with Śiva, is the most single-mindedly monistic of the six schools. It arose in the ninth century in Northern India, then a tapestry of small feudal kingdoms. Mahārājas patronized the various religions. Buddhism was still strong. *Tantric* Śāktism flourished toward the Northeast. Śaivism had experienced a renaissance since the sixth century, and the most widespread Hindu God was Śiva.

According to the traditions of Kashmīr Śaivism, Lord Śiva originally set forth sixty-four systems, or philosophies, some monistic, some dualistic and some monistic theistic. Eventually these were lost, and Śiva commanded Sage Durvasas to revive the knowledge. Sage Durvasas' "mind-born sons" were assigned to teach the philosophies: Tryambaka (the monistic), Amardaka (the dualistic) and Srinatha (monistic theistic). Thus, Tryambaka at an unknown time laid a new foundation for Kashmīr Śaiva philosophy.

Then, it is said, Lord Śiva Himself felt the need to resolve conflicting interpretations of the *Āgamas* and counter the encroachment of dualism on the ancient monistic doctrines. In the early 800s, Sri Vasugupta was living on Mahādeva Mountain near Srinagar. Tradition states that one night Lord Śiva appeared to him in a dream and told him of the whereabouts of a great scripture carved in rock. Upon awakening, Vasugupta rushed to the spot and found seventy-seven terse *sūtras* etched in stone, which he named the *Śiva Sūtras*. Vasugupta expounded the *Sūtras* to his followers, and gradually the philosophy spread. On this scriptural foundation arose the school known as Kashmīr Śaivism, Northern Śaivism, Pratyabhijñā Darśana ("recognition school"), or Trikaśāsana ("Triple Doctrine"). Trika, "trinity," refers to the school's three-fold treatment of the Divine: Śiva, Śakti and soul, as well as to three sets of scriptures and some other triads.

Kashmīr Śaivite literature is in three broad divisions: *Āgama Śāstra*, *Spanda Śāstra* and *Pratyabhijñā Śāstra*. *Āgama Śāstra* includes works of divine origin: specifically the *Śaiva Āgama* literature, but also including Vasugupta's *Śiva Sūtras*. The *Spanda Śāstra*, or *Spanda Kārikās* (of which only two *sūtras* are left), are both attributed to Vasugupta's disciple Kalata (ca 850–900). These elaborate the principles of the *Śiva Sūtras*. The *Pratyabhijñā Śāstra*'s principal components are the *Śiva Dṛiṣṭi* by Vasugupta's disciple, Somananda, and the *Pratyabhijñā Sūtras* by Somananda.

da's pupil, Utpaladeva (ca 900-950). Abhinavagupta (ca 950-1000) wrote some forty works, including *Tantrāloka*, "Light on Tantra," a comprehensive text on Āgamic Śaiva philosophy and ritual. It was Abhinavagupta whose brilliant and encyclopedic works established Kashmir Śaivism as an important philosophical school.

Kashmīr Śaivism provides an extremely rich and detailed understanding of the human psyche, and a clear and distinct path of *kuṇḍalīnī-siddha yoga* to the goal of Self Realization. In its history the tradition produced numerous *siddhas*, adepts of remarkable insight and power. It is said that Abhinavagupta, after completing his last work on the Pratyabhijñā system, entered the Bhairava cave near Mangam with 1,200 disciples, and he and they were never seen again.

Kashmīr Śaivism is intensely monistic. It does not deny the existence of a personal God or of the Gods. But much more emphasis is put upon the personal meditation and reflection of the devotee and his guidance by a *guru*. Creation of the soul and world is explained as God Śiva's *ābhāsa*, "shining forth" of Himself in His dynamic aspect of Śakti, the first impulse, called *spanda*. As the Self of all, Śiva is immanent and transcendent, and performs through his Śakti the five actions of creation, preservation, destruction, revealing and concealing. The Kashmīr Śaivite is not so much concerned with worshiping a personal God as he is with attaining the transcendental state of Śiva consciousness.

An esoteric and contemplative path, Kashmīr Śaivism embraces both knowledge and devotion. *Sādhana* leads to the assimilation of the object (world) in the subject (I) until the Self (Śiva) stands revealed as one with the universe. The goal—liberation—is sustained recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) of one's true Self as nothing but Śiva. There is no merger of soul in God, as they are eternally nondifferent.

There are three *upāyas*, stages of attainment of God consciousness. These are not sequential, but do depend upon the evolution of the devotee. The first stage is *āṇavopāya*, which corresponds to the usual system of worship, *yogic* effort and purification through breath control. The second stage is *śāktopāya*, maintaining a constant awareness of Śiva through discrimination in one's thoughts. The third stage is *śāmbhavopāya* in which one attains instantly to God consciousness simply upon being told by the *guru* that the essential Self is Śiva. There is a fourth stage, *anupāya*, "no means," which is the mature soul's recognition that there is nothing to be done, reached for or accomplished except to reside in one's own being,

which is already of the nature of Śiva. Realization relies upon the *satguru*, whose grace is the blossoming of all *sādhana*.

Despite many renowned *gurus*, geographic isolation in the Kashmir Valley and later Muslim domination kept the following relatively small. Scholars have recently brought the scriptures to light again, republishing surviving texts. The original *paramparā* was represented in recent times by Swami Lakshman Joo. Today various organizations promulgate the esoteric teachings to some extent worldwide. While the number of Kashmir Śaivite formal followers is uncertain, the school remains an important influence in India. Many Kashmir Śaivites have fled the presently war-torn Valley of Kashmir to settle in Jammu, New Delhi and elsewhere in North India. This diaspora of devout Śaivites may serve to spread the teachings into new areas.

### Śiva Advaita

Śiva Advaita is the philosophy of Srikantha as expounded in his *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, a Śaivite commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras* (ca 500-200 BCE). The *Brahma Sūtras* are 550 terse verses by Badarayana summarizing the *Upanishads*. The *Brahma Sūtras*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Upanishads* are the three central scriptures of the various interpretations of Vedānta philosophy. Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva wrote commentaries on these books deriving three quite different philosophies—nondualism, qualified nondualism and dualism, respectively—from the same texts. Each claimed his to be the true interpretation of the *Vedas* and vigorously refuted all other interpretations. Sankara was a monist and accorded worship of the personal God a lesser status. Ramanuja and Madhva, on the other hand, developed theistic philosophies in which devotion to Viṣṇu was the highest path. There was as yet no school of Vedānta elevating devotion to Śiva to similar heights. Srikantha sought to fill this gap. The resulting philosophy is termed *Śiva Viśiṣṭādvaita* and is not unlike Ramanuja's qualified nondualism. In the process of his commentary, Srikantha put Śaiva philosophy into Vedāntic terminology.

Srikantha lived in the eleventh century. Of his personal life virtually nothing is historically known, so the man remains a mystery. Nor did he catalyze a social movement that would vie with Vīra Śaivism or Śaiva Siddhānta. But from his writings it is clear that Srikantha was a masterful expositor and a devout lover of God Śiva. His influence was largely due to Appaya Dikshita, who wrote a compelling commentary on Srikantha's



work in the sixteenth century as part of a successful multi-pronged attempt to defend Śaivism against the inroads of Vaishṇava proselytization in South India.

According to Srikantha, Śiva created the world for no purpose except out of play or sport. Śiva is the efficient cause of creation. As His Śakti, He is also the material cause. Śiva assumes the form of the universe, transforms Himself into it, not directly but through His Śakti. Yet, He is transcendent, greater than and unaffected and unlimited by His creation. Śiva has a spiritual body and lives in a heaven more luminous than millions of suns, which liberated souls eventually can attain. Srikantha in his *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣhya* said, “At the time of creation, preceded by the first vibrations of His energies—solely through an impulse of will, independently of any material cause, and out of His own substance—He creates, that is, manifests, the totality of conscious and unconscious things.”

Purification, devotion and meditation upon Śiva as the Self—the *ākāśa* within the heart—define the path. Meditation is directed to the Self, Śiva, the One Existence that evolved into all form. Release comes only after certain preliminary attainments, including tranquility, faith and non-attachment. Bonds which fetter the soul can be shattered in the torrent of continuous contemplation on and identification with the Supreme, Śiva. Liberation depends on grace, not deeds.

Upon death, the liberated soul goes to Śiva along the path of the Gods, without return to earthly existence. The individual soul continues to exist in the spiritual plane, enjoying the bliss of knowing all as Śiva, enjoying all experiences and powers, except that of creation of the universe. Ultimately, the soul does not become perfectly one with Brahman (or Śiva), but shares with Brahman all excellent qualities. Man is responsible, free to act as he wills to, for Śiva only fulfills needs according to the soul’s *karma*. Srikantha wrote in *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣhya*, “Śiva associates Himself with the triple energies [knowledge, will and action], enters into the total agglomerate of effects, and emerges as the universe, comprising the triad of Deities [Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Rudra]. Who can comprehend the greatness of Śiva, the All-Powerful and the All-Knowing?”

Appaya Dikshita (1554–1626) is a most unusual person in Hindu history. His commentaries on various schools of philosophy were so insightful that they are revered by those schools, even though he did not adhere to their philosophies. An ardent devotee of Lord Śiva, he compiled manuals on *pūjā* worship which are used to the present day by Śaivite priests.

Additionally, he was an excellent devotional poet. Philosophically he adhered throughout his life to the *advaita* school of Adi Sankara. In his battles to reestablish the worship of Śiva against the Vaishṇavism of the day, his life came under threat numerous times. Śaivism was suffering setbacks in South India in the sixteenth century due largely to the patronage of Vaishṇavism by Ramaraja, king of Vijayanagara, whose territory encompassed an area as large as modern Tamil Nadu. When Ramaraja was killed at the fall of Vijayanagara in 1565, his successors ruling from other cities continued the patronage of Vaishṇavism. Appaya succeeded at this crucial juncture in gaining the patronage of King Chinna Bomman of Vellore, who ruled from 1559 to 1579. Bomman had once been subject to the king of Vijayanagara, but after the city fell, he declared his own independence.

Appaya Dikshita set out to compose commentaries on the various philosophies of his day, including that of Srikantha. Appaya's commentaries on the writings of the dualist Madhva are revered to this day by Madhva's adherents. Through his 104 books, Appaya created more harmonious relations with the other systems of thought, promoted Śaivism from several philosophical approaches at once and contributed to the basic devotional worship of Śiva. The patronage of King Chinna Bomman assured the wide spread of Appaya's ideas through specially convened conferences of up to 500 scholars and extensive travel for both Appaya and the trained scholars who served as Śaiva missionaries. Appaya wrote in one text, "Since the summer heat of the evil-minded critics of Lord Śiva and His worship are awaiting in order to burn out and destroy the sprouts of Śiva *bhakti* or devotion that arise in the minds of the devotees, for which the seed is their accumulated merit in their previous births, this work, *Śivakārṇāmṛita*, with its verses made, as it were, of nectar, is written to help rejuvenate those sprouts."

Appaya Dikshita concluded that the philosophies of Srikantha and those of other dualists or modified dualists were necessary steps to recognizing the truth of monism, *advaita*. He argued that Srikantha's emphasis on Saguṇa Brahman (God with qualities) rather than Nirguṇa Brahman (God without qualities) was meant to create, for the moment, faith and devotion in fellow Śaivites, for such devotion is a necessary prerequisite to the discipline needed to know the Transcendent Absolute, Paraśiva, Nirguṇa Brahman. Appaya Dikshita said in *Śivārkaṃaṇi Dīpikā*, "Although *advaita* was the religion accepted and impressed by the great teachers

of old like Sri Sankara [and the various scriptures], still an inclination for *advaita* is produced only by the grace of Lord Śiva and by that alone.”

Śiva Advaita apparently has no community of followers or formal membership today, but may be understood as a highly insightful reconciliation of Vedānta and Siddhānta. Its importance is in its promotion by Appaya Dikshita to revive Śaivism in the sixteenth century.

### Siddha Siddhānta

Siddha Siddhānta, or Gorakshanātha Śaivism, is generally considered to have issued from the lineage of the earlier ascetic orders of India. Gorakshanatha was a disciple of Matsyendranatha, patron saint of Nepal, revered by certain esoteric Buddhist schools as well as by Hindus. Gorakshanatha lived most likely in the tenth century and wrote in Hindi. Historians connect the Gorakshanātha lineage with that of the Pāśupatas and their later successors, as well as to the *siddha yoga* and Āgamic traditions. Gorakshanatha adherents themselves say that Matsyendranatha learned the secret Śaiva truths directly from Śiva, as Adinatha, and he in turn passed them on to Gorakshanatha. The school systematized and developed the practice of *haṭha yoga* to a remarkable degree, indeed nearly all of what is today taught about *haṭha yoga* comes from this school.

Gorakshanatha, the preeminent *guru* and author of *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati* (“tracks in the adept doctrines”), was a man of awesome spiritual power and discerning practicality. As a renunciate, his early life is unknown, though he is thought to have been a native of Punjab. After twelve years of study under his famed *guru*, Matsyendranatha, he mastered the highly occult Nātha *yoga* sciences. Roaming all over North India from Assam to Kashmir, he worshiped Śiva in temples, realizing Him in the deepest of *samādhis* and awakening many of the powers of a Śaiva adept.

By creating twelve orders with monastery-temple complexes across the face of North India, Gorakshanatha popularized his school and effectively insulated pockets of Śaivism from Muslim dominance. Matsyendranatha had already established it in Nepal, where to this day he is deified as the country’s patron saint. Scholars believe that Gorakshanatha’s *yoga* represents a development out of the earlier Pāśupata and related ascetic orders, as there are many similarities of practice and philosophy.

To outer society, Gorakshanatha’s *siddha yogīs* were mesmerizing, memorable men of renunciation—dressed in saffron robes, with flowing, jet-black hair, foreheads white with holy ash, large circular earrings,

*rudrāksha* beads and a unique horn whistle on a hair-cord worn around the neck, signifying the primal vibration, Aum. Muslims called the Gorakshanāthis “Kanphaṭi,” meaning “split-eared ones,” referring to the rite of slitting the ear cartilage to insert sometimes monstrous earrings. Some Muslims even joined the Kanphaṭis, and heads of a few Gorakshanātha monasteries are known by the Muslim title *pir*, “holy father.” This unusual ecumenical connection was of enormous benefit at a time of general religious persecution.

These Nāthas perceived the inner and outer universes as Śiva’s cosmic body (Mahāsākāra Piṇḍa), as the continuous blossoming forth of Himself as Śakti (power) into an infinity of souls, worlds and forces. Earth and life, human frailties and human Divinity are Śiva manifest. As such, these men expressed spiritual exaltation in mankind and joyous devotion through temple worship and pilgrimage. But their daily focus was on internal worship and *kuṇḍalinī yoga*. Inside themselves they sought realization of Parāsamvid, the supreme transcendent state of Śiva.

Gorakshanatha, in *Viveka Mārtāṇḍa*, gives his view of *samādhi*: “*Samādhi* is the name of that state of phenomenal consciousness, in which there is the perfect realization of the absolute unity of the individual soul and the Universal Soul, and in which there is the perfect dissolution of all the mental processes. Just as a perfect union of salt and water is achieved through the process of *yoga*, so when the mind or the phenomenal consciousness is absolutely unified or identified with the soul through the process of the deepest concentration, this is called the state of *samādhi*. When the individuality of the individual soul is absolutely merged in the self-luminous transcendent unity of the Absolute Spirit (Śiva), and the phenomenal consciousness also is wholly dissolved in the Eternal, Infinite, Transcendent Consciousness, then perfect *samarasattva* (the essential unity of all existences) is realized, and this is called *samādhi*.”

Having achieved *samarasattva* (or *samarasa*), the *yogī* remains continually aware of the transcendent unity of God, even while being aware of the ordinary material world. This is the supreme achievement of the system. The school is noted for its concept of *kāya siddhi*, extreme physical longevity, and even the claim of immortality for some. Indeed, Gorakshanatha himself and many of his followers are considered to be alive today, carrying on their work from hidden places. The precise methods of this are not delineated in their texts, but are taught directly by the *guru*. Among the central scriptures are *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* by Svātmarāma,

*Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā*, *Śiva Saṁhitā*, and *Jñānāmṛita*, which are among forty or so works attributed to Gorakshanatha or his followers. Most deal with *haṭha yoga*.

The Siddha Siddhānta theology embraces both transcendent Śiva (being) and immanent Śiva (becoming). Śiva is efficient and material cause. Creation and final return of soul and cosmos to Śiva are described as “bubbles arising and returning to water.” Siddha Siddhānta accepts the *advaitic* experience of the advanced *yogī* while not denying the mixed experiences of oneness and twoness in ordinary realms of consciousness.

Through the centuries, a large householder community has also arisen which emulates the renunciate ideals. Today there are perhaps 750,000 adherents of Siddha Siddhānta Śaivism, who are often understood as Śāktas or *advaita tantrics*. In truth, they range from street magicians and snake charmers, to established citizens and advanced *sādhus*. The school fans out through India, but is most prominent in North India and Nepal. Devotees are called *yogīs*, and stress is placed on world renunciation—even for householders. Over time and still today, the deeper theology has often been eclipsed by a dominant focus on *kuṇḍalinī-haṭha yoga*. Values and attitudes often hold followers apart from society. This sect is also most commonly known as Nātha, the Goraksha Pantha and Siddha Yogī Sampradāya. Other names include Ādinātha Sampradāya, Nāthamaṭha and Siddhamārga. The word *gorakh* or *goraksha* means “cowherd.” (The name *Gorkhā* denotes an inhabitant of Nepal and is the same as *Gurkhā*, the famous martial tribe of that country.)

Today this Nātha tradition is represented by the Gorakshanātha *sādhus* and numerous other venerable orders of Himalayan monks who uphold the spirit of world renunciation in quest of the Self. Millions of modern-day seekers draw from their teachings, treasuring especially the sixteenth-century text by Svatmarama, *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*, “elucidation on *haṭha yoga*.” From these strong, ancient roots, *yoga* schools have arisen in major cities in nearly every country of the world. They are aggressive. They are dynamic. They produce results, physically, mentally and emotionally. They usually do not include Hindu religion but for a minimal presentation of *pūjā*, *guru*, *karma*, *dharma* and the existence of an all-pervasive force, called energy. Because of this loosely-knit philosophical premise and the pragmatic results gained from the practices of *haṭha yoga*, *prāṇāyāma* and meditation, a large following of seekers from all religious backgrounds ever expands. Today these schools encompass *āyur-*

*veda*, astrology and various forms of holistic health practice. Advanced meditation is taught to the most sincere. Thus the ancient wisdom of Siddha Siddhānta survives in the modern age to improve the quality of life for mankind and aid truth seekers everywhere to attain their goal.

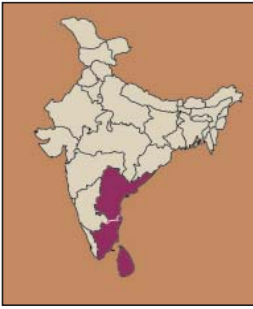
### **Six Schools of Saivism, Conclusion**

Today, in one form or another, each of these six schools of Śaivism continues unhindered. Their leaders and *gurus* have reincarnated and are picking up the threads of the ancient past and bringing them forward to the twenty-first century. Seekers who worship Śiva are carefully choosing between one or another of them. *Gurus*, initiated, uninitiated or self-appointed by the spiritual forces within them, find themselves declaring God Śiva as Supreme Lord and aligning themselves with one or another of the Śaiva lineages. Non-Hindus have been attracted to the profound Śaiva philosophy, serving as unheralded missionaries. Many have fully converted to Saivism as the religion of their soul. In this modern age, toward the end of the twentieth century, Śaivism has gained a new strength and power. The schools of Śaivism relate and interrelate in love, kindness, compassion and understanding, share their strengths and fortify each other's weaknesses.

Our most exalted God Śiva knew His creations were not all the same. In different moods He created different kinds of souls at different times. Similarly, in His supreme wisdom, He created these six approaches to His grace upon one common Vedic-Āgamic foundation—one for *yogic* ascetics, one for heroic nonconformists, one for *kuṇḍalinī* mystics, one for the philosophically astute, one for immortal renunciates and one for devotional nondualists. None was forgotten. Yea, even today, Lord Śiva is ordaining leaders within the boundaries of these six philosophical streams to preach His message in sacred eloquence.

### Philosophical Summaries

The following are concise philosophical summaries of the six schools of Śaivism, along with maps showing the primary areas of origin or present-day influence and concentration of each school in India's states.



**Śaiva Siddhānta:** In Ṛishi Tirumular's monistic theism (ca -200), Śiva is material and efficient cause, immanent and transcendent. The soul, created by Śiva, is destined to merge in Him. In Meykandar's pluralistic realism (ca 1200), God, souls and world are beginningless and eternally coexistent. Śiva is efficient but not material cause. Highlighted are Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.



**Pāśupata Śaivism:** This school, traced to Lakulisa (ca 200), is *bhedādbheda*, simultaneously monistic and theistic, emphasizing Śiva as supreme cause and personal ruler of soul and world. The liberated soul retains individuality in its state of complete union with God. Final merger is compared to stars disappearing in the sky. Noted areas of influence (clockwise) include Gujarat, Kashmir and Nepal.



**Vīra Śaivism:** Made popular by Basavanna (1105-1167), this version of qualified nondualism, Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita, accepts both difference and non-difference between soul and God, like rays are to the sun. Śiva and the cosmic force are one, yet Śiva is beyond His creation, which is real, not illusory. God is efficient and material cause. Influential primarily in Karnataka.



**Kashmīr Śaivism:** Codified by Vasugupta (ca 800), this mildly theistic, intensely monistic school, known as Pratyabhijñā Darśana, explains the creation of soul and world as God Śiva's shining forth in His dynamic first impulse. As the Self of all, Śiva is immanent and transcendent, a real but abstract creator-preserver-destroyer. Founded in Kashmir.



**Śiva Advaita:** This monistic theism, formulated by Srikantha (ca 1050), is called Śiva Viśiṣṭādvaita. The soul does not ultimately become perfectly one with Brahman, but shares with the Supreme all excellent qualities. Appaya Dikshita (1554-1626) attempted to resolve this union in favor of an absolute identity—Śuddhādvaita. Its area of origin and influence covers most of Karnataka state.



**Siddha Siddhānta:** Expounded by Rishi Gorakshanatha (ca 950), this monistic theism is known as *bhedābheda*, embracing both transcendent Śiva Being and immanent Śiva Becoming. Śiva is efficient and material cause. The creation and final return of soul and cosmos to Śiva are likened to bubbles arising and returning to water. Influential in Nepal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.





Nātha Sampradāya  
नाथसम्प्रदाय



RESOURCE THREE

**The Tradition  
Of Masters**

Sivathondan shows the path of clarity of mind  
and pours forth a stream of poems, the knowledge  
to disclose that 'twixt Vedānta and Siddhānta  
no difference is found, and on this Earth to  
us reveals That which transcends all sound.

*Natchintanai, "In Praise of Sivathondan." NT, P. 187*



SRJAT



AMPRADĀYA, MEANING “BESTOWER,” “PRESENTER” OR “THEOLOGICAL TRADITION,” PROVIDES STRENGTH AND STRUCTURE TO HINDUISM. IT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, IT REFERS TO THE ORAL TRANSMISSION OF TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS, SUCH as a *satguru* of an established lineage verbally passing on eternal truths to his *śishya*, like a mother imparting knowledge to her daughter, or a father to his son. During such intimate moments, when deep personal knowledge is transferred, a combination of meaning, experience and realization is conveyed from teacher to pupil through the action of *sampradāya*. Second, *sampradāya* refers to a living stream of tradition or theology within Hinduism, and to its founding preceptors. While *sampradāya* names a living teaching tradition, *paramparā* denotes a succession of *satgurus*. Through one or more *paramparās*, a *sampradāya* is carried forward generation after generation. A *sampradāya* could be likened to a stream which flows into various tributaries, called *paramparās*.

*Nātha* means “lord” or “master,” a knower of the Self who has mastered the intricacies of his inner bodies and states of mind. Through the millennia, Nāthas have been conveyors of esoteric knowledge and wielders of siddhis, powers of the soul. Nātha *siddhas* delve deep into the mind, invoking Śiva’s grace, controlling the *kuṇḍalinī śakti*. They worship with full heart and mind the Lord of lords, Śiva, and in *yogic* contemplation experience identity in His Being.

The Nātha Sampradāya is the mystical fountainhead of Śaivism. The divine messages of the Eternal Truths and how to succeed on the path to enlightenment are locked within the Nātha tradition. All that we know as Śaivism today—Āgamic temple worship, fire sacrifice called *homa*, *sannyāsa*, *sādhana*, *tapas*, *yoga*, *tantra* and the theology of monistic theism—has been carried forward by the Himālayan orders of the Nātha Sampradāya.

This oldest of Śaivite *sampradāyas* existing today consists of two major streams: the Nandinātha Sampradāya and the Ādinātha Sampradāya. The Ādinātha Sampradāya’s earliest known exemplars were Maharishi Adinatha, Matsyendranatha and Gorakshanatha (ca 950), expounder and foremost *guru* of Siddha Siddhānta Śaivism and founder of the well-

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*High in the icy Himalayan mountains sits Maharishi Nandinatha, the earliest known preceptor of the Nandinātha Sampradāya, his matted locks piled high. One of his eight disciples, Tirumular, wearing a skin to warm his body, brought the lineage to the south of India.*

known order of Kānphata Yogīs.

The Nandinātha Sampradāya's earliest known exemplars were Maharishi Nandinatha (ca 200 BCE) and his disciples Patanjali (author of the *Yoga Sūtras*) and Sundaranatha (known as Tirumular in South India, whose *Tirumantiram* comprehensively expounds the path of Śaiva Dharma). In recent times this ancient lineage of masters and the Nandinātha Sampradāya continues through the Kailāsa Paramparā—the first recent known *siddha* being the “Rishi from the Himalayas,” so named because he descended from those holy mountains. In South India, he initiated Kadaitswami (ca 1810–1875), who in turn initiated Chellappaswami (1840–1915). Chellappan passed the mantle of authority to sage Yogaswami (1872–1964), who in 1949 initiated me, and I have appointed as my first successor Bodhinatha Veylanswami.

In the twenty-first century, the Ādinātha and Nandinātha Sampradāyas are both vibrant and vital. They share a common ground of theology, principles, *sādhana*s and many scriptures—including the *Vedas*, *Āgamas* and Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, though, historical, societal and geographical forces over the past 1,000 years have shaped differences between them. It is important to highlight these differences here because much of what is written or discussed today by scholars about the Nāthas refers to the northern Gorakshanātha school and lifestyle, rather than the Tirumular school, which is followed in South India and Sri Lanka. The major differences are:

1. The foremost exposition of the Nandinātha Sampradāya is Tirumular's *Tirumantiram* (ca 200 bce), while that of the Ādinātha Sampradāya is Gorakshanātha's *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati* (ca 950 CE).
2. Most texts of the Nandinātha Sampradāya are in the Tamil language, while those of the Ādināthas are in Sanskrit.
3. The Nandinātha Sampradāya is most influential in the South of India, while the Ādinātha Sampradāya is most prominent in the North of India.
4. The philosophy of the Nandinātha Sampradāya is known as Śaiva Siddhānta, while that of the Ādinātha Sampradāya is known as Siddha Siddhānta.

### The Nandinātha Sampradāya's Belief Patterns

The trilogy of *Dancing*, *Living* and *Merging with Śiva* embodies the teachings of the ancient Nandinātha Sampradāya. These teachings can be summarized as follows.

**1. On the Nature of God:** The Nandinātha Sampradāya is a mystical lineage that places great stress on direct and personal experience of God, on seeing God everywhere and in everyone, on knowing God within oneself. This is achieved through nonintellectual spiritual disciplines called *sādhana*—a term which in its fullest sense embodies *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, profound esoteric practices, intense introspective meditation, and worship.—through purificatory effort, mind-transforming austerities, egoless service and, most importantly, through the bountiful grace of the living *satguru*. Following such a path, called *sādhana mārga*, Nāthas have come to know God, in ancient days and modern.

Enlightened sages of the Nātha Sampradāya teach that God is Śiva, the transcendent/immanent Supreme Being. Śiva is transcendent as unmanifest Paraśiva, the ineffable That which lies beyond time, form and space. Śiva is immanent as Satchidānanda, the substratum or primal substance and pure consciousness flowing through all form. And Śiva is also immanent as Maheśvara, the Primal Soul who performs the five divine actions of creation, preservation, destruction, veiling and revealing. Though Śiva is a singular and sacred mystery, Nāthas understand Him through these three perfections.

The one central teaching of the Nāthas is this: Śiva is All, and all is Śiva. This potent monism nonetheless acknowledges God's creation of world and souls, not as a dark or dreamlike existence, but as a real, purposeful, necessary and joyous one. However, God alone is Absolute, Eternal and Unchanging Reality. The creation—or more precisely, emanation—is relative, temporal and subject to change.

For the Nāthas, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Rudra are not separate Gods existing and acting apart from Lord Śiva. They are Śiva. Viṣṇu names His sustaining, perpetuating power. Brahmā is His creative power. And *Rudra* denotes His destructive or absorbing power. Likewise, Śakti is not just a divine consort, as often represented, but is His manifest power. Śiva and Śakti are the one unmanifest/manifest Reality.

In addition, Nāthas worship the Mahādevas Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya (known as Murugan in the South) and revere all the 330 million Gods of

Śaivism as separate but inseparable from Śiva, believing that they, like all souls, are created by Śiva and yet are wholly pervaded by Him. Thus, for the Nāthas there are many Gods and there is but one Supreme God, Śiva, whose holy names include Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Śakti and more.

Regarding the notion of *avatāra*—that God takes birth upon the Earth as a savior—Nāthas hold that God Śiva does not incarnate to save mankind. He is mankind as well as the perfect and purposeful universe in which mankind matures spiritually. Having created all, consciously knowing all, lovingly guiding all, fully encompassing all, there is no “other” for Śiva, no need, therefore, to rectify a process already made perfect by Him.

**2. On the Nature of the Soul:** Each soul is born of God Śiva’s Being, is of God, and is eventually absorbed, by Śiva’s grace, back into Him. The soul’s journey through existence is its maturing from a germ or seed state to its fully unfolded innate Divinity. Each soul is, in its innermost essence, Paraśiva and Satchidānanda, eternal and uncreated. However, the individual soul body is created as an extension of God Śiva Himself in the image and likeness of His own Primal Soul form, differing only in its maturity. Over vast periods of time and through countless experiences, the soul body matures through experiencing self-created *karmas*. Finally, the soul seeks and realizes its identity as Śiva. Through grace, “*Jīva* becomes Śiva.”

A three-fold bondage or veiling grace, called *pāśa*, both aids and hinders the soul’s knowing of its oneness with God Śiva. *Pāśa* is comprised of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*. *Āṇava* is the individuating veil of duality, source of ignorance which separates the soul from Śiva. *Māyā* is the principle of matter. *Karma* is the cause-and-effect principle governing *māyā*. Experienced subjectively by the soul, it is the result of its own deeds, both “good” and “bad.” In the Nātha view, the soul is not tarnished or marred by these three bonds, only shrouded or veiled so that it may evolve.

The soul’s spiritual progress is along a successive path of *charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. This process is as natural and as beautiful as the growth and blossoming of a lotus. By following this path, the soul’s identity with Śiva can be and will be fully realized when the seeming triple bondage of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* is removed through Śiva’s Grace.

*Moksha*—also called *kaivālya*, perfect inner freedom—is the soul’s release from *saṁsāra*, the cycle of birth and death, attained after dynamic and personal *yogic* realization of Paraśiva and resolution of all *karmas*.

Having known the Absolute, there is no fuller realization, no greater knowing, no higher “experience.” Even after Self Realization and liberation, the soul body continues to evolve in this and other worlds until it merges with the Primal Soul as a drop of water merges with its source, the ocean.

At its inception, the soul comes forth from Lord Śiva as an embryo and progresses through three stages (*avasthā*) of existence: *kevala avasthā*, *sakala avasthā* and *śuddha avasthā*. During *kevala avasthā*, the soul is likened to a seed hidden in the ground or a spark of the Divine hidden in a cloud of unknowing called *āṇava*, the primal fetter of individuality, the first aspect of Lord Śiva’s concealing grace, *tirodhāna śakti*. *Sakala avasthā*, the next stage in the soul’s journey, is the period of bodily existence, the cyclic evolution through transmigration from body to body, under the additional powers of *māyā* and *karma*, the second and third aspects of the Lord’s concealing grace.

The journey through *sakala avasthā* is also in three stages. The first is called *irul pāda*, “stage of darkness,” where the soul’s impetus is toward *pāśa-jñāna*, knowledge and experience of the world. The next period is *marul pāda*, “stage of confusion,” where the soul begins to take account of its situation and finds itself caught between the world and God, not knowing which way to turn. This is called *paśu-jñāna*, the soul seeking to know its true nature. The last period is *arul pāda*, “stage of grace,” when the soul yearns for the grace of God. Now it has begun its true religious evolution with the constant aid of the Lord.

How does *arul*, grace, set in? During the time of *paśu-jñāna*, the soul comes to find that if he performs good and virtuous deeds, life always seems to take a positive turn. Whereas in negative, unvirtuous acts he slowly becomes lost in a foreboding abyss of confusion. Thus, in faith, he turns toward the good and holy. A balance emerges in his life, called *iruvinaḥ oppu*. The pleasures and pains in life no longer raise him to the sky, then crash him to the ground. He has found a peaceful center from where life can be lived in refined composure. Not that he has all of a sudden found perfect and final peace, but he has experienced a balanced state and now seeks to attain perfectly to it. Trials still come and go as his *karmic* patterns ebb and flow.

Whether conscious of it or not, he is bringing the three *malas*—*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*—under control. *Māyā* is less and less an enchanting temptress. *Karma* no longer controls his state of mind, tormenting him



through battering experiences. And *āṇava*, his self-centered nature, is easing its hold, allowing him to feel a more universal compassion in life. This grows into a state called *malaparipakam*, the ripening of the *malas*.

This will allow, at the right moment in his life, *arul* to set in. This is known as the descent of grace, *śaktinipāta*. The internal descent is recognized as a tremendous yearning for Śiva. More and more, he wants to devote himself to all that is spiritual and holy. The outer descent of grace is the appearance of a *satguru*. There is no question as to who he is, for he sheds the same clear, spiritual vibration as that unknown something the soul feels emanating from his deepest self. It is when the soul has reached *malaparipakam* that the Lord's *tirodhāna* function, His concealing grace, has accomplished its work and gives way to *anugraha*, revealing grace, and the descent of grace, *śaktinipāta*, occurs.

The religious path progresses through four stages: *charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. In *charyā* the main emphasis is complete refinement of virtuous qualities. Certain simple religious practices are enjoined, but we can go no farther till becoming a living exemplar of virtue. In *kriyā*, temple worship and the awakening of true *bhakti* occur. In *yoga*, mystic union with the Lord is sought through disciplined *yogic sādhanas* under the *guru's* guidance. The *jñāna* stage begins the *śuddha avasthā* and is the fruit of the previous three stages.

All of this—the three *avasthās*; the four *mārgas* both as progressive and perpetually upheld stages; the importance of *guru*, Liṅgam, *saṅgam* and *valipadu*; the three-fold descent of Siva's grace; and the oneness of God and soul—distinguishes the Tamil religion from all other Indian traditions. Most important is that Śiva is the motivator in this tradition. It is His will that allows the devoted to progress from one *avasthā* to another, one *mārga* into the next, until He, of His own volition, absorbs each soul back into Himself. For each step the soul takes toward Śiva, Śiva takes nine toward the devotee. Thus, merging with Śiva completes the cycle so clearly articulated in Tamil Śaivism.

In the *śuddha avasthā* the *yogī* has attained *samādhi* and lives with an inner realization that sets him apart from all other men. But the *jñāna* stage is not a relaxing or ending of spiritual endeavor. It is the beginning of even deeper self-transformation. The *jñānī* must now seek what is called *sāyujya samādhi*, perpetual immersion in Satchidānanda. Prior to this, he is not yet matured in his realization. He may go into *samādhi*, but comes out into his "same old self," though, of course, not losing his

anchor, which he has set firmly in the Absolute. Now he must infuse his entire being with the spiritual force and power that he has recognized and attained to through *samādhi*. Slowly the dichotomy between the transcendent Absolute and the external world of form becomes less and less apparent, until he becomes as Śiva Himself—a divine being living in a constant state of *sāyujya samādhi*, transcendent-immanent realization of the Self flowing through all form. He is transformed from what he was into a recognizably different being. This is the joyous *sādhana* of *śuddha avasthā*, by which the *yogī* becomes the *jñānī*, a venerable *jīvanmukta*, able to set new patterns of evolution, uplift consciousness and radiate life-changing blessings.

**3. On the Nature of the World:** The Nandinātha Sampradāya understands and perceives the world as a manifest expression of God Śiva Himself. He is Creator and creation. While God is eternal and uncreated, the world is relatively real and subject to constant change. That does not mean that the world is illusion, ignorant seeming or nonexistence. It is important to note that *māyā* for the Nātha is not understood as the Smārtas' classic misapprehension of a rope as a snake. Rather, it is Śiva manifest. Seen thusly, the nature of the world is duality. It contains each thing and its opposite, joy and sorrow, love and hate. Therefore, in the Nātha view, there is no intrinsic evil. The entire range of human expression—whether intellectual achievement, social and cultural interaction, creative and psychological states of mind, instinctive desires or lofty *yogic* cognitions—is but pure experience, powerful living lessons by which the soul learns, matures and progresses nearer to God. Experience is governed by *karma* and the divine laws of *dharma*, softened through God's grace.

This Nātha view of *māyā* also differs from the pluralistic Meykandar conception which holds that *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* (as well as the soul itself) are separate from God, uncreated and eternally coexistent with Him. Under the pluralistic view, God is not both Creator and creation. Instead, He creates by “fashioning” the world from already existing *māyā*, or matter,. He does not create or destroy *māyā* itself.

In simple summary, it can be said that *māyā* is the classroom, *karma* is the teacher and *āṇava* is the student's ignorance. *Māyā* may be understood as that which is in the process of creation, preservation and destruction. Śiva emanates *māyā* and He is the *māyā* He emanates.

**4. Paths of Attainment:** The Nandinātha path leads naturally and inevitably through *charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. *Charyā* is service and living everyday life according to traditional religious principles of conduct in order to purify oneself. *Kriyā* is the regular practice of temple worship, both internal and external, through which understanding, closeness and love for God Śiva deepen. As expounded in Patanjali's eight-limbed (*ashṭāṅga*) *yoga*, the *yoga mārga* is internalized worship which leads to union with God. It is the regular practice of meditation under the guidance and grace of a *satguru* through which the realizations of Satchidānanda and Paraśiva are attained. *Jñāna* is divine wisdom emanating from the maturely enlightened soul. It is immersion of the mind in the blessed realization of God while living out earthly *karmas*. For these highest spiritual attainments, *sādhana*, *brahmacharya*, *kuṇḍalinī yoga* and renunciation of the world are required.

These four *mārgas* are not distinct approaches to Lord Śiva, but progressive stages of a one path. Each builds upon, but does not exclude, the other. *Jñāna* is not an intellectual amassing of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, but a state attained only after God Realization. The Nandinātha Sampradāya believes in the necessity of the illumined *satguru*, who alone brings the *śishya* to face and conquer the lower mind. He is the master who knows the Self and can therefore guide the disciple to the higher Self. The *guru* is a source of grace that sustains the *śishya's* personal *sādhana* as the spiritual forces unfold from within. For Nāthas, the repetition of the sacred Pañchākshara Mantra, Namaḥ Śivāya, is the key to the awakening of Śivaness within each and every devotee on the path to Lord Śiva's holy feet.

**5. Scripture and Religious Perspective:** The primary scriptural authority of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā derives from the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, the *Tirumantiram*, *Tirukural*, *Natchintanai* of Jnanaguru Yogaswami, the *Tirumurai* and, last but not least, my published teachings, including *Loving Gaṇeśa*, *Dancing with Śiva*, *Living with Śiva*, *Merging with Śiva*, *Lemurian Scrolls*, *How to Become a Hindu*, *Śaiva Dharma Śāstras* and the *Maṭhavāsi Śāstras*.

The Nātha Sampradāya teaches that Śaivism is the oldest religion in the world, the eternal faith or Sanātana Dharma, the precursor of the many-faceted religion now termed "Hinduism." Within Hinduism today, there are four main denominations: Śaivism, Vaishṇavism, Śāktism and Smārtism. But since long ago Sanātana Dharma has been none other

than Śaivism. Though the beliefs of Śaivism and of other religions are diverse and different, the devout Śaivite respects and encourages all who worship God and tries never to criticize or interfere with anyone's faith or practice. He follows that single most fundamental practice: seeing Śiva everywhere and in everyone.



Śaiva Siddhānta Advaita-Dvaitau cha  
शैवसिद्धान्त अद्वैत-द्वैतौ च

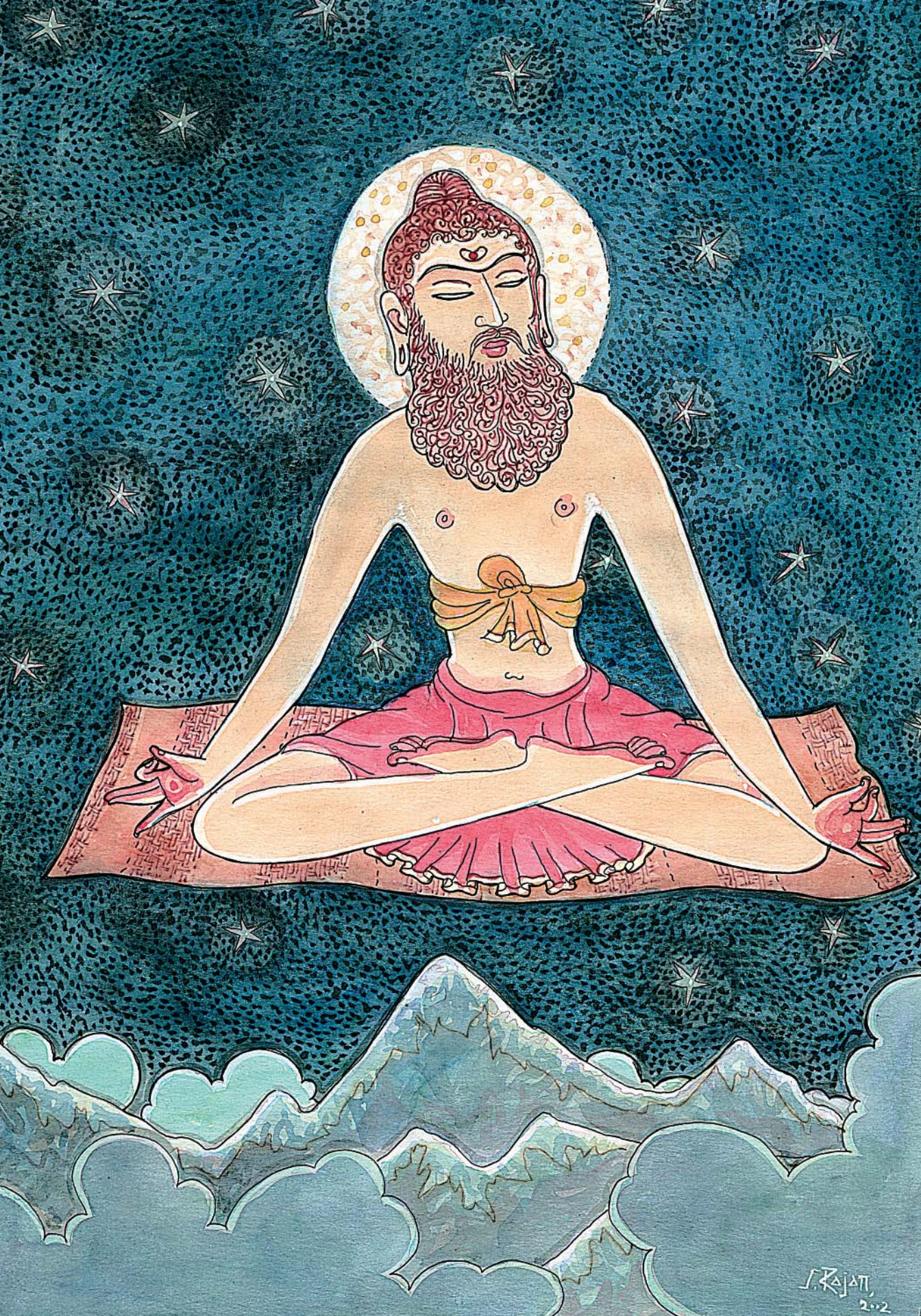


RESOURCE FOUR

**Monism and Pluralism  
In Śaiva Siddhānta**

At the top of the mountain there is nothing but God.  
At the foot of it there is all the manifold variety and  
conflict.

*Words of Our Master. WM2, P. 364*



J. Rajan  
2012



THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS DEBATE IN INDIA HAS NO EQUAL IN THE WORLD. THROUGH THE CENTURIES, DEFENDERS OF OPPOSING PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINTS HONED THEIR POSITIONS AND ARGUMENTS TO A STEELY, RAZOR EDGE. FROM TIME TO TIME, ENTIRE POPULATIONS WERE CONVINCED OR EVEN COMPELLED TO CHANGE THEIR FAITH, AS WHEN KING ASOKA, BORN INTO THE BRAHMANICAL TRADITION, CONVERTED TO BUDDHISM AROUND 258 BCE AND ZEALOUSLY PROMOTED IT FROM AFGHANISTAN TO SRI LANKA. OBVIOUSLY, RELIGIOUS DEBATE CAN HAVE FAR-REACHING EFFECTS, AND SUCH DISPUTES ARE NOT MERELY THE STUFF OF HISTORY, THEY ARE QUITE ALIVE TODAY. THIS RESOURCE CHRONICLES A CONTROVERSIAL EXCHANGE WHICH TOOK PLACE IN INDIA, SRI LANKA, MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, MAURITIUS, U.K. AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE MID-1980S BETWEEN TWO SCHOOLS OF ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA, THE WORLD'S LARGEST ŚAIVITE DENOMINATION. ON ONE SIDE WERE THE MONISTIC THEISTS, WHO STRESS THE ULTIMATE ONENESS OF MAN AND GOD, AND ON THE OTHER STOOD THE PLURALISTIC THEISTS, WHO HOLD THAT GOD, SOUL AND WORLD ARE ETERNALLY SEPARATE. HEREIN ARE THE POSITIONS OF TWO SUBTLY BUT CRUCIALLY DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE COSMOS AND MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THE DEBATE IS A LIVING EXPRESSION OF THE CLASSICAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE DIVINE, ONE THAT IS COMMON TO EVERY RELIGIOUS TRADITION, AND ONE THAT EVERY SEEKER WILL BENEFIT FROM EXPLORING.

Just as there are three orthodox schools of thought within Vedānta philosophy (nondualism, qualified nondualism and dualism), there are two within Śaiva Siddhānta (monism and pluralism). The purpose of this resource section is to present the monistic Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy—sometimes known as Advaita Siddhānta or Advaita Īśvaravāda—and to juxtapose it briefly with pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta or Dvaita Siddhānta. This comparison is important because the pluralistic teachings are widespread, so much so that many authoritative texts proclaim Śaiva Siddhānta to be wholly pluralistic and completely overlook the monistic school, which is actually far older, though less well known. Between these two schools there continues a philosophical debate that has persisted for twenty centuries and more about whether God and soul are ultimately one or two. I first became aware of this perennial debate in 1948 while living and performing *sādhana*, living in little mud huts with cow dung

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*With the starry firmament above and the Earth below, a yogī in full meditative posture has elevated his awareness, rising above the instinctive, emotional and intellectual states into super-consciousness. From such an inner state, it is possible to perceive the fullness of monistic theism.*



floors, in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, prior to my initiation from my *satguru*, Siva Yogaswami. I learned that various pluralist adherents in the area were not pleased with this modern mystic's monistic statements and conclusions. In my life, the issue again came into prominence in the early '80s after my recognition by the world community of Śaivites as Guru Mahāsannidhānam of Kauai Aadheenam and Jagadāchārya of the Nātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā. By that time, our small but dynamic Śaivite Hindu church had distributed thousands of copies of our Hindu Catechism, *Dancing with Śiva*, boldly proclaiming the monistic truths of the Kailāsa Paramparā and bravely claiming the term *Śaiva Siddhānta* as our own. This did not go unnoticed by pluralist scholars and *pandits* who for generations had faced little opposition to their claim that *Śaiva Siddhānta* is pluralistic by definition.

Letters poured into our temple at Kauai Aadheenam in Hawaii, objecting to our philosophical position and urging us to give up the appellation *Śaiva Siddhānta*, or to convert to the pluralistic view. We did not budge, arguing that, indeed, *Śaiva Siddhānta* is the fitting and perfect name for our teachings. In response to these objections, we reiterated our philosophical position clearly and compared it with the pluralist views, citing scriptural sources in a formal document called "Monism and Pluralism in *Śaiva Siddhānta*." And, in an inspired talk distributed throughout the world, I asserted, "There can be only one final conclusion, and that is monistic theism." To the pluralists, it appeared we had thrown down the gauntlet. The debate was on.

Once a relatively muted village affair, this age-old feud quickly escalated into a heated international debate among eight great monasteries in South India and Sri Lanka, of *saṅgas* in South Africa, Mauritius, Malaysia and England, and of philosophers, *pandits*, attorneys, judges and politicians from nearly every continent of the world. But for the first time, perhaps, the issue was faced with the goal of reaching a final resolution. Follow this debate, not as an exercise but as a way to deepen your own understanding of the ultimate things of life, of your own relationship with the universe around you, your own path toward merging in Śiva.

### **Appreciating Religious Differences**

Religion may be simply defined as man's knowledge of himself, of the world in which he finds himself and of the Truth or Reality or God which transcends both. When properly understood, religion does not divide

man from man, making this one a faithless sinner and that one a worthy recipient of Divine Grace. Purely known and practiced, religion is leading man, all men, to enlightenment and liberation. But religion is not always purely known—and even less often purely practiced—which gives rise to differences. Differences in religion, arising as they do out of a variety of racial, cultural and individual experience, are to be expected and appreciated. They provide a fortress against philosophical monotony and spiritual stagnation. Though there are many who seek to convert the rest of the world to their own creed, the wise are tolerant of the beliefs of others and refuse to promote universal uniformity in cultural, intellectual or spiritual spheres.

Though their numbers are dwindling, there are still those who, in an effort to reconcile the differences between religions, claim that all religions are one. We commend the effort and all efforts which bring people into mutual understanding, which soften religious tensions, conflict and animosity. However, to simply say that they are all one and the same is simplistic. It is not true. All religions are not the same. To pretend that their differences are insignificant or nonexistent will not resolve those differences. Understanding, which brings mutual appreciation, is the only permanent resolution, and that comes through an open-minded and courageous study of the unique strengths and weaknesses inherent in each. This is the spirit in which we undertake this assessment of two philosophical schools that worship a one God, Śiva, and together comprise the religious tradition known as Śaiva Siddhānta.

### **The Two Schools Share a Vast Common Ground**

Śaivism is the world's most ancient religion, and its most comprehensive exposition is found in Śaiva Siddhānta, which can be roughly translated as the "Final Conclusions of the Śaiva Dharma." Śaivism—and most especially the traditions and philosophy expressed in Śaiva Siddhānta—is, we are convinced, the religion of the future, more suited than any other to a technological age, fully in harmony with science and more able to provide for mankind's resurgent demands for direct spiritual awakening and enlightened living than any other religion on the planet. The oldest faith has survived an age of reason, with its prophets of agnosticism, to become the newest faith in an age where mystical values are again appreciated.

For the most part, monists and pluralists within Śaiva Siddhānta are of one mind. These are not diametrically opposing philosophies. They

share more in common than they disagree about. In fact, between these two schools there is 95 percent agreement and only 5 percent dissidence. Both value the Nayanars and their *Tirumurai*. Both revere as scriptures the *Vedas* and the *Śaiva Āgamas*. Both follow the Tamil traditions. Both are committed to the importance of temple worship, urging the importance of temple worship and ritual for the benefit of the individual soul and of humanity at large. Both emphasize love of God Śiva, who is both immanent and transcendent, and of the Gods, Gaṇeśa and Murugan. They share the same scriptures and saints, a deep devotion to the *saṅga* of fellow Sivathondars, a belief in *karma* and reincarnation, a firm faith in the need to live a virtuous life and to perform *sādhana* and *yoga*, a veneration of the *satguru* and his necessary role in the spiritual illumination of the soul, which, they concur, moves progressively through the stages of *charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. Both reject the Vaishṇavite concept that God incarnates as a man. They both argue vehemently against the Advaita Vedānta view of *māyā* as mere illusion, insisting that this world has a divine purpose—the evolution of the soul—and that, even though it is only relatively real, it is certainly not unreal. They do not agree with the Advaita Vedānta conception of the ultimate unreality of the soul, or of the Vedāntin's relegation of the mystical science of temple worship to a kindergarten for young souls. Again and again on a hundred issues they find themselves in harmony. Clearly, pluralists and monists agree ninety-five percent as to what constitutes Śaiva Siddhānta. We can never forget that. Tiru A.P.C. Veerabhagu, an eminent South Indian Siddhāntin, a pluralist, called for our working together and lucidly summarized our essential points of agreement as “*guru*, *liṅga*, *saṅgam* and *valipadu* (temple worship).” This, he said, is the essence of Śaiva Siddhānta as found in ancient Tamil literature, the common ground of the two schools.

### **Definitions of Monism and Pluralism**

*Webster's Dictionary* defines *monism* as “the doctrine that there is only one ultimate substance or principle, that reality is an organic whole without independent parts.” This is the opposite of *dualism*: “the theory that the world is ultimately composed of, or explicable in terms of, two basic entities, ... the doctrine that there are two mutually antagonistic principles in the universe, good and evil.” *Pluralism* is defined as “the theory that reality is composed of a multiplicity of ultimate beings, principles or substances.”

### Philosophical Differences between Monism and Pluralism

Stated most simply, the monistic school holds that, by emanation from Himself, God Śiva created everything—the world, all things in the world and all souls—and that each soul is destined to ultimately merge in *advaitic* union with Him, just as a river merges into the sea. The pluralistic school postulates that God Śiva did not create the world or souls, but that they have existed eternally, just as He has, and that the ultimate destiny of the soul is not *advaitic* union in God Śiva but nondual association with Him in eternal blessedness or bliss, a union compared to salt dissolved in water. In one view, there is manifestation from Śiva in the beginning and merging back into Śiva in the end, and only the Supreme God, Śiva, is eternal and uncreated. In the second view, there is no beginning for the soul, but eternal coexistence of the soul with Śiva from the *kevala* state, which goes back to the absolutely primordial time, to the *śuddha* state, which extends forever into the future. In the monistic view, God Śiva is everything; even this physical universe is a part of Him, though He transcends it as well. In the pluralistic view, God Śiva animates and guides the universe, but it is not a part of Him. The crux of the difference, then, is whether there is one eternal reality in the universe or three, whether the soul is eternally separate or is, in essence, one with Śiva.

### The Importance of Such Subtle Issues

Of course, these are subtle distinctions which may not seem to relate to one's daily religious experience. Thus, we may be inclined to dismiss such matters as of concern only to theologians, *satgurus*, *swāmīs*, *yogīs* and philosophers. Yet, they are the very core of religion and cannot be regarded as trivial. They affect every Śaivite, for they define two distinct perceptions of the nature of the soul (and therefore of ourselves), of the world and of God Śiva. They offer two different spiritual goals: either to merge fully and forever in Him (a state which transcends even states of bliss) or to remain eternally separated from God (though such separation is seen positively as endless bliss, which cannot be derogated). One view is unity in identity in which the embodied soul, *jīva*, actually is and becomes Śiva; the other is unity in duality, two in one (two because the third entity, the world, or *pāśa*, does not ever, even partly, merge with God), in which the soul enjoys proximity with God Śiva but remains forever an individual soul.

### A Summary of Monistic Siddhānta

God Śiva created and is constantly creating, preserving and reabsorbing all things, emanating from Himself the individual soul of man, all the worlds and their contents. He is the Beginning and the End, the Author of Existence. He is both material and efficient cause, and thus His act of manifestation may be likened to sparks issuing forth from a fire or fruits emerging from a tree [for definition of *cause*, see page 543].

The individual soul—which is an effulgent being, a body of light, *ānandamaya kośa*—is created, evolves as a seemingly separate being and ultimately merges in undifferentiated union and oneness with God Śiva, which oneness may be called identity. The essence of the soul, Sat-chidānanda and Paraśiva, is eternal and uncreated. It does not evolve, for it is forever perfect. This essence of the soul is not different from Śiva.

But monistic Siddhanta also teaches that the soul is, in a temporary way, different from God. This difference exists with respect to the soul's individuality, not its essence. The body of the soul, *ānandamaya kośa*, composed of pure light, is created, and it is limited. It is not Omnipotent or Omnipresent at its inception. Rather, it is limited and individual, but not imperfect. That is what makes for evolution. That is the whole purpose behind *sarīrāsāra*, behind the cycles of birth and death, to lead this individual soul body into maturity. Of course, the various faculties of mind, perception, discrimination, which are not the soul but which "surround" the soul, are even more limited, and it would be, as stated above, folly to equate these with God Śiva, to say they were the same as He. Ultimately, after many births and further evolution which follows earthly existence, this soul body does merge in God Śiva. This merger is called *viśvagrāsa*. Then, of course, the soul cannot even say, "I am Śiva," for there is no "I" to make the claim. There is only Śiva.

The world and the soul are, in truth, but various forms of Śiva Himself, yet He also transcends His creation and is not limited by it. Also, the world and the soul cannot stand independent of God, a fact which makes it clear that they are evolutes and not eternal entities. When world and soul are absorbed in His Divine Form at the time of *mahāpralaya*—the end of a cosmic creational cycle—all three *malas* (*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*) are removed through His grace, and the soul ceases to exist as an individual, losing its separateness through union and fulfillment in Śiva. After *mahāpralaya*, Śiva alone exists, until creation issues forth from Him in yet another cosmic cycle.

### A Summary of Pluralistic Siddhānta

Pluralistic Siddhānta holds that there are three eternal and coexistent entities—God, soul and world. When we speak of Śiva's creation of the world and all things in the world, we must understand that the primordial material of creation always existed and that God Śiva merely fashions it into its myriad forms, just as a potter shapes a multitude of pots from pre-existing clay, but does not also create the clay. Thus, God Śiva is the efficient cause of the universe, but He is not the material cause. The material cause is *māyā*, which is eternal and uncreated. The soul, too, exists from eternity, and God Śiva fashions the various bodies needed for its evolution and provides the faculties of perception, discrimination, and so forth. The ultimate destiny of the soul is to reach the feet of God Śiva and enjoy nondual (but not *advaitic* in the sense of oneness or identity) union in Him, which may be thought of as eternally blissful beatitude and nearness. The soul rests in union with Him, as salt dissolved in water, while yet retaining its individuality. At the time of *mahāpralaya*, it is not only God Śiva which exists; rather, the world and an infinity of souls are drawn near God Śiva. Souls retain their individual and separate existence, whether real or potential, awaiting another cycle of cosmic creation.

### Purport

*Dancing with Śiva* is based on the first of the above conclusions as the pure, original and highest conclusion of Śaiva Siddhānta. This monistic Śaiva Siddhānta interpretation is the conclusion of our Paramaguru Śiva Yogaswami, of my own personal realizations and of every single one of my *sannyāsins* of the Śaiva Siddhānta Yoga Order. It is the view of creation and union described in the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*. It is the postulation of the Nayanars of Śaiva Samayam, as expounded in their 18,400 *Tirumurai* hymns. And it is the clear teaching of the peerless Rishi Tirumular in his *Tirumantiram*, the first and foremost scripture on Śaiva Siddhānta. Furthermore, it coincides with the teachings of hundreds of sages, saints and *satgurus* throughout the history of the Śaiva Neri, including Vasugupta, founder of Kashmīr Śaivism; Srikantha, founder of Śiva Advaita; and Basavanna, founder of Vīra Śaivism.

### Four Arguments Regarding Monism and Creation

We present now four arguments which proponents of the Meykandar school have put forth for hundreds of years to support their doctrine,

known as Pluralistic Realism, followed by a monistic response and elucidation for each. Each discussion pertains to the doctrine of creation, disproving which is central to the integrity of any philosophy that propounds ultimate dualism. From these four arguments one can gain a concise overview of the differences between the two schools.

## **1 PLURALISM: THERE IS NO REASON THAT A PERFECT GOD WOULD CREATE THE WORLD AND SOULS**

If you speak of a creation, then we must ask, “Why did God create?” There can be no reason that a perfect God would create either the soul or the world. All reasons for creation—whether it be some divine desire to enjoy creation, a demonstration of His glory, a necessity to create or merely a playful sport—make the Creator less than complete, less than self-sufficient, less than perfect. Therefore, there could not have been a creation, and it follows that the world and the soul must have always existed.

### **MONISM, RESPONSE 1: THERE IS NO NEED TO DISCERN A REASON FOR THE CREATION**

The question “Why did God create” arises from the second-*chakra* consciousness of logic, but the answer exists in the sixth-*chakra* consciousness of divine sight. We can never find an entirely adequate reason for creation, any more than a firefly can comprehend the incredible effulgence of a supernova. It is simply God Śiva’s nature to create; it is one of His five powers, or expressions, along with preservation, dissolution, concealing grace and revealing grace. There really is no reason. He creates worlds as naturally as we create thoughts. Is there a reason that we create our thoughts and feelings? Not really. It is simply how we are. It is our nature to do so. We require no reason, and no reason can be found, for it is a fact that lies beyond reason. Similarly, God’s nature is to create, and no reason can explain or limit His actions. The power of creation is, in fact, part of His Perfection. To find no reason for the creation and then to conclude that it never happens is like a firefly, unable to understand the stars above, concluding that stars do not exist. The argument that creation somehow limits God is unfounded, for the opposite is more limiting, denying Him the powers of creation and ultimate dissolution.

## 2 PLURALISM: OUR IMPERFECT WORLD COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CREATED BY A PERFECT GOD

The world is full of sorrow, injustice, evil, disease, death and all manner of imperfection. The soul, too, is tainted with the imperfections of ignorance and limitation. Neither the world nor the soul could possibly be the creation of a perfect God, for imperfection cannot arise from perfection. If God had created the world or the soul, surely He would have made them perfect, and there would be no evil. To say that the world, with its obvious faults, is manifested from God is to malign Him. The only satisfactory explanation to this problem of evil is to assume that the world always existed and that the soul has been immersed in darkness and bondage beginninglessly. Furthermore, if God had created souls, they would all be equal, all alike, for He would not have shown preferences, denying to some what He granted to others. But we observe that souls are different. Therefore, God did not create the world or the soul.

### MONISM, RESPONSE 2: THE WORLD IS LORD ŚIVA'S DIVINE AND PERFECT CREATION

Of course, it cannot be said that Perfection, if It were so inclined, could not give rise to something less than perfect. A Perfect Being could create an imperfect world. Regarding souls, the argument is flawed in that it disregards the Vedic view that Śiva created the cosmic law of *karma*, and each soul, not God, is responsible for its actions and thus its differences and inequalities. And, of course, such inequity is a natural feature of the ongoing creation and unfoldment of a cosmos in which some souls are young and inexperienced, others old, mature and nearing their merger.

The deeper monistic response to the argument is that this world is, in fact, perfect, not imperfect. The world and the soul are God Śiva's divine and flawless creation. It is superficial to say that sorrow and death are evil, that only joy and life are good. That is an incomplete view of the pairs of opposites which, taken together, comprise a perfect whole. Life is precious, indeed possible, because of death. Light depends for its existence on darkness, and joy depends on sorrow.

The Abrahamic theologians saw a world in which there was good and bad, and were unwilling to make their God responsible for both. They therefore posited the ultimate dualism in which all that is good, true and



beautiful is created by a benevolent God, and all that is evil, false and ugly is the handiwork of a malevolent Satan. Siddhānta pluralism, likewise perceiving an imperfect world, instead of postulating a malevolent being to account for the ostensible defects, proposes that the world and the soul have always existed, without creation.

The argument that God could not create as He wills is also flawed in that it limits the unlimited. It compromises the omnipotence of our great God Śiva, implying that He is not everything, that He did not create everything, that there are other and independent entities, separate realities, over which He has dominion but which have their own eternal individuality, too.

The view of Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta as expressed by Saint Tirumular, the Śaiva Nayanars and Siva Yogaswami is that this world is, when viewed from superconsciousness, perfect and that God Śiva has purposefully created each thing and its opposite: good and bad, beauty and deformity, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, life and death. Jnanaguru Yogaswami taught us, “There is not even one evil thing in the world.” He urged us to “See God everywhere,” not just in the obviously good. “Sarvam Śivamayam,” the *satguru* observed. From our ordinary consciousness, this may be difficult to understand, especially when we personally are confronted with disease, death, violence, poverty and all forms of misery. But in fact, it is these sets of opposites, of joys and sorrows, that provide the means for the growth and maturation of the soul, that make us seek beyond the world of duality, that purify and evolve each soul and bring it to Śiva’s holy feet. From the enlightened summit reached by the *siddhas*, all is seen as necessary and good, all is seen as God Himself. If it is true that the world is divinely perfect, as our scriptures and *siddhas* say, then a perfect world has issued from a perfect Creator, and the argument is answered perfectly. Saint Tayumanavar wrote of creation as emanation, and a few verses from his sacred hymns are cited below.

In the final dissolution all that was visible vanished, and what resulted was *mukti* of blemishless bliss; and so the functions of creation and preservation, along with *māyā*, ceased to exist; but who was it that stood with the garland of radiant-eyed white skulls stretching along His Hands and Feet? (15.3. HT)



Alone, by Thyself, Thou arose in the Vast Expanse  
and danced in the arena of the Void.

Thou created the sky and the other elements,  
Thou preserves them and dissolves them. (20.6 & 8. HT)

**What Do the Nayanars Teach?** The 63 Nayanars, Śaivite saints, represent a fundamental source of spiritual inspiration for South Indian Śaivites. Eight of these saints left a legacy of philosophical-devotional literature (*Tirumurai*) that provides insight, knowledge and authority for Śaiva Siddhānta. No Siddhāntin will gainsay their teachings, and thus it is important to know their views on the subject at hand. Here are three among thousands of testimonies in the *Tirumurai* that Lord Śiva is everything, that He became everything.

Thou became the flesh! Thou became the life! Thou became  
the awareness within it! Thou became everything else.  
He is Himself He. He also becomes me. (*Saint Appar*)



*He is the fruit, the juice and even the taster thereof;  
the “Thou” and the “I.” (Appar’s Nindra Tiruttandakam 6.94.5)*



He is the knower; He is the revealer;  
He is the knowledge; He is even the known;  
He is also this vast world, the sky and so on. (*Karaikkalammai* 20)

**Views of Satguru Yogaswami:** In recent times, Sri Lanka’s greatest *siddha* was Siva Yogaswami (1872-1964) of Columbuthurai. He was a *yogī* and mystic who awakened inner knowledge, who realized Śiva through great *sādhana* and *tapas*. Considered among the greatest of modern sages, a true *jīvanmukta* of the highest order, he was the spiritual guide for Śaivites throughout Sri Lanka and South India for many decades. He taught again and again, in person and in his published *Natchintanai*, that Śiva is both Creator and creation. Here are a few relevant quotes from his teachings. (The numbers following the verses denote page numbers in the English edition of *Natchintanai*.)

Can you not perceive that it is That  
which has become both heaven and Earth?  
There is nothing else but That! (382, 34)



He has become the sun and moon. He has become the constellations of the stars. *Mantra* and *tantra* has He become. He has become the medicine and those who swallow it. He has become the Gods, Indra and all the rest. He has Himself become the universe entire. The soul and body, too, has He become. (144; 219)



All is the work of Śiva. All is the form of Śiva. He is everything. (127)  
You and I, he and it, fire and ether, ghosts and devils, other beings and Gods—upon examination will all appear as He. (123)



Before the body falls, revere the God who both the One and many has become. (202)



All is Śiva. Father and mother are Śiva.  
All the Gods are Śiva. The whole universe is Śiva. (237)

Jnanaguru Yogaswami taught us, “When the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* all proclaim that the whole world is filled with God, and that there is nothing else, how can we say that the world exists and the body exists? Is there anything more worthy of reproach than to attribute an independent reality to them? Sages, too, have declared: ‘Those who have become Your own are not other than You.’ Thus, for several reasons of this kind, there is nothing other than God.” Thus resound the *Natchintanai* verses of my *satguru*, affirming the monism of Rishi Tirumular.

### **3 PLURALISM: “CREATION” CANNOT BE, SINCE IT IMPLIES SOMETHING ARISING FROM NOTHING**

If there is a beginning, then there must be an end. But modern laws of physics tell us that energy and matter are neither created nor destroyed, they simply change form. Creation implies that something arises from nothing; and destruction implies that something becomes nothing. But this is absurd and irrational. To think of the immortal soul as undergoing a birth and death is absurd. Why would a benevolent God bring a soul into existence only to lead it, ultimately, to destruction, to nonexistence? Obviously, He would not. We must, therefore, conclude that the soul always existed, that it is eternal and uncreated.

### MONISM, RESPONSE 3: SOULS ARE EMANATED BY ŚIVA AND ULTIMATELY MERGE BACK INTO HIM

The use of the word *creation* might well make one conclude that Śiva is “making or bringing into existence something out of nothing.” That, to be sure, is the Judaic-Christian Western notion of God’s creative act. But in the *Vedas*, their *Upanishads*, the *Tirumurai* and the *Āgamas*, we find creation to be from and of God Himself. The English term for this is *emanation*, defined in *The Oxford Dictionary* as: “The process of flowing forth, issuing or proceeding from anything as a source. Often applied to the origination of created beings from God; chiefly with reference to the theories that regard either the universe as a whole, or the spiritual part of it, as deriving its existence from the essence of God, and not from an act of creation out of nothing.” In his *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*, Dr. William L. Reese defines *emanation* as: “From the Latin *e* (‘from’) and *mano* (‘flow’). Emanation is the doctrine of the production of the world as due to the overflowing superabundance of the Divine. An alternative to the doctrine of creation.... A similar idea is present in Hindu philosophy as well.”

This pluralist argument assumes a form of creation analogous to a potter’s fashioning a pot: God Śiva fashions already existing matter into various forms. God is the potter (called the efficient cause, from the word *effect*, to make). By means of a wheel (called the instrumental cause, thought of as God’s power, or *śakti*), He molds from eternally existing clay (called the material cause and thought of as primordial matter, or *māyā*) a pot (the effect or creation of these three causes). If we hold such a view of the creative act as described in this analogy, then naturally the destructive act seems abhorrent, for it means the ruination of the pot or its return to formless clay. Every Śaiva Siddhāntin is taught that the soul never dies, is never destroyed, so we are almost lured into accepting this argument to preserve our very existence.

But there is another understanding, of God Śiva’s creation: the creation of the soul is like a wave arising from the ocean. In this traditional Hindu analogy, the wave has a beginning, an evolution and an end. Does something arise out of nothing? No, water arises out of water. Does that water cease to exist when it returns to the vast ocean? No, it merges back into the ocean. It merely ceases to be a distinct wave and becomes one with the ocean. That merging is fulfillment, not destruction. So, while

pluralists argue that destruction cannot apply to the soul, because that leads to nothing, to nonexistence, monistic theists answer that union in God is the ultimate blessing, the finite returning to the Infinite, the most glorious goal imaginable, the consummate condition called *viśvagrāsa*. The soul arises from Śiva, evolves through many births and ultimately merges back in Him. Is it destroyed in that merging? No, it is made complete and perfect. It becomes Śiva. “*Jīva* becomes Śiva.”

Finally, the doctrine that the soul, as an individual and independent entity, or being, has a beginning and an end should not be understood to mean that it is ultimately destroyed or eliminated. Such an annihilative concept is alien to Śaivism. Rather, the soul is fulfilled, made perfect and brought into supernal grace when it merges ultimately in Śiva. When the soul merges in Śiva, when *āṇava mala*, which separates it and gives it limited and separate identity, is completely removed, there is no ruination or loss, except the loss of separateness and beclouding *malas*. Quite the opposite: there is grace and union, there is return to Śiva’s Perfect Being. The ego could construe this end of individual existence as something terrible, but that would be to misapprehend the greatest reward there is—perfect union in Śiva from which the soul was issued forth.

But the question of the creation of the soul is not the real issue. The fundamental issue may be described as follows: Is God Śiva everything? Is this universe, including all souls, in Him and of Him, or is it distinct from Him? Is there more than one eternal Reality? Monism or, more precisely, monistic theism, holds that God Śiva is everything, the one and only eternal Reality. The universe and the soul are also Śiva. Monistic theists contend, then, that the soul’s individuality is Śiva, but it is only a part of His Wholeness (which part, being of the nature of manifest creation, relates to His perfection in form—Maheśvara), while its essence is identical with His two innermost perfections—Satchidānanda and Paraśiva. It is this essential identity which the mature *yogī* realizes in his contemplative, superconscious states. Clearly, Satchidānanda and Paraśiva are not created and do not perish, as all created things must. What is created is the individuality of the soul, which we term the soul body. That individualness—which is a subtle, conscious, unique entity endowed with the powers of *içchā*, *kriyā* and *jñāna*: desire-love, action-will and awareness-wisdom—is created, and *does* perish, does merge in Śiva, in the state called *viśvagrāsa*, when *āṇava mala* is removed through His Grace. If *āṇava mala* is removed, then separateness no longer exists and the soul merges

in Śiva wholly and irrevocably. Here are a few verses from the *Upanishads* and other Śaivite scriptures on emanational creation, which is Śaivism's traditional philosophical view:

He (the supreme soul) desired, "Let me become many; let me be born."  
He performed austerity. Having performed austerity, He create all this,  
whatever is here. Having created it, into it, indeed, he entered. Having  
entered it, he became both the actual and the beyond, the defined and  
the undefined, both the founded and the nonfounded, the intelligent  
and the nonintelligent, the true and the untrue.

(*Taittirīya Upanishad* 2.6.1 UPR)



He is the one God, the Creator. He enters into all wombs. The One Absolute, impersonal Existence, together with His inscrutable *māyā*, appears as the Divine Lord, endowed with manifold glories. With His Divine power He holds dominion over all the worlds. At the periods of creation and dissolution of the universe He alone exists. Those who realize Him become immortal. The Lord is One without a second.

Within man He dwells, and within all other beings. He projects the universe, maintains it, and withdraws it into Himself.

(*Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* 3.1-2 UPP)



Brahman is that from which all beings are born, that by which they live, that into which, when departing, they enter.

(*Taittirīya Upanishad* 3.1.1-6 UPH)



As the sea issues forth foam, waves and bubbles which subside into it, the Absolute Spirit is the substratum whence arises the world animate and inanimate, and thither it ends. (*Mapadian* 151)



It is likened to the sparks which issue from a fire.

(*Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* 2.1.20 UPR)



As a spider sends forth and withdraws its web, as hair grows from the body of a living person, so from the Imperishable arises this universe. (*Muṇḍaka Upanishad* 1.1.7 UPR)



The *Raurava Āgama* describes creation as a spark of fire or light issuing forth from the third eye of the Creator.

**Rishi Tirumular on Creation:** Rishi Tirumular states unequivocally time and again in his *Tirumantiram* that God Śiva has created everything from Himself in a process of emanation. The Sanskrit word for creation is *sṛiṣṭi*, meaning “to emit,” “to let loose,” which corresponds closely to the definition of creation as found in the *Tirumantiram*. Tirumular employs the Tamil word *padai*. Here are a number of the relevant verses from the *Tirumantiram*.

Of yore He created worlds seven.  
 Of yore He created celestials countless.  
 Of yore He created souls without number.  
 Of yore He created all—Himself, as Primal Param, uncreated. (446)



In the Primal Play of the Lord were souls (*jīvas*) created;  
 enveloped in mighty *malas* were they. Discarding them,  
 they realized the Self, and sought the feet of their ancient Lord.  
 Thus they Śiva became, with no more births to be. (2369)



All worlds by vast oceans He girt, my Lord, filled pervasively,  
 in omniscience, overseeing all. Of yore He created all, entirely,  
 and stood diffusing His golden hue in worlds everywhere. (3007)



Sadāśiva, the He-She, creates universes all.  
 He has five sons, the Holy One who creates universes all,  
 Himself as the lotus-seated Brahmā, the Creator, became. (386)



Out of *iṣṭhā*, of the three *śaktis*, arose *māyā*; and *māyā* in union with  
*bindu* yielded the rest of the three *māyās* (*śuddha*, *aśuddha* and *prakṛiti*).  
 And *nāda* was of Para born; and all this is the creative play of Paraśiva,  
 the Ultimate. (399)



The One alone created the worlds seven. The One alone spanned  
 the worlds seven. The One alone survived the worlds seven.  
 The One alone pervaded body and life. (404)



One clay, many the receptacles; one God pervades all species. (440)



In union that knows no separateness, verily,  
God is the Beginning and End of All. (1570)

The Paraparam that is the End and the Beginning, Immanent,  
He expanded thus. As Cause and Effect, too, He is. (1927)



*Vaikharī* and the rest of sounds, *māyā* and the rest of impurities,  
*purusha* and the rest of *tattvas* illusory—all these, acting on *śaktis*  
*jñāna* and *kriyā*, the Lord true from time immemorial made. (2007)



If the cardinal directions are all Śiva, why speak of  
someone else, O you men? All smoke emanates from fire.  
All creation arises from our Primal Lord. (3010)

Tirumular's importance in Śaiva Siddhānta is unshakable. Kalaipulavar K. Navaratnam wrote, "Saint Tirumular may be said to be the father of Āgamic Śaivism in South India" (*Studies in Hinduism*, p. 166). Tiru A.V. Subramania Aiyar affirmed, "Saint Tirumular is regarded as the foremost Teacher and Guru in the Tamil land, and Saint Tayumanavar, who styles him as Thava Raja Yogi, traces his spiritual descent from him." Rishi Tirumular's message resounds again and again: God Śiva created, or emanated, everything from Himself, and everything includes the soul, *māyā* that is the substratum of this universe, the *tattvas* which constitute all forms, even the celestial Gods. And He Himself is His creation, both material and efficient cause, as Tirumular states in the following verses:

He is the *tattvas* and their Lord. (2795)



He is the First Being, the effort and the end of effort, too. (11)



The ancient scriptures say the expanding space is His body. (2463)



Holding the worlds apart, as the heavens high He spreads,  
Himself the scorching fire, the sun and moon. (10)





He is the master mahout of all *jīvas*;  
He is *jīvas* themselves, too. (3039)



Water, earth, sky, fire and wind, the spark of light within the body—  
all these He is. He is Paraparam, He is Śiva, our Lord.  
He is the walking *jīva* here below. Deathless He is. (3045)

## 4 PLURALISM: SOULS CAN NEVER ATTAIN TO GOD'S GREATNESS. SOUL AND GOD ARE ONE, YET NOT ONE

Śiva pervades the soul, yet the soul is different from God Śiva. Being different, it does not wholly merge in Him at the end of its evolution. Rather, it reaches His holy feet and becomes one with Him in every way except in the performance of the five powers, which are reserved for God alone. The individual soul never attains to the powers of creation, preservation, destruction, concealing and revealing. To say that the soul is God is an impertinent presumption. Look at this helpless creature, unable to control his own mind and body, ignorant of what will happen even an hour from now, powerlessly caught in the tides of fate, limited in a thousand ways, yet here he is claiming that he is God, the Supreme Being! What folly to claim that the soul is equal to Śiva! It is God Śiva who, by His limitless will, power and knowledge, does everything. The ultimate destiny of the soul, therefore, is to attain God's grace and live in perfect love and blessedness forever at His feet. We call this union *advaita*, but that does not mean oneness; it means not twoness. It is one and yet not one, like salt dissolved in water, like a flower and its fragrance. This is the true meaning of *advaita*. To us, *advaita* means that the soul and God are not separate; they are, inseparably united, even as salt is contained in the sea and fragrance is imbued in a flower. The salt cannot be the sea. The fragrance cannot become the flower. They have their individual existence, and yet they are one in proximity. Even so, the purified soul is embraced by the love of Śiva, and in that embrace, God and soul become one. Nevertheless, the soul remains soul, and God remains God. This is the true meaning of *advaita*.

### MONISM, RESPONSE 4: SOULS ATTAIN FULLY TO ŚIVA'S MAJESTY BY BECOMING ONE WITH HIM

The ultimate end of the soul is, of course, determined in the beginning. If the soul is a spark from Śiva, as the *Raurava Āgama* says, then it is natural that it returns to Śiva, like a drop emerging from the ocean and then once again merging into that ocean. If the soul is separate at the outset, then it must remain separate in the end. So here again we confront the issue of whether or not Śiva is the material cause of the world and the soul.

As to the five powers, Rishi Tirumular states that the soul attains them in its ultimate evolution, not as an individual separate from God, but by wholly merging in God. The pluralist school assumes that attainment of these five powers somehow threatens, or imposes on, the sovereignty of God Śiva. This would, of course, be true if there were still two entities, God and soul, in which case there would arise two Supreme Beings, then three and so on. But Rishi Tirumular makes it clear that the soul attains the five powers by becoming one with Śiva, as a drop returned to the ocean shares in the ocean's majesty, not by becoming another competing ocean, but by the fact of its union. Here are a few verses from the *Tirumantiram* which remind us of the original monistic Śaiva Siddhānta doctrine:

The tiny atom, swimming in the vast universe,  
merges in the Vast—no separate existence knows.  
So also the spirit's plastic stress, sweeping through all bodies,  
at the sight of His holy feet, discovers its ancient home. (137)



None know where the Lord resides.  
To them who seek Him, He resides eternally within.  
When you see the Lord, He and you become one. (766)



They tarry not in the pure *māyā* spheres of Śiva *tattvas*.  
There they but attain the status of the Gods. But, that  
as a springboard, their soul reaches farther out into  
Śiva Himself and merging in His union,  
Self effacing, they become Immaculate Śiva,  
they, forsooth, as Śuddha Śaivas. (1440)



When body and Śiva, as unbroken, unite in *yoga*,  
then shall the grace of Śiva-Śakti be.

Then does *jīva* become Param.  
*Jīva* that leaves this body then becomes all-pervasive.  
 Without beginning or end, it merges forever in Śiva. (2588)

**Verses from the Āgamas:** If we accept that the 28 Śaiva Āgamas are a primary scriptural basis of Śaiva Siddhānta, then we must inquire as to what they have to tell us. Quoting from *The Collected Works of Rāmaṇa Mahārshi*, edited by Arthur Osborne: “The Āgamas are traditional Hindu scriptures regarded as no less authoritative and authentic than the *Vedas*. They are regarded as divinely revealed teachings, and no human authorship is ascribed to them. Temple worship is mainly founded upon them. There are twenty-eight Āgamas that are accepted as authorities. From among them, *Sarvajñānottara* and *Devikālottara* are outstanding as expressing the standpoint of pure Advaita or nonduality.... Both are instructions in the Path of Knowledge given by Lord Śiva” (p. 105). Mr. Osborne then quotes from the Āgamas, from which we offer the following excerpts:

I will tell you, O Guha, another method by means of which even the unqualified, impalpable, subtle and immanent Absolute can be clearly realized, by which realization the wise become themselves Śiva. This has not hitherto been expounded to any other. Now listen!



I permeate all this—visible and invisible, mobile and immobile;  
 I am surely the Lord of all and from me all shine forth.



Giving up the separate identity of yourself as distinct from Śiva, meditate constantly on the nondual unity: “I am He who is known as Śiva.” One who is established in the contemplation of nondual unity will abide in the Self of everyone and realize the immanent, all-pervading One. There is no doubt of this.



When a pot is moved from place to place, the space inside it appears to move, too, but the movement pertains to the pot and not to the space within. So it is with the soul, which corresponds to the space in the pot. When the pot is broken, its inner space merges in the outer expanse; similarly, with the death of the gross body, the spirit merges in the Absolute.

**The Wisdom of Satguru Yogaswami:** How does Satguru Siva Yogaswami view the unity or nonunity of the soul and God? He proclaimed:

By what does the eye see? That is the *ātma* (soul) or God.  
You are the sole emperor of the universe. (18)



What is my real nature? I am the Immortal One. (20)



“*Jīva* is Śiva,” Chellappan declared.  
(See also: 30, 45, 77, 93, 107, 125, 166, 181, 187, 218, etc.)



“Aham Brahmasmi (I am God, Brahman)” —  
make this your daily practice. (38, 133, 185)



“I am He,” you must affirm and meditate each day. (106)



The whole world has evolved from One.  
The whole world is sustained by One.  
The whole world will merge into One.  
That One is my support—O Śiva! (163)

### **The *Tirumantiram* and the *Meykandar Śāstras***

To fully appreciate the doctrines of the two schools of Śaiva Siddhānta, we must consider briefly the contents of two important texts: the *Tirumantiram* and the *Meykandar Śāstras*. The *Tirumantiram* is the work of Rishi Tirumular, a *siddha*, a realized master and perfect *yogī* who composed over 3,000 mystic verses to delineate the path of enlightenment and the nature of the reality he had himself realized. These profound, esoteric and sometimes cryptic and abstruse verses comprise the tenth book of the *Tirumurai*, one of the primary scriptures of Śaiva Siddhānta. It is, in fact, the oldest (ca 200 BCE), most mystical and most comprehensive of the *Tirumurai* and the first instance in history where the term *Śaiva Siddhānta* is recorded.

The *Meykandar Śāstras* are fourteen Tamil treatises written over a long period during the Middle Ages by six authors. They are scholarly texts presenting in detail the metaphysics of pluralism and refutations of

other systems of thought. The fourth of these is *Śivajñānabodham*, composed by Saint Meykandar around 1200 CE, fourteen centuries after the *Tirumantiram*. *Śivajñānabodham* means “Knowledge of Śiva Realization” or “Compendium of Śiva Knowledge.” It is considered by most Siddhāntins as the authoritative summation of pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy, containing in forty lines all that is amplified in the larger commentaries and texts that comprise the balance of the *Meykandar Śāstras*. In its aphoristic brevity, this digest may be likened to the philosophical equivalent of Einstein’s cryptic equation,  $E=MC^2$ . This text, which may well be the shortest scripture ever written, is considered by many to be his only work, though others contend that he also composed the commentaries on the verses.

Whereas Tirumular spoke from his own direct, inner knowing of Absolute Reality, attained through *sādhana* and *yoga*, writers of the *Meykandar Śāstras* took another approach, working through inference and reason, assembling, collating and synthesizing the existing tenets of Śaiva Siddhānta of their day. Whereas Tirumular lived before the dawn of the Common Era, authors of the *Meykandar Śāstras* lived fourteen centuries later, during the Middle Ages. Whereas the *Tirumantiram* is a primary scripture (the tenth of the twelve *Tirumurai*), the *Meykandar Śāstras* are a secondary scripture, not included in the *Tirumurai*. Whereas Tirumular is one of the 63 canonized Śaiva Saints, called Nayanars, Meykandar and his commentators are not. Thus, we have two forces: one spiritual and the other theological or philosophical; one intuitive, the other intellectual and political; one founded on enlightenment and the other based on exceptional mentality.

While the verses of *Śivajñānabodham* are arguably in consonance with *Tirumantiram*, the commentaries, being the balance of the *Meykandar Śāstras*, are not. Commentators and scholars who followed Meykandar interpreted his work (and the *Tirumantiram*) as pluralistic, setting into motion roughly 800 years ago the present-day pluralistic school, a school that has played a dominant part in the modern history of Śaiva Siddhānta. Pluralists place the beginning of their school at the time of the *Meykandar Śāstras*. Historically, it arose out of a broader field of Śaiva Siddhānta, monistic in character, which existed long before.

An analysis of the history of the times suggests that the founding fathers of pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta were—as so often happens in particular historic circumstances—responding to powerful and compelling

movements then in the ascendancy. These included an aggressive Christian theology, the potent Vedāntic teachings of Adi Sankara, and Madhva's dualistic Vaishṇavite school—which were dominant forces in India during those formative centuries. This may be why the final conclusions found in the *Meykandar Śāstras* are philosophically close to the dualistic theism found in the Judaic-Christian-Islamic faiths, and in Vaishṇavism. We might surmise that adoption of the pluralist stance in India was influenced by the desire to show that the same postulations offered by Catholic and Protestant missionaries already exist within Hinduism.

Apart from the Śivāchāryas who study *Śivajñānabodham* as part of their priest training, few Śaivites have deeply studied it, and fewer still are familiar with the contents of *Tirumantiram*. So, it is not surprising that they have assumed—wrongly—that the conclusions of the *Meykandar Śāstras* are in agreement with the *Tirumantiram*. A few know of the monistic school, which defends God's role in creation and postulates an ultimate and complete merger of the soul in God, called *viśvagrāsa*, but they often do not know that this is the original Śaiva Siddhānta of Rishi Tirumular and before. Rather, they think of it, as they have been taught, as a renegade philosophy so similar to the postulations of Advaita Vedānta that it probably had its source in that tradition. This, of course, is not so.

### **Perhaps the Meykandar Sūtras Are Not Literally Pluralistic**

What did Meykandar himself have to say about monism and creation? A careful analysis has convinced us that he did not disagree with Tirumular. We adduce here Meykandar's famous twelve *sūtras* as translated by Kavi Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati, *The Revelations of Saint Meykandar*.

1. *He, she and it*—these are the three terms in which the cosmic entity is spoken of. This cosmos undergoes three changes—birth, growth and death—triple functions. It appears, stays and disappears; but it reappears by dint of the ego-consciousness which binds it. He who ends it is its origin. He, Hara, is the Supreme Master: so say the seers of knowledge.
2. He is one with souls; yet He is Himself unattached, beyond all. He is identified with His willpower, His knowledge-force in inseparable union. Through this force, He pervades all and submits souls to birth and death, allowing them to eat the fruits of their dual acts [good and bad deeds].
3. Because it says: “The body is the mechanism of nature. A soul dwells in its core.” For it responds, “Yes” or “No.” It asserts, “This is my body.” It feels the five sensations. It is conscious in dreams. It does not hunger or eat or act in deep sleep. It knows when taught.

4. The soul is none of the *antaḥkaraṇas* [the inner faculties or senses]. The soul does not feel shrouded by egoism. It is cognizant only in conjunction with the Inner Instruments, just as the king knows the state of affairs through his ministers. Similar is the relation of the soul with the five planes of experience, too.
5. The senses perceive and carry impressions of external objects to the mind. But they cannot know themselves; nor do they know the soul. The soul perceives through the senses and the mind. But similarly, it cannot know itself or God. It is the Divine Grace that activates it, just like a magnet activates iron.
6. If [God] is knowable, then He is nonreal; if unknowable, He does not exist. Therefore, the wise of the world say that He is neither of the two, but the Supreme Reality, both knowable and unknowable. [This version is from Mariasusai Dhavamony's *Love of God According to Śaiva Siddhānta*, who renders this *sūtra* and the next more adequately.]
7. Before Being, all things are nonexistent; hence, Being does not know [nonbeing]; nonbeing does not exist, so it cannot know [Being]. Therefore, that which knows both [Being and nonbeing] is the soul, which is neither Being nor nonbeing [Dhavamony].
8. When the soul is sufficiently advanced in *tapasya* (spiritual discipline), the Supreme Lord comes in the form of a divine master. He instructs the soul: "O Soul, thou hast fallen into the hands of the hunters [the senses]; growing up among them, thou hast forgotten the Lord, who is thy very core. Awake!" The soul wakes up to Reality, renounces all attachments to the senses. It devotes itself unreservedly and uniquely to Hara and attains His Blessed Feet."
9. The Lord cannot be seen by carnal eyes, by the senses. The eye of knowledge must open. Thought must fix in it. Bondage of the lower nature must be left off as a mirage. Then the soul finds shelter in God. To attain this blissful state, the soul should meditate upon the *mantra* Namaḥ Śivāya.
10. Śiva is one with the soul. The soul must merge its individuality, become one with Him and do His Will; then there shall be no stain of *māyā* and *karma* left in its immaculate self.
11. The soul sees and enables the eye to see. Even so, Hara sees, knows and enables the soul to see and know. The soul, by ceaseless devotion (love), attains the feet of Hara.
12. The three-fold impurities prevent the soul from attaining the virtuous, puissant feet of Hara. After washing off their stains, the liberated soul

should keep the company of devotees, full of devotion, devoid of delusion and worship the forms and images in temples as Hara Himself.

The doctrine of Pluralistic Realism is said to derive from Saint Meykandar's *Śivajñānabodham*. However, a careful reading reveals no overtly pluralistic teaching in these twelve respected verses. That, we surmise, came later, from commentaries made on *Śivajñānabodham*. In fact, in the first verse Meykandar states that all things—which he calls “he, she and it”—undergo the three processes (creation, preservation and dissolution). He also states that Śiva is Himself the end and the source of existence. These twelve terse verses are the whole of Saint Meykandar's teachings as written by him.

Meykandar speaks of God, the Creator, as Beginning and End. Nowhere does he tell us that souls coexist from eternity with God, that there were three things in the beginning and will be three in the end. Rather, he clearly states that there is one Beginning, God; there is one End, God. Nor does he speak of an eternal, uncreated world. He assures that God created in the beginning and will reabsorb in the end.

### **Concerns about Vedānta, Siddhānta and Māyā**

One concern that may arise in discussing monism in Śaiva Siddhānta is that to accept an ultimate identity between God and soul (monism) would be tantamount to adopting Adi Sankara's (788-820) Advaita Vedānta philosophy. In fact, the pluralistic arguments above were originally formulated as a refutation of his Vedānta. This concern can easily be allayed. Saiva Siddhānta and the Vedānta expressed in the *Vedas* are not two irreconcilable views. Tayumanavar sang, “Vedānta is the fruit on the tree of Siddhānta.” Satguru Siva Yogaswami taught us that “Śiva is the God of Vedānta and of illustrious Siddhānta,” and “Vedānta and Siddhānta we do not see as different” (NT. 166, 41, 64, 87). Monistic Śaiva Siddhānta embodies both Siddhānta and Vedānta. More precisely, Vedānta is the summit of the vast mountain of Siddhānta; monistic Siddhānta is the whole, and Vedānta is the part, the highest part of that whole. Here we speak of Vedānta not as the denial of all but the Absolute, as in Sankara's view, which regards *māyā*, meaning the entire manifest creation, including the soul and its evolution, as an illusion. Rather, we speak of the original and pristine Vedānta of the *Upanishads*, a perspective that accepts *māyā* as Śiva's grace in form rather than deluding appearance. To the Siddhāntin,



the world is Śivamaya (“made of Śiva”), God’s gift to mankind. While Advaita Vedāntins hold that the world is nothing but *māyā* (by which is meant illusion) and the greatest obstacle to Brahmavidyā, “knowledge of God,” Siddhāntins see this world as Śiva’s gracious way of leading us to union with Him.

Let me elaborate for a moment on these two perspectives on *māyā*. One is that *māyā* is illusion, that this world is merely an appearance and not ultimately real at all. The other is that *māyā* is God’s loving creation, real and important for our spiritual progress. Devotees ask, “Which is correct? Can it be both?” In every aspect of the path there is the highest and the lowest and the in-between look at things, depending on where you are: on the mountainside, on the top or at the bottom. From Absolute Consciousness, *māyā* is illusion, this is true—an illusion to be disregarded, a barrier perpetuating the all-pervasiveness of consciousness which, from an even higher realization, is also an illusion. We are speaking of the contest between Paraśiva being the Absolute and Satchidānanda being the Absolute. So, the dual, dual/nondual and the nondual are the *yogī*’s frustration in these higher states of mind. Once timeless, causeless, spacelessness is realized, all of this falls naturally into place. One sees form, time and causation as an illusion, a relative reality, and within it the mechanism of its own perpetuation of creation, preservation and destruction every microsecond, every second, every hour of every day of every year in the great cycles of time. This is *māyā*. Its complexities are even greater than mathematical equations of all kinds.

So, you have a true/true and you have a true. True/true is seen by the Paramātman, the soul that has realized Paraśiva. And the true is seen by the *ātman* who has realized the all-pervasiveness of God. One is on the brink of the Absolute, and the other *is* the Absolute. Being on the brink of the Absolute is true, but being the Absolute and breaking the seal is the true/true. There you see all of the acts of Śiva’s play, in all of its many manifestations. Then there is the false/true. The false/true is understanding the true/true and the true, and being able to explain them intellectually but being devoid of experience. The true/true and the true are both of experience.

God Śiva has endowed all creation of form with three of His powers, creation, preservation and destruction, and all life, as it is known, maintains itself. A flower creates, preserves and destroys. Microscopic organisms create, preserve and destroy. Because everything is not creating,

preserving and destroying at the same time—the process creates various densities of form, which we Śaiva Siddhāntins call relative reality. Those who don't understand the creative processes of Śiva and the *yoga* processes of seeing through the *ājñā chakra*, may consider the external world as illusory and a hindrance, or a temptation, to their desire for *moksha*. Therefore, they emphasize the concept of giving up desire, which is the desire to enter the illusory world and become part of the illusion, thereby giving up *advaita*; whereas monistic Śaiva Siddhāntins identify closely to Śiva and, as an extension of His will, knowledgeably create, preserve and destroy, and understand themselves. Other organisms do likewise, but without being totally aware of these three functions.

I see *māyā* both as creation, preservation and destruction—and as illusion. The mechanism and the fact form the perspective of Paraśiva. You have to realize that when the seal at the crown *chakra* is broken, the whole perspective changes and you see everything from the inside out, and you, to yourself, are the center of the universe. There is no doubt about it. And every manifestation of *māyā*, which itself is manifestation, and the intricacies of *āṇava* and the complexities of *karma* can be and are seen through.

### **The Extinction of Separateness, or *Āṇava Mala***

Any discussion of monism and pluralism in Śaiva Siddhānta must eventually confront the issue of *āṇava*. *Āṇava* may be simply defined as “ignorance, the sense of separateness and ego,” or more technically as the individuating veil of duality that enshrouds the soul. It is often thought of as darkness. In Śaiva Siddhānta, *āṇava* plays an important philosophical role as the root *mala*, the first and foremost shroud which covers the soul and conceals God. It is also the last veil to be removed from the soul in its evolutionary progress.

For the monist, the removal of *āṇava mala* occurs at the point of merger in Śiva. In his *Tirumantiram*, Rishi Tirumular is clear that at the conclusion of the soul's evolution, at the point of final merger called *viśvagrāsa*, all three *malas* are totally absorbed by the grace of Sadāśiva.

Ridding themselves entirely of *āṇava*,  
and losing all consciousness of *jīva* memory,  
they become *bindu* and *nāda*, the highest  
heavenly goal of oneness with Śiva *tattva*. (500)



Even as a shadow disappears with the body,  
 even as a bubble returns into water,  
 even as a flame of camphor leaves no trace,  
 so it is when *jīva* into Param unites. (2587)

Pluralists agree that *karma* and *māyā* are destroyed fully, but assert that *āṇava* is merely nullified or subdued, when the soul attains to the feet of Śiva. In explaining this condition, they offer the analogy of seeds that have been fried. Such seeds exist but no longer have the power of germination. By this view, God is able to destroy the lesser *malas* of *karma* and *māyā*, but He does not have the power to extirpate *āṇava*. The monist counters that *āṇava mala* is indeed ultimately destroyed by Śiva's grace, for that is essential for the soul to merge fully in God and attain to its true identity. [from below] With the destruction of *āṇava* comes the total loss of separateness. When separateness is lost, then there is oneness.

For the pluralist, it is absolutely imperative that *āṇava* be somehow preserved, for that is by definition the preservation of the separateness of God and soul. What Rishi Tirumular, the Nayanar saints and our Śaiva Siddhānta scriptures tell us is this: even the most tenacious of the *malas*, *āṇava*, is completely annihilated when the soul merges in God Śiva. With the destruction of *āṇava* comes the total loss of separateness. When separateness is lost, then there is oneness, not “not-twoness.” The conclusion is compelling and clear: *āṇava mala* does not shroud the soul forever; rather, it is removed by Śiva's grace, as are the other two *malas*. With its removal comes one incontrovertible fact: monism. Saint Manikkavasagar sings:

Having lost our identity, we merge in Him  
 and become Śiva ourselves. Purifying my soul,  
 He took control of me by making me Śiva.  
 Having destroyed all my three *malas*,  
 He made me Śiva and took lordship over me.

### **A Vital Question: What Happens at Cosmic Dissolution?**

According to Hindu scripture, notably the *Purāṇas* and the *Āgamas*, Śiva's creation—the three-fold cosmos of physical, subtle and causal planes—undergoes three kinds of dissolution. The first is called *laya*, the dissolution of the Bhūloka or physical world, which occurs every 306.72 million years, according to the *Purāṇas*. The second is *pralaya*, the dissolution of

both the Bhūloka and the Antarloka, the subtle and causal worlds, which occurs every 4.32 billion years. The third is *mahāpralaya*, the dissolution of all three worlds, which occurs every 154.569 trillion years. Whereas creation, *śrīṣṭi*, is Śiva's outbreath, absorption, *sarṅhāra*, is His inbreath in the natural cosmic cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution.

The *Śaiva Āgamas* refer to *pralaya* (intermediate dissolution) and describe it as *pāśam* and *paśu*, the world and soul, being drawn to Śiva's feet and remaining there until the next cycle of cosmic creation, at which time they issue forth again. In other words, world and soul are reduced to their causal form. They are extremely close to Śiva, so close that, for all practical purposes and appearances, only Śiva seems to exist, but actually all three entities (God, soul and world) are there, retaining their separate existence. Thus individual souls survive the dissolution called *pralaya*. Both schools agree on this description of *pralaya*, except that monists would contend that during every cycle ending in *pralaya*, advanced souls will have merged fully in Śiva, without separation. It is in the description of *mahāpralaya* that the two schools totally differ. There seems to be no official doctrine on this issue expressed by the Meykandar commentators, but contemporary pluralists have described *mahāpralaya* in exactly the same way they describe *pralaya*. Monists, however, contend that at *mahāpralaya* all three worlds, including time and space, dissolve in Śiva. This is His Ultimate Grace; the evolution of all souls is perfect and complete as they lose individuality and return to Him. Then God Śiva exists alone in His three perfections until He again issues forth creation.

Certainly, *mahāpralaya* is a long way off, and there is much time for speculation. In our discussions, we learned that some pluralists will theorize that all souls must, at the end of their evolution, form a one enlightened soul which lives in communion with Śiva throughout eternity—thus losing their personal identity. Nevertheless, the doctrine that the soul is forever separate from Śiva is ultimately dashed upon the rocks of *mahāpralaya*. Even Arulnandi, the most respected of Meykandar's commentators, admitted to the completeness of *mahāpralaya* and thereby transcended pluralism when he wrote in *Śivajñāna Siddhiar*:

Only One remains at the end of time.  
If two others (*paśu*-souls and *pāśam*-fettters) also  
remained at their posts, then it cannot be.

### A Crucial Verse from the *Tirumantiram*

In our debates on Śaiva Siddhānta, verse 115 from the *Tirumantiram* was brought forward as Tirumular’s definitive statement on the ultimate nature of God, soul and world. The following translation was offered for discussion.

Of the three entities, Pati, *paśu* and *pāśam* (God, soul and bondage), just as Pati (is beginningless), so are *paśu* and *pāśam* also beginningless. If Pati gets near *paśu* and *pāśam*, which are not capable of affecting Pati, the *paśu* (or *paśutvam*) and the *pāśam* (bonds—*āṇava*, *karma*, *māyā*) will disappear.

While pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta takes strength in lines one and two, monistic theism is ratified by lines three and four, where Tirumular says that ultimately there is but one Reality, not three. We find Tirumular telling mankind he has discovered that the soul and the world are beginningless, but that they end when they come into contact or proximity with Śiva. They disappear or merge in Him. Monists find that this verse coordinates perfectly with the monistic view that the essence of soul and world are as beginningless and eternal as Śiva Himself, while the individual soul body has both a beginning and an end.

Alas, as in all things, there are at least two views. In this case, pluralists argue that Tirumular indeed meant the fettered soul when he used the word *paśu* in the first half of verse 115, but, we were told, “here in the latter half of this verse it is used in the sense of the fettered state. It is not the soul itself that disappears, but its fettered state.” If Tirumular had meant that it is not the soul that disappears, he would have said so. But he did not in this verse nor in any other verse in his treatise of 3,047 verses. Instead, he said the soul and the world both disappear when they near Śiva. He alone exists. Let Tirumular’s own words be the final guide:

Out of the Void, a soul it sprang. To the Void it returns.  
Yet it shall not be Void again. In that Void, exhausted,  
it shall die. That is the fate of Hara and Brahmā, too,  
who do not survive the holocaust of *samhāra*. (429)



Of yore He created the worlds seven.  
Of yore He created celestials countless.  
Of yore He created souls (*jīva*) without number.  
Of yore He created all—Himself, as Primal Param, uncreated. (446)

### **Jīva Is Śiva. Tat Tvam Asi. Aham Brahmāsmi. Sarvam Śivamayam.**

Again and again in Śaiva scripture and from the mouths of our *satgurus* we hear that “*Jīva* is Śiva,” “I am That.” It is a clear statement of *advaita*, of monism, of the identity of the soul with God. Not only have all Śaivite sects accepted this view, it is the conclusion of Sankara, Vallabhacharya, Ramakrishna, of Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda, Siva Yogaswami, Anandamayi Ma, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and others. Are we to assume that all great souls in Hindu religious history were wrong? Were they deluded? Did they stray from the path and fall short of the goal? Each and every one of them? Certainly not! Their monistic realizations were in fact the revelation of Truth in Śivajñāna. And it is that same revelation that is propounded today by my Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order as an essential and unquestionable facet of the monistic theism of Śaiva Siddhānta.

Many South Indian pluralistic Siddhāntins deny the great Upanishadic sayings, the *mahāvākya*, by basically ignoring all but the *Meykandar Śāstras*, which they take to be the most important and authoritative scriptures. Some will go so far as to say that all other references in scripture which do not accord with the *Meykandar Śāstras* are to be discarded or disregarded. In Tiru M. Arunachalam’s book, *The Śaiva Āgamas*, he discusses and later condemns this kind of posturing, quoting a typical pluralistic Śaiva Siddhāntin writer’s posture on the *Vedas*: “The Śaiva Siddhāntin has to ignore... the part in the *Jñānakāṇḍa* dealing with the absolute identification of the *jīvātma* and the Paramātman. The other parts of the *Vedas* are to be fully adopted by the Śaiva Siddhāntin, just like the *Āgamas*.”

### **Why Yoga Is Needed in Śaiva Siddhānta**

It is sad but true that when a fine soul, raised in the pluralistic school of Śaiva Siddhānta, reaches toward the greater heights of spiritual *sādhana* and personal experience of Truth or God through *yoga* and meditation, he cannot find within his native Siddhānta a sufficiently profound pathway that satisfies and fulfills his spiritual yearnings, and he is therefore not infrequently inclined to leave the South and find spiritual solace and direction in the North of India. There, more often than not, he eventually adopts a school of Vedānta whose view of God and man unfortunately denies Siddhānta. Why? Because in Vedānta he finds the deepest of all human philosophical conclusions—monism. By this process, South In-

dian Śaiva Siddhānta has been losing *swāmīs* to the Vedānta schools, and suffering from a spiritual “brain drain.”

This is unnecessary, for Siddhānta has always provided a monistic path which embraces Vedānta. Śaiva Siddhāntins everywhere can be proud that the highest teachings of monism were propounded by Rishi Tirumular eight hundred years before Adi Sankara was even born. The monistic truths found in the school of Advaita Vedānta were expounded by our own *siddhas* and Nayanars long ago. They taught this, and more. In fact, Tirumular, in order to distinguish his monistic theism from the pluralistic theism of others, coined the term *Śuddha* (pure) *Śaiva Siddhānta* to describe the teachings of his *Tirumantiram*.

In my experience, in many cases, pluralist practitioners, heavy with the weight of book knowledge, refuse to listen to the inquiring minds of their youth, who then feel, quite naturally, that their religion is bigoted, intolerant, suffocating, unreceptive to their bright and eager desire to perform *yogic sādhanas* to know about God and His greatness. They are hushed and stifled and even beaten if they offer any “unorthodox” ideas or challenge the accepted creed, and soon they learn simply not to ask, for it just gets them in trouble. Or worse, when answers are offered, they are couched in arcane terminology which does not clarify but further confounds and confuses them. No wonder suicide is highly rated as a form of escape by youth.

The fear of parents’ thrashing makes young ones fear God, as parents are the first *guru*. Naturally, *swāmīs* are to be feared next, as are the Catholic priests and nuns who beat them as a form of discipline with little mercy in schools. This is totally Abrahamic in context—the fear of God, the beating of children, the denial of questioning. It is certainly not the free-flowing, inquiring, examining, self-effacing monistic Śaiva approach taught in traditional *gurukulas* in ancient times. So explained Swami Gautamananda, president of the the Ramakrishna Mission in Chennai, where *ahimsā*, nonhurtfulness of any kind, mentally, emotionally or physically, was the protocol in his *maṭha* and schools.

Youth are often told, “You just can’t understand Śaiva Siddhānta unless you know classical Tamil.” Imagine if a young Christian were told he couldn’t comprehend his religion unless he studied Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, or the ancient Hebrew and Greek in which their Bible was originally written! Christianity would soon wither and perish from the Earth. The fundamentals of Śaiva Siddhānta should be easily taught

to the youth in any language to give them a foundation for living, to be practiced in confidence and without intimidation.

Not a single one of our Nayanars was a Tamil *pandit* or scholar, but will anyone claim they did not understand Siddhānta? No, religion is not learned in libraries or universities, but in transforming personal experience, in temples and caves and *satsaṅga*. It is learned in the silence of meditation and contemplation, in the rigors of *sādhana* and *yoga*, practices which are universal, transcending all cultural and linguistic barriers. Tens of millions of Śaiva Siddhāntins have a direct and simple approach to their religion. They love Śiva Peruman. They worship Śiva Peruman. They serve and meditate upon and speak sweetly of Śiva Peruman and of His devotees. They know that Śiva is found in the heart, not in books, and they seek Him there. That is the vigorous and living faith of Śaiva Siddhānta, the San Mārga, the true path to God Śiva's Feet.

Vedānta captured the respect and imagination of the world and became immensely popular by offering its own positive, intelligent, well-crafted and pragmatic approach for seekers in the East and the West. Monistic Śaiva Siddhānta is, we are convinced, more enlightened, more positive, more intelligent, more practical. It has a great future. But to live in the future, it must come out of the past. That is one reason we have worked so hard for over half a century to give Siddhānta a fresh, new, bright, attractive modern-English thrust, availing ourselves of technological means of propagation. Most have applauded the effort; many have requested that we continue introducing Śaiva Siddhānta to the international community.

### **Summation: Visions of Truth, Dualism and Nondualism**

Śaiva Siddhānta, the final conclusions of the awakened soul who soars in superconsciousness above the mountaintop, diffuses through our minds as the distilled essence of the *Vedas*, the *Śaiva Āgamas*, and the *Tirumurai*, most especially the great *Tirumantiram*. Śaiva Siddhānta is thickly rooted in these scriptures and surges forth as a giant banyan of their expression. These are our scriptures, and within our scriptures are found both the essential oneness of monism and the evolutionary two-ness of theism. Therefore the *ṛishis* of the *Upanishads*, the *siddhas* of the *Āgamas*, our Śaivite Saints and our Siva Yogaswami Paramparā of the Nandinātha Sampradāya have always taught monistic theism so that you, too, can awaken the natural perceptions of your own soul.



From this mountaintop perspective, we can observe, appreciate, understand and be lovingly tolerant of all theological paths to God Śiva. This is because we are seeing the outer and inner worlds from our soul's perspective. However, when people see the outer and inner worlds from intellectual states of mind, perceiving a concrete reality of you and I and God and world eternally separate, with no union of being, there is a tendency to be rigid and intolerant, quite the opposite of the soul's natural state of mind. There is no need for seekers to participate in these kinds of battles. What is important is for each of you to follow the path of our Śaivite saints and *siddhas*. It is a path more of love than of learning, more of tolerance than of entanglement. Our sages and seers have made themselves sufficiently clear. They need no interpolations.

Let us stand together, united in the knowledge of monistic theism as taught by our Nayanar saints and the enlightened savants of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. Let us remain high-minded in our thoughts and actions. People, who are always at one stage or another on the great San Mārga, will at some point lash out and attack you. This is predictable and natural. Set a fine example of tolerance and understanding in your community. Always hold the mountaintop perspective.

Remember, from the very beginning of man's encounter with reality, in both the East and the West, discussions have persisted between those who see the world as one and those who see it as made up of two or more. Asked by sincere devotees about how to understand the two schools, I once answered: Both are right. However, one is more advanced, more enlightened. But that does not make the other wrong. It all depends on whether you are on the top looking down or on the bottom looking up. One view is for the intellectual, the other is for the *ṛishi*. The intellectual will see it only one way; he will then discard the other view as wrong. The *ṛishi* can see it both ways, yet he knows that the monistic view is the higher realization. It all depends on where you are in your spiritual unfoldment. This is the merger of Vedānta and Siddhānta.

We recently heard a physicist say that his mentor, Werner Heisenberg, observed that there are two kinds of truth—shallow truth and deep truth. Shallow truth is one whose opposite is false. Deep truth is truth whose opposite may be perceived as an integral part of its own validity. That wise observation of the physical universe also applies to our spiritual knowledge. The deeper mystics do not draw a square to exclude, deny and condemn views which oppose their own. Instead, they draw a wide

circle that embraces the entirety of the vast mystery of Śiva's creation.

You see, there are stages of realization, and the world and God and soul look a little different from each stage. It really all depends on the window we are looking out of, the *chakra* in which we are functioning. Thus, in exploring monism and dualism one must keep an open mind. This will bring the realization that the view called monistic theism is the summation of them both and is the highest realization, the ancient philosophy that is indigenous to man, preceding even the Vedic era. What, then, is monistic theism? It is the belief in God, but God not separate from man. It is external worship of Śiva which is then internalized into realization of one's own Śivaness. It is a *bhakti*, experiential, yogically transforming philosophy.

The dualistic or pluralistic conception appears true from one perspective, but it is only a slice of the whole. It is not the whole. Regarded most simply, pluralism came as the philosophical conclusion or realization of saints within the *charyā* and *kriyā pādas*, while monism joined with theism is the overwhelming vision within the *yoga* and *jñāna pādas*.

Here is another way to explain the same thing. Visualize a mountain and the path leading to its icy summit. As the climber traverses the lower ranges, he sees the meadows, the passes, the giant boulders. This we can liken to theism, the natural dual state where God and man are different.

Reaching the summit, the climber sees that the many parts are actually a one mountain. This is likened to pure monism. Unfortunately, many pure monists, reaching the summit, teach a denial of the foothills they themselves climbed on the way to their monistic platform. However, by going a little higher, lifting the consciousness into the space above the topmost peak of the mountain, the entire truth is known. The bottom and the top are viewed as a one whole, just as theism and monism are understood and accepted by the awakened soul. The knower and the known become one.

Pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta makes the part into the whole, tending to deny, limit, redefine and modify the monism taught by the Śaiva saints and proclaimed in the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. To know the final conclusions, to comprehend the monistic theism of Śaiva Siddhānta, one must go a little farther, do more *sādhana*, in order to see these truths from a higher plane of consciousness. As Rishi Tirumular admonishes, "Siddhānta without Vedānta is the common Śaiva's lot." By Vēdānta, he meant the advaitic, monistic, final conclusion of the *Vedas*, which really, esoteri-

cally, are the results of the realization of thousands of seekers. When *yogic* realization, and transformation because of it, is not present, Vedānta is said to become “the path of words.” However, the basic understanding of Vedānta naturally leads into Siddhānta, once understanding matures into directing the force of desire into realization of the Self. Here we have the happy and necessary blend of Vedānta and Siddhānta as a way of life and spiritual practice. The acceptance of both schools gives strength; the rejection of one or the other drains energies through intolerance and limits the full comprehension of God, world and soul. If you understand this, it will make you strong. It will make your religion strong.

My *satguru*, Siva Yogaswami, asked me which of these schools of thought was the right one. I told him that both were right in their own way. It all depends on whether you are on top of the mountain looking down or at the bottom of it looking up. He smiled and nodded. Jnanaguru Yogaswami taught that monistic theism is the highest vision of truth. For pluralists to deny the *Vedas* is to deny Vedānta, and that is to deny Truth itself. For Vedāntists to deny the reality of God and creation is to deny Siddhānta, and that also is a denial of Eternal Truth. We cannot find a more shallow course of action than to declare the enlightened postulations of the illumined saints as superficial affirmations or as mad ravings, which a pluralist *pandit* once told me they were.

It is argued—as an issue involving Tamil nationalism within their state, Tamil Nadu, in India—that embracing monism may divide the Tamil people. This is indefensible. Monistic theism is the soul of Śaivism, and therefore it is the soul of the Tamil people. It is monistic theism that will unite all the Tamils the world over in a one unanimity of belief, worship and understanding.

It is also contended that by preserving pluralism as a unique feature of Tamil Śaivism, the Tamil identity is being preserved. This is a very narrow view. It only preserves a partial understanding of Truth and denies the Tamil people their rightful heritage of the fullness and richness of Sanātana Dharma. Dravidian history reveals that a united people are those who all worship the same Supreme God in the same way, pledging their allegiance to the fullness of the eternal truths discovered by their saints and sages. Thus, each one is strong in his or her *dharma*, with developed qualities of leadership, compassion, insight, cooperation and fortitude. Thus, each one awakens the burning zeal of *sādhana* to personally experience these inner Truths. The results of this unity are great civilizations like the

Indus Valley, the Chola Empire and the Vijayanagara Empire. But today we find the Tamils a people fractioned among themselves, divided into a multiplicity of “-isms.” The more religious have escaped into the heights of Siddhānta-Vedānta. The more intellectual or Western-educated are ensnared in arguments and Western rationales or have wandered off into Buddhism and Christianity.

Monistic theism, that all-embracing and ancient path which is common among all Śaivite sects, is the solution to international unity among the Tamil people in the twenty-first century as it was 5,000 years ago, for its theology closes the door to conversion and puts the heart and mind at peace. Furthermore, it is this mountaintop view of reality which alone can free the soul from the cycles of birth and death, joy and sorrow. In this age of enlightenment, religion and the knowledge of Truth that it holds must be unquestionably easy to understand and universally available to all who seek refuge at Lord Śiva’s holy feet.

### Resolution

The monism/pluralism debate, rekindled by our statement that there can be only one final conclusion, was resolved in the understanding that within Śaiva Siddhānta there is one final conclusion for pluralists and one final conclusion for monistic theists. This occurred in February of 1984 at the South Indian monastery of Sri-la-sri Shanmuga Desika Gnanasambandha Paramacharya Swamigal, 26th Guru Mahāsannidhānam of the Dharmapura Aadheenam, at a meeting of professors, advocates, theologians, academicians and *pandits* on the issue. The resolution came when His Holiness, presiding over the meeting, effectively declared that all who follow the Meykandar philosophy are indeed pluralists when he had prepared for publication two booklets written by the late Śaiva Siddhānta scholar, V. K. Palasuntharam: 1) *Souls Are Beginningless*, and 2) *There Has Always Been Only a Pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta Philosophy*.

Heretofore, the Meykandar exponents had been equivocal in this area, considering themselves sort of *dvaitic* and sort of *advaitic*, and redefining the word *advaita* (which means “not dual”) to allow for two things to exist in the state of oneness. Through His Holiness, the followers of the Meykandar lineage had formally and publicly declared themselves pluralists, and thus acknowledged their difference with the monistic school of Śaiva Siddhānta as expounded by Kauai Aadheenam’s 162nd Guru Mahāsannidhānam and the Śaiva Swāmī Saṅgam.

At the same time, as a result of two sometimes heated debates at national and international levels and numerous formal papers, now the pluralistic school, which had been the popular view for centuries, heartfully and in loving trust accepted what had been the ever-present monistic Śaiva Siddhānta position. Thus the spirit of Sanātana Dharma that is modern Hinduism bound the monistic school and the pluralistic school into a productive partnership for the good of all, working together in the great Hindu renaissance, which is surging forward as a result of the global Hindu diaspora, and spawning an indomitable Hindu front.

We are happy to say that peace, tolerance, forbearance and mutual respect now exist between these two schools. We feel that the foundation for this coexistence of love and trust was made on January 30, 1981, when we met with His Holiness for the first time. I was on a holy pilgrimage to Śaivism's most sacred sites with my entourage of forty Eastern and Western devotees when messengers from His Holiness invited us to visit his ancient Dharmapura Aadheenam. Together we sat in the inner chambers of his palatial spiritual refuge, built by *mahārājas* in the sixteenth century. It was quite a spectacle—Eastern *pandits* with their *guru*, and Western mystics with theirs, discussing the philosophical enigmas that have perplexed the mind of man from the dawn of history. Through our translators, we spoke of God, of the soul and the world, and of the dire need for Śaivite schools in South India, and around the world, to pass this great knowledge on to the next generation.

After our lively discussion, a special lunch was served. Later, one of our *swāmīs* casually inquired of His Holiness about his large golden earrings, wondering where such a pair might be obtained for myself. Without hesitation, the *guru* summoned an aide and whispered some instructions. Moments later, a pair of earrings identical to those he was wearing were placed in his hands. His Holiness indicated that these were for me. Joyfully shrugging off our objections that he was being too generous, he immediately set about placing them in my ears with his own hands, enlarging the existing holes to accept these massive gold rings which are the traditional insignia of a *paramāchārya guru mahāsannidhānam aadheenakartha*. Then he presented new orange *kavi* cloth to me and to my accompanying *swāmīs*.

We gratefully accepted the Sannidhānam's unexpected and generous gift as a gesture of goodwill to help us on our way of spreading the message of Śaiva Siddhānta. Perhaps even more importantly, it was to us a

sign of cooperative efforts between two great monasteries, one firmly teaching pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta in the East, and the other boldly promulgating monistic Śaiva Siddhānta in the West. We thought to ourselves that all that transpired after this would be for the best. To the on-looking *pandits*, this presentation of the *āchārya* earrings meant that all knowledgeable Hindus would know that the Guru Mahāsannidhānam of Dharmapura Aadheenam and the Guru Mahāsannidhānam of Kauai Aadheenam would work together for the future of Śaiva Siddhānta. Later the same day, Mahāsannidhānam asked me to address several thousand people who were seated in the giant inner hall overlooking the large temple tank. I spoke of the greatness of Śaivism and Śaiva Siddhānta and the effects of its spreading into the Western world. The day culminated when His Holiness handed me an ornate silver casket in which was kept a precious scroll honoring our work in spreading Śaiva Siddhānta.

Later, after being engraved with words of acknowledgement, the casket was officially presented to me at the 1,000-pillared hall in Chidambaram Temple just before the sacred *bharata natyam* performance by premier dancer Kumari Swarnamukhi, a state treasure of Tamil Nadu, which we arranged as part of our Innersearch Travel-Study Program. This was the first dance performance within the temple's precincts in over fifty years, since the Anglican British outlawed the dancing of *devadāsīs* in temples. More than 15,000 devotees were packed into the viewing area while 300,000 more, we were told, filled the 65-acre temple complex. The entire city of Chidambaram came forward, as well as neighboring villages, for this historic presentation of all 108 *tāṇḍava* poses, a magnificent event held on the temple's most popular evening, establishing once and for all that, yes, dance could again be held in Chidambaram. This tradition, once banned, now continues at Śiva's most hallowed sanctuary. So, dancing with Śiva began again on that historic day—a dance that never ends. We look forward to the day when dance in each and every Śaiva temple in South India and around the world is a vital part of worship. That day is not far off, for temple congregations in Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States already take great joy when their girls and boys dance for God and the Gods. That dance is the perfect metaphor of Śiva's gracious presence in the world He created!



Ekam Sat Anekāḥ Panthānaḥ  
एकम् सत् अनेकाः पन्थानः



RESOURCE FIVE

## Truth Is One, Paths Are Many

If you remain at the top, you will see no difference. You can preach *dharma* only when you come down. If you remain at the top and see, everything will appear as one. That One always remains pure. Nothing can pollute it.

*Words of Our Master. WM, P. 36*





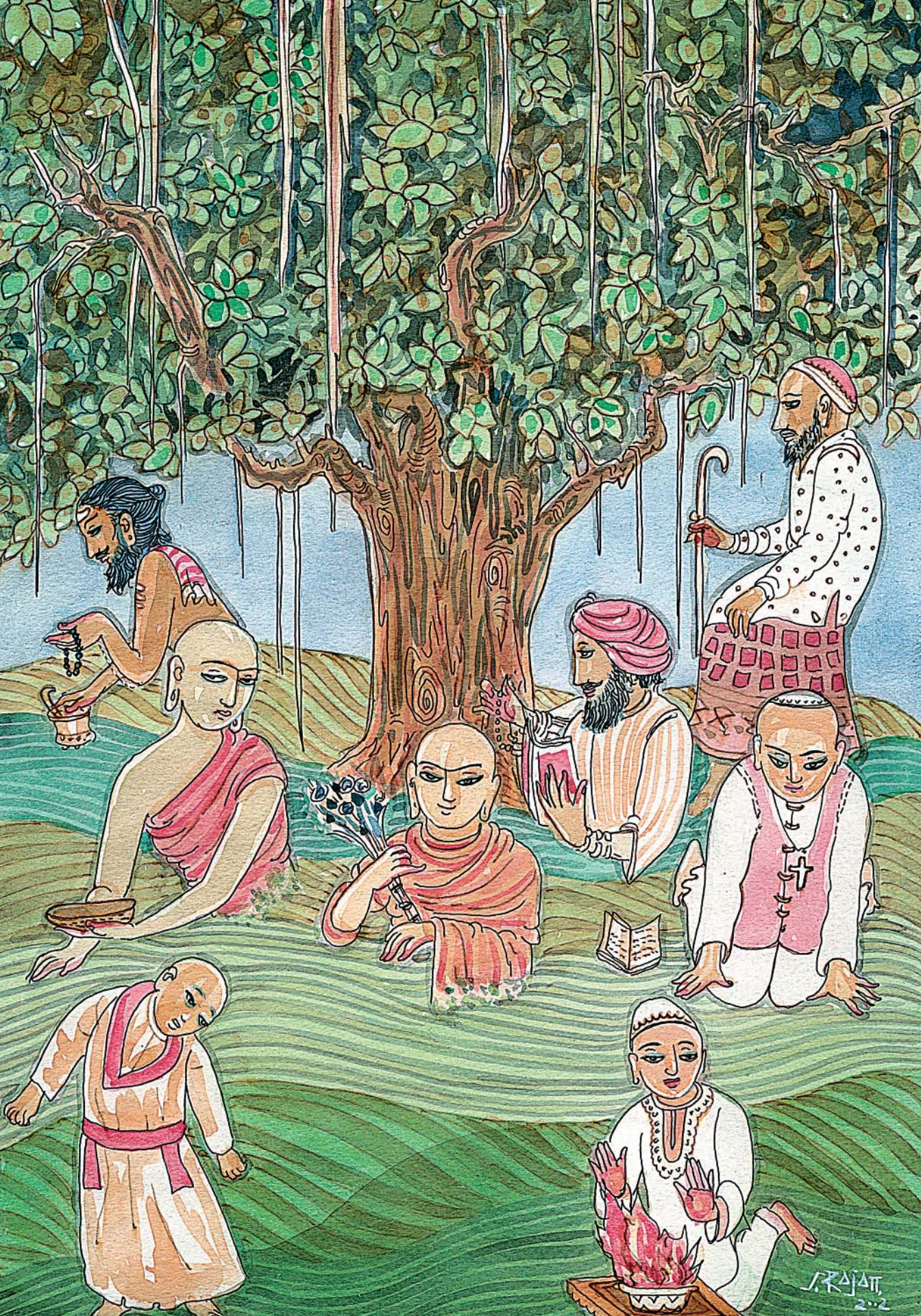


IF RELIGIONS HAVE EVER CONFUSED AND CONFOUNDED YOU, TAKE HEART! THIS NEXT RESOURCE SECTION WAS WRITTEN JUST FOR YOU. IT IS OUR HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO GATHER FROM HUNDREDS OF SOURCES A SIMPLE, IN-A-NUTSHELL SUMMARY of the world's major spiritual paths. The strength of this undertaking, brevity, is also its flaw. Complex and subtle distinctions, not to mention important exceptions, are consciously set aside for the sake of simplicity. There are hundreds of books addressing deeper matters, but none that we know of which have attempted a straightforward comparative summary. There is a need for no-nonsense reviews of religions, and this may hopefully begin to meet that need.

By juxtaposing a few of their major beliefs, we hope to highlight how other major world religions and important modern secular philosophies are similar to and differ from Hinduism. A leisurely hour with this section under a favorite tree will endow you with a good grasp of the essential truths of every major religion practiced today on the planet. It may also dispel the myth that all religions are one, that they all seek to lead adherents by the same means to the same Ultimate Reality. They don't, as a conscientious review will show. As you read through the 171 beliefs in this study, put a check by the ones you believe. Why, you might find that you are a Buddhist-Christian-Existentialist or a Taoist-New-Age-Materialist. Place yourself in the cosmology of the beliefs of the world. Many have found this self-inquiry satisfying, others awesomely revealing.

Pilgrim, pilgrimage and road—it was but myself toward my Self, and your arrival was but myself at my own door.

SUFI MYSTIC, JALAL UDDIN RUMI (1207–1273)





# The Major Religions Of the World

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*The banyan tree symbolizes the breadth of spirituality, shading all who gather near. Here members of several faiths assemble: a Hindu with a water pot, a Buddhist with a begging bowl, a Jain, a turbaned Sikh, a Muslim cleric, a Christian, a Jew and a Taoist priest in robes.*



# Hinduism

**FOUNDED:** Hinduism, the world's oldest religion, has no beginning—it predates recorded history.

**FOUNDER:** Hinduism has no human founder.

**MAJOR SCRIPTURES:** The *Vedas*, *Āgamas* and more.

**ADHERENTS:** Nearly one billion, mostly in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, Indian Ocean, Africa, Europe and North and South America.

**SECTS:** There are four main denominations: Śaivism, Śāktism, Vaiṣṇavism and Smārtism.

## SYNOPSIS

Hinduism is a vast and profound religion. It worships one Supreme Reality (called by many names) and teaches that all souls ultimately realize Truth. There is no eternal hell, no damnation. It accepts all genuine spiritual paths—from pure monism (“God alone exists”) to theistic dualism (“When shall I know His Grace?”). Each soul is free to find his own way, whether by devotion, austerity, meditation (*yoga*) or selfless service. Stress is placed on temple worship, scripture and the *guru-disciple* tradition. Festivals, pilgrimage, chanting of holy hymns and home worship are dynamic practices. Love, nonviolence, good conduct and the law of *dharma* define the Hindu path. Hinduism explains that the soul reincarnates until all *karmas* are resolved and God Realization is attained. The magnificent holy temples, the peaceful piety of the Hindu home, the sub-

the metaphysics and the science of *yoga* all play their part. Hinduism is a mystical religion, leading the devotee to personally experience the Truth within, finally reaching the pinnacle of consciousness where man and God are one.

### GOALS OF THE FOUR MAJOR HINDU SECTS

**ŚAIVISM:** The primary goal of Śaivism is realizing one's identity with God Śiva, in perfect union and nondifferentiation. This is termed *nirvikalpa samādhi*, Self Realization, and may be attained in this life, granting *moksha*, permanent liberation from the cycles of birth and death. A secondary goal is *savikalpa samādhi*, the realization of Satchidānanda, a unitive experience within superconsciousness in which perfect Truth, knowledge and bliss are known. The soul's final destiny is *viśvagrāsa*, total merger in God Śiva.

**ŚĀKTISM:** The primary goal of Śāktism is *moksha*, defined as complete identification with God Śiva. A secondary goal for the Śāktas is to perform good works selflessly so that one may go, on death, to the heaven worlds and thereafter enjoy a good birth on Earth, for heaven, too, is a transitory state. For Śāktas, God is both the formless Absolute (Śiva) and the manifest Divine (Śakti), worshiped as Pārvatī, Durgā, Kālī, Amman, Rājarājeśvarī, etc. Emphasis is given to the feminine manifest by which the masculine Unmanifest is ultimately reached.

**VAISHŅAVISM:** The primary goal of Vaishṅavites is *videha mukti*, liberation—attainable only after death—when the small self realizes union with God Vishṅu's body as a part of Him, yet maintains its pure individual personality. Lord Vishṅu—all-pervasive consciousness—is the soul of the universe, distinct from the world and from the *jīvas*, “embodied souls,” which constitute His body. His transcendent Being is a celestial form residing in the city of Vaikuṅṭha, the home of all eternal values and perfection, where the soul joins Him upon *mukti*, liberation. A secondary goal—the experience of God's Grace—can be reached while yet embodied through taking refuge in Vishṅu's unbounded love. By loving and serving Vishṅu and meditating upon Him and His incarnations, our spiritual hunger grows and we experience His Grace flooding our whole being.

**SMĀRTISM:** The ultimate goal of Smārtas is *moksha*, to realize oneself as Brahman—the Absolute and only Reality—and become free from

*saṁsāra*, the cycles of birth and death. For this, one must conquer the state of *avidyā*, or ignorance, which causes the world to appear as real. All illusion has vanished for the realized being, *Jīvanmukta*, even as he lives out life in the physical body. At death, his inner and outer bodies are extinguished. Brahman alone exists.

## PATHS OF ATTAINMENT

ŚAIVISM: The path for Śaivites is divided into four progressive stages of belief and practice called *charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. The soul evolves through *karma* and reincarnation from the instinctive-intellectual sphere into virtuous and moral living, then into temple worship and devotion, followed by internalized worship or *yoga* and its meditative disciplines. Union with God Śiva comes through the grace of the *satguru* and culminates in the soul's maturity in the state of *jñāna*, or wisdom. Śaivism values both *bhakti* and *yoga*, devotional and contemplative *sādhanas*.

ŚĀKTISM: The spiritual practices in Śāktism are similar to those in Śaivism, though there is more emphasis in Śāktism on God's Power as opposed to Being, on *mantras* and *yantras*, and on embracing apparent opposites: male-female, absolute-relative, pleasure-pain, cause-effect, mind-body. Certain sects within Śāktism undertake "left-hand" *tantric* rites, consciously using the world of form to transmute and eventually transcend that world. The "left-hand" approach is somewhat occult in nature; it is considered a path for the few, not the many. The "right-hand" path is more conservative in nature.

VAISHṆAVISM: Most Vaishṇavites believe that religion is the performance of *bhakti sādhanas*, and that man can communicate with and receive the grace of the Gods and Goddesses through the *darśana* of their icons. The paths of *karma yoga* and *jñāna yoga* lead to *bhakti yoga*. Among the foremost practices of Vaishṇavites is chanting the holy names of the *Avatāras*, Vishṇu's incarnations, especially Rāma and Kṛishṇa. Through total self-surrender, *prapatti*, to Vishṇu, to Kṛishṇa or to His beloved consort Rādhārāṇī, liberation from *saṁsāra* is attained.

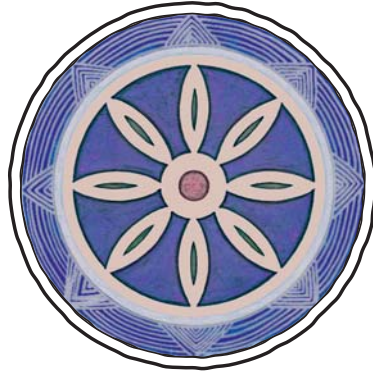
SMĀRTISM: Smārtas, the most eclectic of Hindus, believe that *moksha* is achieved through *jñāna yoga* alone—defined as an intellectual and meditative but *non-kuṇḍalinī-yoga* path. *Jñāna yoga's* progressive stages are scriptural study (*śravaṇa*), reflection (*manana*) and sustained medi-

tation (*dhyāna*). Guided by a realized *guru* and avowed to the unreality of the world, the initiate meditates on himself as Brahman to break through the illusion of *māyā*. Devotees may also choose from three other non-successive paths to cultivate devotion, accrue good *karma* and purify the mind. These are *bhakti yoga*, *karma yoga* and *rāja yoga*, which certain Smārtas teach can also bring enlightenment.

### HINDU BELIEFS

1. I believe in a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being who is both immanent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest Reality.
2. I believe in the divinity of the *Vedas*, the world's most ancient scripture, and venerate the *Āgamas* as equally revealed. These primordial hymns are God's word and the bedrock of Sanātana Dharma, the eternal religion which has neither beginning nor end.
3. I believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution.
4. I believe in *karma*, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds.
5. I believe that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all *karmas* have been resolved, and *moksha*, spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Not a single soul will be eternally deprived of this destiny.
6. I believe that divine beings exist in unseen worlds and that temple worship, rituals, sacraments as well as personal devotionals create a communion with these *devas* and Gods.
7. I believe that a spiritually awakened master, or *satguru*, is essential to know the Transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification, pilgrimage, self-inquiry and meditation.
8. I believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice *ahimsā*, "noninjury."
9. I believe that no particular religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine religious paths are facets of God's Pure Love and Light, deserving tolerance and understanding.





# Buddhism

**FOUNDED:** Buddhism began about 2,500 years ago in India.

**FOUNDER:** Gautama Siddhārtha, the Buddha, or “Enlightened One.”

**MAJOR SCRIPTURES:** The *Tripitaka*, *Anguttara-Nikāya*, *Dhammapada*, *Sutta-Nipāta*, *Samyutta-Nikāya* and many others.

**ADHERENTS:** Over 300 million.

**SECTS:** Buddhism today is divided into three main sects: Theravāda or Hinayāna (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia), Mahāyāna (China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea), and Vajrayāna (Tibet, Mongolia and Japan).

## SYNOPSIS

Life’s goal is *nirvāṇa*. Toward that end, Buddha’s teachings are capsulized in the Four Noble Truths, *chatvāri ārya satyāni*:

1. **THE TRUTH OF SUFFERING:** Suffering, *duḥkha*, is the central fact of life. Being born is pain, growing old is pain, sickness is pain, death is pain. Union with what we dislike is pain, separation from what we like is pain, not obtaining what we desire is pain.
2. **THE TRUTH OF THE ORIGIN (SAMUDĀYA) OF SUFFERING:** The cause of suffering is the desire (*icchā*), craving (*tanhā*) or thirst (*trishnā*) for sensual pleasures, for existence and experience, for worldly possessions and power. This craving binds one to the wheel of rebirth, *saṃsāra*.
3. **THE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION (NIRODHA) OF SUFFERING:** Suffering can be brought to an end only by the complete cessation of desires—the forsaking, relinquishing and detaching of oneself from desire and craving.

4. THE TRUTH OF THE PATH (*mārga*) TO ENDING SUFFERING: The means to the end of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path (*ārya āṣṭāṅga mārga*), right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation.

## GOALS OF BUDDHISM

The primary goal of the Buddhists is *nirvāṇa*, defined as the end of change, literally meaning “blowing out,” as one blows out a candle. Theravāda tradition describes the indescribable as “peace and tranquility.” The Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna traditions view it as “neither existence nor non-existence,” “emptiness and the unchanging essence of the Buddha” and “ultimate Reality.” It is synonymous with release from the bonds of desire, ego, suffering and rebirth. Buddha never defined *nirvāṇa*, except to say, “There is an unborn, an unoriginated, an unmade, an uncompounded,” and it lies beyond the experiences of the senses. *Nirvāṇa* is not a state of annihilation, but of peace and reality. As with Jainism, Buddhism has no creator God and thus no union with Him.

## PATH OF ATTAINMENT

Buddhism takes followers through progressive stages of *dhyāna*, *samāpatti* and *samādhi*. *Dhyāna* is meditation, which leads to moral and intellectual purification, and to detachment which leads to pure consciousness. The *samāpattis*, or further *dhyānas*, lead through a progressive nullification of psychic, mental and emotional activity to a state which is perfect solitude, neither perception nor nonperception. This leads further to *samādhi*, supernatural consciousness and, finally, entrance into the ineffable *nirvāṇa*. Many Buddhists understand the ultimate destiny and goal to be a heaven of bliss where one can enjoy eternity with the Bodhisattvas. Mahāyāna places less value on monasticism than Theravāda and differs further in believing one can rely on the active help of other realized beings for salvation. Vajrayāna, also called Tantric or Mantrayāna Buddhism, stresses *tantric* rituals and *yoga* practices under the guidance of a *guru*. Its recognition of and involvement in the supernatural distinguishes it from other Buddhist schools.

## BUDDHIST BELIEFS

1. I believe that the Supreme is completely transcendent and can be described as *Sūnya*, a void or state of nonbeing.
2. I believe in the Four Noble Truths: 1) that suffering is universal; 2) that desire is the cause of suffering; 3) that suffering may be ended by the annihilation of desire; 4) that to end desire one must follow the Eight-Fold Path.
3. I believe in the Eight-Fold Path of right belief, right aims, right speech, right actions, right occupation, right endeavor, right mindfulness and right meditation.
4. I believe that life's aim is to end suffering through the annihilation of individual existence and absorption into *nirvāṇa*, the Real.
5. I believe in the "Middle Path," living moderately, avoiding extremes of luxury and asceticism.
6. I believe in the greatness of self-giving love and compassion toward all creatures that live, for these contain merit exceeding the giving of offerings to the Gods.
7. I believe in the sanctity of the Buddha and in the sacred scriptures of Buddhism: the *Tripitaka* (Three Baskets of Wisdom) and/or the *Mahāyāna Sūtras*.
8. I believe that man's true nature is divine and eternal, yet his individuality is subject to the change that affects all forms and is therefore transient, dissolving at liberation into *nirvāṇa*.
9. I believe in *dharma* (the Way), *karma* (cause and effect), reincarnation, the *saṅga* (brotherhood of seekers) and the passage on Earth as an opportunity to end the cycle of birth and death.



## Jainism

**FOUNDED:** Jainism began about 2,500 years ago in India.

**FOUNDER:** Nataputra Vardhamana, known as Mahavira, “Great Hero.”

**MAJOR SCRIPTURES:** The *Jain Āgamas* and *Siddhāntas*.

**ADHERENTS:** About six million, almost exclusively in Central and South India, especially in Mumbai.

**SECTS:** There are two sects. The Digambara (“Sky-clad”) sect holds that a saint should own nothing, not even clothes, thus their practice of wearing only a loincloth. They believe that salvation in this birth is not possible for women. The Svetambara (“White-robed”) sect disagrees with these points.

### SYNOPSIS

Jainism strives for the realization of the highest perfection of man, which in its original purity is free from all pain and the bondage of birth and death. The term *Jain* is derived from the Sanskrit *jina*, “conqueror,” and implies conquest over this bondage imposed by the phenomenal world. Jainism does not consider it necessary to recognize a God or any being higher than the perfect man. Souls are beginningless and endless, eternally individual. It classes souls into three broad categories: those that are not yet evolved; those in the process of evolution and those that are liberated, free from rebirth. Jainism has strong monastic-ascetic leanings, even for householders. Its supreme ideal is *ahimsā*, equal kindness and reverence for all life. The *Jain Āgamas* teach great reverence for all forms

of life, strict codes of vegetarianism, asceticism, nonviolence even in self-defense, and opposition to war. Jainism is, above all, a religion of love and compassion.

### THE GOALS OF JAINISM

The primary goal of the Jains is becoming a Paramātman, a perfected soul. This is accomplished when all layers of *karma*, which is viewed as a substance, are removed, leading the soul to rise to the ceiling of the universe, from darkness to light, where, beyond the Gods and all currents of transmigration, the soul abides forever in the solitary bliss of *moksha*. *Moksha* is defined in Jainism as liberation, self-unity and integration, pure aloneness and endless calm, freedom from action and desire, freedom from *karma* and rebirth. *Moksha* is attainable in this world or at the time of death. When it is reached, man has fulfilled his destiny as the man-God. For the Jains there is no creator God and, therefore, no communion with Him. The nature of the soul is pure consciousness, power, bliss and omniscience.

### PATH OF ATTAINMENT

The soul passes through various stages of spiritual development, called *guṇasthānas*, progressive manifestations of the innate faculties of knowledge and power accompanied by decreasing sinfulness and increasing purity. Souls attain better births according to the amount of personal *karma* they are able to eliminate during life. Between births, souls dwell in one of the seven hells, the sixteen heavens or fourteen celestial regions. Liberated souls abide at the top of the universe. All Jains take five vows, but it is the monk who practices celibacy and poverty. Jainism places great stress on *ahimsā*, asceticism, *yoga* and monasticism as the means of attainment. Temple *pūjās* are performed to the twenty-four Tirthankaras or spiritual preceptors, literally “ford-makers,” those who take others across the ocean of *samsāra*.

## JAIN BELIEFS

1. I believe in the spiritual lineage of the 24 Tirthankaras (“ford-makers”) of whom the ascetic sage Mahāvīra was the last—that they should be revered and worshiped above all else.
2. I believe in the sacredness of all life, that one must cease injury to sentient creatures, large and small, and that even unintentional killing creates *karma*.
3. I believe that God is neither Creator, Father nor Friend. Such human conceptions are limited. All that may be said of Him is: He is.
4. I believe that each man’s soul is eternal and individual and that each must conquer himself by his own efforts and subordinate the worldly to the heavenly in order to attain *moksha*, or release.
5. I believe the conquest of oneself can only be achieved in ascetic discipline and strict religious observance, and that nonascetics and women will have their salvation in another life (Digambara sect).
6. I believe that the principle governing the successions of life is *karma*, that our actions, both good and bad, bind us and that *karma* may only be consumed by purification, penance and austerity.
7. I believe in the *Jain Āgamas* and *Siddhāntas* as the sacred scriptures that guide man’s moral and spiritual life.
8. I believe in the Three Jewels: right knowledge, right faith and right conduct.
9. I believe the ultimate goal of *moksha* is eternal release from *samsāra*, the “wheel of birth and death,” and the concomitant attainment of Supreme Knowledge.



## Sikhism

**FOUNDED:** Sikhism began about 500 years ago in the Lahore area of India's Punjab region which is now in Pakistan.

**FOUNDER:** Guru Nanak.

**MAJOR SCRIPTURE:** The *Ādi Granth*, revered as the present *guru* of the faith.

**ADHERENTS:** Estimated at nine million, mostly in India's state of Punjab.

**SECTS:** Besides the Khalsa, there are the Ram Raiyas in Uttar Pradesh and two groups that have living *gurus*—Mandharis and Nirankaris.

### SYNOPSIS

The Muslims began their invasions of India some 1,200 years ago. As a result of Islam's struggle with Hindu religion and culture, leaders sought a reconciliation between the two faiths, a middle path that embraced both. Sikhism (from *sikka*, meaning "disciple") united Hindu *bhakti* and Sufi mysticism most successfully. Sikhism began as a peaceful religion and patiently bore much persecution from the Muslims, but with the tenth *guru*, Govind Singh, self-preservation forced a strong militarism aimed at protecting the faith and way of life against severe opposition. Sikhism stresses the importance of devotion, intense faith in the *guru*, the repetition of God's name (*nām*) as a means of salvation, opposition to the worship of idols, the brotherhood of all men and rejection of caste differences (though certain caste attitudes persist today). There have been no *gurus* in the main Sikh tradition since Guru Govind Singh, whose last instructions to followers were to honor and cherish the teachings of the ten *gurus* as embodied in the scripture, *Ādi Granth*.

## THE GOALS OF SIKHISM

The goal of Sikhism lies in *moksha*, which is release and union with God, described as that of a lover with the beloved and resulting in self-transcendence, egolessness and enduring bliss, or *ānanda*. The Sikh is immersed in God, assimilated, identified with Him. It is the fulfillment of individuality in which man, freed of all limitations, becomes co-extensive and co-operant and co-present with God. In Sikhism, *moksha* means release into God's love. Man is not God, but is fulfilled in unitary, mystical consciousness with Him. God is the Personal Lord and Creator.

## PATH OF ATTAINMENT

To lead man to the goal of *moksha*, Sikhism follows a path of *japa* and hymns. Through chanting of the Holy Names, Sat Nām, the soul is cleansed of its impurity, the ego is conquered and the wandering mind is stilled. This leads to a superconscious stillness. From here one enters into the divine light and thus attains the state of divine bliss. Once this highest goal is attained, the devotee must devote his awareness to the good of others. The highest goal can be realized only by God's grace, and this is obtained exclusively by following the *satguru* (or nowadays a *sant*, or saint, since there are no living *gurus*, by the edict of Govind Singh, the tenth and last *guru*) and by repeating the holy names of the Lord guided by the *Ādi Granth*, the scripture and sole repository of spiritual authority. For Sikhs there is no image worship, no symbol of Divinity.



## SIKH BELIEFS

1. I believe in God as the sovereign One, the omnipotent, immortal and personal Creator, a being beyond time, who is called Sat Nām, for His name is Truth.
2. I believe that man grows spiritually by living truthfully, serving selflessly and by repetition of the Holy Name and Guru Nanak's Prayer, *Japaji*.
3. I believe that salvation lies in understanding the divine Truth and that man's surest path lies in faith, love, purity and devotion.
4. I believe in the scriptural and ethical authority of the *Ādi Granth* as God's revelation.
5. I believe that to know God the *guru* is essential as the guide who, himself absorbed in love of the Real, is able to awaken the soul to its true, divine nature.
6. I believe in the line of ten *gurus*: Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas, Guru Rām Dās, Guru Arjun, Guru Har Govind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishnan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Govind Singh—all these are my teachers.
7. I believe that the world is *māyā*, a vain and transitory illusion; only God is true as all else passes away.
8. I believe in adopting the last name "Singh," meaning "lion" and signifying courage, and in the five symbols: 1) white dress (purity), 2) sword (bravery), 3) iron bracelet (morality), 4) uncut hair and beard (renunciation), and 5) comb (cleanliness).
9. I believe in the natural path and stand opposed to fasting, pilgrimage, caste, idolatry, celibacy and asceticism.



## Taoism

**FOUNDED:** Taoism began about 2,500 years ago in China.

**FOUNDER:** Lao-tzu, whom Confucius described as a dragon riding the wind and clouds.

**MAJOR SCRIPTURE:** The *Tao te Ching*, or “Book of Reason and Virtue,” is among the shortest of all scriptures, containing only 5,000 words. Also central are the sacred writings of Chuang-tsu.

**ADHERENTS:** Estimated at 50 million, mostly in China and other parts of Asia.

**SECTS:** Taoism is a potently mystical tradition, so interpretations have been diverse and its sects are many.

### SYNOPSIS

The Tao, or Way, has never been put down in words; rather it is left for the seeker to discover within. Lao-tzu himself wrote, “The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao.” Taoism is concerned with man’s spiritual level of being, and in the *Tao te Ching* the awakened man is compared to bamboo: upright, simple and useful outside—and hollow inside. Effulgent emptiness is the spirit of Tao, but no words will capture its spontaneity, its eternal newness. Adherents of the faith are taught to see the Tao everywhere, in all beings and in all things. Taoist shrines are the homes of divine beings who guide the religion, bless and protect worshipers. A uniquely Taoist concept is *wu-wei*, nonaction. This does not mean no action, but rather not exceeding spontaneous action that accords with

needs as they naturally arise; not indulging in calculated action and not acting so as to exceed the very minimum required for effective results. If we keep still and listen to the inner promptings of the Tao, we shall act effortlessly, efficiently, hardly giving the matter a thought. We will be ourselves, as we are.

### THE GOALS OF TAOISM

The primary goal of Taoism may be described as the mystical intuition of the Tao, which is the Way, the Primal Meaning, the Undivided Unity, the Ultimate Reality. Both immanent and transcendent, the Tao is the natural way of all beings, it is the nameless beginning of Heaven and Earth, and it is the mother of all things. All things depend upon the Tao, all things return to it. Yet it lies hidden, transmitting its power and perfection to all things. He who has realized the Tao has uncovered the layers of consciousness so that he arrives at pure consciousness and sees the inner truth of everything. Only one who is free of desire can apprehend the Tao, thereafter leading a life of “actionless activity.” There is no Personal God in Taoism, and thus no union with Him. There are three worlds and beings within them, and worship is part of the path.

### PATH OF ATTAINMENT

One who follows the Tao follows the natural order of things, not seeking to improve upon nature or to legislate virtue to others. The Taoist observes *wu-wei*, or nondoing, like water which without effort seeks and finds its proper level. This path includes purifying oneself through stilling the appetites and the emotions, accomplished in part through meditation, breath and other forms of inner discipline, generally under a master. The foremost practice is goodness or naturalness, and detachment from the Ten Thousand Things of the world.

### TAOIST BELIEFS

1. I believe that the Eternal may be understood as the Tao, or “Way,” which embraces the moral and physical order of the universe, the path of virtue which Heaven itself follows, and the Absolute—yet so great is it that “the Tao that can be described is not the Eternal Tao.”
2. I believe in the unique greatness of the sage Lao-tsu and in his disciple Chuang-tsu.
3. I believe in the scriptural insights and final authority of the *Tao te Ching* and in the sacredness of Chuang-tsu’s writings.
4. I believe that man aligns himself with the Eternal when he observes humility, simplicity, gentle yielding, serenity and effortless action.
5. I believe that the goal and the path of life are essentially the same, and that the Tao can be known only to exalted beings who realize it themselves—reflections of the Beyond are of no avail.
6. I believe the omniscient and impersonal Supreme is implacable, beyond concern for human woe, but that there exist lesser Divinities—from the high Gods who endure for eons, to the nature spirits and demons.
7. I believe that all actions create their opposing forces, and the wise will seek inaction in action.
8. I believe that man is one of the Ten Thousand Things of manifestation, is finite and will pass; only the Tao endures forever.
9. I believe in the oneness of all creation, in the spirituality of the material realms and in the brotherhood of all men.



## Confucianism

**FOUNDED:** Confucianism began about 2,500 years ago in China.

**FOUNDER:** Supreme Sage K'ung-fu-tsu (Confucius) and Second Sage Meng-tzu (Mencius).

**MAJOR SCRIPTURES:** *The Analects, Doctrine of the Mean, Great Learning and Mencius.*

**ADHERENTS:** Estimated at 350 million, mostly in China, Japan, Burma and Thailand.

**SECTS:** There are no formal sects within Confucianism. Followers are free to profess other religions and yet still be Confucianists.

### SYNOPSIS

Confucianism is, and has been for over 25 centuries, the dominant philosophical system in China and the guiding light in almost every aspect of Chinese life. Confucius and his followers traveled throughout the many feudal states of the Chinese Empire, persuading rulers to adopt his social reforms. They did not offer a point-by-point program, but stressed instead the “Way,” or “One Thread,” Jen (also translated as “humanity or love”), that runs through all Confucius’ teachings. They urged individuals to strive for perfect virtue, righteousness (called Yi) and improvement of character. They taught the importance of harmony in the family, order in the state and peace in the Empire, which they saw as inherently interdependent. Teachings emphasize a code of conduct, self-cultivation and propriety—and thus the attainment of social and national order. Stress

is more on human duty and the ideal of the “superior man” than on a divine or supramundane Reality. Still, Confucius fasted, worshiped the ancestors, attended sacrifices and sought to live in harmony with Heaven. Confucianism is now enjoying a renaissance in China.

### **THE GOALS OF CONFUCIANISM**

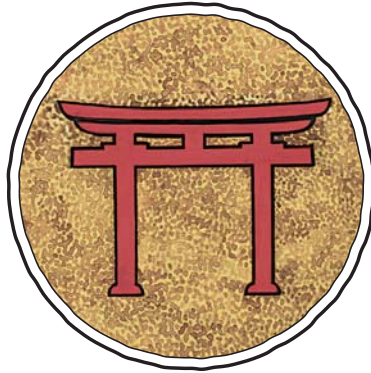
The primary goal of Confucianism is to create a true nobility through proper education and the inculcation of all the virtues. It is described as the return to the way of one’s ancestors, and the classics are studied to discover the ancient way of virtue. Spiritual nobility is attainable by all men; it is a moral achievement. Confucius accepted the Tao, but placed emphasis on this return to an idealized age and the cultivation of the superior man, on the pragmatic rather than the mystical. The superior man’s greatest virtue is benevolent love. The other great virtues are duty, wisdom, truth and propriety. Salvation is seen as realizing and living one’s natural goodness, which is endowed by heaven through education. The superior man always knows the right and follows his knowledge.

### **PATH OF ATTAINMENT**

Besides virtue, the five relationships offer the follower of Confucianism the means for progressing. These five relationships are to his ruler, his father, his wife, his elder brother and his friend. Ancestors are revered in Confucianism, and it is assumed that their spirit survives death. With respect to a Deity, Confucius was himself an agnostic, preferring to place emphasis on the ethical life here rather than to speak of a spiritual life beyond earthly existence, guiding men’s minds not to the future, but to the present and the past.

### CONFUCIAN BELIEFS

1. I believe in the presence of the Supreme Ruler in all things, and in Heaven as the Ethical Principle whose law is order, impersonal and yet interested in mankind.
2. I believe that the purpose of life is to follow an orderly and reverent existence in accord with *Li*, propriety or virtue, so as to become the Superior Man.
3. I believe in the Golden Rule: “Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.”
4. I believe that Confucius, China’s First Sage, is the Master of Life whose teachings embody the most profound understanding of Earth and Heaven, and that Mencius is China’s Second Sage.
5. I believe in the writings of Confucius as scriptural truth and in the Four Sacred Books: *The Analects*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Great Learning*, and *Mencius*.
6. I believe that each man has five relationships, entailing five duties to his fellow man: to his ruler, to his father, to his wife, to his elder brother and to his friend—the foremost being his familial duties.
7. I believe that human nature is inherently good, and evil is an unnatural condition arising from inharmony.
8. I believe that man is master of his own life and fate, free to conduct himself as he will, and that he should cultivate qualities of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sincerity.
9. I believe that the family is the most essential institution among men, and that religion should support the family and the state.



## Shintoism

**FOUNDED:** Shintoism began around 2,500–3,000 years ago in Japan.

**FOUNDER:** Each of the thirteen ancient sects has its own founder.

**MAJOR SCRIPTURES:** *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Things), *Nihongi* (Chronicles of Japan), a later work, *Yengishiki* (Institutes of the period of Yengi), and the *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* are the primary works, but they are not regarded as revealed scripture.

**ADHERENTS:** Estimated at 30 million, mostly in Japan.

Most are also Buddhists.

### SYNOPSIS

There are two main divisions. One is the thirteen ancient sects, all very similar. The second is known as State Shinto, and is a later synthesis finding its highest expression in the worship of the Emperor and loyalty to the State and family. Shinto (from the Chinese characters *Shen* and *Tao*, signifying the “Way of the Spirits”) is called *Kami-no-michi* in vernacular Japanese. *Kami* are the innumerable Gods or nature spirits. Shinto shrines are many, over 100,000 in Japan. In the shrines no images are worshiped, rather it is considered that the *Kami* themselves are there. Fresh foods, water, incense, etc., are offered daily upon the altar. There is an inward belief in the sacredness of the whole of the universe, that man can be in tune with this sacredness. Stress is placed on truthfulness and purification through which man may remove the “dust” which conceals his inherently divine nature and thus receive the guidance and blessings



of Kami. The Shintoist's ardent love of the motherland has found unique expression in the loyalty and devotion of the Japanese people to their state institutions.

### **THE GOALS OF SHINTOISM**

The primary goal of Shintoism is to achieve immortality among the ancestral beings, the Kami. Kami is understood by the Shintoist as a supernatural, holy power living in or connected to the world of the spirit. Shintoism is strongly animistic, as are most Eastern and Oriental faiths, believing that all living things possess a Kami nature. Man's nature is the highest, for he possesses the most Kami. Salvation is living in the spirit world with these divine beings, the Kami.

### **PATH OF ATTAINMENT**

Salvation is achieved in Shinto through observance of all taboos and the avoidance of persons and objects which might cause impurity or pollution. Prayers are made and offerings brought to the temples of the Gods and Goddesses, of which there are said to be 800 myriad in the universe. Man has no Supreme God to obey, but needs only know how to adjust to Kami in its various manifestations. A person's Kami nature survives death, and a man naturally desires to be worthy of being remembered with approbation by his descendants. Therefore, fulfillment of duty is a most important aspect of Shinto.

### SHINTO BELIEFS

1. I believe in the “Way of the Gods,” Kami-no-michi, which asserts nature’s sacredness and uniquely reveals the supernatural.
2. I believe there is not a single Supreme Being, but myriad Gods, superior beings, among all the wonders of the universe which is not inanimate but filled everywhere with sentient life.
3. I believe in the scriptural authority of the great books known as the *Record of Ancient Things*, *Chronicles of Japan*, *Institutes of the Period of Yengi* and *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*.
4. I believe in the sanctity of cleanliness and purity—of body and spirit—and that impurity is a religious transgression.
5. I believe that the State is a divine institution whose laws should not be transgressed and to which individuals must sacrifice their own needs.
6. I believe in moral and spiritual uprightness as the cornerstone of religious ethics and in the supreme value of loyalty.
7. I believe that the supernatural reveals itself through all that is natural and beautiful, and value these above philosophical or theological doctrine.
8. I believe that whatever is, is Divine Spirit, that the world is a one brotherhood, that all men are capable of deep affinity with the Divine and that there exists no evil in the world whatsoever.
9. I believe in the practical use of ceremony and ritual, and in the worship of the Deities that animate nature, including the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, the Moon God Tsuki-yomi, and the Storm God Sasa-no-wo.



## Zoroastrianism

**FOUNDED:** Zoroastrianism began 2,600 years ago in ancient Iran.

**FOUNDER:** Spenta Zarathustra (Zoroaster).

**MAJOR SCRIPTURE:** Portions of the *Zend Avesta* (Persian).

**ADHERENTS:** 125,000, mostly near Mumbai, where they are called Parsis.

**SECTS:** The present-day sects are three: Shahenshai, Kadmi and Fassali.

### SYNOPSIS

Two principles form the basis of Zoroastrian ethics: the maintenance of life and the struggle against evil. In order to maintain life, one must till the soil, raise cattle, marry and have children. Asceticism and celibacy are condemned; purity and avoidance of defilement (from death, demons, etc.) are valued. In order to combat evil, one must at all times oppose the forces of evil and those who side with them. Zoroastrianism stresses monotheism, while recognizing the universal sway of two opposite forces (dualism). The powers of good are led by Ahura Mazda, or Ormazd (the Wise Lord), and the forces of evil by Angra Mainyu or Ahriman (the Evil Spirit). Each side has an array of warriors; bands of angels and archangels on one side and hosts of demons and archfiends on the other. Good will eventually triumph on Judgment Day, when a Messiah and Savior named Saoshyant will appear to punish the wicked and establish the righteous in a paradise on Earth. A central feature of the faith is the sacred fire that is constantly kept burning in every home, fueled by fragrant sandalwood. Fire is considered the only worshipful symbol, the great purifier and sustainer, of the nature of the sun itself.

## THE GOALS OF ZOROASTRIANISM

The goal of Zoroastrianism is to be rewarded with a place in heaven where the soul will be with God, called Ahura Mazda, sharing His blessed existence forever.

### PATH OF ATTAINMENT

Man's life, according to Zoroastrianism, is a moral struggle, not a search for knowledge or enlightenment. He is put on the Earth to affirm and approve the world, not to deny it, not to escape from it. Salvation is found in obedience to the will of Ahura Mazda as revealed and taught by His prophet, Zoroaster. Man has but one life. He also has the freedom to choose between good and evil, the latter being embodied in Angra Mainyu who rebelled against God. At death, each is judged and consigned to his deserved abode.

Zoroastrians hold truth as the greatest virtue, followed by good thoughts, words and deeds. They value the ethical life most highly. Though there will be a resurrection of the dead, a judgment and a kingdom of heaven on Earth, followed by punishment of the wicked, all sins will be eventually burned away and all of mankind will abide forever with Ahura Mazda. Hell, for the Zoroastrian, is not eternal.

### ZOROASTRIAN BELIEFS

1. I believe there are two Great Beings in the universe. One, Ahura Mazda, created man and all that is good, beautiful and true, while the other, Angra Mainyu, vivifies all that is evil, ugly and destructive.
2. I believe that man has free will to align himself with good or evil, and when all mankind is in harmony with the God Ahura Mazda, Angra Mainyu will be conquered.
3. I believe the soul is immortal and upon death crosses over Hell by a narrow bridge—the good crossing safely to Heaven and the evil falling into Hell.
4. I believe that a savior named Sayoshant will appear at the end of time, born of a virgin, reviving the dead, rewarding the good and punishing the evil, and thereafter Ahura Mazda will reign.
5. I believe that Zoroaster, also known as Zarathustra, is the foremost Prophet of God.
6. I believe in the scriptural authority of the *Zend Avesta*.
7. I believe that purity is the first virtue, truth the second and charity the third—and that man must discipline himself by good thoughts, words and deeds.
8. I believe that marriage excels continence, action excels contemplation and forgiveness excels revenge.
9. I believe in God as Seven Persons: Eternal Light; Right and Justice; Goodness and Love; Strength of Spirit; Piety and Faith; Health and Perfection; and Immortality—and that He may best be worshiped through the representation of fire.



## Judaism

**FOUNDED:** Judaism began about 3,700 years ago in the Near East (chiefly Canaan, now Israel; and Egypt).

**FOUNDERS:** Abraham, who started the lineage, and Moses, who emancipated the enslaved Jewish tribes from Egypt.

**MAJOR SCRIPTURE:** The *Torah* (the *Old Testament* and the *Talmud*).

**ADHERENTS:** About 12 million worldwide, over half in the United States.

**SECTS:** Jews are divided into Orthodox, Conservative and Reform sects, with other regional and ethnic divisions.

### SYNOPSIS

The religion of the Jews is inseparable from their history as a people. Much of the *Torah* traces the ancestry of Abraham through Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and finally to Moses, the foremost of God's prophets in Hebrew history. It was Moses who conveyed to Judaism the Ten Commandments given by God and established the religious laws and traditions.

The *Torah* (literally, "Doctrine," "Teaching," "Law") consists primarily of the written *Torah*, i.e. the Hebrew *Bible*, or the *Old Testament*; and secondarily of oral Torah, ultimately codified as *Talmud* (literally, "instruction"), in two redactions, Jerusalem *Talmud* and the more authoritative Babylonian *Talmud*. In the narrower sense, *Torah* denotes only the *Pentateuch*, i.e., the first five books of the *Old Testament*. But in extended usage, *Torah* as scripture is somewhat analogous to the Hindu *Veda*, which beyond the four *Samhitās* may also apply to their extensions, the

*Brahmāṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upanishads*. As a term for moral and religious principles, Jewish *Torah* has as comprehensive an application as *Hindu Dharma*.

By far the most profound characteristic of Judaism is its strict monotheism. The Jews hold an unshakable belief in one God and one God only, known as Yahweh, “whose name cannot be taken in vain,” and from whom all creation flows. The Jewish people consider themselves a chosen people, apart from all the other peoples of the Earth, by virtue of their covenant with Yahweh.

Much stress is placed on the hallowing of daily existence, worship in the synagogue, prayer and reading of the scriptures. Few religions can boast of such a close-knit family tradition as Judaism, making the home a great strength to the religion and a constant refuge to the faithful. Each day, morning and evening, every devout Jew affirms his faith by repeating Moses’ prayer: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.”

### THE GOALS OF JUDAISM

The goal of Judaism lies in the strict obedience to the *Torah*, Jewish scripture, which can alleviate the plight of the individual and of society. Obeying God’s law brings rewards in the future life when the Messiah will come to overthrow evil and reward the righteous in God’s kingdom on the Earth, the Day of the Lord. The soul thereafter will enjoy God’s presence and love.

### PATH OF ATTAINMENT

Man has two impulses: good and evil. He can either follow God’s law or rebel and be influenced by Satan, who caused God’s creation to go astray. Following God’s law is the highest morality, possible through obedience to the *Torah*, which pleases God. One must follow justice, charity, ethics and honesty, being true to the one true God, Yahweh.

### JUDAIC BELIEFS

1. I believe in the One God and Creator who is incorporeal and transcendent, beyond the limitation of form, yet who cares for the world and its creatures, rewarding the good and punishing the evil.
2. I believe in the Prophets, of whom Moses was God's foremost, and in the Commandments revealed to him by God on Mount Sinai as man's highest law.
3. I believe in the *Torah* as God's word and scripture, composed of all the *Old Testament* books (the *Hebrew Bible*) and the *Talmud*. They are God's only immutable law.
4. I believe that upon death the soul goes to Heaven (or to Hell first if it has been sinful), that one day the Messiah will appear on Earth and there will be a Day of Judgment, and the dead shall be called to Life Everlasting.
5. I believe that the universe is not eternal, but was created by and will be destroyed by God.
6. I believe that no priest should intervene in the relationship of man and God, nor should God be represented in any form, nor should any being be worshiped other than the One God, Yahweh.
7. I believe in man's spiritualization through adherence to the law, justice, charity and honesty.
8. I believe that God has established a unique spiritual covenant with the Hebrew people to uphold for mankind the highest standards of monotheism and piety.
9. I believe in the duty of the family to make the home a House of God through devotions and ritual, prayers, sacred festivals and observation of the Holy Sabbath Day.





# Christianity

**FOUNDED:** Christianity began about 2,000 years ago in what is now Israel.

**FOUNDER:** Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus Christ, “Anointed One,” “the Messiah.”

**MAJOR SCRIPTURE:** The *Bible*—*Old and New Testaments*.

**ADHERENTS:** Estimated at 2 billion.

**SECTS:** Christianity is divided into three main sects: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant. Among Protestants there are over 20,000 denominations.

## SYNOPSIS

The majority of Christians adhere to the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended unto Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, . . . the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.” Most Christian faith revolves around the basic principles of this creed, but with important exceptions to its various beliefs. Christianity has an unwavering conviction that it is the only true religion, the only path to salvation. This engenders a missionary zeal, an urgency to evangelize around the world.

Stress is placed on acceptance of Jesus as God incarnate and Savior, on good conduct, compassion, service to mankind, faith and preparation for the Final Judgment. Only good Christians will be saved and accepted into heaven. Today over half of all Christians are black. Membership is diminishing in developed nations but increasing in undeveloped nations.

### THE GOALS OF CHRISTIANITY

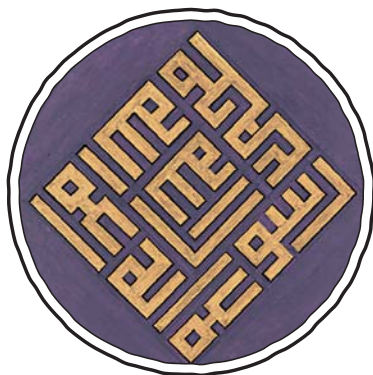
The goal of Christianity is eternal life with God in heaven, a perfect existence in which God's glory and bliss are shared. It is also a personal life, enjoyed differently by souls according to the amount of grace achieved in life.

### PATH OF ATTAINMENT

Man's plight is caused by disobedience to God's will. Man needs redemption from the forces which would enslave and destroy him—fear, selfishness, hopelessness, desire and the supernatural forces of the Devil, sin and death against which he is powerless. His salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ, that is, in acceptance of Jesus' resurrection from the dead as proof of God's power over the forces of sin and death. The good Christian lives a life of virtue and obedience to God out of gratitude to God for sacrificing Jesus for the sins of all who come to accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. Jesus is to return again to judge the world and bring God's rule to the Earth. Through following the law of God as found in the *Holy Bible* and through God's grace, man attains salvation. Those who do not achieve this blessedness are, after death, consigned to a hell of eternal suffering and damnation.

### CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

1. I believe in God the Father, Creator of the universe, reigning forever distinct over man, His beloved creation.
2. I believe man is born a sinner, and that he may know salvation only through the Savior, Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son.
3. I believe that Jesus Christ was born of Mary, a virgin.
4. I believe that Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, then resurrected from the dead and now sits at the right hand of the Father as the final judge of the dead, and that He will return again as prophesied.
5. I believe that the soul is embodied for a single lifetime, but is immortal and accountable to God for all thoughts and actions.
6. I believe in the historical truth of the *Holy Bible*, that it is sacred scripture of the highest authority and the only word of God.
7. I believe that upon death and according to its earthly deeds and its acceptance of the Christian faith, the soul enters Heaven, Purgatory or Hell. There it awaits the Last Judgment when the dead shall rise again, the redeemed to enjoy life everlasting and the unsaved to suffer eternally.
8. I believe in the intrinsic goodness of mankind and the affirmative nature of life, and in the priceless value of love, charity and faith.
9. I believe in the Holy Trinity of God who reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and in the existence of Satan, the personification of evil, deception and darkness.



# Islam

**FOUNDED:** Islam began about 1,400 years ago in present-day Saudi Arabia.

**FOUNDER:** Prophet Mohammed.

**MAJOR SCRIPTURES:** The *Koran*, Islam's revealed scripture, and the *Hadith*, the teachings, sayings and life of the Prophet Mohammed.

**ADHERENTS:** One billion, mostly in the Middle East, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Africa, China and Eastern Europe.

**SECTS:** There are two main divisions within Islam. The Sunnis are followers of the political successors of Mohammed. The Shiites are followers of Mohammed's family successors, all martyred at an early age.

## SYNOPSIS

*Islam* means "submission," surrender to the will of God, called Allah. Those who submit are called Muslims. Islam is based upon five "pillars," or principal acts of faith to which every Muslim in the world adheres. These are: 1) Faith in Allah: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet." 2) Praying five times daily: kneeling in the direction of Mecca, the holy city. 3) Giving of alms: a share of each Muslim's income is given to support the mosque and the poor. 4) Fasting: throughout Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, the faithful fast from sunrise to sunset. 5) Pilgrimage: the binding force of the peoples who have embraced Islam. At least once in life every believer, physically and materially able to do so, must go to Mecca, the holy city. They go dressed in simple, seamless white garments.

Islam teaches absolute monotheism and Mohammed's primacy as God's last Prophet on Earth. Stress is on the brotherhood of believers, nondifference of religious and secular life, obedience to God's Law, abstinence from alcohol, good conduct and the limitation of all except Allah. Today Islam is the world's fastest-growing religion.

### THE GOALS OF ISLAM

The primary goal of Islam is to enjoy eternal life, both physical and spiritual, in heaven with Allah. Heaven is a paradise in which all the joys and pleasures abound, in which one lives amid beautiful gardens and fountains, enjoying the choicest foods served by sweet maidens. Man is the noblest creation of God, ranking above the angels. It is the sacred duty of Muslims to convert others to the Islamic faith. Islam has an ardent conviction that it is the only true religion, the only path to salvation. From this belief arises an extraordinary zeal, to share the faith and to convert others. The ideal human society is an Islamic theocracy.

### PATH OF ATTAINMENT

Total submission to Allah is the single path to salvation, and even that is no guarantee, for Allah may desire even a faithful soul to experience misery. The good Muslim surrenders all pride, the chief among sins, and follows explicitly the will of Allah as revealed in the *Koran* by His last and greatest prophet, Mohammed. This and this alone brings a full and meaningful life and avoids the terrors of Hell which befall sinners and infidels. He believes in the Five Doctrines and observes the Five Pillars. The virtues of truthfulness, temperance and humility before God are foremost for Islam, and the practices of fasting, pilgrimage, prayer and charity to the Muslim community are most necessary to please Allah. The five doctrines are: 1) There is only one true God, Allah. 2) There are angels, chief of whom is Gabriel. 3) There are four inspired books: the *Torah* of Moses, the *Zabur* (Psalms) of David, the *Injil* (Evangel) of Jesus, and the *Koran*, Allah's final message, which supersedes all other scriptures. 4) There have been numerous prophets of Allah, culminating in Mohammed, the Last Prophet. 5) There will be a final Day of Judgment and Resurrection. A sixth, but optional, doctrine is belief in *kismet*, "fate" or "destiny."

### ISLAMIC BELIEFS

1. I believe that Allah is the Supreme Creator and Sustainer, all-knowing and transcendent and yet the arbiter of good and evil, the final judge of men.
2. I believe in the Five Pillars of Faith: 1) praying five times daily, 2) charity through alms-giving, 3) fasting during the ninth month, 4) pilgrimage to Holy Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and 5) profession of faith by acknowledging, “There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet.”
3. I believe in the *Koran* as the Word of God and sacred scripture mediated through the Angel Gabriel to Mohammed.
4. I believe in the direct communion of each man with God, that all are equal in the eyes of God and therefore priests or other intercessors are unneeded.
5. I believe in the pure transcendence of God, great beyond imagining—no form or idol can be worshiped in His Name.
6. I believe that the soul of man is immortal, embodied once on Earth, then entering Heaven or Hell upon death according to its conduct and faith on Earth.
7. I believe in the Last Judgment and that man should stand in humble awe and fear of God’s wrathful and vengeful power.
8. I believe that truthfulness should be observed in all circumstances, even though it may bring injury or pain.
9. I believe that salvation is only obtained through God’s grace and not through man’s efforts, yet man should do good and avoid all sins, especially drunkenness, usury and gambling.



A. RAJAN  
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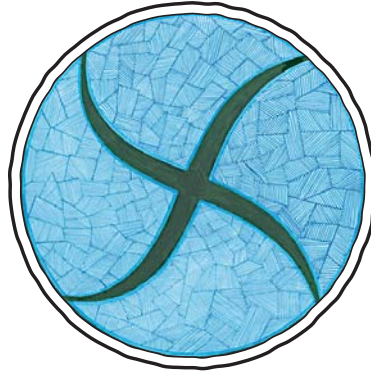


## Faiths and Movements

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*The artist shows lesser known faiths explored in this section. From upper left, clockwise: ecology/humanitarianism, mysticism/past life readings, new age/occultism, shamanism and theosophy leader Annie Besant, with Ramalingaswami's universalistic Temple of Light at the center.*





## *A Sampling of Faiths*

**I**n his search of the Divine, man has created innumerable smaller religions, often called faiths. These spiritual paths are often charismatic or mystical in source or nature and have a powerful spiritual presence despite being numerically small. A few examples:

**SPIRITUALISM:** Spiritualism holds that there is another, perhaps deeper, reality on “the other side” which can be contacted by mediums or psychics who have sufficient sensitivity. It is one of the oldest forms of communion.

**SHAMANISM:** This broad term includes the thousands of tribal faiths which have existed on every continent since long before recorded history. Beliefs include a deep sense of the sacredness of life and of the Earth, communion with spirit guides and in the ability of man to live in harmony with and influence nature.

**THEOSOPHY:** Inspired by Hinduism and Buddhism and founded in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott, Theosophy emphasizes mystical experience, esoteric doctrines and monism. Theosophists seek universal brotherhood, exploring the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

**UNIVERSALISM:** Many faiths are based on universalist principles, often as a conscious effort to avoid certain doctrines which are seen as narrow or sectarian. Universalism arises in all religions, whether Christian (Unitarianism), Islam (Baha’i), Jain (Rajneeshism) or Hindu (dozens of integrating-all-religions movements, such as those of Satya Sai Baba, Krishnamurti and Maharshi Mahesh Yogi).

## OTHER FAITHS

Among thousands of other faiths are: indigenous people's tribal religions, humanitarianism, neo-Indian religion, shamanism, Anthroposophy, Swedenborgianism, Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, Scientology, Eckankar, channeling, witchcraft, Paganism, occultism, Subud, mysticism, Freemasonry, Satan worship, Huna, Voodoo, Santeria, Sufism, Baha'i, Rosicrucianism, Christian Science and Religious Science.

### A SAMPLING OF BELIEFS OF FAITHS

1. I believe in the fundamental unity and common source of all religions (Baha'i and Universalism).
2. I believe man's natural spirituality is best expressed in loving and practical aid to his fellow man, rather than metaphysical inquiry (Humanitarianism).
3. I believe in the unity of religions, the efficacy of devotion, *sādhana* and service and in Satya Sai Baba as the living Incarnation of God (Saiism).
4. I believe that spiritual progress comes through analysis of current and past life experiences which resolves past *karma* most directly (Scientology).
5. I believe that there is no God beyond the Divine within man and no truth beyond existential freedom, that all religions imprison man, causing repression, fear and poverty (Rajneeshism).
6. I believe man's sense of the sacred can be fulfilled naturally, without formal worship, houses of God, ceremony, creeds or theology (various faiths).
7. I believe religion consists of unitive and direct mystical experience which should be the objective of every religious aspirant (mysticism).
8. I believe that the cultivation of occult powers including ESP, astral travel, past life readings, etc., is the highest pursuit of that which is spiritual (occultism).
9. I believe in the intimate relationship of man, Spirit and the Earth—which is a living, sacred being—and in the brotherhood of all creatures (indigenous tribalism).

## Movements

Here we explore some of the larger movements, which are not necessarily spiritual in nature but are important currents of thought and belief which shape modern politics and society. Others that we do not delve into include human rights, gay liberation, women's equality, anti-abortion, anti-child-abuse, interfaith, native rights and extraterrestrialism.



## Drug Culture

“Drug culture” refers to the fluid ideas and unrestrained way of life developed in Western societies during the 1960s. Its adherents embrace a lifestyle based on the use of various natural and man-made drugs, such as marijuana, hashish, peyote, mescaline, cocaine, LSD and chemical designer drugs.

### DRUG CULTURE BELIEFS

1. I believe that one can achieve the ultimate goal of enlightenment, as understood by any religion, through the use of drugs.
2. I believe that the psychedelic drug experience, properly handled, fulfills the role of a spiritual teacher or *guru*.
3. I believe that drugs give mystical experiences of various types identical to and therefore equally as valid as those achieved through *yoga*, penance, grace, etc.
4. I believe that the knowledge gained on drugs is more valid than the traditional knowledge given by society or religion because it is direct,

personal experience of a higher order.

5. I believe that people who take drugs are more “aware” or “enlightened” than those who do not.
6. I believe that one can solve his personal psychological problems or “hangups” by taking drugs.
7. I believe in living simply, close to nature and in harmony with others and that sexual relationships need not be restricted by the traditional morals imposed by society.
8. I believe that the ideal life is to completely drop out of society, becoming self-sufficient and associating with others of a like mind, and that those who do not drop out of society but continue to involve themselves in mundane materialism are living in a lower consciousness.
9. I believe that the meaning of life is found in intense self-revelatory experiences, which can be attained through drugs that open the doors of perception to higher consciousness.



## The New Age

The term *new age* was coined in the 1970s to denote an awakening of the mass consciousness to deeper realities and the need for individual attunement with universal, higher consciousness and creative transformation. In practice, new-age thinking embraces myriad enlightenment teachings (mostly of Eastern origin)—from crystalography to Zen, parapsychology to holistic medicine.

## NEW AGE BELIEFS

1. I believe in the one Eternal Source or Ultimate Reality, called by many names, which flows through all forms of nature and can be known through spiritual realization and experience.
2. I believe in unseen worlds and beings who may interact with our world, and that some are benevolent and help guide and protect us, while others are malevolent, and that channeling, or mediumship, is a means of contacting such souls.
3. I believe that the world is a dynamic, conscious entity; that mankind is but one part of the cosmic ecology and that, as stewards, we must treat the world responsibly, with love, respect and reverence.
4. I believe that consciousness is present in and conveyed through some structures more than others. Thus, for example, crystals are powerful sources or channels of knowledge and spiritual strength.
5. I believe in meditation, trance, rebirthing, self-healing, channeling, past-life regression, crystals, sexual *tantras*, drugs and more as effective tools in the quest for wholeness and oneness with the sacred, and that one should continue to explore alternatives and not feel restricted to the disciplines of any one system of thought.
6. I believe the world has entered the New Age, the age of Aquarius, awakening to the consciousness of love, selflessness, compassion and creativity, from the old age of hatred, war, ignorance and greed. Those who perceive this vision should share it with others to uplift society.
7. I believe that traditional religions are outmoded and that we are moving toward a universal brotherhood; yet, the Eastern religions and so-called primitive faiths are rich reservoirs of truth and spiritual practice.
8. I believe in nonconformity and noncommitment: that each person is responsible to his-her own conscience only and not to the dictates of society which often unduly hamper freedom of expression, and that even spiritual *gurus* are to be approached with circumspection.
9. I believe that many of society's traditional economic and social structures are outmoded and should be abandoned for ones which reflect new-age consciousness, and that dropping out of society is a valid new-age alternative.



## The Ecology Movement

In the 1980s there arose an Earth-ethics movement complete with philosophy, an immense following and compelling missionary zeal. It deemed the present global environmental imbalance so severe as to threaten future generations' quality of life, perhaps even leading to the extinction of the human race. There is a wide philosophical range among adherents: 1) man-centered conservationists seek to preserve natural resources for human enjoyment, 2) environmentalists work to preserve ecosystems and species and 3) "deep ecologists" call for spiritualization of human life in consonance with a sacred nature. In the 1990s this movement brought together organizational, tribal, religious and political leaders from hundreds of nations to focus on global concerns at international conferences. Adherents believe the world must act speedily to protect nature and humanity from disaster.

### BELIEFS OF THE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

1. I believe that all nature is sacred and One and that each life form has intrinsic value in a cosmos where elements, plants, animals and humans are intimately interconnected, essential to and dependent on the whole.
2. I believe that every human being has the right to a healthy, pristine, undiminished environment, and that we are morally obliged to work toward assuring this right for future generations.
3. I believe that all living beings have an inalienable right to exist, and that through our ignorance, assisted by science, we have disrupted

life's balance and brought about the extinction of vast numbers of plant and animal species.

4. I believe that the sacredness of life demands the practice of nonviolence, that differences must be resolved by consultation rather than conflict. Nations must work toward complete disarmament.
5. I believe we must change our system of values away from materialism and consumerism, transform our hearts and minds, make simple and concrete changes in our way of life and renew our deepest religious impulses as we create a global society.
6. I believe mankind must rediscover the value of frugality, avoid waste, implement sustainable systems of nonpolluting farming, manufacturing and energy production to enable future generations to meet their needs. Simplicity of life fosters inner freedom and outer sustainability.
7. I believe that biological, cultural and religious diversity are essential to life's purpose, and that all species and human traditions, especially indigenous faiths, must be preserved through peaceful co-existence, protection of habitats through wilderness preservation.
8. I believe that the present ecological crisis is, at its heart, a spiritual crisis for the human race and affirm the importance of respecting all spiritual traditions, promoting those that foster concern and responsibility for the environment and vigorously challenging those that do not.
9. I believe that overpopulation poses one of the greatest threats to the natural environment and to the quality of human life, and that to establish a sustainable Earth community we must promote the extended family and make greater efforts to educate women and children.



## Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism describes any religious creed or philosophical persuasion marked by extreme dogmatism and intolerance. There are fundamentalist denominations within virtually every religion and faith—including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism—all believing in a literal interpretation of their scripture as *the* exclusive truth, the one and only way which all souls must follow to attain salvation. Historically, fundamentalism, especially when coupled with evangelical zeal, has led to aggression and violence against nonbelievers.

### FUNDAMENTALIST BELIEFS

1. I believe that there is only one acceptable perception of truth, and it is stated in our scriptures; and all who do not accept this doctrine are following false paths and are destined to eternal damnation.
2. I believe that the gospel was spoken at one point in time by our messiah, the one and only true representative of God, and is not subject to or in need of adaptation through time or circumstance.
3. I believe that the members of our faith have been divinely commissioned by God and are duty-bound to spread His holy word throughout the world.
4. I believe that government should reflect and embody the beliefs of my faith, and that even nonbelievers should abide by our religious law as the law of the land.
5. I believe that there is in this world a battle between the believers, rep-



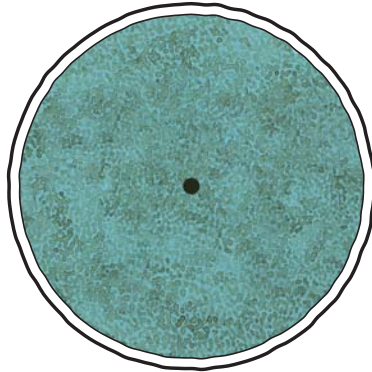
resenting the forces of light, and the nonbelievers, representing the forces of darkness, and that ultimately good will conquer evil.

6. I believe that, if necessary, force and violence should be used to bring nonbelievers and dissidents to accept the truth of our religious doctrine, and that the use of such force is justifiable in the name of God.
7. I believe that free inquiry and the questioning of our religious doctrine is the first step to heresy and should be guarded against, and that modern liberties are forms of self-indulgence and sin.
8. I believe that our codes of morality are God's absolute commandments and are not subject to change, revision or reinterpretation.
9. I believe that education for children should consist of strict and exclusive learning of our teachings and careful censorship of other forms of thought and belief.





J. RAJAT  
202



# Atheistic Philosophies

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*Many belief systems look upon the world as all there is. These include atheism, materialism and more. Here a man is beset with doubts about life and the Gods, yet all the while they are nearby, guiding his path toward the certainty that comes of personal spiritual experience.*

In this section we examine the beliefs of four philosophies or world views that exclude God: materialism, Communism, existentialism, and secular humanism. Of course, there are many smaller isms that could be listed here, but these are among the most prevalent. Their ideas and teachings have great influence throughout the world, especially in Western universities and the Western news media.



## Materialism

Materialism is the view that “nothing exists except matter and its movements and modifications.” In practice it is “devotion to material needs or desires to the neglect of spiritual matters; a way of life, opinion or tendency based entirely upon material interests” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). There is a vast range of philosophies based on materialism, often embracing the philosophy of Western science, including determinism, or pre-determination, the view that events occur by natural law and the results can be the only one’s possible.

### MATERIALIST BELIEFS

1. I believe that all religious endeavor is a waste of time and energy, that there is no God, and all so-called paranormal or psychic phenomena are quackery and superstition.
2. I believe that there is no such thing as the soul; death of the body is death of the mind, and there is no reincarnation or afterlife.
3. I believe that the material universe, governed by natural laws and chance, is the ultimate and only reality and that all apparently non-

material substances, such as mind, are explicable as modifications of matter.

4. I believe that science is the means of understanding all the secrets of the universe, for all phenomena are the result of material processes which are governed by predictable, natural laws.
5. I believe that free will is an illusion; that each event, being a fortuitous combination of particles and forces, can only happen in one way and is thus predetermined (deterministic materialism).
6. I believe that there is no objective “higher purpose” in life, no absolute basis for ethics or morality and no retribution for sin or reward for virtue. Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain are the only two goals rational men will pursue—what pleases me is good, what pains me is bad (hedonistic materialism).
7. I believe that all novel qualities of existence can be derived from changing material conditions—that men’s mental and spiritual life, their ideas and aims, reflect their material conditions of existence (dialectical materialism).
8. I believe that though not all things consist of matter or its modifications, whatever exists can be satisfactorily explained in natural terms (modified or naturalistic materialism).
9. I believe that man, the highest and most complex of the evolutionary process prevailing throughout the universe, may continue to evolve into an even more perfect being or higher species (utopian materialism).



## Communism

Communism emerged around the turn of the 20th century in present-day Russia as “a hypothetical stage of socialism, as formulated by Marx, Engels, Lenin and others, to be characterized by a utopian classless and stateless society and the equal distribution of economic goods and to be achieved by revolutionary and dictatorial, rather than gradualistic, means” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*). Communism is proudly atheistic and seeks to liberate mankind from superstition and “spiritual bondage.”

### COMMUNIST BELIEFS

1. I believe there is no God and no knowable providential order, that this physical world is the only reality, physical beings are the only real beings, and reason is man’s highest faculty.
2. I believe religion is “the opiate of the people,” an exploiters’ tool of oppression that should be eliminated and its resources redirected to improving world conditions to lift mankind from misery.
3. I believe mysticism and religion are primitive and fraught with error, prejudice and superstition, and that modern science, based on materialism and empirical evidence, is the only respectable avenue to useful knowledge.
4. I believe that each person has but a single life and that death is final. Therefore, in this life we are to attain all that is deemed worthwhile and express our finer qualities in service to the greater social good.
5. I believe that as in the case of nature, history evolves in a continuous line from lower to higher forms, from tribalism, feudalism and capi-

talism to its final maturity in socialism, and that the collapse of capitalism and the establishment of socialism will usher in an age of peace and plenty, when state control will no longer be needed.

6. I believe that all men are created equal and are inherently good, and that distinctive attitudes, personalities and experiences are determined solely by one's environment; therefore, to uplift mankind, improve the environment.
7. I believe that the views expressed by our great Marxist revolutionaries represent the one and only correct world outlook, and that it is imperative to overthrow the capitalist regimes, through violent revolution if necessary, to usher in a new order.
8. I believe that the world's wealth should be shared equally, and that unequal distribution caused by class distinctions, is the root of all social evils, driving men to greed, selfishness and exploitation. Economic necessity is the basic moving force in society.
9. I believe there is no knowable providential order, that death is permanent, that God does not exist and that the highest life is one of intense consciousness.



## Existentialism

Existentialism arose in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. It teaches that God does not exist, or cannot be known, and affirms individuality and freedom. Stress is on transcendence of the mundane world through exaltation of will, the meaninglessness of existence and the absence of a substratum upon which to base truths or values. Man simply exists, free to create his own meaning in life. It is, however, important to bear in



mind that there is a vital strain of religious, or quasi-religious, existentialism as well.

### EXISTENTIALIST BELIEFS

1. I believe that there is no knowable providential order in nature or in the larger realm of existence or cosmos.
2. I believe that the being of man is ultimately meaningless, which is to say that man knows not why he exists and cannot rise to the knowledge of his destiny.
3. I believe that each man is an individual and should break his dependence on society and rely solely upon his own individual life, spirit, personality and thought.
4. I believe that immortality is not a condition of man. Death is quite realistically seen as an ultimate end and radical fact which cannot be overcome. Man should not tolerate even an anguished hope of personal survival.
5. I believe that harmony and security in human relationships are impossible to achieve, and the only satisfactory attitude toward others is based upon explicit recognition of this fact.
6. I believe that "Evil is not an illusion. It is not the effect of passions which might be cured, or a fear which might be overcome. It is not an ignorance which might be enlightened. Evil cannot be redeemed" (Sartre).
7. I believe that God does not exist.
8. I believe that the highest and best life is lived in the intensity of being fully conscious of the life experience. This experience necessarily contains problems, struggle, suffering and conflict. This is man's unalterable reality within which his free, creative action and choice gives birth to the fullness of consciousness which would otherwise be deadened by security and contentment.
9. I believe that the soul of man is not whole without such unpleasant things as death, anxiety, guilt, fear and trembling, and despair. It would be the final error of reason to deny that these emotions exist, or to strive to manipulate them out of existence. Therefore, it can be said that nothing can be accomplished by denying that man is essentially a troubled being, except to make more trouble.



## Secular Humanism

Humanism is “a modern, nontheistic, rationalist movement that holds that man is capable of self-fulfillment, ethical conduct, etc., without recourse to supernaturalism” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*). By the term *secular* this stream distinguishes itself from theistic (Christian) humanism. Secular humanism evolved out of 18th-century rejection of revealed Christianity and the emergence of modern science and free thought. Modern secular humanists condemn and refute all assertions of divine or paranormal phenomena.

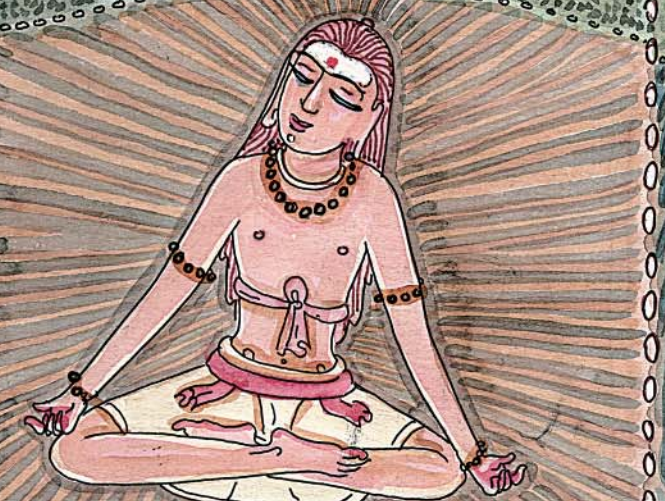
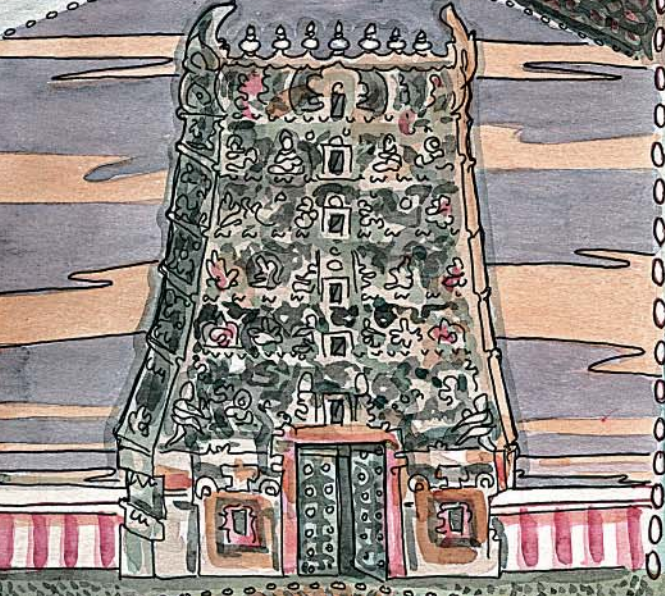
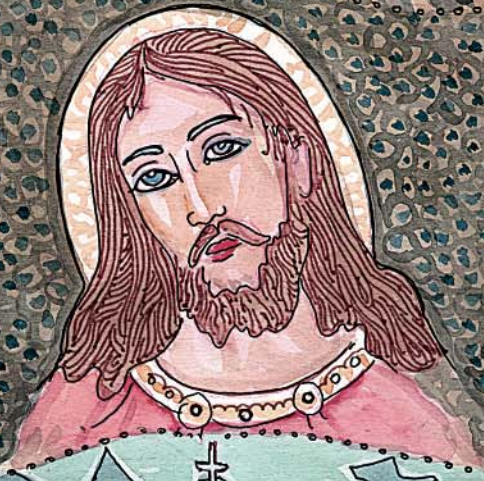
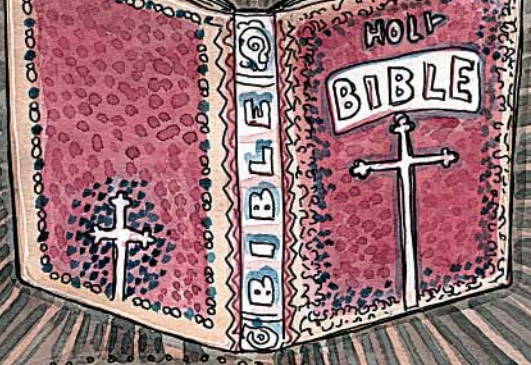
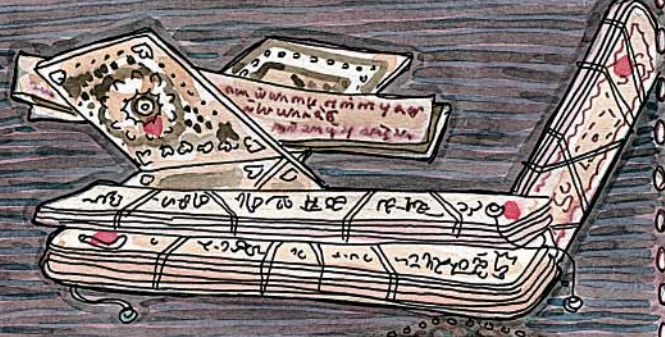
### SECULAR HUMANIST BELIEFS

1. I believe in nontheism, as there is no rational proof for the existence of God, and do not delude myself with thoughts of a Supreme Being.
2. I believe that traditional religions and faiths preach false doctrines, are oppressive and lead their followers toward ignorance, bigotry and dogmatism, and that it is my duty to be actively skeptical of and challenge the illusions of orthodox religions and all attempts to explain the world in supernatural terms.
3. I believe in the preservation and enhancement of the human species as my ultimate concern, and in the global human family, which must preserve the Earth for future generations through developing a secular, planetary morality and system of law.
4. I believe that living a good, moral life is the best means for individual and collective happiness and that morality has a rational, secular basis.
5. I believe in expanding human rights and intellectual and moral freedom, and in secular democracy, with strict separation of church and

state, as the means of eliminating discrimination and attaining equality and justice for all.

6. I believe in the development of the creative human potential through education in the arts and sciences and in the paramount importance of free inquiry in an open, pluralistic, universalist society.
7. I believe in the application and development of reason and modern science as the highest means to understanding the universe, solving human problems and enabling each individual to realize his greatest potential.
8. I believe in striving for fulfillment and happiness in this life and reject all notions of reincarnation and afterlife as false and baseless, seeking my fullest capacity as a human being here and now, serving others and creating a better, more just world.
9. I believe in Darwin's theory of evolution as scientific fact, and in naturalism, holding that the known world is all that exists, and that it has no supernatural or spiritual creation, control or significance.





V. RAJAN  
202



# Religious Comparisons

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*A useful way to understand religions is to place them side by side. With Hinduism on the left and Christianity on the right, we explore their scriptures (Vedas and Bible), founders (Siva and Jesus), places and ways of worship (temple and church) and paths to salvation (yoga and faith).*



## Eastern and Western Views

In the following analysis, using one of several common religious categorizations, we compare the Eastern religions with the Western ones on many points of belief. The Eastern religions are Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. The Western religions are Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam. We can see immediately that there is a vast difference between Eastern and Western religions, with the Eastern goals being unitive and introspective and the Western goals being dualistic, extroverted. The Eastern mind tends to see God everywhere, in all things, and to see everything as sacred. The Western mind considers it heresy to believe that God pervades all things, and makes a strong difference between what is sacred and what is profane. In general we notice the Eastern holding to *karma*, reincarnation and liberation, the Western postulating a single life for the soul, followed by reward or punishment. Keep in mind that this is not a comprehensive comparison, as it does not take into account the East Asia religions—Taoism, Confucianism and Shinto. To discover your own belief patterns, take a pencil and put a check mark next to the view—Eastern or Western—which is closest to your own belief on each of the subjects. We might note here that the Eastern religions described here all originated in India, and that Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism were offshoots of Hinduism. Among the Western faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam all share a common root in Abraham, and in recent times the term *Abrahamic* has been coined to denote these three world religions. Naturally there are important exceptions to the views expressed (for example, Buddhism does not believe in a Personal God). Nevertheless these broad generalities are useful, as they give a scholarly window into the East and the West.

## DIFFERENCES

### *On Creation*

**EASTERN VIEW:** The universe exists in endless cycles of creation, preservation and destruction. There is no absolute end to the world, neither is there a duality of God and world, but a unity.

**WESTERN VIEW:** The world was created by God and at some point in the future will be forever destroyed by Him. He is distinct from it, and rules it from above. Stresses a dualistic nature of the world.

### *On the True God*

**EASTERN VIEW:** There is but one true and absolute God. All religions speak of Him. All souls are destined to receive God's grace through a process that takes them through diverse experiences on many paths according to their understanding, temperament and maturity of soul. God is pure Love and Consciousness but may be terrifying as well.

**WESTERN VIEW:** There is but one true God and one true religion. Those who accept it will enjoy God's grace; all others, unless they repent and come to my God, will suffer eternally in hell. God is loving as well as wrathful.

### *On Proof of God's Existence*

**EASTERN VIEW:** Proof of God's existence and love lies in direct communion, and indirectly through enlightened *gurus*, the God-Realized men of all ages, and the revealed scriptures they bring forth in every age.

**WESTERN VIEW:** Proof of God's love and promise for man is in the person of His Prophet and in His unchanging and unique revealed scripture.



### *On Personal Experience of God*

EASTERN VIEW: Personal, inner and often mystical experience of God is the crux of religion. Man can and ultimately must know God during earthly life. Individually oriented and introspective.

WESTERN VIEW: It is presumptuous for man to seek personal knowledge of God. The linchpin of religion is not experience but belief and faith, coupled with a virtuous life. Socially oriented and extroverted.

### *On the Path to God, and Divine Judgment*

EASTERN VIEW: Man is free to choose his form of worship, for all paths lead ultimately to God.

Sin is only of the mind, not of the soul, which is pure. There is no Judgment Day for God does not judge or punish. He lovingly guides all souls back to Himself.

WESTERN VIEW: Only one path leads to God, others are false and futile. Everyone must convert to the one true religion. Failing that, the soul, laden with sin, will be damned on Judgment Day.

### *On Man's Plight*

EASTERN VIEW: Man's plight is but his soul's immaturity. He is ever on a progressive path which leads from ignorance to knowledge, from death to immortality.

WESTERN VIEW: Man's plight is due to disobedience to God's will, to nonbelief and nonacceptance of His law.

### *On Hell*

EASTERN VIEW: God is Love and is inextricably one with the soul, guiding it through *karmas* into the fulfillment of *dharma* and finally to *moksha*, liberation. Hell is a lower astral realm, not a physical place; nor is it eternal. Hell exists as a period of *karmic* intensity or suffering, a state of mind in life or between lives.

WESTERN VIEW: On Judgment Day the physical body of every soul that ever lived is brought to life, and God consigns pure souls to heaven and sinners to hell, a physical place where the body burns without being consumed and one suffers the anguish of knowing he will never be with God.

### *On Evil*

**EASTERN VIEW:** There is no intrinsic evil. All is good. All is God. No force in the world or in man opposes God, though the veiling instinctive-intellectual mind keeps us from knowledge of Him.

**WESTERN VIEW:** There is indeed genuine evil in the world, a living force which opposes the will of God. This evil is embodied in Satan and his demons, and partially in man as one of his tendencies.

### *On Virtue and Salvation*

**EASTERN VIEW:** Virtuous conduct and right belief are the foundation stones of religious life, the first step toward higher mystical communion. Liberation requires knowledge and personal attainment, not mere belief.

**WESTERN VIEW:** If one obeys God's commands for a moral and ethical life and believes in Him and in His Prophet—for example, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed or Zoroaster—salvation is assured.

### *On the Origin of Religion*

**EASTERN VIEW:** Religion is cosmic, eternal, transcending human history, which is cyclical. Stress is placed on revelation of God's presence in the here and now.

**WESTERN VIEW:** Religion is historical, beginning with a prophet or event. Stress is placed on the past and on the rewards or punishments of the future. History is linear, never to be repeated.

### *Nature of Doctrines*

**EASTERN VIEW:** Doctrines tend to be subtle, complex and even paradoxical. Freedom to worship and to believe in a variety of ways is predominant. Other paths are accepted as God's divine will at work. Universal and tolerant.

**WESTERN VIEW:** Doctrines tend to be simple, clear and rational. Worship and belief are formalized, exacting and required. Other paths are endured, but not honored. Exclusivist and dogmatic.

### ***On Liberation and Enlightenment***

EASTERN VIEW: The goals of enlightenment and liberation are to be found in this life, within the context of time, within man himself. Doctrines may be dual or nondual, *dvaitic* or *advaitic*.

WESTERN VIEW: Salvation comes at the end of the world, the end of time, and has nothing to do with enlightenment. Strictly dualistic, *dvaitic*. Mystical sects, though minor, provide exceptions.

### ***On the Nature of Worship***

EASTERN VIEW: Worship is individual, highly ritualistic and meditative, centering around the holy temple and the home shrine all days of the week.

WESTERN VIEW: Worship is congregational, simple in its rituals, centering around the church, synagogue or mosque, mostly on a Sabbath day.

### ***On the Path to Sainthood***

EASTERN VIEW: Path to saintliness is through self-discipline, purification, concentration and contemplation. Value is placed on ascetic ideals, individual *sādhana*, *yoga* and superconscious awakening.

WESTERN VIEW: Path to saintliness is through self-sacrifice, submission to God and concern for the welfare of others. Value is placed on good works, social concerns and scriptural study, with little emphasis on *yoga* or asceticism.

## SIMILARITIES

### *On God and Devas*

EASTERN VIEW: Belief in a Supreme Deity, maker of all souls and all things, and in lesser Deities and Mahādevas.

WESTERN VIEW: Belief in a Supreme Deity, maker of all souls and all things, and in the angels and celestial hosts.

### *On Salvation and God's Will*

EASTERN VIEW: Salvation is through strict obedience to God's will and the descent of His grace through the enlightened spiritual preceptor.

WESTERN VIEW: Salvation is through strict obedience to God's will, usually through a messiah, prophet or priest.

### *On Good Conduct*

EASTERN VIEW: To live a virtuous and moral life is essential to further spiritual progress, for *adharmic* thoughts, deeds and words keep us from knowledge of God's closeness.

WESTERN VIEW: Religion must be based on ethical and moral conduct, for their opposite leads us away from God.

### *On the Destiny of the Soul*

EASTERN VIEW: The purpose of life is to evolve, through experience, into our spiritual destiny. Things of the world are not the purpose of the world.

WESTERN VIEW: Man's destiny lies beyond this world, which is but an opportunity for earning eternal joy or suffering.

### *On the Nature of Reality*

EASTERN VIEW: There is more to reality than we experience with the five senses. The soul is immortal, deathless and eternal, ultimately merging in God.

WESTERN VIEW: There is more to reality than the things of this world. The soul is immortal, deathless and eternal, living forever in God's presence or separated from Him.



## Hinduism and Christianity

Our HINDUISM TODAY editors were contacted in 1993 by *Christianity Today* magazine to be interviewed for a major story called “Hindus in America.” Thus began a series of dialogs that added to their article crucial and often corrective insights to dispel common myths and misinformation about the world’s oldest religion. Perhaps most significantly, they agreed to publish our own nine fundamental Hindu beliefs. The editors of *Christianity Today* composed nine parallel Christian convictions, written in a series of intense sessions by the best theologians they could assemble. The resulting point-counterpoint—whose brevity is both its strength and its weakness—summarizes the cosmic perspective of two of the world’s largest faiths.

### *On Revealed Scriptures*

HINDUS BELIEVE in the divinity of the *Vedas*, the world’s most ancient scripture, and venerate the *Agamas* as equally revealed. These primordial hymns are God’s word and the bedrock of Sanātana Dharma, the eternal religion which has neither beginning nor end.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE the Bible is the uniquely inspired and fully trustworthy word of God. It is the final authority for Christians in matters of belief and practice, and though it was written long ago, it continues to speak to believers today.

### ***On the Nature of God***

HINDUS BELIEVE in a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being who is both immanent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest Reality.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE in one God in three persons. He is distinct from his creation, yet intimately involved with it as its sustainer and redeemer.

### ***On the World's Creation***

HINDUS BELIEVE that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE that the world was created once by the divine will, was corrupted by sin, yet under God's providence moves toward final perfection.

### ***On Karma and Destiny***

HINDUS BELIEVE in *karma*, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE that, through God's grace and favor, lost sinners are rescued from the guilt, power and eternal consequences of their evil thoughts, words and deeds.

### ***On Incarnation and Liberation***

HINDUS BELIEVE that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all *karmas* have been resolved, and *moksha*, spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Not a single soul will be eternally deprived of this destiny.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE that it is appointed for human beings to die once and after that face judgment. In Adam's sin, the human race was spiritually alienated from God, and that those who are called by God and respond to his grace will have eternal life. Those who persist in rebellion will be lost eternally.

### *On Worship of Divine Beings*

HINDUS BELIEVE that divine beings exist in unseen worlds and that temple worship, rituals, sacraments as well as personal devotionals create a communion with these *devas* and Gods.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE that spirit-beings inhabit the universe, some good and some evil, but worship is due to God alone.

### *On Spiritual Guidance*

HINDUS BELIEVE that a spiritually awakened master, or *sat-guru*, is essential to know the Transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification, pilgrimage, self-inquiry and meditation.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE that God has given us a clear revelation of Himself in Jesus and the sacred Scriptures. He has empowered by his Spirit prophets, apostles, evangelists, and pastors who are teachers charged to guide us into faith and holiness in accordance with his Word.

### *On Noninjury and the Sanctity of Life*

HINDUS BELIEVE that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice *ahimsā*, “noninjury.”

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE that life is to be highly esteemed but that it must be subordinated in the service of Biblical love and justice.

### *On the Way to Salvation*

HINDUS BELIEVE that no particular religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine religious paths are facets of God’s Pure Love and Light, deserving tolerance and understanding.

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE that Jesus is God incarnate and, therefore, the only sure path to salvation. Many religions may offer ethical and spiritual insights, but only Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.



## Judaism, Christianity and Islam

The similarities between these three Abrahamic religions are stronger than their differences, though historically it is the differences that have been stressed. They each believe in a single life, followed by heaven or hell. They agree that God is opposed by evil, by Satan, who tempts and destroys sinners by causing disobedience to God's law. They are all prophet-oriented, though Christianity is the only one to make the prophet divine. They believe in their religion as the one and only true religion, and that nonbelievers are condemned, though Judaism is somewhat more tolerant or universal, believing God judges all men of all religions by their actions. These three Biblical religions are strongly monotheistic and dualistic, believing man is eternally separate from God and that man's highest destiny is in heaven. Together they rely not so much on inner experience or mystical contact and guidance, as on sacred rites, on faith and belief, and on good works to guide man Godward. Each believes that God has a special covenant with its members, though the terms differ. They each bury their dead, anticipating that the physical body will one day be resurrected on the Earth, rising from the grave on Judgment Day.

### *On the True Religion*

JUDAISM: There is but one true religion, Judaism, and one revealed scripture, the *Torah*, which includes the *Old Testament* and the *Talmud*.



CHRISTIANITY: There is but one true religion, Christianity, and one scripture—the *Holy Bible*, Old and New Testaments.

ISLAM: The one true faith is Islam, and the *Koran* is the highest revealed scripture, but other books are honored as revealed too, including the *Bible* and certain Hindu scriptures.

### ***On Genesis and Original Sin***

JUDAISM: Example of Adam, his temptation and fall from grace, and in original sin. Some early and more of modern religious thinks tend to interpret this narrative as an allegory of human condition.

CHRISTIANITY: The same, but taking Adam's story literally.

ISLAM: Same, but Allah forgave Adam. Therefore, there is no original sin.

### ***On the Proof of God's Power***

JUDAISM: Such proof can be seen in the historic Exodus.

CHRISTIANITY: Proof of God's power lies in Christ's resurrection.

ISLAM: Proof of God's power is in the *Koran* itself.

### ***On Man's Obligation to God***

JUDAISM: Jews are obligated exclusively to Yahweh, since He delivered them out of Egypt.

CHRISTIANITY: Man is obligated to God since He sacrificed His Son for man's sins.

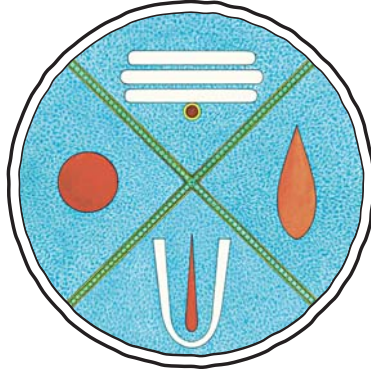
ISLAM: There exists no special obligation; avoidance of hell is man's motivation.

### ***On the Means to Salvation***

JUDAISM: Salvation is through strict adherence to the Law as stated in the *Torah*.

CHRISTIANITY: Salvation is through acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior.

ISLAM: Salvation is through total submission to Allah.



## The Four Hindu Sects

The spectrum of Hindu religiousness is found within four major sects or denominations: Śaivism, Śāktism, Vaiṣṇavism and Smārtism. Among these four streams, there are certainly more similarities than differences. Many of the *ślokas* and *bhāshyas* of *Dancing with Śiva* (Śivena saha Nartanam), *Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism* (Hindu Dharma Samakālina Praśnottaram) have shown how they concur as well as differ. All four believe in *karma* and reincarnation and in a Supreme Being who is both form and pervades form, who creates, sustains and destroys the universe only to create it again in unending cycles. They strongly declare the validity and importance of temple worship, in the three worlds of existence and the myriad Gods and *devas* residing in them. They concur that there is no intrinsic evil, that the cosmos is created out of God and is permeated by Him. They each believe in *māyā* (though their definitions differ somewhat), and in the liberation of the soul from rebirth, called *moksha*, as the goal of human existence. They believe in *dharma* and in *ahimsā*, noninjury, and in the need for a *satguru* to lead the soul toward Self Realization. They wear the sacred marks, *tilaka*, on their foreheads as sacred symbols, though each wears a distinct mark. Finally, they prefer cremation of the body upon death, believing that the soul will inhabit another body in the next life. While Hinduism has many sacred scriptures, all sects ascribe the highest authority to the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, though their *Āgamas* differ somewhat. Here, now, is a brief comparison of these four denominations.

### *On the Personal God/Goddess*

- ŚAIVISM: Personal God and temple Deity is Śiva, neither male nor female. Lords Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya are also worshiped.
- ŚĀKTISM: Personal Goddess and temple Deity is Śrī Devī or Śakti, female, worshiped as Rājarājeśvarī, Pārvati, Lakshmi, Sarasvatī, Kālī, Amman, etc. —the Divine Mother.
- VAISHṆAVISM: Personal God and temple Deity is Viṣṇu, male. His incarnations as Rāma and Kṛishṇa are also worshiped, as well as His divine consort, Rādhā Rāṇī.
- SMĀRTISM: Personal God and temple Deity is Īśvara, male or female, worshiped as Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti, Gaṇeśa and Sūrya or any Deity of devotee's choice, e.g., Kumāra or Kṛishṇa.

### *On the Nature of Śakti*

- ŚAIVISM: Śakti is God Śiva's inseparable power and manifest will, energy or mind.
- ŚĀKTISM: Śakti is an active, immanent Being, separate from a quiescent and remote Śiva.
- VAISHṆAVISM: No special importance is given to Śakti. However, there are parallels wherein the divine consorts are conceived as the inseparable powers of Viṣṇu and His incarnations: e.g., Kṛishṇa's Rādhā Rāṇī and Rāma's Sitā.
- SMĀRTISM: Śakti is a divine form of Īśvara. It is God's manifesting power.

### *On the Nature of Personal God*

- ŚAIVISM: God Śiva is pure love and compassion, immanent and transcendent, pleased by our purity and *sādhana*.
- ŚĀKTISM: The Goddess Śakti is both compassionate and terrifying, pleasing and wrathful, assuaged by sacrifice and submission.
- VAISHṆAVISM: God Viṣṇu is loving and beautiful, the object of man's devotion, pleased by our service and surrender.
- SMĀRTISM: Īśvara appears as a human-like Deity according to devotees' loving worship, which is sometimes considered a rudimentary self-purifying practice.

### *On the Doctrine of Avatāra*

- ŚAIVISM: There are no divine earthly incarnations.
- ŚĀKTISM: The Divine Mother does incarnate in this world.

VAISHŅAVISM: Viṣṇu has ten or more incarnations.

SMĀRTISM: All Deities may assume earthly incarnations.

### ***On the Soul and God***

ŚAIVISM: God Śiva is one with the soul. The soul must realize this *advaitic* Truth by God Śiva's grace.

ŚĀKTISM: The Divine Mother, Śakti, is mediatrix, bestowing *advaitic moksha* on those who worship Her.

VAISHŅAVISM: God and soul are eternally distinct. Through Lord Viṣṇu's grace, the soul's destiny is to worship and enjoy God.

SMĀRTISM: Īśvara and man are in reality Absolute Brahman. Within *māyā*, the soul and Īśvara appear as two. *Jñāna* dispels the illusion.

### ***Spiritual Practice***

ŚAIVISM: With *bhakti* as a base, emphasis is placed on *sādhana*, *tapas* and *yoga*. Ascetic.

ŚĀKTISM: Emphasis is on *bhakti* and *tantra*, sometimes occult, practices. Ascetic-occult.

VAISHŅAVISM: Emphasis is on supreme *bhakti* or surrender, called *prapatti*. Generally devotional and nonascetic.

SMĀRTISM: Preparatory *sādhana*s are *bhakti*, *karma*, *rāja yoga*. The highest path is through knowledge, leading to *jñāna*.

### ***Major Scriptures***

ŚAIVISM: *Vedas*, *Śaiva Āgamas* and *Śaiva Purāṇas*.

ŚĀKTISM: *Vedas*, *Śākta Āgamas (Tantras)* and *Purāṇas*.

VAISHŅAVISM: *Vedas*, *Vaiṣṇava Āgamas*, *Purāṇas* and the *Itihāsas* (*Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, especially the *Bhagavad Gītā*).

SMĀRTISM: *Vedas*, *Āgamas* and classical *smṛiti*—*Purāṇas*, *Itihāsas*, especially the *Bhagavad Gītā*, etc.

### ***Regions of Influence***

ŚAIVISM: Geographically widespread, strongest in South and North India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

ŚĀKTISM: Geographically widespread, most prominent in Northeast India, especially Bengal and Assam.

VAISHŅAVISM: Geographically widespread, especially strong throughout India, North and South.

SMĀRTISM: Geographically widespread, most prominent in North and South India.



THIS CONCLUDES OUR COMPARISON OF HINDUISM'S FOUR PROMINENT DENOMINATIONS, AND OF OTHER RELIGIONS, FAITHS AND PHILOSOPHIES. THERE ARE MANY MORE INDIGENOUS, TRIBAL GROUPS WHO FOLLOW SIMILAR PATHS AND CALL THEMSELVES BY unique names, and there are many more paths yet to be discovered in the future. This chapter can be a complete outline, affording to those who read it carefully a simple overview of those intangible human beliefs which, in all their variety, are at the root of attitudes and behavior, that, over time, create culture. Hopefully, it could do more, perhaps mark the beginning of discovering your own place in this grand scheme. Conversion is easy into any one of these forms of worship, practice and attainment. It is happening all the time. All souls on the path to perfection eventually commit themselves by choosing a preceptor, one who has gone before. Journeying through life without a preceptor is like traversing the ocean without a map or a compass. Even climbing the slopes of the Himalayas, a Sherpa is needed to safely guide. Compare your beliefs, as they are today, with all those cataloged in this synopsis, and come to terms with the supreme dedication that each of these paths demands of its followers. Having done this, declare boldly who you are to your own self. Claim your spiritual identity, your preceptor and the religious faith to which you find you belong. Then follow your chosen path with all your heart. Give it your full devotion, energy and loyalty in fulfilling its goals. True seekers on the path hoping for genuine attainment do not wander from path to path, school to school, preceptor to preceptor, because it is known that indecision inhibits all spiritual growth.





**Bhārata Kālachakra**  
**भारतकालचक्र**

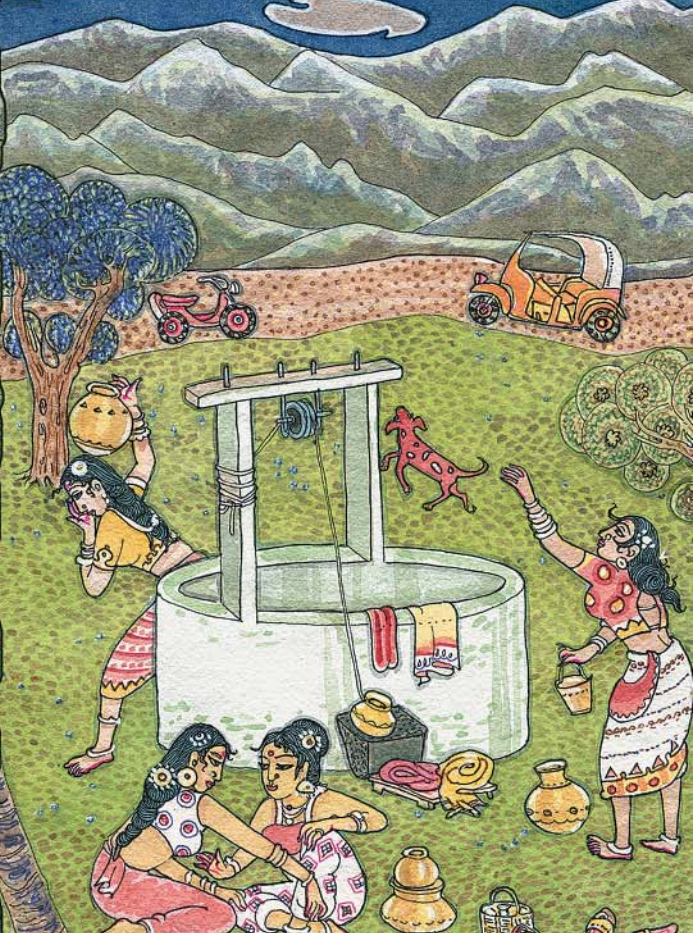
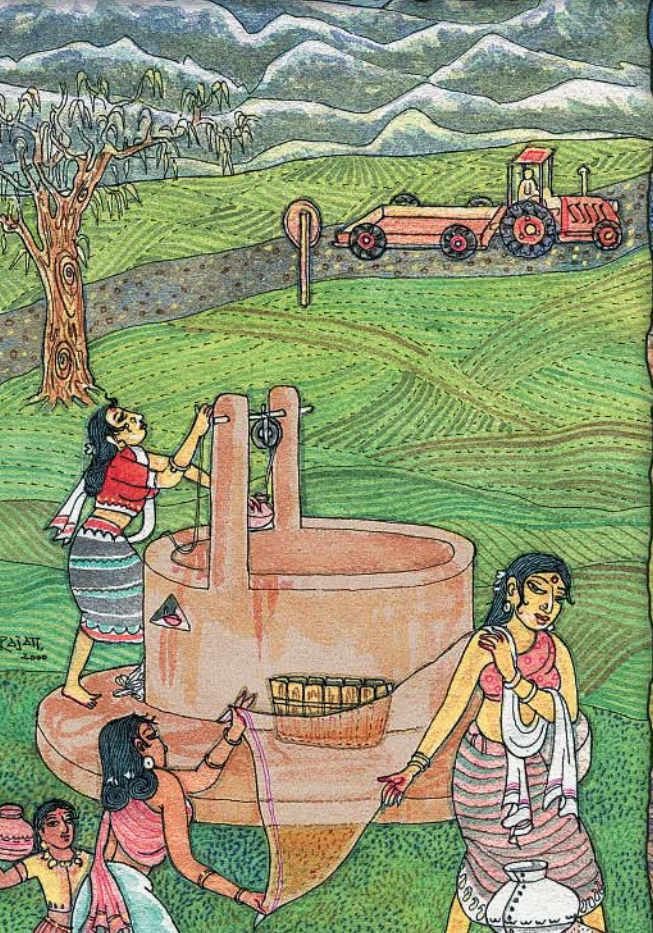
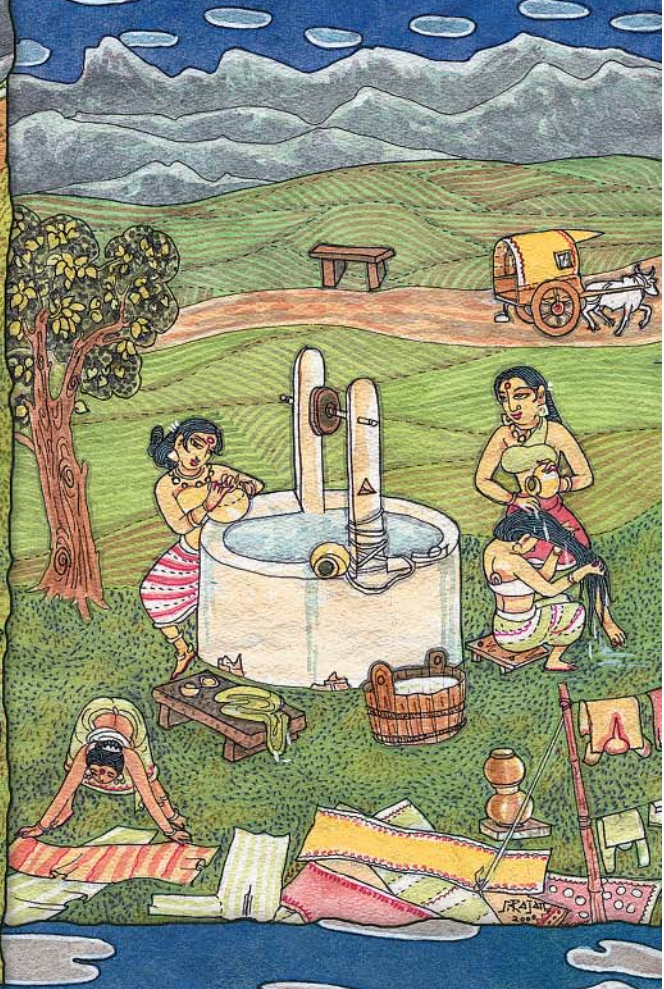
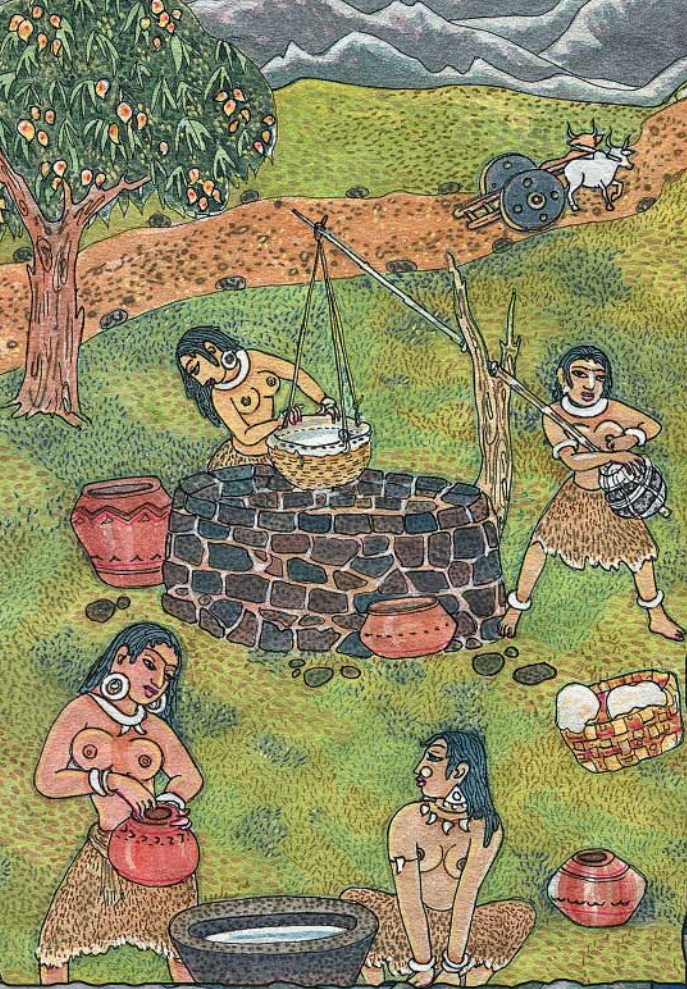


**RESOURCE SIX**  
**Hindu Timeline**

It has ever been so.

*Words of Our Master. WM2, P. 360*







MUCH OF WHAT INDIA AND HINDUISM ARE TODAY CAN BE UNDERSTOOD BY EXAMINING THEIR ORIGINS AND HISTORY. HERE IS A HUMBLE CHRONOLOGY THAT TELLS THE STORY OF THE SAGES, KINGS, OUTSIDE INVADERS AND INSIDE REFORMERS WHO

contributed to the world's oldest living civilization and largest modern-day democracy. Hindu India has been home to twenty to thirty percent of the human race throughout most of recorded time. Her story, summarized here, is crucial to human history. The emphasis on spirituality in India's thought and history is unparalleled in human experience. The king in his court, the sage on his hill and the farmer in one of Bharat's 700,000 villages each pursues his *dharma* with a common ultimate purpose: spiritual enlightenment. This perspective is the source of Hinduism's resilience in the face of competing faiths and conquering armies. No other nation has faced so many invaders and endured. These invasions have brought the races of the world to a subcontinent one-third the size of the US. There are many feats of which the ancient Hindus could be proud, such as the invention of the decimal system of numbers, philosophy, linguistics, surgery, city planning and statecraft. And most useful to us in preparing this timeline: their skill in astronomy.

Dates after Buddha are subject to little dispute, while dates before Buddha have been decided as much by current opinion and politics as by scientific evidence. The overwhelming tendency of Western scholarship has been to deny the great antiquity of Hinduism. Indian scholar S.B. Roy points out that the commonly accepted chronology of German-born and Oxford University educated linguist Max Müller (1823–1900) is based “on the ghost story of *Kathāsaritasāgara*.” Indologist Klaus K. Klostermaier agrees: “The chronology provided by Max Müller and accepted uncritically by most Western scholars is based on very shaky ground indeed.” Müller admitted his covert intention to undermine Hinduism. In a letter to his wife in 1886 he wrote: “The translation of the *Veda* will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion, and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last 3,000 years.”

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*Women gather at common wells throughout India to wash their hair, clean laundry, fetch fresh water, share the news of the day, and more. One such South Indian well is shown in four different periods of its history: clockwise from upper left, 1000 BCE; 1700 CE; 1900 CE; and 2002 CE.*

Contemporary researchers, such as Dr. B.G. Siddharth of B.M. Birla Science Centre, Dr. S.B. Roy, Professor Subhash Kak, Dr. N.R. Waradpande, Bhagwan Singh and Dr. David Frawley, have developed a much earlier picture of India, assembling new chronologies based on dating scriptural references by their relationship to the known precession of the equinoxes. Earth's axis of rotation "wobbles," causing constellations, as viewed from Earth, to drift at a constant rate and along a predictable course over a 25,000-year cycle. For example, a *Rig Vedic* verse observing winter solstice at Aries can be correlated to around 6500 BCE. Frawley states, "Precessional changes are the hallmark of Hindu astronomy. We cannot ignore them in ancient texts just because they give us dates too early for our conventional view of human history." Besides such references from scripture, there is other evidence to support these scholars' dates, such as carbon-14 dating, the discovery of Indus-Sarasvatī Valley cities and the recent locating of the Sarasvatī River, a prominent landmark of Vedic writings.

Many entries in this timeline prior to 600 BCE derive from the work of Dr. S.B. Roy ("Chronological Framework of Indian Protohistory—The Lower Limit") and that of David Frawley, PhD (*Gods, Sages and Kings*). In many cases, we have included more than one entry for an event to show the diverse postulations on its dating. For a comprehensive review of the Timeline, we were fortunate to have the scholarly assistance of Prof. Shiva G. Bajpai PhD, Director of Asian Studies at California State University, who co-authored the remarkable tome, *A Historical Atlas of South Asia*.

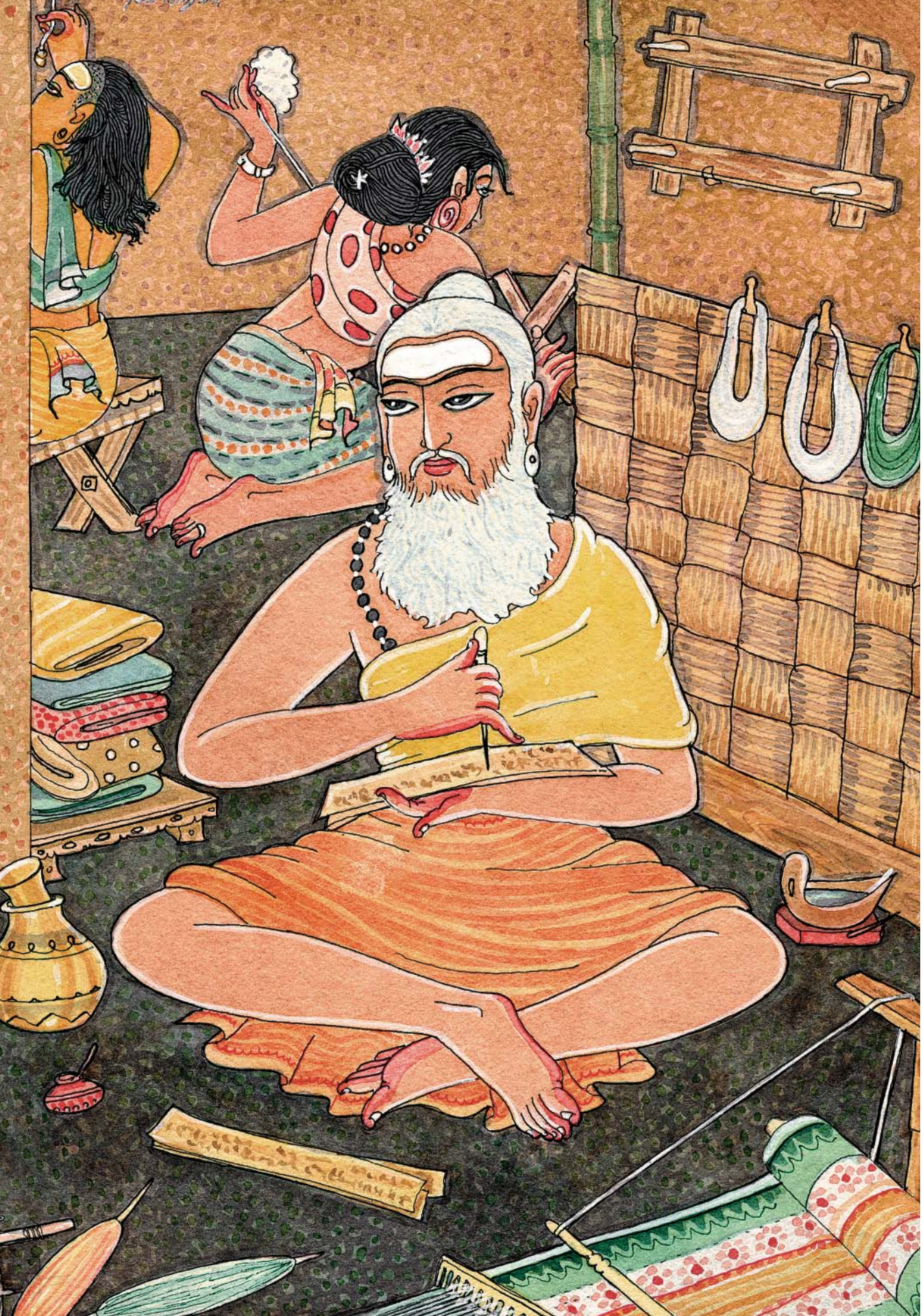
Max Müller was an early evangelist of another, more invidious, dogma imposed on Hindu history: the "Āryan invasion" theory. Originally a Vedic term meaning "noble," then applied to the parent-language of Greek, Sanskrit, Latin and Germanic, the term *Āryan* soon referred to those who spoke that parent language—a supposed race of light-skinned Āryans. The idea of a parent race caught the imagination of 18th and 19th century European Christian scholars, who hypothesized elaborate Āryan migrations from Central Asia, west to Europe, south to Iran and India (ca 1500 BCE) and east to China—conquering local "primitive" peoples and founding the world's great civilizations. This theory holds that the *Vedas*, the heart and core of Sanātana Dharma, were substantially brought to India by these outsiders and only in part composed in India. Though lacking scientific evidence, this theory, like the alleged Āryan-Dravidian racial split, was accepted and promulgated as fact for three main reasons. It provided a convenient precedent for Christian British subjugation of India. It reconciled ancient Indian civilization and religious scripture with the

supposed late 4000 BCE Biblical date of Creation. It created division and conflict among the peoples of India, making them vulnerable to conversion by Christian missionaries.

Many scholars today, of both East and West, believe the *Rig Veda* people who called themselves Āryan were indigenous to India, and that there never was an Āryan invasion. India's languages have been shown to share common ancestry in ancient Sanskrit and Tamil. Even these two apparently unrelated languages, according to current "super-family" research, have a common origin: an ancient language dubbed *Nostratic*.

Evidence substantiating the New Model for India's history includes the following. *Rig Veda* verses belie the old chronology: 1.51.14-15 cites winter solstice occurring when the sun rises in Revati *nakshatra*, which is only possible at 6,000 BCE, long before the alleged invasion. Carbon dating confirms horses in Gujarat at 2,400 BCE, contradicting the claim that Āryans must have brought them to the region around 1500 BCE. NASA satellite photos prove the Sarasvatī River basin is real, not myth. Fire altars excavated at Kali Bangan in Rajasthan support existence of *Rig Veda* culture at 2,700 BCE. Kunal, a new site in Haryana, shows use of writing and silver craft in pre-Harappan India, 6-7,000 BCE. Supporters of the New Model include B.G. Tilak, P.C. Sengupta, S.B. Roy, S.D. Kulkarni, Pargiter, Jagat Pati Joshi, Dikshit, K.N. Shastri, Sri Aurobindo, Hermann Jacobi, S.R. Rao, Dayananda Saraswati, Subash Kak, David Frawley and B.G. Siddharth. The New Model states that India's native peoples founded the Indus/Sarasvatī River civilization, developed Sanskrit and wrote her ancient texts, that European dates are wrong, and that the dating of the Bhārata War at 3139-38 BCE (not 1424 BCE) is the true "sheet anchor" of Indian chronology. By this school of thought, India's history goes back perhaps 10,000 years, and India is not indebted to invaders for her traditions. Evidence shows that Vedic texts, once deemed partly mythology, are Earth's oldest factual account of human experience.

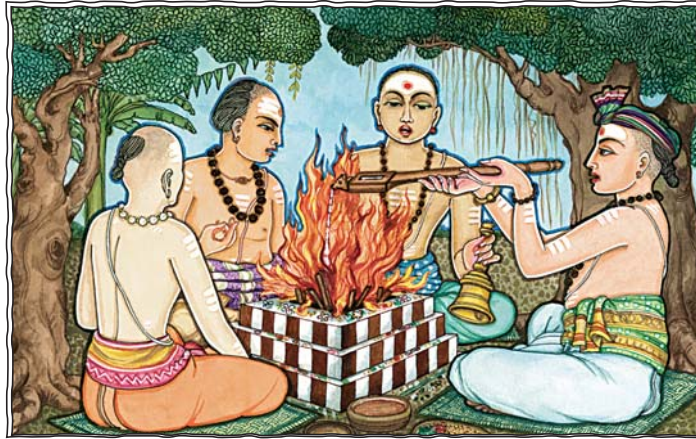
**How to Read the Timeline:** The thick maroon vertical line represents the flow of time. The thinner colored lines to the left indicate the duration of major dynasties. Not all are included, for at times India was divided into dozens of independent kingdoms. Approximate dates are preceded by *ca*, an abbreviation for *circa*, which denotes "around" or "in approximately." Most dates prior to Buddha (624 BCE) are considered estimates.





*The weaver-saint Tiruvalluvar is part of Hindu history. Living in South India around 200 BCE, he wrote the ethical masterpiece Tirukural to guide humanity along the right path. Here he is etching verses onto a palm leaf, while his family spins thread and looms cloth.*

- 6776 Start of Hindu king's lists according to Greek references that give Hindus 150 kings and a history of 6,400 years before 300 BCE; agrees with next entry.
- 6500 *Rig Veda* verses (e.g., 1.117.22, 1.116.12, 1.84.13.5) say winter solstice begins in Aries (according to D. Frawley), giving antiquity of this section of the *Vedas*.
- 6000 Early sites on the Sarasvatī River, then India's largest, flowing west of Delhi into the Rann of Kutch; Rajasthan is a fertile region with much grassland, as described in the *Rig Veda*. The culture, based upon barley (*yava*), copper (*ayas*) and cattle, also reflects that of the *Rig Veda*.
- 5500 Date of astrological observations associated with ancient events later mentioned in the *Purāṇas* (Alain Danielou).
- 5500 Mehargarh villagers make baked pottery and thousands of small, clay of female figurines (interpreted to be earliest signs of Śakti worship), and are involved in long-distance trade in precious stones and sea shells.
- 5000 World population, 5 million; doubles every 1,000 years.
- 5000 Beginnings of Indus-Sarasvatī civilizations of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. Date derived by considering excavated archeological sites 45 feet deep. Brick fire altars exist in many houses, suggesting Vedic fire rites. Earliest signs of Śiva. This mature culture lasts 3,000 years, ending around -1700.
- 5000 Rice is harvested in China, with grains found in baked bricks. But its cultivation originated in Eastern India.
- 4300 Traditional date for Lord Rāma's time (Kulkarni's date is -5500; see also -2040, and latest dating at -500).
- 4004 Archbishop Usher's (17th century) supposed date of the creation of the world, based on genealogies in the *Old Testament*.
- 4000 Excavations from this period at Sumerian sites of Kish and Elamite Susa reveal presence of Indian imports.
- 4000 India's population is 1 million.
- 3928 July 25th: the earliest eclipse mentioned in the *Rig Veda* (according to Indian researcher Dr. Sri P.C. Sengupta).
- 3761 The year of world creation in the Jewish religious calendar.
- 3200 In India, a special guild of Hindu astronomers (*nakshatra darśas*) record in Vedic texts citations of full and new moon at winter and summer solstices and spring and fall equinoxes with reference to 27 fixed stars (*nakshatras*) spaced nearly equally on the moon's ecliptic (visual path across the sky). The precession of the equinoxes (caused by the mutation of the Earth's axis of rotation) makes the *nakshatras* appear to drift at a constant rate along a predictable course over a 25,000-year cycle. Such observations enable specialists to calculate backwards to determine the date the indicated position of moon, sun and *nakshatra* occurred.
- 3139 Reference to vernal equinox in Rohinī (middle of Taurus) from some *Brahmāṇas*, as noted by B.G. Tilak, Indian scholar and patriot. Now preferred date of *Mahābhārata* war and life of Lord Kṛishṇa (see also -1424).
- 3102 Beginning of Kali Yuga (Kali Era) in Hindu time reckoning.
- 3100 Early Vedic period ends, late Vedic period begins.
- 3100 Indian culture in Afghanistan and parts of Central Asia.
- 3100 Āryans inhabit Iran, Iraq and Western Indus-Sarasvatī Valley frontier. [Frawley describes Āryans as "a culture of spiritual knowledge." He and many Indian scholars believe 1) the Land of Seven Rivers (Sapta Sindhu) cited in the *Rig Veda* refers to India only, 2) the people of Indus-Sarasvatī valleys and those of *Rig Veda* are the same, and 3) there was no Āryan invasion. Others claim the Indus-Sarasvatī people were Dravidians who moved out or were displaced by incoming Āryans.]



- 3000 Weaving in Europe, Near East and Indus-Sarasvati Valley is primarily coiled basketry, either spiraled or sewn.
- 3000 Evidence of horses in South India.
- 3000 People of Tehuacan, Mexico, are cultivating maize.
- 3000 *Śaiva Āgamas* are recorded; time of the earliest Tamil Saṅgam (by traditional dating; see also -500).
- 2700 *Tolkappiyam* Tamil grammar is composed (traditional dating; see also -500).
- 2700 Seals of Indus-Sarasvati Valley indicate Śiva worship, represented by Paśupati, Lord of Animals.
- 2600 Indus-Sarasvati civilization reaches height it sustains until -1700. Spreading from Pakistan to Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, it is the largest of the world's three oldest civilizations, with links to Mesopotamia (possibly Crete), Afghanistan, Central Asia and Karnataka. Harappa and Mohenjodaro each have populations of 100,000.
- 2600 Major portions of the *Veda* hymns are composed during the reign of Visvamitra I (Dating by S.B. Roy).
- 2600 Drying up of Drishadvati River of Vedic fame, along with possible shifting of the Yamuṇā to flow into the Gaṅgā.
- 2600 First Egyptian Pyramid under construction.
- 2500 Main period of Indus-Sarasvati cities. *Atharva Veda* indicates culture relies heavily on rice and cotton, which were first cultivated in India. Ninety percent of sites are along the Sarasvatī, the region's agricultural bread basket. Mohenjo-daro is a large peripheral trading center. Rakhigari and Ganweriwala on the Sarasvatī are as big as Mohenjo-daro. So is Dholavira in Kutch. Indus-Sarasvati sites have been found as far south as Karnataka's Godavari River and north into Afghanistan on the Amu Darya River.
- 2500 Reference to vernal equinox in *Ṛittikā* (Pleiades or early Taurus) from *Yajur* and *Atharva Veda* hymns and *Brāhmaṇas*. This corresponds to Harappan seals that show seven women (the *Ṛittikās*) tending a fire.
- 2350 Sage Gargya (born 2285), 50th in Purānic list of kings and sages, son of Garga, initiates method of reckoning successive centuries in relation to a *nakshatra* list he records in the *Atharva Veda* with *Ṛittikā* as the first star. Equinox occurs at *Ṛittikia Pūrṇimā*.
- 2300 Sargon founds Mesopotamian kingdom of Akkad, trades with Indus-Sarasvati Valley cities.
- 2300 Indo-Europeans in Russia's Ural steppelands develop efficient spoked-wheel



- chariot, using 1,000-year-old horse husbandry and freight-cart technology.
- 2051 Divodasa reigns to -1961, has contact with Babylon's King Indatu (Babylonian chronology). Dating by S.B. Roy.
- 2050 Vedic people are settled in Iran (Persia) and Afghanistan.
- ca -2040 Prince Rāma born at Ayodhya, site of future Rāma temple (this and next two dates by S.B. Roy; see also -4000).
- 2033 Reign of Dasaratha, father of Lord Rāma. King Ravana, villain of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, reigns in Sri Lanka.
- 2000 Indo-Europeans (Celts, Teutons, Slavs, Balts, Hellens, Italics) follow social usages and beliefs that parallel early Vedic patterns.
- 2000 Possible date of the first formulated *Śaiva Āgamas*.
- 2000 World population: 27 million. India: 5 million or 22 percent. India has roughly one fourth of human race through much of history.
- 1915 All Madurai Tamil Saṅgam is held at Thiruparankundram (according to traditional Tamil chronology).
- 1900 Late Vedic period ends, post Vedic period begins. (Early dating; see also -1000).
- 1900 Drying up of Sarasvatī River, end of Indus-Sarasvatī culture, end of the Vedic age. After this, the center of civilization in ancient India relocates from the Sarasvatī to the Gaṅgā, along with possible migration of Vedic peoples out of India to the Near East (perhaps giving rise to the Mitanni and Kassites, who worship Vedic Gods). The redirection of the Sutlej into the Indus causes the Indus area to flood. Climate changes make the Sarasvatī region too dry for habitation. (Thought lost, its river bed is finally photographed via satellite in the 1990s.)
- 1728-1686 Hammurabi, famous lawgiver, is king of Babylon.
- 1500 Egyptians bury their royalty in the Valley of the Kings.
- 1500 Polynesians migrate throughout Pacific islands.
- 1500 Proposed date of submergence of the stone port city of Dwarka near Gujarat. Residents use iron and employ a script halfway between Harappan and Brahmi, India's ancient pre-Sanskritic alphabet. [Findings from recent excavations by Dr. S.R. Rao, larger than Mohenjo-daro. Many identify it with the Dwarka of Kṛishṇa's time, suggesting possible date of Lord Kṛishṇa. Indicates second urbanization phase of India between Indus-Sarasvatī sites like Harappa and later cities on the Gaṅgā.]
- 1500 Indigenous iron technology in Dwarka and Kashmir.
- 1500 Cinnamon is exported from Kerala to Middle East.
- 1450 End of *Ṛig Veda Saṃhitā* composition.
- 1450 Early *Upanishads* are composed during the next few hundred years, also *Vedāṅgas* and *Sūtra* literature.
- 1424 Mahābhārata War occurs (dated from reference in the *Mahābhārata* citing winter solstice at Dhanishṭha, which occurs around this time). Reign of Kaurava king Dhritarashtra and of Pandava king Yudhishtira. Time of Sage Yajñavalkya. (See now-preferred date at -3139. Subash Kak places the battle at -2449. Others give later dates, up to 9th century BCE.)
- 1424 Birth of Parikshit, grandson of Arjuna, and next king.
- 1350 At Boghaz Köy, Turkey, stone inscription of the treaty with Mitanni lists as divine witnesses the Vedic Deities Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra and the Nāsātyas (Aśvins).



- 1316 *Mahābhārata* epic poem is composed by Sage Vyasa.
- 1300 Very early date (by S.B. Roy) for lifetime of Panini, whose *Ashṭādhyāyī* systematizes Sanskrit grammar in 4,000 rules. (Western scholars place him at -400 bce, or as late as 300 ce.)
- 1300 Revisions are made in the materials of *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* through 200 BCE. *Purāṇas* are edited up until 400 CE. Early *smṛiti* literature is composed over next 400 years.
- 1255 King Suchi of Magadha sets forth *Jyotisha Vedāṅga*, dating it by including an astronomical note that summer solstice is in Aśleshā Nakshatra.
- 1250 Moses leads 600,000 Jews out of Egypt. (Early traditional dating.)
- 1200 Approximate time of the legendary Greek-Trojan War celebrated in Homer’s epic poems, *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (ca -750).
- 1150 Nebuchadnezzar I of Isin, king of Babylon, throws off Elamite domination.
- 1000 Late Vedic period ends. Post-Vedic period begins. (Later dating, see also -1900).
- 1000 World population is 50 million, doubling every 500 years.
- 1000 Jewish king David (reigns to ca -962) rules a united kingdom in present-day Israel and parts of Jordan and Syria.
- 950 King Hiram of Tyre in Phoenicia, in treaty with Israel’s King Solomon (son of David), trades with the port of Ophir (Sanskrit: Supara) near modern Mumbai. Same trade with India goes back to Harappan era.
- 950 Jewish traders arrive in India in King Solomon’s merchant fleet. Later Jewish colonies find India a tolerant home.
- 950 Breakdown of Sanskrit as a spoken language occurs over the next 200 years.
- 900 Iron Age in India. Early sporadic use dates from at least -1500.
- ca -900 Earliest records of the holy city of Varanasi (one of the world’s oldest living cities) on the sacred river Gaṅgā.
- 900 Use of iron supplements bronze in Greece.
- 850 The Chinese are using the 28-*nakshatra* zodiac called Shiu, adapted from the Hindu *jyotisha* system.
- ca -800 Later *Upanishads* are recorded.
- 800 Later *smṛiti* (secondary Hindu scriptures) are composed, elaborated and developed during next 1,000 years.
- 776 First Olympic Games are held and documented in Greece.
- 750 Prākṛits (vernacular or “natural” languages) develop among India’s common peoples. Already flourishing in 500 BCE, Pāli and other Prākṛits are chiefly known from Buddhist and Jain works composed at this time.

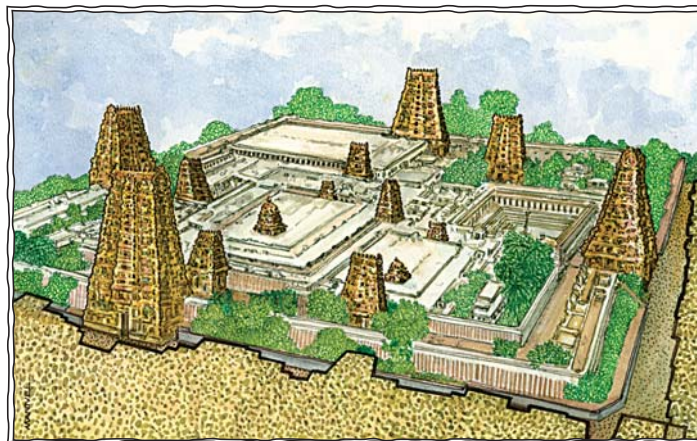
- 750 Literary Sanskrit is refined over next 500 years, taking on its classical form.
- 700 Early Smārtism emerges from the syncretic Vedic *brāhminical* (priestly caste) tradition. (It flourishes today as a liberal sect alongside Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta sects.)
- 623-543 Life of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, born in Uttar Pradesh in a princely Śākya Śaivite family. (Date by Sri Lankan Buddhists. Indian and other scholars favor -563 to -483; Mahāyānists of China and Japan prefer -566 to -486 or later.)
- 605 Nebuchadnezzar II is king of Babylon (-605 to -562). His building program makes it the world's largest and most magnificent city, slightly larger than present-day San Francisco.
- ca -600 Life of Zoroaster, founder of Zoroastrianism, original religion of the Persians. His *Zend Avesta*, holy book of that faith, has much in common with the *Ṛig Veda*, sharing many verses. Zoroastrianism makes strong distinctions between good and evil, setting the dualistic tone of God and devil which pervades all later Western religions.
- ca -600 Life of Susruta of Varanasi, the father of surgery. His *āyurvedic* treatises cover pulse diagnosis, hernia, cataract, cosmetic surgery, medical ethics, 121 surgical implements, antiseptics, toxicology, psychiatry, classification of burns, midwifery, surgical anesthesia, therapeutics of garlic and use of drugs to control bleeding.
- ca -600 The Ajivikas, an ascetic, atheistic sect of naked *sādhus* is at its height, continuing in Mysore until the 14th century. Adversaries of Buddha and Mahavira, their philosophy is deterministic, holding that everything is inevitable.
- ca -600 Lifetime of Lao-tzu, founder of Taoism in China, author of *Tao te Ching*. Its esoteric teachings of simplicity and selflessness shape Chinese life for 2,000 years and permeate the religions of Vietnam, Japan and Korea.
- 599-527 Lifetime of Mahavira Vardhamana, 24th Tirthankara, renaissance Jain master who stresses vegetarianism, asceticism and nonviolence. (Some place him 40 years later.)
- 560 In Greece, Pythagoras teaches math, music, vegetarianism and *yoga*, drawing from India's wisdom ways.
- 551-478 Lifetime of Confucius, founder of Confucianism. His teachings on social ethics form the basis of Chinese education, religion and ruling-class ideology.
- 518 Darius I of Persia (Iran) invades Indus Valley. This Zoroastrian ruler shows tolerance for local religions.
- ca -500 Lifetime of Kapila, founder of Sāṅkhya Darśana, one of six classical systems of Hindu philosophy.
- ca -500 Dams to store water are constructed in India.
- 500 World population reaches 100 million. India's population is 25 million, 15 million of whom live in the Gaṅgā basin.
- ca -500 Over the next 300 years (according to later dating by Müller) numerous secondary Hindu scriptures (*smṛiti*) are composed: *Śrauta Sūtras*, *Gṛihya Sūtras*, *Dharma Sūtras*, *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Purāṇas*, etc.
- ca -500 Tamil Saṅgam age (-500 to 500) begins (see -3000). Sage Agastya writes *Agattiyam*, first known Tamil grammar (Kulkarni places him at -8576). Tolkappiyar (Kulkarni says -2700) writes *Tolkappiyam Purananuru*, on grammar, stating he is recording rules on poetry, rhetoric, etc., of earlier grammarians, indicating prior high development of Tamil. Gives rules for absorbing Sanskrit words. Other Saṅgam Age works are the poetical *Paripadal*, *Pattuppattu*, *Ettuthokai Purananuru*, *Akananuru*, *Aingurunuru*, *Padimenkilkanakku*. Some refer to worship of Viṣṇu, Indra, Murugan and Supreme Śiva.

-400

-300

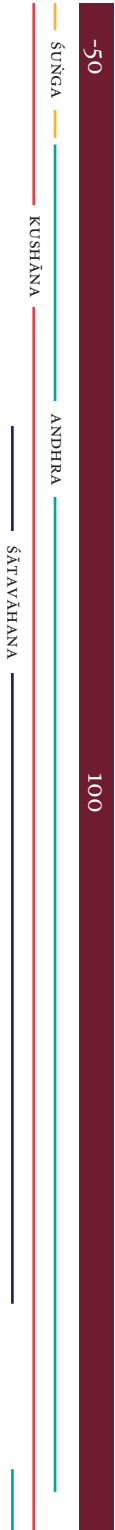
MAURYA

- ca -486 Ajatasatru (reign -486 to -458) ascends Magadha throne.
- 480 Ajita, a *nāstika* (atheist) who teaches a purely material explanation of life and that death is final, dies.
- 478 Prince Vijaya, exiled by his father, King Sinhabahu, sails from Gujarat with 700 followers. Founds Sinhalese kingdom in Sri Lanka. (From the *Mahāvamsa* chronicle, ca 500.)
- 469-399 Lifetime of Athenian philosopher Socrates.
- 428-348 Lifetime of Plato, Athenian disciple of Socrates. This great philosopher founds Athens Academy in -387.
- 400 Panini composes his Sanskrit grammar, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (date by Western scholars; see Indian dates at -1300).
- ca -400 Lifetime of Hippocrates, Greek physician and “Father of medicine,” formulates Hippocratic oath, code of medical ethics still pledged by Western doctors.
- ca -350 Rainfall is measured by Indian scientists.
- 326 Alexander the Great of Macedon invades but fails to conquer Northwestern India. Soldiers’ mutiny forces him to retreat and he leaves India the same year. Greeks who remain intermarry with Indians. Mutual interaction influences both civilizations. Greek sculpture impacts Hindu styles. Bactrian kingdoms later promote Greek influence.
- 305 Chandragupta Maurya, founder of first pan-Indian empire (-324 to -184), expels Greek garrisons of Seleucus, founder of Seleucid Empire in Iran and Syria. At its height under Emperor Asoka (reign -273 to -232), the Mauryan Empire includes all India except the far South.
- ca -302 Kautilya (Chanakya), minister to Chandragupta Maurya, writes *Arthaśāstra*, a compendium of laws, procedures and advice for running a kingdom.
- 302 In *Indica*, Megasthenes, envoy of King Seleucus, reveals to Europe in colorful detail the wonders of Mauryan India: an opulent society with intensive agriculture, engineered irrigation and 7 castes: philosophers, farmers, soldiers, herdsmen, artisans, magistrates and counselors.
- ca -300 Chinese discover cast iron, known in Europe by 1300 ce.



- ca -300 Pāṇḍya kingdom (-300 to -1700 CE) is founded, builder of many of South India’s grandest temples, including Madurai Minakshi, Srirangam and Rameshwaram (ca 1600).
- ca -300 Pāñcharātra Vaiṣṇava sect is prominent. All later Vaiṣṇava sects are based

- on the Pañcharātra beliefs (formalized by Sandilya around 100 CE).
- 297 Emperor Chandragupta abdicates; becomes Jain monk.
- 273 Asoka, the greatest Mauryan Emperor, grandson of Chandragupta, seizes power and rules until 232. He converts to Buddhism after his brutal conquest of Kalinga in -260, and several other countries. He excels at public works, sends diplomatic missions to Syria, Egypt, Cyrene (now Libya), Epirus and Greece; and Buddhist *dharma* missions to Sri Lanka, China and throughout Southeast Asia. In his 40-year reign, Buddhism becomes a world power. He records his work and teaching in inscriptions, the Rock and Pillar Edicts. India's national emblem features the lion capital from his pillar at Sarnath.
- 251 Emperor Asoka sends his son Mahendra (-270 to -204) to spread Buddhism in Sri Lanka, where to this day he is revered as the national faith's founding missionary.
- ca -251 The latest (Western) date for Panini's grammar. (See -1300, -400.)
- ca -250 Lifetime of Maharishi Nandinatha, first known *satguru* in the Kailāsa Paramparā of the Nandinātha Sampradāya. His eight disciples are Sanat कुमार, Sanakar, Sanadanar, Sananthanar, Sivayogamuni, Patanjali, Vyaghrapada and Tirumular (Sundaranatha).
- ca -221 Great Wall of China is built, ultimately 2,600 miles long, the only man-made object visible from the moon.
- ca -200 Lifetime of Rishi Tirumular, disciple of Maharishi Nandinatha and author of the 3,047-verse *Tirumantiram*, a summation of *Śaiva Āgamas* and *Vedas*, concisely articulating the Nandinātha Sampradāya teachings, founding South India's monistic Śaiva Siddhānta school.
- ca -200 Lifetime of Saint Auvaiyar of Tamil Nadu, Gaṇeśa devotee, mystic poet and *yogīnī* (see also 800).
- ca -200 Lifetime of Patanjali, *śishya* of Nandinatha and brother monk of Tirumular. He writes the *Yoga Sūtras* at Chidambaram, in South India (Kulkarni dates him at -550).
- ca -200 Bhogar Rishi (one of 18 Tamil *siddhars*) shapes from nine poisons the *mūrti* enshrined in today's Palani Hills temple in South India. He is from China or visits there.
- ca -200 Lifetime of Saint Tiruvalluvar, poet-weaver who lived near present-day Chennai, author of *Tirukural*, "Holy Couplets," the classic Tamil work on ethics and statecraft (sworn on in today's South Indian law courts).
- ca -200 Jaimini writes the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*.
- ca -150 Ajantā Buddhist Caves are begun near present-day Hyderabad. Construction of 29 monasteries and galleries continues to 650 CE. Famous murals are painted 600–650 CE.
- 145 Chola Empire (-145 to -1300 CE) of Tamil Nadu is founded, noted for government organization and artistic accomplishment, including enormous irrigation works.
- 140 Emperor Wu begins three-year reign of China; worship of the Mother Goddess, Earth, attains importance.
- 130 Reign ends of Menander (Milinda), Indo-Greek king who converts to Buddhism.
- 117-116 Greek navigators Eudoxus of Cyzicus and Hippalus of Alexandria discover use of monsoon winds in the direct sea traffic (rather than coast wise) to and from India. This results in the great increase of Western commerce, especially under the early Roman Empire.
- 58 Vikrama Sāmvat Era Hindu calendar begins.
- 50 Kushāṇa Empire begins (-50 to -220 CE). This Mongolian Buddhist dynasty



- ca -10 Ilangovadikal, son of King Cheralathan of the Tamil Saṅgam age, writes outstanding epic *Silappathikaram*, classical Tamil treatise on music and dance.
- 4 Jesus of Nazareth (-4 to -30 CE), founder of Christianity, is born, traditionally in Bethlehem of Judea (dates according to current Biblical scholarship).

**Western calendar begins. C.E.—Common Era**

- 10 World population is 170 million. India’s is 35 million: 20.5 percent of world.
- ca 50 South Indians occupy Funan, Indochina. Kaundinya, an Indian *brāhmin*, is first king. Śaivism is state religion.
- 53 A Christian legend places the death of Saint Thomas, one of Christ’s 12 Apostles, in Chennai. But history offers no evidence he ever came to India and shows that Bharat’s first Christian community was Kerala’s Syrian Malabar Church, founded in 345 by Thomas of Cana.
- ca 60 Emperor Ming-Ti (reign: 58–76) converts to Buddhism and introduces the faith in China. Brings two monks from India who erect temple at modern Honan.
- 69 A large Jewish community is established in Cochin.
- ca 75 A Gujarat prince named Ajisaka invades Java.
- 78 Śaka Hindu calendar/era begins.
- ca 80 Jains divide, on points of rules for monks, into the Śvetāmbara, “White-clad,” and the Digambara, “Sky-clad.”
- ca 80–180 Lifetime of Charaka, court physician to the Kushāna king, Kanishka. He formulates a code of conduct for doctors of *āyurveda* and writes *Charaka Saṁhitā*, a manual of medicine.
- ca 100 Lifetime of Sandilya, first systematic promulgator of the ancient Pāñcharātra doctrines. His *Bhakti Sūtras*, devotional aphorisms on Vishṇu, inspire a Vaishṇava renaissance. By 900 CE the sect has left a permanent mark on many Hindu schools. (The *Saṁhitā* of Sandilya and his followers, *Pañcharātra Āgama*, embodies the chief doctrines of present-day Vaishṇavas.)
- 100 Hsüen Tsang of China establishes trade routes to India and as far west as Rome, later known as the Silk Roads. (See alternate date: 630–644).
- 105 Paper is invented in China.
- 117 The Roman Empire reaches its greatest extent.
- 125 Satakarni (reign: ca 106–130) of Andhra’s Śātavāhana dynasty (-70–225) destroys Śaka kingdom of Gujarat.
- ca 175 Greek astronomer Ptolemy, known as Asura Maya in India, spreads the knowledge of solar astronomy, Sūrya Siddhānta, to Indian students.
- 180 Mexican city of Teotihuacan has 100,000 population and covers 11 square miles. Grows to 250,000 by 500 CE.
- ca 200 Lifetime of Lakulisa, famed *guru* who leads a reformist movement within Pāśupata Śaivism.
- ca 200 Hindu kingdoms are established in Cambodia and Malaysia.
- 205–270 Lifetime of Plotinus, Egyptian-born monistic Greek philosopher and religious genius who transforms a revival of Platonism in the Roman Empire into what present-day scholars call Neo-Platonism, greatly influencing Islamic and European thought. He teaches *ahimsā*, vegetarianism, *karma*, reincarnation and belief in a Supreme Being that is both immanent and transcendent.
- ca 250 Pallava dynasty (ca 250–885) is established in Tamil Nadu. They erect the Kailasa Kamakshi Temple complex at the capital of Kanchi and the great

KUSHAN

300

GUPTA

PALLAVA

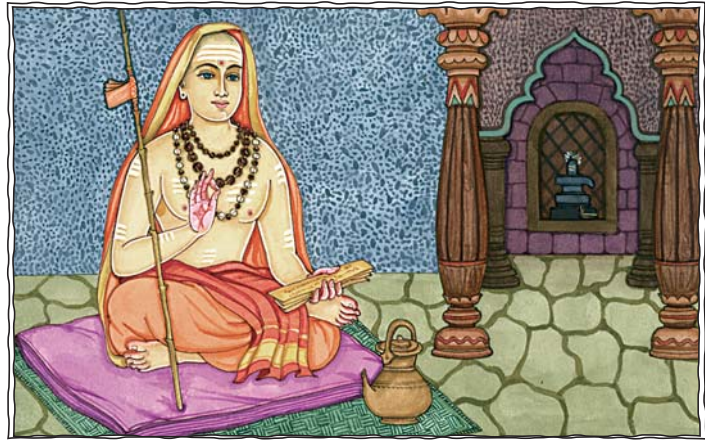
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- 7th-century stone monuments at Mahabalipuram.
- ca 275 Buddhist monastery Mahavihara is founded in Anuradhapura, capital of Sri Lanka.
- 350 Imperial Gupta dynasty (320–540) flourishes. During this “Classical Age” norms of literature, art, architecture and philosophy are established. This North Indian empire promotes both Vaishṇavism and Śaivism and, at its height, rules or receives tribute from nearly all India. Buddhism also thrives under tolerant Gupta rule.
- ca 350 Licchavi dynasty (ca 350–900) establishes Hindu rule in Nepal. Small kingdom becomes the major intellectual and commercial center between South and Central Asia.
- 358 Huns, excellent archers and horsemen possibly of Turkish origin, invade Europe from the East.
- 375 Maharaja Chandragupta II Vikramaditya, greatest Hindu monarch, reigns to 413, expanding the prosperous Gupta Empire northward beyond the Indus River.
- ca 380–460 Approximate lifetime of Kalidasa, the great Sanskrit poet and dramatist, author of *Śākuntala* and *Meghadūta*. (An earlier dating championed by some scholars is 50 BCE.)
- 391 Roman Emperor Theodosius destroys Greek Hellenistic temples in favor of Christianity.
- ca 400 *Manu Dharma Śāstra* is written. Its 2,685 verses codify cosmogony, four *āśramas*, government, domestic affairs, caste and morality. (Others prefer -600; Kulkarni gives 150 BCE for latest edition of a code in vogue since -7000.)
- ca 400 Polynesians sailing in open outrigger canoes reach as far as Hawaii and Easter Island.
- ca 400 *Chaturāṅga*, the Indian forerunner of chess, has evolved from *ashtapāda*, a board-based race game, into a four-handed war game played with a die. Later, in deference to the *Laws of Manu* which forbid gambling, players discard the die and create *shatranj*, a two-sided strategy game.
- ca 400 Vatsyayana writes *Kāmasūtra*, the famous text on erotics.
- 419 Moche people of Peru build a Sun temple 150 feet high using 50 million bricks.
- ca 430 Hindu ancestors of present-day Romani people, or Gypsies, leave Rajasthan, Sindh and other areas of India, move to Persia and gradually on to reach Europe ca 800.
- 438–45 Council of Ferrara-Florence, Italy, strengthens the Roman Catholic stance against the doctrine of reincarnation.
- ca 440 Ajanta cave frescoes (long before Islam) depict Buddha as Prince Siddhārtha, wearing *chūḍīdāra pyjama* and a prototype of the “Nehru shirt.”
- 450–535 Life of Bodhidharma of South India, 28th patriarch of India’s Dhyāna Buddhist sect, founder of Ch’an Buddhism in China (520), known as Zen in Japan.
- ca 450 Hephthalite invasions (ca 450–565) take a great toll in North India. These “White Huns” (or Hūṇas) from the borders of China may or may not be related to Europe’s Hun invaders.
- ca 450 As the Gupta Empire declines, Indian sculptural style evolves and continues until the 16th century. The trend is away from the swelling modeled forms of the Gupta period toward increasing flatness and linearity.
- 453 Attila the Hun dies after lifetime of plundering Europe.
- 499 Aryabhata I (476–ca 550), Indian astronomer and mathematician, using Hindu (“Arabic”) numerals accurately calculates pi ( $\pi$ ) to 3.1416, and the solar year to 365.3586805 days. A thousand years before Copernicus, Ary-

<p style="text-align: center;">500</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GUPTA</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid orange;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">EARLY CHĀLUKYA</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid red;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">PALLAVA</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid green;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">600</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RASHTRAKUTA</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid blue;"/>	<p>abhata propounds a heliocentric system with elliptically orbiting planets and a spherical Earth spinning on its axis, explaining the apparent rotation of the heavens. His <i>Āryabhaṭīya</i> contains history’s first exposition on plane and spherical trigonometry, algebra and arithmetic.</p> <p>ca 500 <i>Mahāvamśa</i>, a Pāli text chronicling Sri Lankan history from -500, is written, probably by Buddhist monk Mahanama. A sequel, <i>Chulavamśa</i>, continues the history to 1500.</p> <p>ca 500 Sectarian folk traditions are revised, elaborated and reduced to writing as the <i>Purāṇas</i>, Hinduism’s encyclopedic compendium of culture and mythology.</p> <p>500 World population is 190 million. India’s is 50 million: 26.3 percent of world.</p> <p>510 Hephthalite Mihirakula from beyond Oxus River crushes imperial Gupta power. Soon controls much of North-Central India.</p> <p>ca 533 Yaśovarman of Malva and Isanavarman of Kanauj defeat and expel the Hephthalites from North India.</p> <p>ca 543 Pulakesin I founds Chālukya Dynasty (ca 543–757; 975–1189) in Gujarat and later in larger areas of West India.</p> <p>548 Emperor Kimmei officially recognizes Buddhism in Japan by accepting a gift image of Buddha from Korea.</p> <p>553 Council of Constantinople II denies doctrine of soul’s existence before conception, implying that reincarnation is incompatible with Christian belief.</p> <p>565 The Turks and Persians defeat the Hephthalites.</p> <p>570–632 Lifetime of Mohammed of the Quraysh Bedouin tribe, founder of Islam. Begins to preach in Mecca, calling for an end to the “demons and idols” of Arab religion and conversion to the ways of the one God, Allah.</p> <p>ca 590–671 Lifetime of Śaiva saint Nayanar Tirunavukkarasu, born into a farmer family at Amur, now in South Arcot, Tamil Nadu. He writes 312 songs, totalling 3,066 <i>Tirumurai</i> verses. Cleaning the grounds of every temple he visits, he exemplifies truly humble service to Lord Śiva. His contemporary, the child-saint Nayanar Sambandar, addresses him affectionately as Appar, “Father.”</p> <p>ca 598–665 Lifetime of Brahmagupta, pre-eminent Indian astronomer, who writes on gravity and sets forth the Hindu astronomical system in his <i>Brāhma Sphuṭa Siddhānta</i>. Two of 25 chapters are on sophisticated mathematics.</p> <p>ca 600 Religiously tolerant Pallava king Narasinhavarman builds China Pagoda, a Buddhist temple, at the Nagapatam port for Chinese merchants and visiting monks.</p> <p>ca 600–900 Twelve Vaiṣṇava Alvar saints of Tamil Nadu flourish, writing 4,000 songs and poems (assembled in their canon <i>Nalayira Divya Prabandham</i>) praising Nārāyaṇa, Rāma and narrating the affairs of Kṛiṣṇa and the <i>gopīs</i>.</p> <p>ca 600 Life of Banabhatta, Śākta master of Sanskrit prose, author of <i>Harshācharita</i> (Story of Harsha) and <i>Kādambarī</i>.</p> <p>606 Buddhist Harshavardhana, reigning 606–644, establishes first great kingdom after the Hephthalite invasions, eventually ruling all India to the Narmadā River in the South.</p> <p>ca 610 Mohammed begins prophecies, flees to Mecca in 622.</p> <p>ca 630 Vagbhata writes <i>Aṣṭāṅga Saṅgraha</i> on <i>āyurveda</i>.</p> <p>630–34 Chālukya Pulakesin II becomes Lord of South India by defeating Harshavardhana, Lord of the North.</p> <p>630–44 Chinese pilgrim Hsüen Tsang (Xuan-zang) travels in India, recording his copious observations. Population of Varanasi is 10,000, mostly Śaiva. Nalanda Buddhist university (his biographer writes) has 10,000 residents, including 1,510 teachers, and thousands of manuscripts. (Alternate date: 100.)</p> <p>641–45 Arab Muslims conquer Mesopotamia, Egypt and Persia.</p>
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- ca 650 Lifetime of Nayanar Śaiva saint Tirujnana Sambandar. Born a *brāhmin* in Tanjavur, he writes 384 songs totalling 4,158 verses that make up the first three books of *Tirumurai*. At 16, he disappears into the sanctum of Nallur temple, near Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu.
- ca 650 More than 60 Chinese monks have traveled to India and her colonies. Four hundred Sanskrit works have been translated into Chinese; 380 survive to the present day.
- 686–705 Reign of Pallava king Rajasinha. He inherits the stone-carving legacy of Emperor Mahendra and his son, Narasinha, who began the extensive sculptural works in the thriving seaport of Mahabalipuram.
- ca 700 Over the next hundred years the 2,095-square-mile Indonesian island of Bali receives Hinduism from its neighbor, Java.
- 712 Muslims conquer Sind region (Pakistan), setting up base for pillaging expeditions that drain North India's wealth.
- 732 Franks prevent Muslim conquest of Europe, stopping Arabs at Poitiers, France, northwest limit of Arab penetration.
- 739 Chālukya armies beat back Arab Muslim invasions at Navasari in modern Maharashtra.
- ca 750–1159 Pāla dynasty arises in Bihar and Bengal, last royal patrons of Buddhism, which they help establish in Tibet.
- ca 750 Rashtrakuta dynasty carves Kailasa temple out of a rock hill at Ellora.
- ca 750 A Hindu astronomer and mathematician in Baghdad translates into Arabic Brahmagupta's *Brāhma Sphuṭa Siddhānta* (treatise on astronomy), transmitting decimal notation and use of zero to the Arab world.
- ca 750 Lifetime of Bhavabhuti, Sanskrit dramatist, second only to Kalidasa. Writes *Mālatī-Mādhava*, a Śākta work.
- ca 750 Valmiki writes 29,000-verse *Yoga Vāsishṭha*.
- ca 750 A necklace timepiece, *kadikaram* in Tamil, is worn by an emperor (according to scholar M. Arunachalam).



- 788 Adi Sankara (788–820) is born in Malabar. The famous Smārta monk-philosopher writes mystic poems and scriptural commentaries, including *Viveka Chūḍāmaṇi*, and regularizes ten monastic orders called Daśanāmī. Preaches Māyāvāda Advaita, emphasizing the world as illusion and God as the sole Reality.
- ca 800 *Bhakti* revival curtails Buddhism in South India. In the North, Buddha is

800		revered as Vishṇu's 9th incarnation.
800	ca 800	Life of Nammalvar, greatest of Alvar saints. His poems shape beliefs of Southern Vaiṣṇavas to the present day.
800	ca 800	Lifetime of Vasugupta, modern founder of Kashmīr Śaivism, a monistic, meditative school.
800	ca 800	Lifetime (by later dating) of Auvaiyar, saint of Tamil Nadu, Gaṇeśa devotee, author of <i>Auvai Kural</i> . She is associated with the Lambika <i>kuṇḍalini</i> school. (An earlier strong traditional date for Auvaiyar of 200 BCE is from a story about her and Saint Tiruvalluvar as contemporaries. A third reference places her around 1000. <i>Auvaiyar</i> means "venerable, learned lady;" some believe there were three different Auvaiyars.)
800	ca 800	Lifetime of Karaikkalammaiyar, one of the 63 Śaiva saints of Tamil Nadu. Her mystical, <i>yogic</i> hymns, preserved in <i>Tirumurai</i> , remain popular to the present day.
800	ca 800	Lifetime of Andal, girl saint of Tamil Nadu. Writes devotional poetry to Lord Kṛiṣṇa, disappears at age 16.
825	ca 825	Nayanar Tamil saint Sundarar is born into a family of Ādiśaiva temple priests in Tirunavalur in present-day South Arcot. His 100 songs in praise of Śiva (the only ones surviving of his 38,000 songs) make up <i>Tirumurai</i> book 7. His <i>Tiru Tondattotthai</i> poem, naming the Śaiva saints, is the basis for Saint Sekkilar's <i>Periyapurāṇam</i> .
825	ca 825	Vasugupta discovers the rock-engraved <i>Śiva Sūtras</i> .
846	846	Vijayalaya re-establishes his Chola dynasty, which over the next 100 years grows and strengthens into one of the greatest South Indian Empires ever known.
850	ca 850	Śrī Vaiṣṇava sect established in Tamil Nadu by Acharya Nathamuni, forerunner of the great theologian Ramanuja.
850	ca 850	Life of Manikkavasagar, Śaiva Samayāchārya saint, born in Tiruvadavur, near Madurai, into a Tamil <i>brāhmin</i> family. Writes famed <i>Tiruvagasam</i> , 51 poems of 656 verses in 3,394 lines, chronicling the soul's evolution to God Śiva. <i>Tirupalli-eluchi</i> and <i>Tiruvembavai</i> are classic examples of his innovative style of devotional songs.
875	875	Muslim conquests extend from Spain to Indus Valley.
885	885	Cholas kill Aparajita, king of the Pallavas, in battle.
900	ca 900	Lifetime of Matsyendranatha, exponent of the Nātha sect emphasizing <i>kuṇḍalini yoga</i> practices.
900	ca 900	Under the Hindu Malla dynasty (ca 900–1700) of Nepal, legal and social codes influenced by Hinduism are introduced. Nepal is broken into several principalities.
900–1001	ca 900–1001	Lifetime of Sembian Ma Devi, queen of Maharaja Gandaraditta Chola from 950 to 957. A loyal patron of Śaivism, she builds ten temples and inspires and influences her grand-nephew, son of Sundara Chola, who as King Rajaraja I becomes a great temple-builder.
900	900	Mataramas dynasty in Indonesia reverts to Śaivism after a century of Buddhism, building 150 Śaiva temples.
950	ca 950	Lifetime of Gorakshanatha, Nātha <i>yogī</i> who founds the order of Kanphaṭha Yogis and Gorakshanātha Śaivism, the philosophical school called Siddha Siddhānta.
950–1015	ca 950–1015	Lifetime of Kashmīr Śaiva <i>guru</i> Abhinavagupta.
960	960	Chola king Vira, after having a vision of Śiva Naṭarāja, commences enlargement of the Śiva temple at Chidambaram, including the construction of the gold-roofed shrine. The enlargement is completed in 1250 CE.

CHOLA

RASHTRAKUTA

PALLAVA

850

WESTERN CHALUKYAS

CHANDELAS (BUNDHELKHAND)

CHOLA	1000	985	Rajaraja I (reign 985–1014) ascends the South Indian Chola throne and ushers in a new age of temple architecture exemplified at Tanjavur, Darasuram, Tirubhuvanam and Chidambaram. Pallava architectural influences (dominant <i>vimānas</i> , inconspicuous <i>gopuras</i> ) fade.
		ca 1000	Gorakshanatha writes <i>Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati</i> , “Tracks on the Doctrines of the Adepts.” In 353 verses he explains the nature of God and universe, structure of <i>chakras</i> , <i>kunḍalīnī</i> force and methods for realization.
		1000	World population is 265 million. India’s is 79 million, 29.8 percent of world.
		ca 1000	Vikings reach North America, landing in Nova Scotia.
		ca 1000	Polynesians arrive in New Zealand, in the last stage in the greatest migration and navigational feat in history, making them the most widely spread race on the planet.
		1001	Turkish Muslims sweep through the Northwest under Mahmud of Ghazni, defeating Jayapala of Hindu Śāhi Dynasty of South Afghanistan and Punjab at Peshawar. This is the first major Muslim conquest in India.
		ca 1010	<i>Tirumurai</i> , Tamil devotional hymns of Śaiva saints, is collected as an anthology by Nambiandar Nambi.
		1017	Mahmud of Ghazni sacks Mathura, birthplace of Lord Kṛishṇa, and establishes a mosque on the site during one of his 17 Indian invasions for holy war and plunder.
		1017–1137	Life of Ramanuja of Kanchipuram, Tamil philosopher-saint of Śrī Vaishṇava sect that continues <i>bhakti</i> tradition of South Indian Alvar saints. His strongly theistic, nondual Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta philosophy restates Pañcharātra tradition. Foremost opponent of Sankara’s system, he dies at age 120 while head of Srirangam monastery.
		1018–1060	Lifetime of Bhojadeva Paramara, Gujarati king, poet, artist and monistic Śaiva Siddhānta theologian.
		1024	Mahmud of Ghazni plunders Somanath Śiva temple, destroying the Śivaliṅga and killing 50,000 Hindu defenders. He later builds a mosque on the remaining walls.
		1025	Chola ruler Maharaja Rajendra I sends victorious naval expeditions to Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia, initiating decline of Mahāyāna Buddhist empire of Srivijaya.
		ca 1040	Chinese invent the compass and moveable type and perfect the use of gunpowder, first invented and used in India as an explosive mixture of saltpetre, sulfur and charcoal to power guns, cannons and artillery.
		ca 1050	Lifetime of Srikantha, promulgator of Śiva Advaita, a major philosophical school of Śaivism.
		ca 1130–1200	Lifetime of Nimbarka, Telugu founder of the Vaishṇava Nimandi sect holding <i>dvaitādvaita</i> , dual-nondual, philosophy. He introduces the worship of Kṛishṇa together with consort Rādhā. (Present-day Nimavats revere Lord Viṣṇu Himself, in the form of the Haṁsa Avatāra, as the originator of their sect.)
		ca 1130	Lifetime of Sekkilar, Tamil chief minister under Chola Emperor Kulottunga II (reign 1133–1150) and author of <i>Periyapurāṇam</i> , 4,286-verse epic hagiography of the 63 Śaiva saints, which is book 12 of the <i>Tirumurai</i> .
		ca 1150	Life of Basavanna, renaissance <i>guru</i> of the Vira Śaiva sect, stressing free will, equality, service to humanity and worship of the Śivaliṅga worn around the neck.
		ca 1150	Khmer ruler Suryavarman II completes Angkor Wat temple (in present-day Cambodia), where his body is later entombed and worshiped as an embodiment of Viṣṇu. This largest Hindu temple in Asia is 12 miles in circumfer-
ORISSA (FROM THE 5TH CENTURY)	WESTERN CHALUKYAS	1050	

W. CHALUKYAS ORISSA CHOLA MAMLUK SULTANS OF DELHI	1200 1250 1300	<p>ence, with a 200-foot high central tower.</p> <p>ca 1162 Mahadevi is born, Śaiva ascetic saint of Karnataka. She wrote 350 majestic and mystical poems.</p> <p>1175 Toltec Empire of Mexico crumbles.</p> <p>1185 Mohammed of Ghur conquers Punjab and Lahore.</p> <p>1191 Eisai founds Rinzaï Zen sect in Japan after study in China.</p> <p>1193 Qutb ud-Din Aybak, a freed slave and first Muslim Sultan of Delhi, establishes Mamluk Dynasty (1193–1290).</p> <p>1197 Great Buddhist university of Nalanda is destroyed by Muslim Ikhtiyār uddin.</p> <p>1200 All of North India is now under Muslim domination.</p> <p>1200 India population reaches 80 million.</p> <p>ca 1200 An unknown author writes <i>Yoga Yājñavalkya</i>.</p> <p>1215 King John is forced to grant the Magna Carta, giving greater rights to the people of England.</p> <p>1227 Mongol Emperor Genghis Khan, conqueror of a vast area from North China to Iran and Central Asia, the largest empire the world has yet seen, dies.</p> <p>1230–60 Suryā temple is constructed at Konarak, Orissa.</p> <p>1238–1317 Lifetime of Ananda Tirtha Madhva, venerable Vaishṇava dualist and opponent of Śankara’s Māyāvādin Advaita philosophy. He composes 37 works and founds the Dvaita Vedānta school, the Brahma Vaishṇava Sampradāya and its eight monasteries, <i>aṣṭamaṭha</i>, in Udupi.</p> <p>ca 1250 Lifetime of Meykandar, Śaiva saint who founds the Meykandar school of pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta. His 12-<i>sūtra Śivajñānabodham</i> becomes the core scripture.</p> <p>1260 Meister Eckhart, the German mystic, is born.</p> <p>1268–1369 Lifetime of Vedanta Desikar, gifted Tamil scholar and poet who founds the Vadakalai, a sect of Vaishṇavism headquartered at Kanchipuram.</p> <p>1270–1350 Lifetime of Namadeva, foremost poet-saint of Maharashtra’s Vārkarī (“pilgrim”) Vaishṇava school, disciple of Jnanadeva. He and his family compose a million verses in praise of Lord Viṭhobā (Vishṇu).</p> <p>1272 Marco Polo visits India en route to China.</p> <p>1274 Council of Lyons II declares that souls go immediately to heaven, purgatory or hell; interpreted by Catholic fathers as condemning the doctrine of reincarnation.</p> <p>1275–96 Lifetime of Jnanadeva, Nātha-trained Vaishṇava saint, founder of the Vārkarī school, who writes <i>Jñāneśvarī</i>, a Marāṭhi verse commentary on <i>Bhagavad Gītā</i>, which becomes Maharashtra’s most popular book.</p> <p>1279 Muktabai is born, Mahārashtran Vārkarī saint and Nātha <i>yoginī</i>, known for her 100 sacred verses.</p> <p>1280 Mongol (Yuan) dynasty (1280–1368) installed in China, under which the bulk of translation of works from Sanskrit into Chinese is completed.</p> <p>1296 Ala-ud-din, second sultan of the Khilji dynasty, rules most of India after his General Kafur conquers the South, extending Muslim dominion all the way to Rameshwaram.</p> <p>ca 1300 Lifetime of Janabai, Mahārashtran Vārkarī Vaishṇava woman saint who writes a portion of Namadeva’s million verses to Viṭhobā (Vishṇu).</p> <p>ca 1300 The <i>Ānanda Samucṇhaya</i> is written, 277 stanzas on <i>hatha yoga</i>, with discussion of the <i>chakras</i> and <i>nādis</i>.</p> <p>1300 Muslim conquerors reach Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari) at the southernmost tip of India and build a mosque there.</p> <p>1317–72 Life of Lalla of Kashmir, Śaiva renunciate and mystic poet. She contributes significantly to the Kashmiri language.</p>
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CHOLA

1300

TUGHLLAK SULTANS

ORISSA

VIJAYANAGARA

1400

LODI SULTANS



- 1336 Vijayanagara Empire (1336–1646) of South India is founded. European visitors are impressed by the opulence and sophistication of its 17-square-mile capital.
- 1345 Aztecs establish advanced civilization in Mexico.
- 1346–90 Life of Krittivasa, translator of *Rāmāyaṇa* into Bengali.
- 1347 Plague called the Black Death spreads rapidly, killing 75 million worldwide before receding in 1351.
- ca 1350 Svatomarama writes *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*.
- ca 1350 Lifetime of Appaya Dikshita, South Indian philosopher-saint whose writings reconcile Vaishṇavism and Śaivism. He advances Śiva Advaita and other Śaiva schools and compiles a temple priests' manual still used today.
- 1398 Tamerlane (Timur) invades India with 90,000 cavalry and sacks Delhi because its Muslim ruler was too tolerant of Hindu idolatry. A Mongolian admirer of Sufism, he was one of the most ruthless of all conquerors.
- 1399 Haridwar, Gaṅgā pilgrimage town, is sacked by Timur.
- ca 1400 *Goraksha Upanishad* is written.
- 1414 Hindu prince Paramesvara of Malaysia converts to Islam.
- 1414–80 Life of Gujarāti Vaishṇava poet-saint Narasinha Mehta.
- 1415 Bengali poet-singer Baru Chandidas writes *Śrīkṛishṇakirtana*, a collection of exquisite songs praising Kṛishṇa.
- 1429 Joan of Arc, age 17, leads French to victory over English.
- ca 1433 China cloisters itself from the outside world by banning further voyages to the West, forming the first “bamboo curtain.”
- 1440–1518 Lifetime of Kabir, Vaishṇava reformer who has both Muslim and Hindu followers. (His Hindi songs remain immensely popular to the present day.)
- ca 1440 Johannes Gutenberg (ca 1400–1468) invents the West's first moveable-type printing press in Germany.
- 1450?–1547 Lifetime of Mirabai, Vaishṇava Rajput princess saint who, married at an early age to the *rāṇa* of Udaipur, devotes herself to Kṛishṇa and later renounces worldly life to wander through India singing to Him beautiful mystic compositions that are sung to the present day.
- 1469–1538 Lifetime of Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism, originally a reformist Hindu sect stressing devotion, faith in the *guru*, repetition of God's name and rejection of renunciation and caste. (Most present-day Sikhs consider themselves members of a separate religion.)
- 1478 Spanish Inquisition begins. Over the next 20 years, Christians burn several

ORISSA	1480	1479–1531	thousand persons at the stake. Lifetime of Vallabhacharya, a married Telugu <i>brāhmin</i> saint who teaches <i>puṣṭīmārga</i> , “path of love,” and a lofty nondual philosophy, Śuddhādvaita Vedānta, in which souls are eternally one with Brahman. Vallabhacharya’s Vaishṇavism worships Kṛishṇa in the form of Śrī Nāthjī.
		1483–1563	Lifetime of Surdas, sightless Hindi bard of Agra, whose hymns to Kṛishṇa are collected in the <i>Sūrsagar</i> .
		1486–1543	Life of Chaitanya, Bengali founder of popular Vaishṇava sect which proclaims Kṛishṇa Supreme God and emphasizes <i>saṅkīrtan</i> , group chanting and dancing.
		1492	Looking for India, Christopher Columbus lands on San Salvador island in the Caribbean, thus “discovering” the Americas and proving the Earth is round, not flat.
		1498	Portugal’s Vasco da Gama sails around Cape of Good Hope to Calcutta, first European to find sea route to India. Portuguese Catholics soon capture Goa (1510) and other places, beginning conquest and exploitation of India by Europeans.
		ca 1500	Life of Arunagirinathar, Tamil saint, author of <i>Tiruppugal</i> hymns; emphasizes feeding the hungry during a time of Muslim oppression and disrupted family life.
		ca 1500	Buddhist and Śaiva Hindu princes are forced off Java by invading Muslims. They resettle on neighboring Bali, with their overlapping priesthoods and vast royal courts: poets, dancers, musicians and artisans. Within 100 years they construct what many call a fairytale kingdom.
		1500	World population 425 million; 105 million live in India.
		1503–1566	Lifetime of Nostradamus, French physician and astrologer who wrote <i>Centuries</i> (1555), a book of prophecies.
		VIJAYANAGARA	1500
1510	Portuguese Catholics conquer Goa to serve as capital of their Asian maritime empire, beginning conquest and exploitation of India by Europeans.		
1517	Luther begins Protestant Reformation in Europe.		
ca 1520	Poet-saint Purandardas (1480–1564) of the Vijayanagara court systematizes Karnatik music.		
1526	Mughal conqueror Babur (1483–1530) defeats the Sultan of Delhi and captures the Koh-i-noor diamond. Occupying Delhi, by 1529 he founds the Indian Mughal Empire (1526–1761), consolidated by his grandson Akbar.		
1528	Emperor Babur destroys temple at Lord Rāma’s birthplace in Ayodhya, erects Babri Masjid (mosque).		
1532–1623	Life of monk-poet Tulsidas, author of <i>Rāmācharitamānasa</i> (1574–77) (based on <i>Rāmāyaṇa</i> ). It advances Rāma worship in the North.		
1542	Spanish Jesuit priest Francis Xavier (1506–1552), most successful Catholic missionary, lands in Goa. First to train and employ native clergy in conversion efforts, he brings Catholicism to India, Malay Archipelago and Japan.		
1544–1603	Life of Dadu, ascetic saint of Gujarat, founder of Dādūpantha, which is guided by his <i>Bānī</i> poems in Hindi.		
1556	Akbar (1542–1605), grandson of Babur, becomes third Mughal Emperor at age 13. Disestablishes Islam as state religion and declares himself impartial ruler of Hindus and Muslims; encourages art, culture, religious tolerance.		
LODI SULTANS	1500	1565	Muslim forces defeat and utterly destroy the city of Vijayanagara. Empire finally collapses in 1646.
		1565	Muslim forces defeat and utterly destroy the city of Vijayanagara. Empire finally collapses in 1646.
		1565	Polish astronomer Copernicus’ (1473–1543) heliocentric system, in which
SIKH KINGDOMS	1500		
MUGHAL SULTANS	1500		

- Earth orbits the sun, gains popularity in Europe among astronomers and mathematicians. (See Aryabhata, 499.)
- 1569 Akbar captures fortress of Ranthambor, ending Rājput independence. Soon controls nearly all of Rajasthan.
- ca 1570 Ekanatha (1533-99), Vārkarī Vaishṇava saint and mystic composer, edits Jnanadeva's *Jñāneśvari* and translates *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, advancing Marāṭhi language.
- 1588 British Navy destroys the Spanish Armada off the coast of Calais, France, to become rulers of the high seas.
- 1589 Akbar rules half of India, shows tolerance for all faiths.
- 1595 Construction is begun on Chidambaram Temple's Hall of a Thousand Pillars in South India, completed in 1685.
- ca 1600 "Persian wheel" to lift water by oxen is adopted, one of few farming innovations since Indus Valley civilization.
- 1600 Royal Charter forms the East India Company, setting in motion a process that ultimately results in the subjugation of India under British rule.
- 1603-4 Guru Arjun compiles *Ādi Granth*, Sikh scripture.
- 1605 Akbar the Great dies at age 63. His son Jahangir succeeds him as fourth Mughal Emperor.
- 1605 Sikh Golden Temple (Harimandir) at Amritsar, Punjab, is finished; covered with gold leaf two centuries later.
- 1608-49 Lifetime of Tukaram, beloved Vārkarī *sant* famed for his *abhaṅgas*, "unbroken hymns," to Kṛishṇa. Considered greatest Marāṭhi spiritual composer.
- 1608-81 Lifetime of Ramdas, mystic poet, Sivaji's *guru*, Marāṭhi saint, who gives Hindus the *dhvaja*, saffron flag.
- 1610 Galileo of Italy (1564-1642) perfects the telescope and with it confirms the Copernican theory. Catholic Inquisition condemns him a heretic for his assertions.
- 1613-14 British East India Company sets up trading post at Surat.
- 1615-18 Mughals grant Britain right to trade and establish factories in consideration for English navy's protection of the Mughal Empire against Portuguese sea power.
- 1619 Jaffna kingdom is annexed and Sri Lanka's ruling dynasty deposed by Portuguese Catholics who, between 1505 and 1658, destroy most of the island's Hindu temples.
- 1619 First black slaves from Africa are sold in Virginia.
- 1620 English pilgrims land and settle at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts.
- 1627-80 Life of Sivaji, valiant general and tolerant founder of Hindu Marāṭha Empire (1674-1818). Emancipates large areas confiscated by Muslims, returning them to Hindu control. First Indian ruler to build a major naval force.
- ca 1628-88 Lifetime of Kumaraguruparar, prolific poet-saint of Tamil Nadu who founds monastery in Varanasi to propound Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy.
- 1630 Over the next two years, millions starve to death as Shah Jahan (1592-1666), fifth Mughal Emperor, drains the royal treasury to buy jewels for his "Peacock Throne."
- 1647 Shah Jahan completes Taj Mahal in Agra on the Yamunā River. Its construction has taken 20,000 laborers 15 years, at a total cost equivalence of US\$25 million.
- 1649 Red Fort is completed in Delhi by Shah Jahan.
- ca 1650 Dharmapura Aadheenam, Śaiva monastery, founded near Mayuram, South India, by Guru Jnanasambandar.
- ca 1650 Robert de Nobili (1577-1656), Italian Jesuit missionary noted for fervor and

1650		intolerance, arrives in Madurai, declares himself a <i>brāhmin</i> , dresses like a Hindu monk. He is credited with composing a <i>Veda</i> -like Sanskrit scripture extolling Jesus.
ca 1650		Two <i>yoga</i> classics, <i>Śiva Saṁhitā</i> and <i>Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā</i> , are written.
1654		A Tamil <i>karttanam</i> is written and sung to celebrate recovery installation of the Tiruchendur Murugan <i>mūrti</i> .
1658		Zealous Muslim Aurangzeb (1618–1707) becomes Mughal Emperor. His discriminatory policies toward Hindus, Marāṭhas and the Deccan kingdoms contribute to the dissolution of the Mughal Empire by 1750.
1660		Frenchman François Bernier reports India's peasantry is living in misery under Mughal rule.
1664		Great Plague of London kills 70,000, 15 percent of population.
1675		Aurangzeb executes Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur, beginning the Sikh-Muslim feud that continues to this day.
1679		Aurangzeb levies <i>jizya</i> tax on non-believers, Hindus.
1680–1747		Lifetime of Italian Jesuit missionary Costanzio Beschi, who preached for 36 years in Tamil Nadu. Under the name of Viramamunivar, he lived in Indian fashion and attained proficiency in the Tamil language. His long poem <i>Tembāvaṇi</i> retells Biblical stories in ornate style.
1682–1722		Peter the Great rules in Russia.
1688		Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb demolishes all temples in Mathura, said to number 1,000. (During their 500-year reign, Muslim rulers destroy roughly 60,000 Hindu temples throughout India, constructing mosques on 3,000 of those sites.)
1700		World population is 610 million. India population is 165 million: 27 percent of world.
ca 1770–1840		Life of the Rishi from the Himalayas, <i>guru</i> of Kadaitswami and first historically known <i>satguru</i> of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā since Tirumular.
1705–42		Lifetime of Tayumanavar, Tamil Śaiva poet-saint and devotional <i>yogic</i> philosopher of Tiruchirappalli.
1708		Govind Singh, tenth and last Sikh <i>guru</i> , is assassinated.
1708–37		Jai Singh II builds astronomical observatories in Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain, Benares and Mathura.
1718–75		Lifetime of Ramprasad, Bengali Śakta poet-saint.
ca 1725		Jesuit Father Hanxleden compiles the first Sanskrit grammar in a European language.
ca 1750		<i>Śākta</i> songs of Bengali poets Ramprasad Sen and Kamalakanta Bhattacharya glorify Her as loving Mother and Daughter and stimulate a rise in devotional Śāktism.
1751		Robert Clive, age 26, seizes Arcot in modern Tamil Nadu as French and British fight for control of South India.
1760		Śaiva <i>sannyāsīs</i> fight Vaishṇava <i>vairāgīs</i> in tragic battle at Hardwar Kumbha Mela; 18,000 monks are killed.
1760		Israel ben Eliezer (Besht), liberal founder of Hasidic Judaism, dies.
1761		Afghan army of Ahmad Shah Durrani routs Hindu Marāṭha forces at Panipat, ending Marāṭha hegemony in North India. As many as 200,000 Hindus are said to have died in the decisive eight-hour battle.
1764		British defeat the weak Mughal Emperor and gain full control of Bengal, richest province of India.
1769		Prithivi Narayaṇ Shah, ruler of Gorkha principality, conquers the Nepal Valley and moves capital to Kathmandu, establishing the present-day Hindu

MUGHAL SULTANS

1700

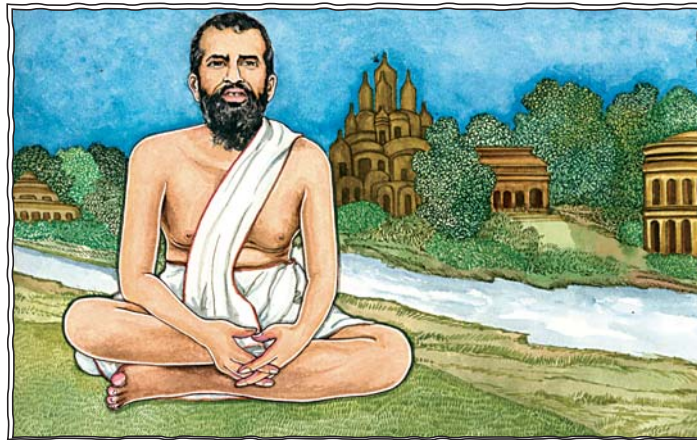
SIKH KINGDOMS

MARATHAS



MARĀTHAS	1780	
		nation of Nepal.
	1773	British East India Company obtains monopoly on the production and sale of opium in Bengal.
	ca 1780–1830	Golden era of Karnatic music. Composers include Sastri Tyagaraja Swami-gal, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Sama Sastri.
	1781	George Washington routs British at Yorktown, Virginia.
	1781–1830	Lifetime of Sahajanandaswami, Gujarati founder of the Swāminārāyaṇ sect (with 1.5 million followers today).
	1784	Judge and linguist Sir William Jones founds Calcutta's Royal Asiatic Society. First such scholastic institution.
	1786	Sir William Jones uses the <i>Rig Veda</i> term <i>Āryan</i> ("noble") to name the parent language of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and Germanic tongues. <i>Nostratic</i> is a more recent term for this hypothetical parent language of Indo-European and certain other languages previously deemed totally unrelated.
	1787–95	British Parliament impeaches Warren Hastings, Governor General of Bengal (1774–85) for misconduct.
	1787	British Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade is formed, marking the beginning of the end of slavery.
	1789	French Revolution begins with storming of the Bastille.
	1792	Britain's Lord Cornwallis, Governor General of India, defeats Tipu Sahib, Sultan of Mysore and most powerful ruler in South India, main bulwark of resistance to British expansion in India.
	1793	Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin in the US, vastly increasing cotton production, proliferating slavery required to process it.
	1796	Over two million worshipers compete for sacred Gaṅgā bath at Kumbha Mela in Hardwar. Five thousand Śaiva ascetics are killed in tragic clash with Sikh ascetics.
	1799	Sultan Tipu is killed in battle against 5,000 British soldiers who storm and raze his capital, Srirangapattinam.
	1803	Second Anglo-Marāṭha war results in British Christian capture of Delhi and control of large parts of India.
	1803	India's population estimated at 200 million.
	1803–82	Lifetime of Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet who helps popularize <i>Bhagavad Gītā</i> and <i>Upanishads</i> in US.
	1804–91	Lifetime of renaissance <i>guru</i> Kadaitswami, born near Bangalore, sent to Sri Lanka by the Rishi from the Himalayas to strengthen Śaivism against Catholic incursion.
	1807	Importation of slaves is banned in the US through an act of Congress motioned by Thomas Jefferson.
	1809	British strike a bargain with Ranjit Singh for exclusive areas of influence.
	1812	Napoleon's Grand Army retreats from Moscow. Out of a 500,000-strong invasion force only 20,000 survive.
	1814	First practical steam locomotive is built.
	1817–92	Lifetime of Bahauallah, Mirza Husayn 'Ali, founder of Baha'i faith (1863), a major off-shoot religion of Islam.
	1818–78	Lifetime of Sivadayal, renaissance founder of the esoteric reformist Rādhā-soamī Vaishṇava sect in Agra.
	1820	First Indian immigrants arrive in the US.
	1822–79	Life of Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, renaissance activist who propounds Advaita Siddhānta, writes first Hindu catechism and translates <i>Bible</i> into Tamil to enable Hindus a faithful comparison to the <i>Vedas</i> and <i>Agamas</i> .
SIKH KINGDOMS	1800	
		BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

- 1823–74 Life of Ramalingaswami, Tamil saint, renaissance founder of Vadalur’s “Hall of Wisdom for Universal Worship.”
- 1824–83 Lifetime of Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, renaissance founder of Arya Samaj (1875), Hindu reformist movement stressing a return to the values and practices of the *Vedas*. Author of *Satya Prakash*, “Light on Truth.”
- 1825 First massive emigration of Indian contract workers from Chennai is to Reunion and Mauritius islands.
- 1828 Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) founds Adi Brahma Samaj in Calcutta. Influenced by Islam and Christianity, he denounces polytheism, idol worship; repudiates the *Vedas*, *avatāras*, *karma* and reincarnation, caste and more.
- 1831–91 Lifetime of Russian mystic Madame H.P. Blavatsky, founder of Theosophical Society in 1875, bringing aspects of psychism, Buddhism and Hinduism to the West.
- 1831 British Christians defeat Ranjit Singh’s forces at Balakot, in Sikh attempt to establish a homeland in N.W. India.
- 1833 Slavery is abolished in British Commonwealth countries, giving impetus to abolitionists in United States.
- 1834–79 Lifetime of Sir Mutu Coomaraswamy, brings Śaiva Siddhānta to England, is first Asian knighted by Queen Victoria. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy is his son.
- 1835 Macaulay’s *Minute* furthers Western education in India. English is made official government and court language.
- 1835 Mauritius receives 19,000 immigrant indentured laborers from India. Last ship carrying workers arrives in 1922.



- 1836–86 Lifetime of Sri Paramahansa Ramakrishna, God-intoxicated Bengali Śākta saint, *guru* of Swami Vivekananda. He exemplifies the *bhakti* dimension of Śākta Universalism.
- 1837 Britain formalizes emigration of Indian indentured laborers to supply cheap labor under a system more morally acceptable to British Christian society than slavery, declared illegal in the British Empire in 1833.
- 1837 Kālī-worshiping Thugees are suppressed by British.
- 1838 British Guyana receives its first 250 Indian laborers.
- 1838–84 Life of Keshab Chandra Sen, Hindu reformer who founds Brahma Samaj of India, a radical offshoot of the Adi Brahma Samaj of Ram Mohan Roy.
- 1840–1915 Lifetime of Satguru Chellappaswami of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, initiated at age

1840

BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

1857

BRITISH CROWN RULE

- 19 by Siddha Kadaitswami as next *satguru* in the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā.
- 1840 Joseph de Gobineau (1816–1882), French sociologist, writes *The Inequality of Human Races*. Proclaims the “Āryan race” superior to other great strains and lays down the aristocratic class-doctrine of Āryanism that later provides the basis for Adolf Hitler's Āryan racism.
- 1841 First US chair of Sanskrit and Indology established at Yale University; American Oriental Society founded in 1842.
- 1842–1901 Life of Eknath Ranade, founder of Prarthana Samaj. His social-reform thinking inspires Gokhale and Gandhi.
- 1843 British conquer the Sind region (present-day Pakistan).
- 1845 Trinidad receives its first 197 Indian immigrant laborers.
- 1846 British forcibly separate Kashmir from the Sikhs and sell it to the mahārāja of Jammu for £1,000,000.
- 1849 Sikh army is routed by the British at Amritsar.
- 1850 First English translation of the *R̥ig Veda* by H.H. Wilson, first holder of Oxford's Boden Chair, founded “to promote the translation of the Scriptures into English, so as to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian religion.”
- 1851 Sir M. Monier-Williams (1819–99) publishes *English-Sanskrit Dictionary*. His completed *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* is released after three decades of work in 1899, weeks after his death. 1853–1920 Lifetime of Sarada Devi, wife of Sri Ramakrishna.
- 1853 Max Müller (1823–1900), German Christian Orientalist in England, advocates the term *Āryan* to name a hypothetical primitive people of Central Asia, the common ancestors of Hindus, Persians and Greeks. Müller speculates that this “Āryan race” divided and marched West to Europe and East to India and China around 1500 BCE. Their language, Müller avers, developed into Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Germanic, etc., and all ancient civilizations descended primarily from this Āryan race.
- 1856 Catholic missionary Bishop Caldwell coins the term *Dravidian* to refer to South Indian Caucasian peoples.
- 1857 First Indian Revolution, the “Sepoy Mutiny” (native troops of the Army of the East India Company), is quashed within months as the British retake Delhi, then inflict bloody retribution and plunder throughout North India for atrocities at Kanpur. Britain introduces direct rule through the India Office, a British department of state—ending the 100-year reign of the East India Company.
- 1858 India has 200 miles of railroad. By 1869 5,000 miles of steel track are installed by British railroad companies. In 1900, total track is 25,000 miles, and by World War I, 35,000 miles. By 1970, at 62,136 miles, it is the world's greatest train system. Unfortunately, this vastly depletes India's forests.
- 1859 Charles Darwin publishes controversial book, *The Origin of Species*, propounding his “natural selection” theory of evolution and laying the foundations of modern biology.
- 1860 *S/S Truro* and *S/S Belvedere* dock in Durban, S. Africa, carrying first indentured servants (from Chennai and Calcutta) to work sugar plantations. With contracts of five years and up, thousands emigrate over next 51 years.
- 1861 American Civil War begins in Charleston, S. Carolina.
- 1861–1941 Lifetime of Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.
- 1863–1902 Life of Swami Vivekananda, dynamic renaissance missionary to West and

1870

BRITISH CROWN RULE

1880

- catalyst of Hindu revival in India.
- 1869–1948 Lifetime of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Indian nationalist and Hindu political activist who develops the strategy of nonviolent disobedience that forces Christian Great Britain to grant independence to India (1947).
- 1870 Doctrine of papal infallibility is asserted by the Vatican.
- 1872–1964 Lifetime of Satguru Yogaswami, Nātha renaissance sage of Sri Lanka, Chellappaswami’s successor in the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā.
- 1872–1950 Life of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Bengali Indian nationalist and renaissance *yoga* philosopher. His 30-volume work discusses the “superman,” the Divinely transformed individual soul. Withdraws from the world in 1910 and founds international ashram in Pondicherry.
- 1873–1906 Lifetime of Swami Rama Tirtha, who lectures throughout Japan and America spreading “practical Vedānta.”
- 1875 Madame Blavatsky founds Theosophical Society in New York, later headquartered at Adyar, Chennai, where Annie Besant, president (1907–1933), helps revitalize Hinduism with metaphysical defense of its principles.
- 1876 British Queen Victoria (1819–1901), head of Church of England, is proclaimed Empress of India (1876–1901).
- 1876 Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.
- 1876–1890 Max Müller, pioneer of comparative religion as a scholarly discipline, publishes 50-volume *Sacred Books of the East*, English translations of Indian and Oriental scriptures.
- 1877–1947 Lifetime of Sri Lanka’s Ananda Coomaraswamy, foremost interpreter of Indian art and culture to the West.
- 1879 Incandescent lamp is invented by American Thomas Edison (1847–1931). He patents more than a thousand inventions, among them the microphone (1877) and the phonograph (1878). In New York, Edison installs the world’s first central electric power plant (1881–82).
- 1879 The *Leonidas*, first emigrant ship to Fiji, adds 498 Indian indentured laborers to the nearly 340,000 already working in other British Empire colonies.
- 1879–1966 Lifetime of Sadhu T.L. Vaswani, altruistic Sindhi poet and servant of God, founds several Hindu missions in India and seven Mira Educational Institutions.
- 1879–1950 Lifetime of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Hindu Advaita renunciate renaissance saint of Tiruvannamalai, S. India.
- 1882–1927 Lifetime of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Indian-born Muslim mystic, instrumental in bringing Sufism to the West.
- 1884–1963 Lifetime of Swami Ramdas, known as Papa, Indian saint and devotee of Lord Rāma.
- 1885 A group of middle-class intellectuals in India, some of them British, found the Indian National Congress to be a voice of Indian opinion to the British government. This is the origin of the later Congress Party.
- 1885 First automobile powered by an internal combustion engine is produced by Karl Benz in Mannheim, Germany. Henry Ford makes his first car in 1893 in the US and later invents assembly line production.
- 1886 René Guénon is born, first European philosopher of some note to become a Vedāntin.
- 1887–1963 Lifetime of Swami Sivananda, Hindu universalist renaissance *guru*, author of 200 books, founder of Divine Life Society, with 400 branches worldwide in present day.
- 1888 Max Müller, revising his stance, writes, “*Āryan*, in scientific language, is utterly inapplicable to race. If I say *Āryans*, I mean neither blood nor bones,

1890

- nor hair nor skull; I mean simply those who spoke the Āryan language.”
- 1888–1975 Lifetime of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, renowned Tamil panentheist, renaissance philosopher, eminent writer; free India’s first Vice-President and second President.
- 1891 The Maha Bodhi Society, an organization to encourage Buddhist studies in India and abroad, is founded in Sri Lanka by Buddhist monk Anagarika Dharmapala.
- 1893 Swami Vivekananda represents Hinduism at Chicago’s Parliament of the World’s Religions, first ever interfaith gathering, dramatically enlightening Western opinion as to the profundity of Hindu philosophy and culture.
- 1893–1952 Life of Paramahansa Yogananda, universalist Hindu, renaissance founder of Self Realization Fellowship (1925) in US, author of famed *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946), popular book globalizing India’s spiritual traditions.
- 1894 Gandhi drafts first petition protesting the indentured servant system. Less than six months later, the British announce the halt of indentured emigration from India.
- 1894–1994 Lifetime of Swami Chandrasekharendra, venerated Śaṅkarācārya saint of Kanchi monastery in South India.
- 1894–1969 Lifetime of Meher Baba of Poona, silent sage whose mystical teachings stress love, self-inquiry and God consciousness.
- 1896–1982 Lifetime of Anandamayi Ma, God-intoxicated *yoginī* and mystic Bengali saint. Her spirit lives on in devotees.
- 1896 Nationalist leader and Marāṭhi scholar Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1857–1920) initiates Gaṇeśa Visarjana and Śivāji festivals to fan Indian nationalism. He is first to demand complete independence, Pūrṇa Svarāj, from Britain.
- 1896–1977 Lifetime of Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. In 1966 he founds International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in the US.
- 1896 American humorist Mark Twain writes *Following the Equator*, describing his three-month stay in India, during a voyage to Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, South Africa and England. According to him, and his critics, it is one of his finest works.
- 1897 Swami Vivekananda founds Ramakrishna Mission.
- 1898–1907 Cholera epidemic claims 370,000 lives in India.
- 1900 World population is 1.6 billion. India population is 290 million: 17.8 percent of world.
- 1900 India’s tea exports to Britain reach 137 million pounds.
- 1900–77 Uday Sankar of Udaipur, dancer and choreographer, adapts Western theatrical techniques to Hindu dance, popularizing his ballet in India, Europe and the US.
- 1905 Lord Curzon, arrogant British Viceroy of India, resigns.
- 1905 Sage Yogaswami, age 33, is initiated by Chellappaswami at Nallur, Sri Lanka; later becomes the next preceptor in the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā.
- 1906 Muslim League political party is formed in India.
- 1906 Dutch Christians overcome Bali after Puputan massacres in which Hindu Balinese royal families are murdered.
- 1908–82 Lifetime of Swami Muktananda, a guru of the Kashmīr Śaiva school who founds Siddha Yoga Dham to promulgate Indian mysticism, *kuṇḍalīnī yoga* and philosophy.
- 1909–69 Lifetime of Dada Lekhraj (1909–1969), Hindu founder of Brahma Kumaris, an international social reform movement stressing meditation and world peace.

1900

1912

BRITISH CROWN RULE

1920

- 1909 Gandhi and assistant Maganlal agitate for better working conditions and abolition of indentured servitude in South Africa. Maganlal continues Gandhi's work in Fiji.
- 1912 Anti-Indian racial riots on the US West Coast expel large Hindu immigrant population.
- 1913 New law prohibits Indian immigration to South Africa, primarily in answer to white colonists' alarm at competition of Indian merchants and expired labor contracts.
- 1914 US government excludes Indian citizens from immigration. Restriction stands until 1965.
- 1914 Austria's Archduke Francis Ferdinand is assassinated by Serb nationalists. Chain reaction leads to World War I.
- 1914 Swami Satchidananda is born, founder of Integral Yoga Institute and Light of Truth Universal Shrine in the US.
- 1917 Following the Bolshevik Revolution, communists under Lenin seize power in Russia, one sixth of Earth's land mass.
- 1917 Last Hindu Indian indentured laborers are brought to British Christian colonies of Fiji and Trinidad.
- 1917-93 Life of Swami Chinmayananda, Vedāntist writer, lecturer, Hindu renaissance founder of Chinmaya Mission and co-founder of the Vishva Hindu Parishad.
- 1918 World War I ends. Death toll estimated at ten million.
- 1918 Spanish influenza epidemic kills 12.5 million in India, 21.6 million worldwide.
- 1918 Sadhu J.P. Vaswani is born in Hyderabad, charismatic orator, mystic, poet, philosopher, humanitarian leader.
- 1918 Sirdi Sai Baba, saint to Hindus and Muslims, dies at approximately age 70.
- 1919 Brigadier Dyer orders Gurkhā troops to shoot unarmed demonstrators in Amritsar, killing 379. Massacre convinces Gandhi that India must demand full independence from oppressive British Christian rule.
- 1920 Gandhi formulates *satyāgraha*, "truth power," strategy of noncooperation and nonviolence against India's Christian British rulers. Later resolves to wear only simple *dhoti* to preserve India's homespun cotton industry.
- 1920 System of Indian indentured servitude is abolished following grassroots agitation by Gandhi.
- 1920 Ravi Shankar is born in Varanasi. *Sitār* master, composer and founder of National Orchestra of India, he inspires Western appreciation of Indian music.
- 1922 Pramukh Swami is born, renaissance traditionalist Hindu, head of Bochasanwasi Swaminarayan Sanstha Sangh.
- 1922 Tagore's school at Santiniketan (founded 1901) is made into Visva Bharati University. Becomes a national university in 1951.
- 1923 US law excludes Indian nationals from naturalization.
- 1924 Sir John Marshall (1876-1958) discovers relics of Indus Valley ancient Hindu civilization. Begins systematic large-scale excavations.
- 1925 K.V. Hedgewar (1890-1949) founds Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist movement.
- 1926 Satya Sai Baba is born, charismatic universalist Hindu renaissance *guru*, educationalist, worker of miracles.
- 1927 Sivaya Subramuniaswami is born in Oakland, California, 162nd *satguru* in the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā and author of this book.
- 1927 Maharashtra bars tradition of dedicating girls to temples as Devadāsīs, ritual dancers. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa soon follow suit. Twenty years later, Tamil Nadu bans devotional dancing and singing by women in its thousands of temples and in all Hindu ceremonies.

1930

- 1927 & 34 Indians are admitted as jurors and court magistrates in India.
- 1928 Hindu leader Jawaharlal Nehru drafts plan for a free India; becomes president of Congress Party in 1929.
- 1929 Chellachiamman, saint of Sri Lanka, dies. She was mentor to Sage Yogaswami and Kandiah Chettiar.
- 1931 Sri Chinmoy is born in Bengal, *yogī*, artist, self-transcendence master and United Nations peace ambassador.
- 1931 2.5 million Indians reside overseas; largest communities are in Sri Lanka, Malaya, Mauritius and South Africa.
- 1931 Dr. Karan Singh is born, son and heir apparent of last mahārāja of Kashmir; becomes parliamentarian, Indian ambassador to the US and global Hindu spokesman.
- 1934 Paul Brunton's instantly popular *A Search in Secret India* makes known to the West such illumined holy men as Sri Chandrasekharendra and Ramana Maharshi.

1936–1991

- Lifetime of Srimati Rukmini Devi, founder Kalakshetra—a school of Hindu classical music, dance, theatrical arts, painting and handicrafts—in Chennai.
- 1938 Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is founded in Mumbai by K.M. Munshi to conserve, develop and diffuse Indian culture.
- 1939 Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle"), manifesto of Nazism, published 1925, sells 5 million copies in 11 languages. It reveals his racist Āryan, anti-Semitic ideology, strategy of revenge and National-Socialist (Nazi) rise to power.
- 1939 World War II begins September 1 as Germany invades Poland.
- 1939 Maria Montessori (1870–1952), renowned Italian physician and "discoverer of the child," spends nine years in India teaching her kindergarten method and studying Hinduism through the Theosophical Society in Adyar.

1940

- 1939 Mohammed Ali Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League from 1934 to his death in 1947, calls for a separate Muslim state. His firm stand at the time of independence is instrumental in the formation of Pakistan.
- 1942 At sites along the lost Sarasvatī River in Rajasthan, archeologist Sir Aurel Stein finds shards with incised characters identical to those on Indus Valley seals.
- 1945 Germany surrenders to Allied forces. Ghastly concentration camps are discovered where 6 million Jews were killed.
- 1945 US drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, ending World War II. Total war dead is 60 million.
- 1945 The United Nations is founded by the four Allied nations and China to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."
- 1947 India gains independence from Britain August 15. Leaders agree to partition into India and Pakistan despite Gandhi's opposition (as chronicled in a letter to Lord Mountbatten that surfaced in 1996: "I pointed [out] the initial mistake of the British being party to splitting India into two. It is not possible to undo the mistake.") Death toll is 600,000 in dual exodus of 14 million.

BRITISH CROWN RULE

1948

INDEPENDENT INDIA

1950



- 1948 The last British troops leave India February 28 in a procession through the city of Mumbai culminating at the Gateway to India, a monument erected to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary in 1911.
- 1948 Britain grants colony of Sri Lanka Dominion status and self-government under Commonwealth jurisdiction.
- 1948 Establishment of Sarva Seva Sangh, Gandhian movement for new social order (Sarvodaya).
- 1948 Mahatma Gandhi is assassinated January 30th in Poona by Nathuram Godse, 35, editor-publisher of *Mahāsbhā*, a Hindu weekly, in retaliation for Gandhi’s concessions to Muslim demands and agreeing to partition 27 percent of India to create the new Islamic nation of Pakistan.
- 1949 Sri Lanka’s Sage Yogaswami initiates Sivaya Subramuniyaswami as his successor in Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā. Subramuniyaswami founds Saiva Siddhanta Church and Yoga Order the same year.
- 1949 India’s new Constitution, authored chiefly by B.R. Ambedkar, declares there shall be no “discrimination” against any citizen on the grounds of caste, *jāti*, and that the practice of “untouchability” is abolished.
- 1950 Wartime jobs in West, taking women out of home, have led to weakened family, delinquency, cultural breakdown.
- 1950s-60s Tours of Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan lead to worldwide popularization of Indian music.
- 1950 India is declared a secular republic. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1947-1964) is determined to abolish caste and industrialize the nation. Constitution makes Hindi official national language; English to continue for 15 years; 14 major state languages are recognized.
- 1951 India’s Bharatiya Janata Sangh (BJP) party is founded.
- 1955-6 Indian government enacts social reforms on Hindu marriage, inheritance, guardianship, adoption, etc
- 1955 Albert Einstein (1879-1955), brilliant German physicist, author of the Theory of Relativity theory, dies. He declared Lord Śiva Naṭarāja the best metaphor for the workings of the universe.
- 1956 India’s government reorganizes states according to linguistic principles and inaugurates second Five-Year Plan.
- 1956 Swami Satchidananda makes first visit to America.
- 1957 Sivaya Subramuniyaswami founds Himalayan Academy in San Francisco and opens there the United States’ first Hindu temple.



1960

1970

- 1959 Dalai Lama flees Tibet and finds refuge in North India as China invades his Buddhist nation.
- 1959 The transistor makes computers smaller and faster than prototypes like the 51-foot-long, 8-foot high Mark I, containing ¾-million parts and 500 miles of wire, invented for the US Navy in 1944 by IBM's Howard Aiken. From the 1960s onward, integrated circuitry and microprocessors will empower these descendants of the 5,000-year-old abacus to revolutionize technology.
- 1960 Since 1930, 5 percent of immigrants to US have been Asians, while European immigrants have constituted 58 percent.
- 1960 Border war with China shakes India's nonaligned policy.
- 1961 India forcibly reclaims Goa, Daman and Diu from the Portuguese. Goa became a state of India in 1987.
- 1963 US President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.
- 1963 Hallucinogenic drug culture arises in the US. Hindu *gurus* decry the false promise and predict "a chemical chaos."
- 1964 India's Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), a Hindu religious nationalist movement, is founded to counter secularism.
- 1964 Rock group, the *Beatles*, practice Transcendental Meditation (TM), bringing fame to Maharshi Mahesh Yogi.
- 1965 US immigration law cancels racial qualifications and restores naturalization rights. Admits 170,000 Asians yearly.
- 1966 Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, becomes prime minister of India, world's largest democracy, succeeding Lal Bahadur Sastri who took office after Nehru's death in 1964.
- 1968 US civil rights leader Martin Luther King is assassinated.
- 1969 US astronaut Neil Armstrong sets foot on the moon.
- 1970 Kauai Aadheenam, site of Kadavul Hindu Temple, Saiva Siddhanta Church headquarters and San Marga Sanctuary, is founded February 5 on Hawaii's Garden Island by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami.
- 1971 Rebellion in East Pakistan (formerly Bengal). Ten million Bengalis, mainly Hindus, flee to India. Indo-Pak border clashes escalate to war. India defeats West Pakistan. East Pakistan becomes independent Bangladesh.
- 1972 *A Historical Atlas of South Asia* is produced by Joseph E. Schwartzberg, Shiva G. Bajpai, Raj B. Mathur, *et al.*
- 1972 Muslim dictator Idi Amin expels Indians from Uganda.
- 1973 Neem Karoli Baba, Hindu mystic and *siddha*, dies.
- 1974 India detonates a "nuclear device."
- 1974 Watergate scandal. US President Nixon resigns.
- 1975 Netherlands gives independence to Dutch Guyana, which becomes Surinam; one third of Hindus (descendants of Indian plantation workers) emigrate to Netherlands for better social and economic conditions.
- 1977 One hundred thousand Tamil Hindu tea-pickers expatriated from Sri Lanka are shipped to Chennai, South India.
- 1979 Sivaya Subramuniyaswami founds HINDUISM TODAY international journal to promote Hindu solidarity.
- 1980 Two million attend grand South Indian counterpart to Kumbha Mela of Prayag, the Mahāmagham festival, held every 12 years in Kumbhakonam on the river Kāveri.
- 1981 India is home to half the world's cattle: 8 cows for every 10 Indians.
- 1981 Deadly AIDS disease is conclusively identified.
- 1981 First Bharata natyam dance in a temple since 1947 Christian-British ban on Devadāsīs is held at Chidambaram; 100,000 attend the performance ar-

1983

ranged by Sivaya Subramuniaswami.

- 1983 Violence between Hindu Tamils and Buddhist Singhalese in Sri Lanka marks beginning of Tamil rebellion by Tiger Freedom Fighters demanding an independent nation called Eelam. Prolonged civil war results.
- 1984 Balasarasvati, eminent classical Karnatic singer and Bharata natyam dancer of worldwide acclaim, dies.
- 1984 Since 1980, Asians have made up 48 percent of immigrants to the US, with the European portion shrinking to 12 percent.
- 1984 Indian soldiers under orders from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi storm Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar and crush rebellion. She is assassinated this year by her Sikh bodyguards in retaliation. Her son Rajiv takes office.
- 1986 Swami Satchidananda dedicates Light of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS) at Yogaville in Virginia, USA.
- 1986 Jiddu Krishnamurti, anti-*guru guru*, quasi-existentialist philosophical Indian lecturer and author, dies.
- 1986 Delhi's World Religious Parliament bestows title Jagadāchārya, "World Teacher," on five spiritual leaders for their efforts in promoting Hinduism outside India: Swami Chinmayananda (Mumbai); Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami (Hawaii); Yogiraj Amrit Desai (Pennsylvania); Paṇḍit Tej Ramji Sharma (Kathmandu); Swami Jagpurnadas Maharaj (Mauritius).
- 1987 Coup by Col. S. Rabuka, a Methodist, deposes Fiji's Indian-dominated government; 1990 constitution guarantees political majority to ethnic (mostly Christian) Fijians.
- 1988 General Ershad declares Islam the state religion of Bangladesh, outraging the 12-million (11 percent) Hindu population.
- 1988 US allows annual influx of 270,000 Asian immigrants.
- 1988 First Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival is held at Oxford University, England. Hindus discuss international cooperation with 100 religious leaders and 100 parliamentarians.
- 1989 Christians spend US\$165 million yearly to convert Hindus.
- 1989 The Berlin Wall is taken down November 9. Germany is reunited October 3, 1990. Warsaw Pact is dissolved.
- 1990 Under its new democratic constitution, Nepal remains the world's only country with Hinduism as the state religion.
- 1990 300,000 Hindus flee Muslim persecution in Kashmir Valley. Armed militancy begins struggle to end Indian rule and merge with Pakistan as a purely Islamic region. More than 25,000 people are killed over the next 12 years.
- 1990 Foundation stones are laid in Ayodhya (near Babri Masjid) for new temple at birthplace of Lord Rāma, as Hindu nationalism rises.
- 1990 Vatican condemns Eastern mysticism as false doctrine in letter by Cardinal Ratzinger approved by Pope John Paul II, to purge Catholic monasteries, convents and clergy of involvement with Eastern meditation, *yoga* and Zen.
- 1990 Co-sponsored by the Supreme Soviet, Second Global Forum of Spiritual Leaders and Parliamentarians for Human Survival, in Moscow, gives stage for Hindu thinking. Sringeri *sannyāsin* Swami Paramananda Bharati concludes Forum with Vedic peace prayer in Kremlin Hall, leading 2,500 world leaders in chanting *Aum* three times.
- 1990 Communist leadership of USSR collapses, to be replaced by 12 independent democratic nations.
- 1991 Hindu Renaissance Award is established by HINDUISM TODAY and awarded to Swami Paramananda Bharati of Sringeri Matha as "1990 Hindu of the Year."
- 1991 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is assassinated in May.

INDEPENDENT INDIA

1990

1991

1994

- 1991 Indian tribals, *ādivāsīs* 45 million strong.
- 1991 In Bangalore, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami commissions architect Sri V. Ganapati Sthapati to carve the Chola-style, white-granite, Iraivan Temple, a project guided by Sri Sri Trichy Swami and Sri Sri Balagangadharanathaswami. When shipped to Kauai, Hawaii, Iraivan will be the West's first all-stone Āgamic temple.
- 1992 Swami Chidananda Saraswati, head of Parmarth Niketan Trust, is named 1991 Hindu of the Year for his *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* project.
- 1992 World population reaches 5.2 billion; 17 percent, or 895 million, live in India. Of these, 85 percent, or 760 million, are Hindu.
- 1992 Third Global Forum of Spiritual Leaders and Parliamentarians meets in Rio de Janeiro in conjunction with Earth Summit (UNCED). Hindu views of environment and values inform 70,000 delegates planning global future.
- 1992 Hindu radicals demolish Babri Masjid built in 1548 on Rama's birthplace in Ayodhya by Muslim conqueror Babur after he destroyed a Hindu temple marking the site. The monument was a central icon of Hindu grievances against Muslim destruction of 60,000 temples.
- 1993 Swami Chinmayananda is named 1992 Hindu of the Year, for lifetime of dynamic service to Sanātana Dharma worldwide—attains *mahāsamādhi* July 26, at age 77.
- 1993 Swami Brahmananda Sarasvati, renowned *yoga* scholar, and Swami Vishnu-devananda, author of world's most popular manual on *haṭha yoga*, reach *parinirvāṇa*.
- 1993 Chicago's centenary Parliament of the World's Religions convenes in September. Presidents' Assembly, 25 world-faith representatives, forms to perpetuate the effort.
- 1994 Harvard University study identifies over 800 Hindu temples open for worship in the United States.
- 1994 Mata Amritanandamayi (1953–) charismatic woman saint of Kerala, is named 1993 Hindu of the Year.
- 1994 All India pays homage to Kanchi's beloved peripatetic *tapasvin* sage, Srila Sri Sankaracharya Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, who passes away January 7, during his 100th year.
- 1994 Hindu Heritage Endowment, first Hindu international trust, is founded by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami.
- 1995 January 30: 45 million gather at Prayag festival, world's largest gathering.
- 1995 Sri Swami Satchidananda named 1994 Hindu of the Year.
- 1995 August: National seminar of 43 Indian historians and archeologists fixes "the date of Bhārata War at 3139-38 BCE to be the true 'sheet anchor' of Indian chronology."
- 1995 September: India's Supreme Court declares that Ramakrishna Mission is Hindu, overturning its 1980 petition for legal status as a non-Hindu minority religion.
- 1995 September: the Milk Miracle: for 24 hours, Lord Gaṇeśa icons, first in India, then in nearly every country where Hindus reside, sip milk, offered with a spoon by devotees. Tens of millions flock to temples. Delhi's vast stocks of milk, a million liters, is sold out within hours.
- 1995 October: World Hindu Conference convenes in South Africa. President Nelson Mandela attends.
- 1996 Sri Pramukh Swami Maharaj is named Hindu of the Year for 1995, when he founded massive temple in London.
- 1996 One-third (700,000) of Sri Lanka's Tamils have scattered globally as 13-year-

1997

INDEPENDENT INDIA

1999

old civil war continues.

- 1997 Sri Satya Sai Baba is named 1996 Hindu of the Year.
- 1997 Sastri Pandurang Athavale, 76, wins the US\$1.21-million Templeton Prize for his movement of bringing nearness to God to India's downtrodden.
- 1998 Sri Chinmoy is named 1997 Hindu of the Year.
- 1998 Fiji's new constitution helps abolish racial discrimination. In a unifying move, after 28 years of infighting, all Fijians, including Indians, Chinese and Europeans, will all now officially be known as Fiji Islanders.
- 1998 December 20: B.V. Raman, whom fellow astrologer K.N. Rao called the greatest teacher of astrology in 400 years, dies at 86. Editor of *Astrological Magazine* since 1936, he challenged the trend of his countrymen to blindly adopt foreign values and reject India's own traditions, especially astrology.
- 1998 December 26: Sri Ram Swarup, born in 1920, renaissance seer, founder of Voice of India, among 20th century's most influential Hindu thinkers, makes his transition.
- 1998 Maneka Gandhi, writer and environmentalist, widow of Sanjay Gandhi, who presents weekly TV shows in India, breaks ground for animal rights in August, inaugurating the Mysore chapter of People for Animals, boldly speaking against ritual sacrifice as barbaric and uncivilized.
- 1998 Sri Swami Buaji Maharaj, at 109, is named 1998 Hindu of the Year.
- 1999 TERI, a think tank for sustainable development, warns of India's massive environmental degradation since 1947. Activists seek to stop hazardous dam projects and teach principles of eco-ethics, eco-culture and eco-dharma through such programs as the Badrinatha reforestation project.
- 1999 India's sacred art of painting is honored as senior masters like B.G. Sharma and Sri Indra Sharma, publish color large-format books of their life work.
- 1999 Christian campaigns gain force in India to convert the most "unreached nucleus of people in the world." Hindu resentment erupts in sporadic violence.
- 1999 In Kashmir, massacres of Hindus by Muslim insurgents are so common that they attract attention only when large numbers die.
- 1999 With the waning of rationalism and of Christianity, Paganism experiences a renaissance in Europe as people return to the old Gods, reestablish pre-Christian holy sites and practice the faith openly.
- 1999 Hindu awareness and anti-defamation groups begin speaking out as never before, against insults to Hindu traditions and sensibilities, such as the use of Deity images by shoe manufacturers.
- 1999 Educators for nonviolent child-rearing, such as Kris Bhat, author of *Guide to Indo-American Parenting*, are offering viable alternatives to corporal punishment; while principalities gradually ban hitting children in schools.
- 1999 Just outside Washington, D.C., in Lanham, Maryland, Hindus throng to celebrate the consecration of large Murugan temple.
- 1999 India's ruling party is the BJP, the most prominent member of the Sangh Pariwar, a network of organizations ideologically affiliated with the large Hindu activist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).
- 1999 August 28: the foundation is poured for the Iraivan Temple in Hawaii, using a revolutionary "fly-ash" concrete mix designed to last 1,000 years.
- 1999 October 26: respected meditation *guru*, author and philosopher Sri Eknath Eswaran, founder of Blue Mountain Center, passes away at age 88.
- 1999 Pope John Paul II visits India and unwittingly galvanizes opposition to Christian conversion efforts by openly stating that the Church's sole mission in India is the conversion of all Hindus.

2000

INDEPENDENT INDIA

- 1999 Ma Yoga Shakti, 73, one of the first global *yoga* teachers, is named Hindu of the Year 1999, as a pioneer in bringing India's ancient wisdom to the world.
- 2000 January 1: India's version of the Statue of Liberty—a majestic 133-foot-tall granite statue of Saint Tiruvalluvar, author of the ethical masterpiece, *Tirukkural*—is unveiled at the southernmost tip of the continent.
- 2000 The traditional garb of Hindu men, once disdained and all but abandoned, is making a splash in social circles through the efforts of trendy designers.
- 2000 The well-prepared-for Y2K computer disaster, feared to wreak havoc at midnight of the millennium, passes with virtually no incident. Other millennium doomsday fears also fade into oblivion.
- 2000 Dozens of South Asian women's organizations are now established across America to help victims of the global problem of domestic violence.
- 2000 Devotees of charismatic Indira Bettiji Goswami (Jiji) flock to Baroda to celebrate opening of palatial Sri Nathji temple, Manjalpur Mandir, in June.
- 2000 August 25: Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami receives the U Thant Peace Award from The Peace Meditation at the United Nations and addresses 1,200 spiritual leaders gathered for the UN Millennium Peace Summit with the message, "For peace in the world, stop the war in the home."
- 2000 October 29: massive cyclone rips through Orissa, leaving 20 million homeless, killing 20,000 people and 700,000 cattle. Swaminarayan Fellowship sadhus are instrumental in relief efforts in the devastated Indian state.
- 2000 Youth Symposium in Mauritius highlights typical concerns that Hindu youth are everywhere gathering to discuss: rituals, marriage, Hindu identity, Western influence, parental pressure and community service.
- 2000 Sri Lanka's Hindu diaspora has established strong, practicing religious communities around the globe, particularly in Europe and Canada. Thousands worship in dozens of temples and publicly celebrate grand festival processions in municipal streets.
- 2000 Kenya-born Mansukh Patel of the Netherlands, with a following across Europe, exemplifies a new breed of teachers of Dharma, reaching out with a message of compassion, courage and self-dependence rooted in tradition.
- 2000 Indian archeologists agree to help Vietnam restore the famous seventh-century Hindu Cham temples damaged and neglected during years of war. UNESCO declares them a World Heritage Site.
- 2000 Since 1900, 75 percent of Earth's crop plant varieties have been lost; thousands of species of birds, mammals, fish and invertebrates face extinction due to the ravaging of Earth by man. "Most biological systems, which have sustained life on the planet for millions of years, will collapse some time during the next century," warns the Union of Concerned Scientists.
- 2000 Best-selling author and TV celebrity Deepak Chopra, probably the most famous Indian living in the West, has made the ancient sciences of *āyurveda*, *yoga* and meditation user-friendly to the American mainstream.
- 2000 Sri Swami Chidananda Saraswati, venerated, sagely elder President of the Divine Life Society, is named Hindu of the Year 2000.
- 2000 Ten million Bangladesh Hindus have fled to India over the last 50 years to escape sustained persecution and periodic riots. Percentage of Hindus has fallen from 53% in 1872, to 32% in 1900, to 22% in 1947, to 10% in 2000.
- 2000 The first crematorium in North America designed to serve the needs of Sikhs and Hindus is established in Delta, British Columbia, featuring windows through which up to 2,000 people can watch the body burn to ashes.
- 2000 Russia, dominated by the Orthodox Russian Church, bans quasi-Hindu groups and other minorities as "destructive cults." Black-listed groups in-

- clude ISKCON, Ananda Marga and Brahma Kumaris.
- 2000 Hindu themes, especially *karma* and reincarnation, are more and more evident in major motion pictures—like *Sixth Sense* and *Unbreakable* by Indian director M. Night Shyamalan.
- 2000 *Āyurveda*, India’s holistic healing system, is gaining global respect, as allopathic medicine fails to fulfill the quest for good health and relief from illness. Centers are popular all through the West, and medical pilgrims flock to clinic/resorts in India, particularly Kerala, for treatment.
- 2000 December: Delhi’s High Court strikes down a provision for corporal punishment in the Delhi School Education Act, saying it “violates the constitutional right guaranteeing equality and protection of life and personal liberty.”
- 2001 January: 70 million, history’s largest human gathering, worship at Kumbha Mela 2001, Allahabad, at the confluence of the Gangā and Yamuṇā.
- 2001 January 22: massive earthquake in Gujarat near Ahmedabad kills 20,000 and damages 7,000 villages. Huge relief and rehabilitation effort ensues.
- 2001 At Harvard University, Professor Arvind Sharma launches a vanguard course, “Common Misconceptions in the Study of Indic Civilization,” to explore misrepresentations held by Western historians and archeologists.
- 2001 Popular, dynamic Pontiff Sri Bharati Tirthaswami continues the resurgence of Sringeri Math, first and foremost of the four cardinal spiritual centers founded by Adi Sankara in the ninth century.
- 2001 Among 100,000 Hindu university students in the US, many are studying, practicing and sharing their faith with others through chapters of the Hindu Students Council, now established at 56 colleges and five high schools. Summer-camp intensives are another way students of the Hindu diaspora learn about their religion and share their experiences with others.
- 2001 Sri Sambamurthy Sivachariar is named Hindu of the Year 2001 for a lifetime of service and leadership as a Śaiva temple priest and for his efforts to overcome problems that lead many Hindu priests worldwide to leave the priesthood: lack of respect, poor working conditions and low pay.
- 2001 April: an unprecedented conference of US *āyurvedic* schools, practioners and enthusiasts convened by the California Association of Ayurvedic Medicine, founded in 1998, is lauded as “the real birth of *āyurveda* in the West.”
- 2001 June 2: His Majesty King Birendra and most of Nepal’s royal family are murdered, gunned down in the royal palace by the king’s oldest son, Crown Prince Dipendra. The king’s brother, Prince Gyanendra, is crowned king.
- 2001 July 22: The VHP’s Hindu Sangam Cultural Festival in Milpitas, California, draws 15,000, the largest Hindu gathering ever held on the West Coast.
- 2001 Hindu websites proliferate on the Internet for ashrams, schools, resources and temples, where you can even sponsor and attend *pūjās* online. This and CD technology also boosts accessibility and popularity of Indian music. Hindu leaders and devotees worldwide now communicate easily via e-mail.
- 2001 *Vāstuvidyā*, Vedic architecture, is in renaissance, with interest and support on many fronts, including Kerala’s Vastuvidya Gurukulam at Aranmula.
- 2001 August: Sivaya Subramuniaswami, six assisting monks and 65 students board the MS Amsterdam for “2001 Northern European and Russian Inner-search,” Gurudeva’s 19th travel-study program since 1967.
- 2001 HINDUISM TODAY magazine inaugurates *Hindu Press International* (HPI), providing daily news on Hindu events freely by e-mail and on the Internet.
- 2001 Studies at Dholavira help to further dispel the “Āryan Invasion” theory, even among diehard believers. The latest Indus Valley site discovered, this well-planned city of 250 acres near the Indo-Pakistan border reveals no evi-

- dence of such an invasion.
- 2001 Hindu religious television channels are established in India, broadcasting presentations by gifted preachers like Morari Babu all over the nation. Newspapers and magazines are running regular articles on Hindu concepts.
- 2001 The first Hindu prime minister of Trinidad, Basdeo Panday, is sworn into his second term, holding his hand not on the Bible, but the *Bhagavad Gītā*.
- 2001 September 11: Two jetliners, hijacked by Muslim terrorists, destroy the World Trade Center, killing nearly 3,000 in a devastating blow to US economy and morale. A third plane cripples the Pentagon. The US and allies pulverize the Taliban/Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan. Hindus and other East Asians in the US are victimized in sporadic anti-Muslim backlash.
- 2001 November 12: beloved Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyiswami, author of this book, passes away, leaving a half-century legacy of work that sparked a Hindu renaissance and a global fellowship led by a monastic order from six nations to continue his vision. His appointed successor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, ascends the Pīṭham in Hawaii.
- 2001 *Newsweek* reports on a new scientific field, neuro-theology, which theorizes that the area of the brain governing self-identity quiets down during meditation, leaving the perception of being “one with all of creation.”
- 2002 February 27: 54 Hindus in Godhra, mostly women and children, are massacred by armed Muslims. Vicious riots across Gujarat leave 1,000 dead and 100,000 Muslims in refugee camps. The Hindu ideal of nonviolence faces the acid test as leaders divide on condemning or condoning the carnage.
- 2002 Efforts by Hindus to build new Rama Temple at Ayodhya are increased, exacerbating tensions with Muslims who also revere the site.
- 2002 Dada J. P. Vaswani, spiritual head of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission in Pune, is named 2002 Hindu of the Year for an exemplary lifetime of spreading the *dharma* through eloquent oratory, soul-stirring publications and a loving, saintly presence that transcends race, creed, politics and nationality.
- 2002 Hinduism continues to get stronger in most countries of the old diaspora: Fiji, Guyana, Trinidad, Mauritius and Malaysia; and migrant communities from these lands—like the Suriname Hindus to Holland and Guyanese to New York—are maintaining their faith and identity.
- 2002 Sanskrit studies gain popularity in the West, and in India at institutions like the Sanskrit Sansthan of Uttar Pradesh, which offers Vedic courses on *yajña*, *samskāras*, *pūjā* and *jyotiṣa* to young adults in 60 centers .
- 2002 Millions of visitors to New York City are learning the ways of Hindu worship in temple, home and village from Stephen Huyler’s other-worldly exhibit, “Meeting God,” at the American Museum of Natural History.
- 2002 June 12: Six Hindus participate in the World Council of Religious Leaders in Bangkok, forming a charter emphasizing their role in working with the UN to mitigate global conflicts and working locally to ease poverty, preserve the environment and break down religious barriers.
- 2002 June 13: Prabhushri Swami Amar Jyoti, 73, founder of four Jyoti Ashrams in the US and India, attains *mahāsamādhi*.
- 2002 Gallop Poll: 25 percent of all Americans believe in reincarnation.
- 2002 August 21: Swami Satchidananda, founder of Integral Yoga Institute and Light of Truth Universal Shrine in Virginia, attains *mahāsamādhi* at age 87.
- 2002 In a new trend, Christian activists in the West are opposing the teaching of yoga and meditation in schools because of their basis in Eastern religion.
- 2002 Survey of youth in Holland, home to 80,000 Hindus, reveals a poor knowledge of Hinduism and a decided leaning away from old traditions, though

2002

INDEPENDENT INDIA

- 90 percent did affirm that Hindus should be proud of their religion.
- 2002 The VHP establishes the Veda Vidya Peetham in Panjal, Kerala, to allow five elders, among the last living experts of the *Jaiminiya Sāma Veda* tradition, to teach this unique system of Sanskrit chanting to young students.
  - 2002 Following a global trend to bolster Hinduism’s declining priesthood by accepting non-*brāhmins*, 57 non-*brāhmin* men and boys receive the sacred thread ceremony and commence training in Nandipulam, Kerala.
  - 2002 *Havana*, fire ritual, is popular in the diaspora, especially Śrī Mahā Rudra Yajña, with communities gathering en masse to chant *Śrī Rudram*.
  - 2002 HINDUISM TODAY publishes “Medical Ethics,” an article presenting for the first time a summary of Hindu *āyurvedic* perspectives on end-of-life issues, birth issues and other medical concerns facing modern man.
  - 2002 The Malaysia Hindu Sangam seeks to inspire local temples to conduct discourses, social service programs and religious classes, echoing a global concern over the dearth of Hindu education for youth. Christian evangelism, suicide, conversion to Islam, discrimination and poverty are dire problems Hindus face in this Islamic nation.
  - 2002 The Tamil Nadu state government begins Sunday spiritual classes in 63 Hindu shrines to teach children sacred songs and scripture.
  - 2002 *The Comprehensive Oxford Dictionary*, the most authoritative dictionary of the English language, adds 600 new Indian entries to its 20-volume tenth edition, such as *Hindutva*, *panchayat*, *puri* and *dosa*.
  - 2002 Hindu Megatrends 2002: Updating its 1989 analysis, HINDUISM TODAY cites nine megatrends: 1) from Hindu meekness to Hindu pride; 2) from village awareness to global awareness; 3) from East only to both East and West; 4) from a spiritual leadership of men only, to men and women; 5) from temple decline to renovation; 6) from introversion to extroversion; 7) from limited tools to abundant resources; 8) from colony to superpower; 9) from the agricultural to the technological era; 10) from major blows to fewer setbacks.
  - 2050 Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) predicted that in 2000 the West will still dominate Earth, but in the 21st century India will conquer her conquerors. Religion worldwide will regain its earlier importance, and world events will return to the East where civilization originated.
  - 2094 Will Durant foretold in *The Story of Civilization*, “India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of mature mind, understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love for all human beings.”











**Bālaka Pustaka**  
**बालकपुस्तक**



**RESOURCE SEVEN**

**A Children's Primer**

You must meditate in the morning and evening and at night before you go to bed. Just pronounce the name "Śiva" and sit quietly for about two minutes. You will find everything in your life falling into place and your prayers answered.

*Words of Our Master. WM2, P. 368*





LOVING HINDU PARENTS WORLDWIDE HAVE CALLED FOR A COMMON RELIGIOUS CODE TO TEACH THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS. THEY HAVE ASKED, “WHAT IS THE MINIMUM I MUST DO TO DISPATCH MY DUTY TO MY RELIGION AND MY CHILDREN?” THE WORLD

Hindu Federation of Nepal discussed this need at its international conference in Bali in late 1992, and shared their concern with me at that time. In response, I told the Bali Mahāsaṅgha that I would work with my research staff to prepare the minimal duties for parents to pass on the Sanātana Dharma to the next generation. The result was ten *ślokas* summarizing the five essential Hindu beliefs, and the five corresponding observances performed in expression of those beliefs. *Āchāryas* concur that these are sufficient to know and follow to be a good Hindu. We first published these in HINDUISM TODAY'S March, 1993, edition, along with the very popular primer for children covering Hinduism from A to Z. Both of these are assembled here as A Children's Primer. In this section you will also find an illustrated summary of the essential Hindu *samskāras*, or rites of passage. These sacraments are vital to Hindus, for whom life is a sacred journey and every crucial step is acknowledged through traditional ceremony. There are many types of *samskāras*, from the rite anticipating conception to the funeral ceremony. Each one, properly observed, empowers spiritual life, preserves religious culture and establishes bonds with inner worlds as the soul accepts and matures into the responsibilities of each succeeding stage of life. The modern Hindu child raised up with these precepts, practices and sacraments will be a fully functioning human being, one who is tolerant, devotional, fair, fearless, obedient, secure, happy, selfless, detached and traditional.

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*In a story from the Śiva Purāṇa, Sukavan and Sukalai die, leaving 12 children who fall into bad company. Disturbing a sage's meditation, they are cursed. God takes pity. They grow into ministers, all becoming great Śivajñānīs. Children of all backgrounds can prosper with Śiva's grace.*



# Hinduism A to Z

## *Dharma Varṇamālā*

### धर्मवर्णमाला

A UNIQUE INITIAL ALPHABET  
DESIGNED WITH INDIAN MOTIFS



*A* is for Aum,  
the three-syllabled  
*mantra* that repre-  
sents the Sacred  
Mystery in sound  
and vibration.

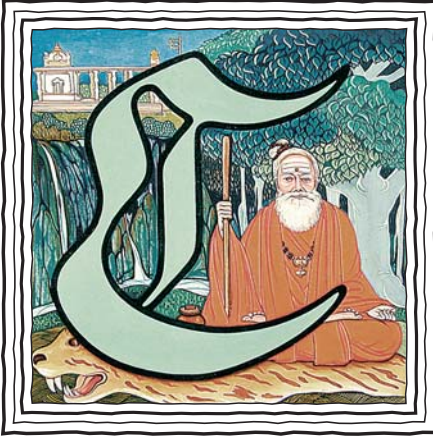
*B* is for *bhakti*,  
deep devotion  
and love for the  
Divine which  
softens even  
hearts of stone.




---

*A child asks his father questions about life. As is common, the father is perplexed, realizing that he does not have adequate answers. From such family needs, this catechism arose, and that includes this illustrated alphabet with its simple summary of Hindu Dharma for the very young.*





C is for culture,  
the beauty of  
Hindu music, fine  
arts, drama, dance,  
literature and  
architecture.

D is for  
*dharma*, which  
is righteousness,  
cosmic order and  
duty, leading us on  
the right path.



E is for Earth, our  
lovely blue planet,  
which we treat as  
sacred, protecting  
all its wonderful  
creatures.



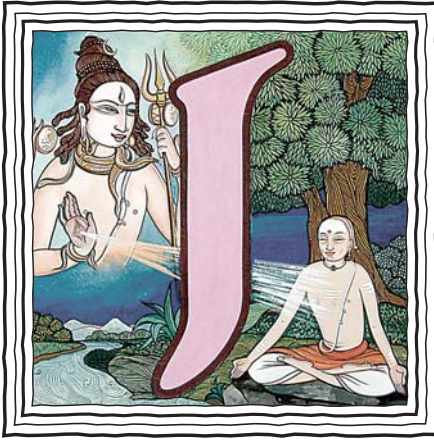


*F* is for family,  
the precious  
cornerstone of  
Hindu life, culture,  
service and  
tradition.

*G* is for *guru*,  
our enlightened  
master who,  
knowing Truth  
himself, can  
guide us there.



*H* is for *haṭha*  
*yoga*, healthful  
physical science  
for vitality, energy-  
balancing and  
meditation.



*I* is for India,  
Bharata, Mother-  
land to one-sixth of  
humanity, holy  
land for Hindus  
everywhere.

*J* is for *japa*,  
repetitive, prayerful  
*mantras* which  
quiet emotion  
and empower the  
mind.

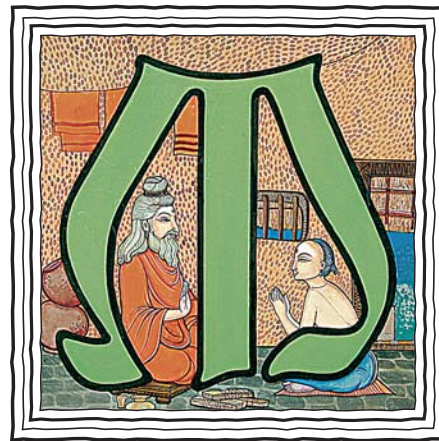


*K* is for *karma*,  
the law of cause and  
effect by which we  
determine our  
experience and  
destiny.



L is for lotus,  
the heart's inner  
shrine, where  
God dwells, ever  
serene, ever  
perfect.

M is for *mauna*,  
not talking, the  
inner silence known  
when words,  
thoughts and  
actions are stilled.



N is for  
nonattachment,  
the art of living the  
simple life, without  
too many needs or  
desires.



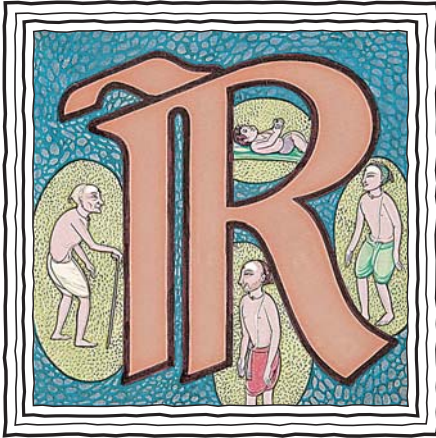


O is for open-mindedness, the Hindu's tolerant freedom of thought, inquiry and belief.

P is for *pūjā*, mystic worship of the Divine in our home shrine and holy temples and places.

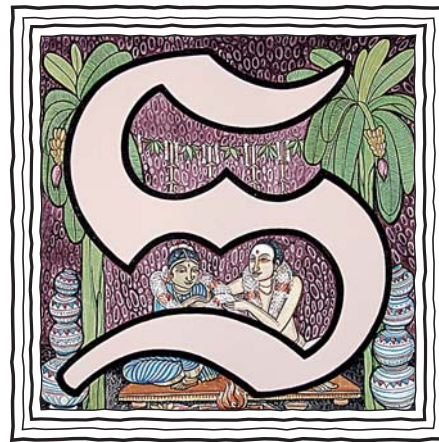


Q is for quest, seeking to know, "Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?"

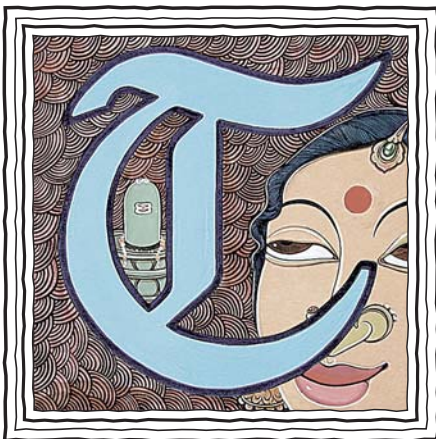


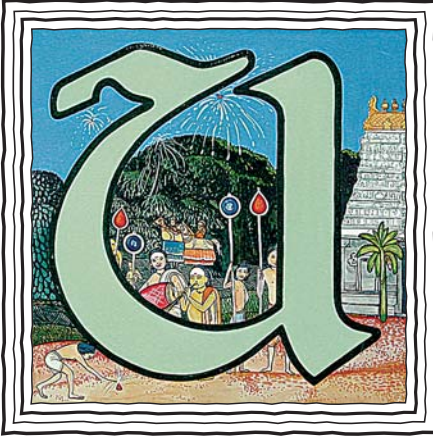
**R** is for  
reincarnation, our  
immortal soul's  
journey from birth  
to rebirth. We do  
not fear death.

**S** is for *saṁskāras*,  
sacraments  
sanctifying life's  
passages: name-  
giving, marriage,  
death and more.



**T** is for *tilaka*,  
forehead marks  
worn in honor  
of our unique  
and varied  
lineages.



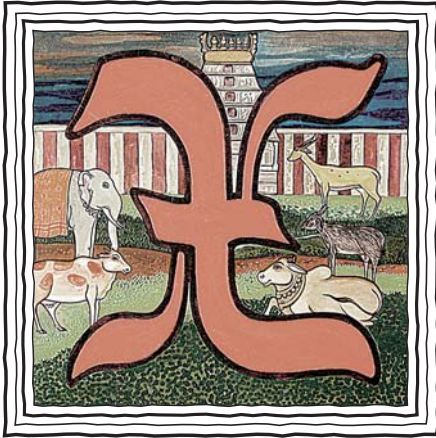


*U* is for *utsava*,  
our many home  
and temple festivals,  
full of *bhakti*, fun,  
feasting and family  
sharing.

*V* is for *Vedas*,  
our oldest and  
holiest book,  
the word of God  
recorded in 100,000  
Sanskrit verses.

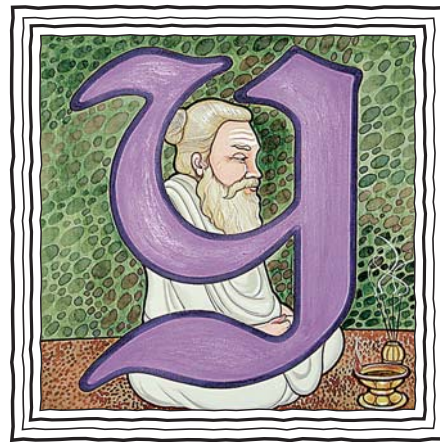


*W* is for wealth  
(*artha*), one of  
life's four goals,  
along with love,  
*dharma* and  
enlightenment.



X is for xerophily, the ability of certain plants and animals to thrive in India's hot, arid plains.

Y is for *yoga*, union of the soul with God which brings release from worldly bondage.



Z is for zeal, the fervor with which we perform service, go on pilgrimage and greet our holy religious leaders.





# Five Precepts

## *Pañcha Śraddhāḥ*

### पञ्चश्रद्धाः

THESE FIVE ŚLOKAS CONSTITUTE THE MINIMAL HINDU BELIEFS. BY TEACHING THESE TO SONS AND DAUGHTERS, PARENTS WORLDWIDE PASS ON THE SANĀTANA DHARMA TO THEIR CHILDREN.

#### सर्वं ब्रह्मन् 1. *Sarva Brahman: God Is All in all*



The dear children are taught of one Supreme Being, all-pervasive, transcendent, creator, preserver, destroyer, manifesting in various forms, worshiped in all religions by many names, the immortal Self in all. They learn to be tolerant, knowing the soul's Divinity and the unity of all mankind.

#### मन्दिर 2. *Mandira: Holy Temples*



The dear children are taught that God, other divine beings and highly evolved souls exist in unseen worlds. They learn to be devoted, knowing that temple worship, fire ceremonies, sacraments and devotionals open channels for loving blessings, help and guidance from these beings.

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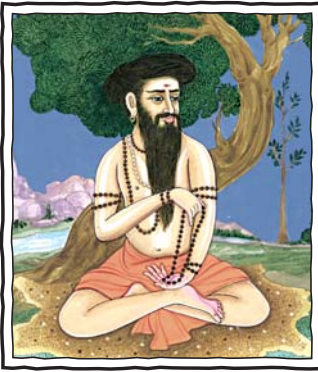
*On a warm summer evening a family gathers on their outdoor balcony. Father embraces the younger son, while older sister plays a lute. Mother listens to the music, gratified to spend these sweet moments with her dear ones and thus pass the dharma to the next generation.*

### कर्म 3. *Karma*: Cosmic Justice



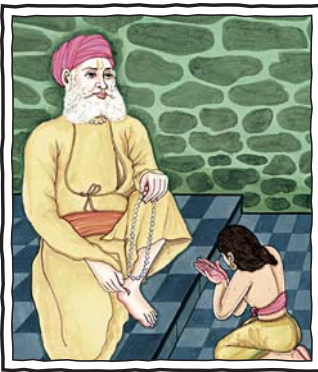
The dear children are taught of *karma*, the divine law of cause and effect by which every thought, word and deed justly returns to them in this or a future life. They learn to be compassionate, knowing that each experience, good or bad, is the self-created reward of prior expressions of free will.

### संसार मोक्ष 4. *Samsāra-Moksha*: Liberation



The dear children are taught that souls experience righteousness, wealth and pleasure in many births, while maturing spiritually. They learn to be fearless, knowing that all souls, without exception, will ultimately attain Self Realization, liberation from rebirth and union with God.

### वेद गुरु 5. *Veda, Guru*: Scripture, Preceptor



The dear children are taught that God revealed the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, which contain the eternal truths. They learn to be obedient, following the precepts of these sacred scriptures and awakened satgurus, whose guidance is absolutely essential for spiritual progress and enlightenment.

# Five Practices

## *Pañcha Kriyāḥ*

### पञ्चक्रियाः

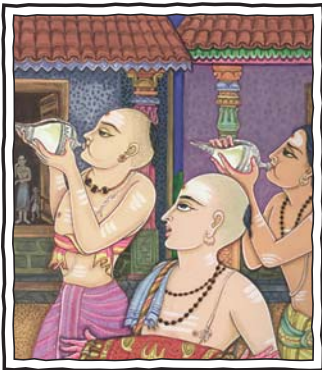
THESE FIVE ŚLOKAS OUTLINE THE MINIMAL HINDU PRACTICES, ALSO KNOWN AS *PAÑCHA NITYA KARMAS*, THAT PARENTS TEACH THEIR CHILDREN IN ORDER TO NURTURE FUTURE CITIZENS WHO ARE STRONG, SECURE, RESPONSIBLE, TOLERANT AND TRADITIONAL.

#### उपासना 1. *Upāsanā*: Worship



The dear children are taught daily worship in the family shrine room—rituals, disciplines, chants, *yogas* and religious study. They learn to be secure through devotion in home and temple, wearing traditional dress, bringing forth love of the Divine and preparing the mind for serene meditation.

#### उत्सव 2. *Utsava*: Holy Days



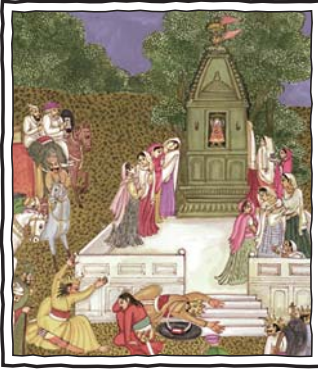
The dear children are taught to participate in Hindu festivals and holy days in the home and temple. They learn to be happy through sweet communion with God at such auspicious celebrations. *Utsava* includes fasting and attending the temple on Monday or Friday and other holy days.

### धर्म 3. *Dharma*: Virtuous Living



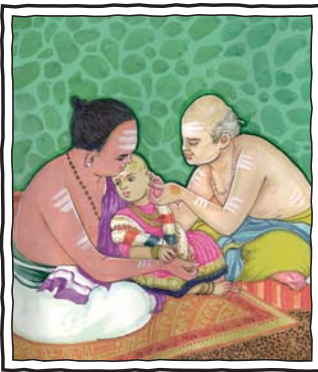
The dear children are taught to live a life of duty and good conduct. They learn to be selfless by thinking of others first, being respectful of parents, elders and *swāmīs*, following divine law, especially *ahimsā*, mental, emotional and physical noninjury to all beings. Thus they resolve karmas.

### तीर्थयात्रा 4. *Tirthayātrā*: Pilgrimage



The dear children are taught the value of pilgrimage and are taken at least once a year for *darśana* of holy persons, temples and places, near or far. They learn to be detached by setting aside worldly affairs and making God, Gods and gurus life's singular focus during these journeys.

### संस्कार 5. *Samskāra*: Rites of Passage



The dear children are taught to observe the many sacraments which mark and sanctify their passages through life. They learn to be traditional by celebrating the rites of birth, name-giving, head-shaving, first feeding, ear-piercing, first learning, coming of age, marriage and death.

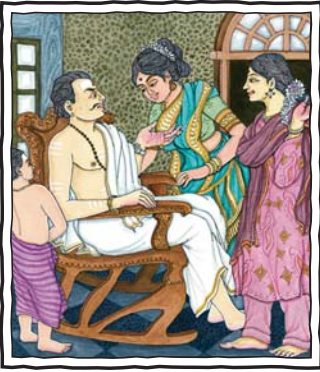
# Five Parenting Guidelines

## *Pañcha Kuṭumba Sādhana*

### पञ्च कुटुम्ब साधन

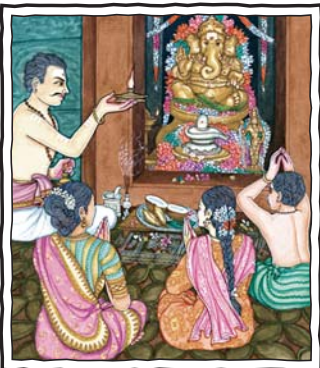
THESE FIVE ŚLOKAS DESCRIBE THE PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE FATHERS AND MOTHERS IN SETTING STRONG RELIGIOUS EXAMPLES THAT NURTURE CHILDREN AND TEACH THEM TO FOLLOW THE PATH OF *DHARMA*.

#### धर्मचार 1. *Dharmachāra*: Good Conduct



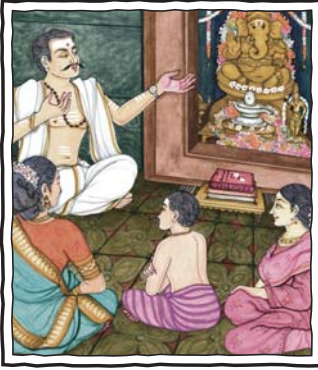
Loving fathers and mothers, knowing they are the greatest influence in a child's life, behave the way their dear children should when adults. They never anger or argue before young ones. Father in a *dhotī*, mother in a *sārī* at home, all sing to God, Gods and *guru*.

#### धर्मस्वगृह 2. *Dharma Svagriha*: Home Worship



Loving fathers and mothers establish a separate shrine room in the home for God, Gods and guardian *devas* of the family. Ideally it should be large enough for all the dear children. It is a sacred place for scriptural study, a refuge from the *karmic* storms of life.

### धर्मसम्भाषन 3. *Dharma Sambhāshana*: Talking About Religion



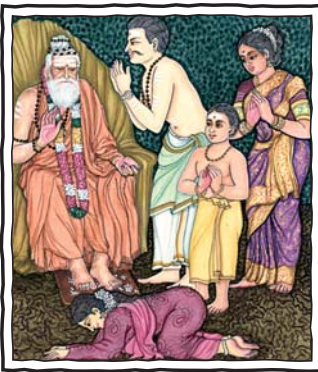
Loving fathers and mothers speak Vedic precepts while driving, eating and playing. This helps dear children understand experiences in right perspective. Parents know many worldly voices are blaring, and their *dharmic* voice must be stronger.

### धर्मस्वाध्याय 4. *Dharma Svādhyāya*: Continuing Self-Study



Loving fathers and mothers keep informed by studying the *Vedas*, *Āgamas* and sacred literature, listening to *swāmīs* and *paṇḍitas*. Youth face a world they will one day own, thus parents prepare their dear children to guide their own future progeny.

### धर्मसंग 5. *Dharma Saṅga*: Following a Spiritual Preceptor



Loving fathers and mothers choose a preceptor, a traditional *satguru*, and lineage to follow. They support their lineage with all their heart, energy and service. He in turn provides them clear guidance for a successful life, material and religious.







# Eight Rites of Passage

## *Ashṭa Saṁskāra*

### अष्टसंस्कार

SACRAMENTS ARE PERFORMED TO CELEBRATE AND SANCTIFY LIFE'S CRUCIAL JUNCTURES, INFORM FAMILY AND COMMUNITY, AND SECURE INNER-WORLD BLESSINGS. HERE ARE EIGHT OF THE ESSENTIAL RITES. OTHERS RITES HONOR COMING OF AGE, THE STAGES OF CHILD-BEARING AND ATTAINING THE WISDOM YEARS.

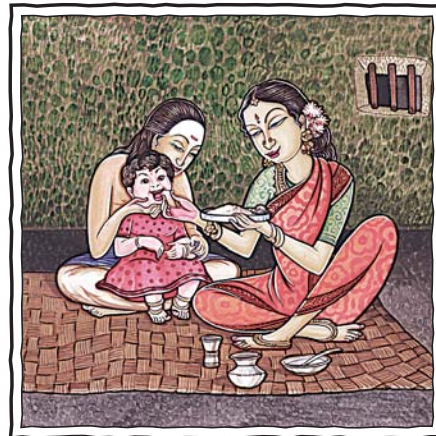


### नामकरण *Nāmakaraṇa*

This is the Hindu name-giving ceremony, performed in the home or the temple 11 to 41 days after birth. The father whispers the auspicious new name in the infant's right ear.

### अन्नप्राशन *Annaprāśana*

The first feeding of solid food is a sacred event performed by the father in the temple or home. The choice of food offered to a child at this crucial time is said to help determine his or her destiny.



Under an elaborate ceremonial tent, a groom holds his bride's hand as they take the traditional seven steps round the sacred fire during their wedding rites, called vivāha saṁskāra. Priests officiate, chanting from the Vedas and offering oblations into the fire to bless the couple.



### कर्णवेध *Karṇavedha*

The ear-piercing ceremony, given to both boys and girls, performed in the temple or the home, generally on the child's first birthday. Health and wealth benefits derive from this ancient rite.

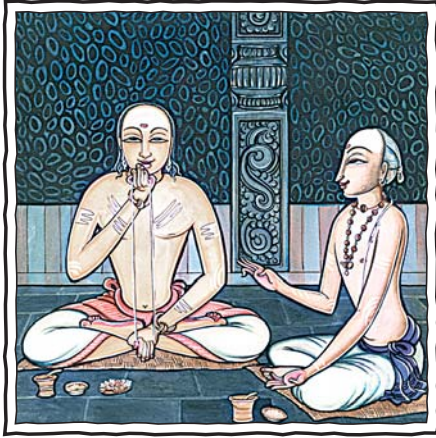
### चूडाकरण *Chūḍākarana*

The head is shaven and smeared with sandalwood paste in this rite performed in the temple or home before age four. It is a very happy day for the child. The shaven head denotes purity and egolessness.



### विद्यारम्भ *Vidyārambha*

The formal beginning of primary education. In this rite, performed in the home or temple, the child scribes the first letter of the alphabet in a tray of unbroken, uncooked, saffron rice.



### उपनयन *Upanayana*

The ceremonial investment of the “sacred thread” and initiation into Vedic study, performed in the home or temple, usually between the ages of 9 and 15, after which a youth is considered “twice born.”

### विवाह *Vivāha*

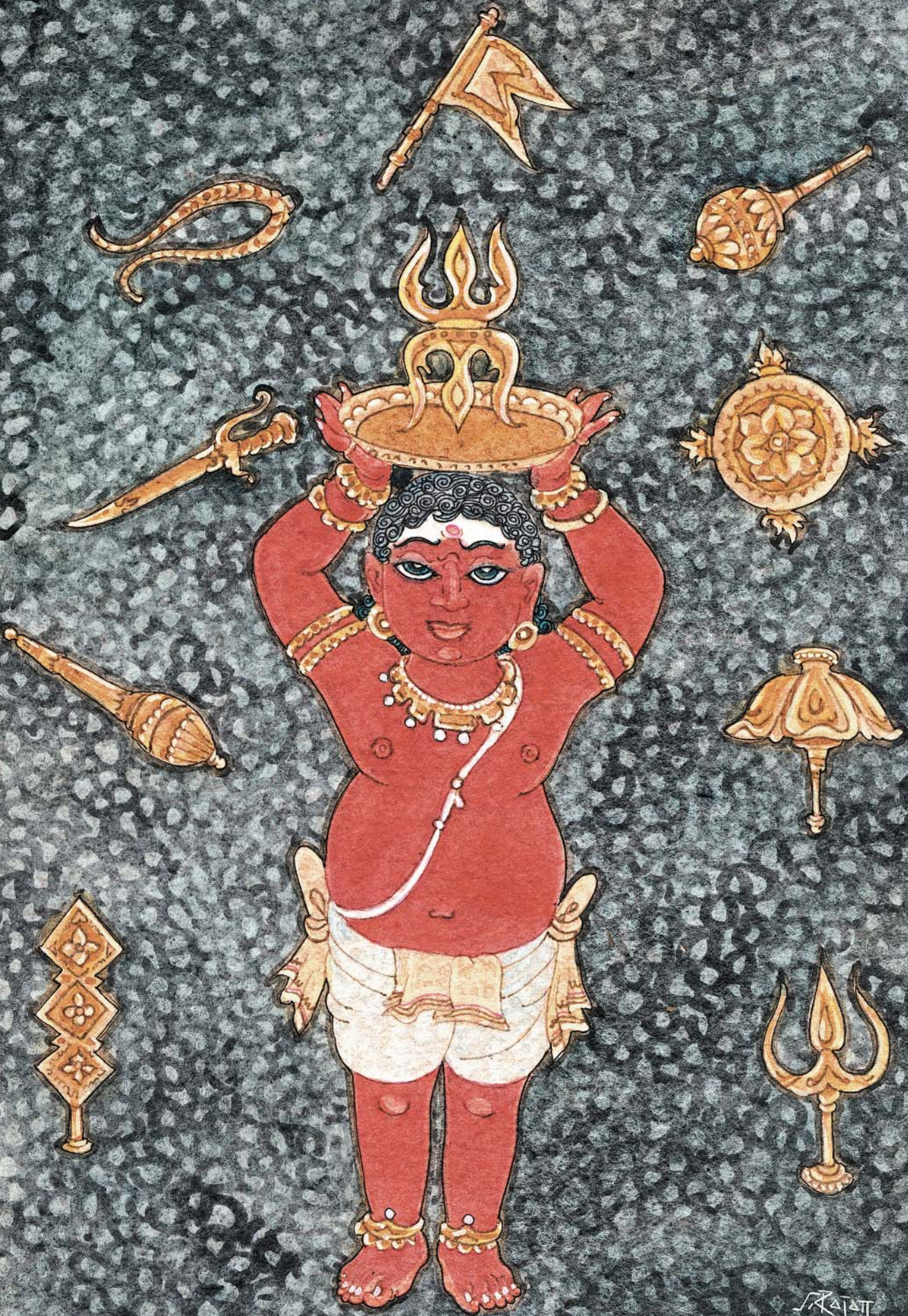
The marriage ceremony, performed in a temple or wedding hall around the sacred *homa* fire. Lifetime vows, Vedic prayers and seven steps before God and Gods consecrate the union of husband and wife.



### अन्त्येष्टि *Antyeshṭi*

The funeral rite includes preparation of the body, cremation, home-cleansing and dispersal of ashes. The purifying fire releases the soul from this world that it may journey unhindered to the next.





# Sacred Symbols of Śaivism

## *Maṅgala Śaiva Lakṣhaṇa*

### मंगलशैवलक्षण

ENDEARING IMAGES EMBODYING  
INTUITIONS OF THE SPIRIT THAT ADORN  
HINDU ART, ARCHITECTURE AND ICONOGRAPHY



SYMBOLS ADORN OUR WORLD AND MIND AT EVERY TURN—IN OUR SPIRITUAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EXPERIENCE. A RING OR GOLD PENDANT SERVES TO SILENTLY ATTEST TO AND STRENGTHEN WEDDED LOVE. ON A MOUNTAINOUS ROAD IN ANY COUNTRY, a sign with a truck silhouette on a steeply angled line warns drivers of dropping grades ahead. The red cross signals aid and comfort in crises. Golden arches tell the vegan to beware. Among the best known symbols in the world are the simple numerals: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. They originated in ancient India as characters of the Brahmi script. Now and then, historic images or happenings are supercharged into symbols. The awesome mushroom cloud of the atom bomb will forever represent the terrifying specter of nuclear destruction.

It is humanity's sacred symbols, its icons of Divinity and Reality, that wield the greatest power to inform and transform consciousness. Taoists gazing upon a yin-yang symbol, Navajo Indians delicately pouring a feather symbol in a sand painting, Muslims embroidering the crescent moon and star, Tibetan Buddhists contemplating an intricate mandala, Christians kneeling before the cross, Hindus meditating upon the Aum, Pagans parading the ankh at Stonehenge—all these images, and hundreds more, communicate cosmic belief structures and function as gateways to inner truths.

To the societies of prehistory (*ca* 7,000-4,000 BCE), living fully in the raw splendor and power of nature, symbols and icons represented supernatural states and beings—as they still do for us today. A stylized image

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*A deva holds above his head a golden vajra (a “thunderbolt” representing indestructibility), a celestial weapon wielded by the Vedic God Indra and other Deities. Other symbols, clockwise: śakti vel, cudgel, sword, noose, flag, mace, chakra with four flames, an umbrella and triśūla.*

of a snake coiled around the top of a clay vase communicated a complex and abstract idea, interpreted by anthropologist Marija Gimbutas as cosmic life force and regeneration.

Wielded by mystic priests, or shamans, symbols serve as psychic tools for invoking invisible cosmic beings and shaping the forces of nature. Thus, to conjure power, a medieval alchemist would enclose himself in a magic circle (a worldwide symbol) filled with geometric pictograms symbolizing astral-plane realities.

Today, as in prehistoric epochs, religious symbols often draw on the forces of nature. The sun flares into prominence among these symbols, appearing in a spectrum of motifs across cultures from Mexico to Mongolia. Hinduism developed dozens of solar symbols, including the *swastika* and the wheel of the sun, which was adopted by the Buddhists as their eight-spoked *dharma* wheel.

Hinduism has amassed a range of didactic icons from thousands of years back. Coins found in the Indus Valley have carried the symbols of the cow and of the yogi seated in meditation across a 6,000-year corridor of time. Many images from the Vedic age have become popular motifs in Kashmiri carpets and Chidambaram *sārīs*. These serve, significantly, to identify and distinguish members of a sect or community. The simple red dot worn on the forehead of many devout Hindus is both the mark of our *dharmic* heritage and the personal reminder to all who wear it that we must see things not only with our physical eyes, but with the mind's eye, the third eye.

India's adepts and seers have excelled at symbolic imagery, transforming *mudrās* (hand gestures) into instantly recognized emblems and transmitters of a Deity's power or a particular frequency of energy. Each accoutrement of the dozens of Deities in the Hindu pantheon conveys a cosmic function, force or capacity. Today this ancient magic is carried forward in a multitude of ways, from the temple priest's invocation to the Indian housewife's drawing of multi-colored designs, called *kolams* or *rangoli*, on the ground as auspicious auguries, household blessings and greetings.



### प्रणव ॐ

*Pranava, Aum*, is the root *mantra* and primal sound from which all creation issues forth. It is associated with Lord Gaṇeśa. Its three syllables stand at the beginning and end of every sacred verse, every human act. Aum.

### गणेश

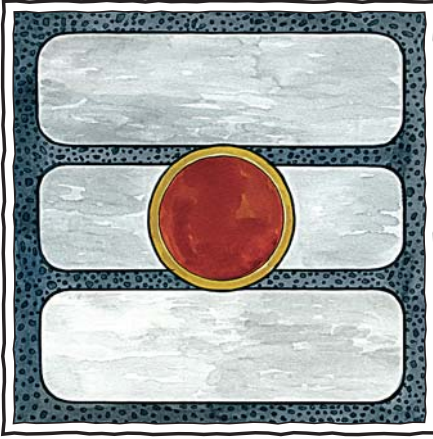
*Gaṇeśa* is the Lord of Obstacles and Ruler of Dharma. Seated upon His throne, He guides our *karmas* through creating and removing obstacles from our path. We seek His permission and blessings in every undertaking. Aum.



### वट

*Vaṭa*, the banyan tree, *Ficus indicus*, symbolizes Hinduism, which branches out in all directions, draws from many roots, spreads shade far and wide, yet stems from one great trunk. Śiva as Silent Sage sits beneath it. Aum.





### त्रिपुण्ड्र

*Tripundra* is a Śaivite's great mark, three stripes of white *vibhūti* on the brow. This holy ash signifies purity and the burning away of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*. The *bindu*, or dot, at the third eye quickens spiritual insight. Aum.

### नटराज

*Natarāja* is Śiva as “King of Dance.” Carved in stone or cast in bronze, His *ānanda tāṇḍava*, the fierce ballet of bliss, dances the cosmos into and out of existence within the fiery arch of flames denoting consciousness. Aum.



### மயில்

*Mayil*, “peacock,” is Lord Muruga's mount, swift and beautiful like Kārttikeya Himself. The proud display of the dancing peacock symbolizes religion in full, unfolded glory. His shrill cry warns of approaching harm. Aum.





## नन्दि

*Nandi* is Lord Śiva's mount, or *vāhana*. This huge white bull with a black tail, whose name means "joyful," disciplined animality kneeling at Śiva's feet, is the ideal devotee, the pure joy and strength of Śaiva Dharma. Aum.

## बिल्व

*Bilva* is the bael tree. Its fruit, flowers and leaves are all sacred to Śiva, liberation's summit. Planting *Aegle marmelos* trees around home or temple is sanctifying, as is worshipping a Liṅga with *bilva* leaves and water. Aum.



## पद्म

*Padma* is the lotus flower, *Nelumbo nucifera*, perfection of beauty, associated with Deities and the *chakras*, especially the 1,000-petaled *sahasrāra*. Rooted in the mud, its blossom is a promise of purity and unfoldment. Aum.





## स्वस्तिक

*Swastika* is the symbol of auspiciousness and good fortune—literally, “It is well.” The right-angled arms of this ancient sun-sign denote the indirect way that Divinity is apprehended: by intuition and not by intellect. Aum.

## महाकाल

*Mahākāla*, “Great Time,” presides above creation’s golden arch. Devouring instants and eons, with a ferocious face, He is Time beyond time, reminder of this world’s transitoriness, that sin and suffering will pass. Aum.



## अंकुश

*Ankuśa*, the goad held in Lord Ganeśa’s right hand, is used to remove obstacles from *dharma*’s path. It is the force by which all wrongful things are repelled from us, the sharp prod which spurs the dullards onward. Aum.



अञ्जलि

*Anjali*, the gesture of two hands brought together near the heart, means to “honor or celebrate.” It is our Hindu greeting, two joined as one, the bringing together of matter and spirit, the self meeting the Self in all. Aum.

गो

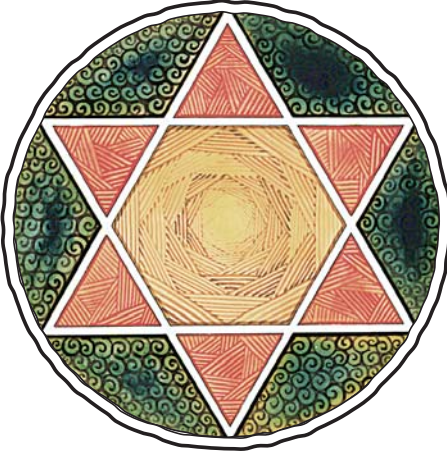
*Go*, the cow, is a symbol of the earth, the nourisher, the ever-giving, undemanding provider. To the Hindu, all animals are sacred, and we acknowledge this reverence of life in our special affection for the gentle cow. Aum.



மாங்கோலம்

*Mankolam*, the pleasing paisley design, is modeled after a mango and associated with Lord Gaṇeśa. Mangos are the sweetest of fruits, symbolizing auspiciousness and the happy fulfillment of legitimate worldly desires. Aum.





### षट्कोण

*Shatkoṇa*, “six-pointed star,” is two interlocking triangles; the upper stands for Śiva, *puruṣa* and fire, the lower for Śakti, *prakṛiti* and water. Their union gives birth to Sanatkumāra, whose sacred number is six. Aum.

### मूषिक

*Mūshika* is Lord Gaṇeśa’s mount, the mouse, traditionally associated with abundance in family life. Under cover of darkness, seldom visible yet always at work, *Mūshika* is like God’s unseen grace in our lives. Aum.



### கொன்றை

*Konrai*, Golden Shower, blossoms are the flowering symbol of Śiva’s honeyed grace in our life. Associated with His shrines and temples throughout India, the *Cassia fistula* is lauded in numberless *Tirumurai* hymns. Aum.



## होमकुण्ड

*Homakunḍa*, the fire altar, is the symbol of ancient Vedic rites. It is through the fire element, denoting divine consciousness, that we make offerings to the Gods. Hindu sacraments are solemnized before the *homa* fire. Aum.

## घण्टा

*Ghaṇṭā* is the bell used in ritual *pūjā*, which engages all senses, including hearing. Its ringing summons the Gods, stimulates the inner ear and reminds us that, like sound, the world may be perceived but not possessed. Aum.



## गोपुर

*Gopuras* are the towering stone gateways through which pilgrims enter the South Indian temple. Richly ornamented with myriad sculptures of the divine pantheon, their tiers symbolize the several planes of existence. Aum.



## कलश

*Kalaśa*, a husked coconut circled by five mango leaves on a pot, is used in *pūjā* to represent any God, especially Lord Gaṇeśa. Breaking a coconut before His shrine is the ego's shattering to reveal the sweet fruit inside. Aum.

## குத்துவிளக்கு

*Kuttuvilaku*, the standing oil lamp, symbolizes the dispelling of ignorance and awakening of the divine light within us. Its soft glow illumines the temple or shrine room, keeping the atmosphere pure and serene. Aum.



## कमण्डलु

*Kamaṇḍalu*, the water vessel, is carried by the Hindu monastic. It symbolizes his simple, self-contained life, his freedom from worldly needs, his constant *sādhana* and *tapas*, and his oath to seek God everywhere. Aum.



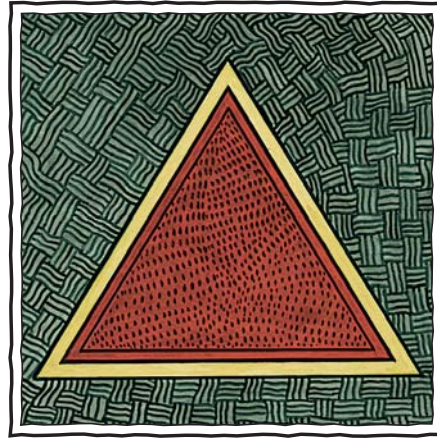


திருவடி

*Tiruvadi*, the sacred sandals worn by saints, sages and *satgurus*, symbolize the preceptor's holy feet, which are the source of his grace. Prostrating before him, we humbly touch his feet for release from worldliness. Aum.

त्रिकोण

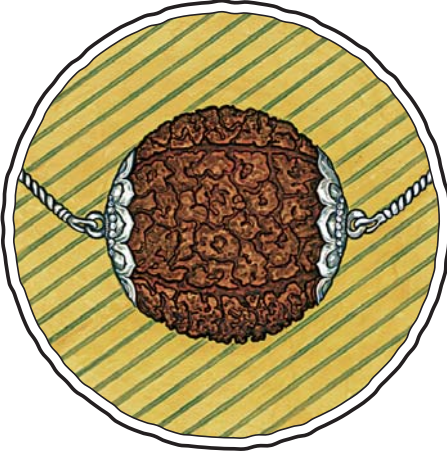
*Trikona*, the triangle, is a symbol of God Śiva which, like the Śivaliṅga, denotes His Absolute Being. It represents the element fire and portrays the process of spiritual ascent and liberation spoken of in scripture. Aum.



சேவல்

*Seval* is the noble red rooster who heralds each dawn, calling all to awake and arise. He is a symbol of the imminence of spiritual unfoldment and wisdom. As a fighting cock, he crows from Lord Skanda's battle flag. Aum.



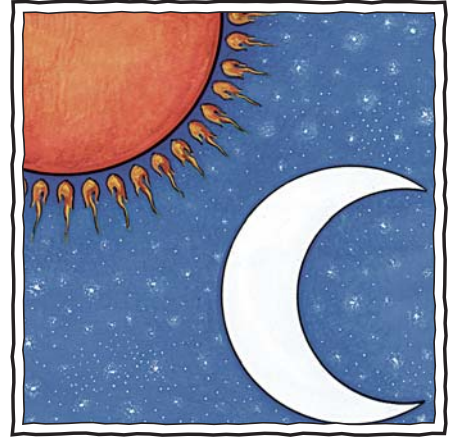


### रुद्राक्ष

*Rudrāksha* seeds, *Eleocarpus ganitrus*, are prized as the compassionate tears Lord Śiva shed for mankind's suffering. Śaivites wear *mālās* of them always as a symbol of God's love, chanting on each bead, "Aum Namaḥ Śivāya."

### चन्द्र सूर्य

*Chandra* is the moon, ruler of the watery realms and of emotion, testing place of migrating souls. *Sūrya* is the sun, ruler of intellect, source of truth. One is *piṅgalā* and lights the day; the other is *iḍā* and lights the night. Aum.



### வேல்

*Vel*, the holy lance, is Lord Murugan's protective power, our safeguard in adversity. Its tip is wide, long and sharp, signifying incisive discrimination and spiritual knowledge, which must be broad, deep and penetrating. Aum.



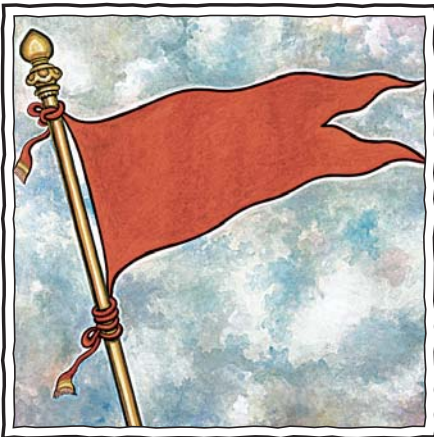


त्रिशूल

*Trishūla*, Śiva’s trident carried by Himalayan *yogīs*, is the royal scepter of the Śaiva Dharma. Its triple prongs betoken desire, action and wisdom; *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *sushumṇā*; and the *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Aum.

नाग

*Nāga*, the cobra, is a symbol of *kuṇḍalinī* power, cosmic energy coiled and slumbering within man. It inspires seekers to overcome misdeeds and suffering by lifting the serpent power up the spine into God Realization. Aum.

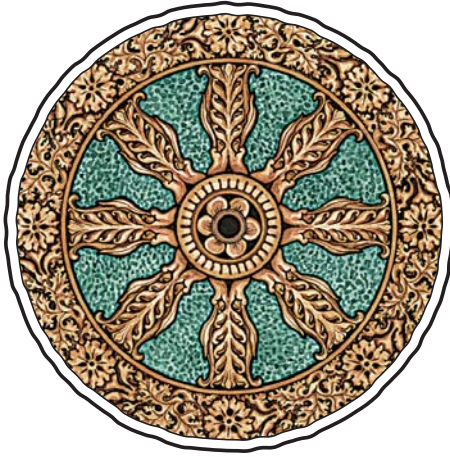


ध्वज

*Dhvaja*, “flag,” is the orange or red banner flown above temples, at festivals and in processions. It is a symbol of victory, signal to all that “Sanātana Dharma shall prevail.” Its color betokens the sun’s life-giving glow. Aum.

कालचक्र

*Kālachakra*, “wheel, or circle,



of time,” is the symbol of perfect creation, of the cycles of existence. Time and space are interwoven, and eight spokes mark the directions, each ruled by a Deity and having a unique quality. Aum.

### शिवलिङ्ग

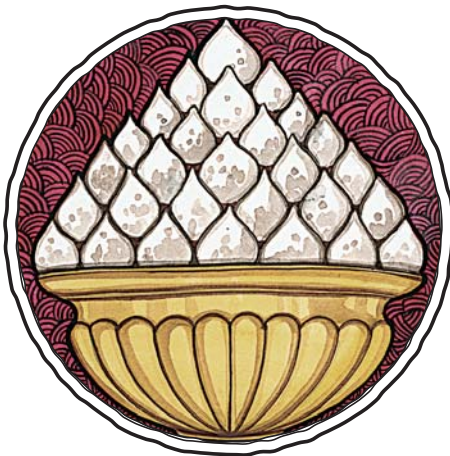
*Śivalinga* is the ancient mark or symbol of God. This ellip-

tical stone is a formless form betokening Paraśiva, That which can never be described or portrayed. The *pīṭha*, pedestal, represents Śiva’s manifest Parāśakti. Aum.



### मोदक

*Modaka*, a round, lemon-sized sweet made of rice, coconut, sugar and spices, is a favor-



ite treat of Gaṇeśa. Esoterically, it corresponds to *siddhi* (attainment or fulfillment), the gladdening contentment of pure joy. Aum.

### पाश

*Pāśa*, tether or noose, represents the soul’s three-fold bondage of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*. *Pāśa* is the all-important



force or fetter by which God (Pati, envisioned as a cowherd) brings souls (*paśu*, or cows) along the path to Truth. Aum.

हंस

*Haṁsa*, vehicle of Brahmā, is the swan (more accurately, the wild goose *Aser indicus*). It is a noble symbol for the soul, and for adept renunciates, Paramahaṁsa, winging high above the mundane and diving straight to the goal. Aum.





## Chitrāṇi चित्राणि

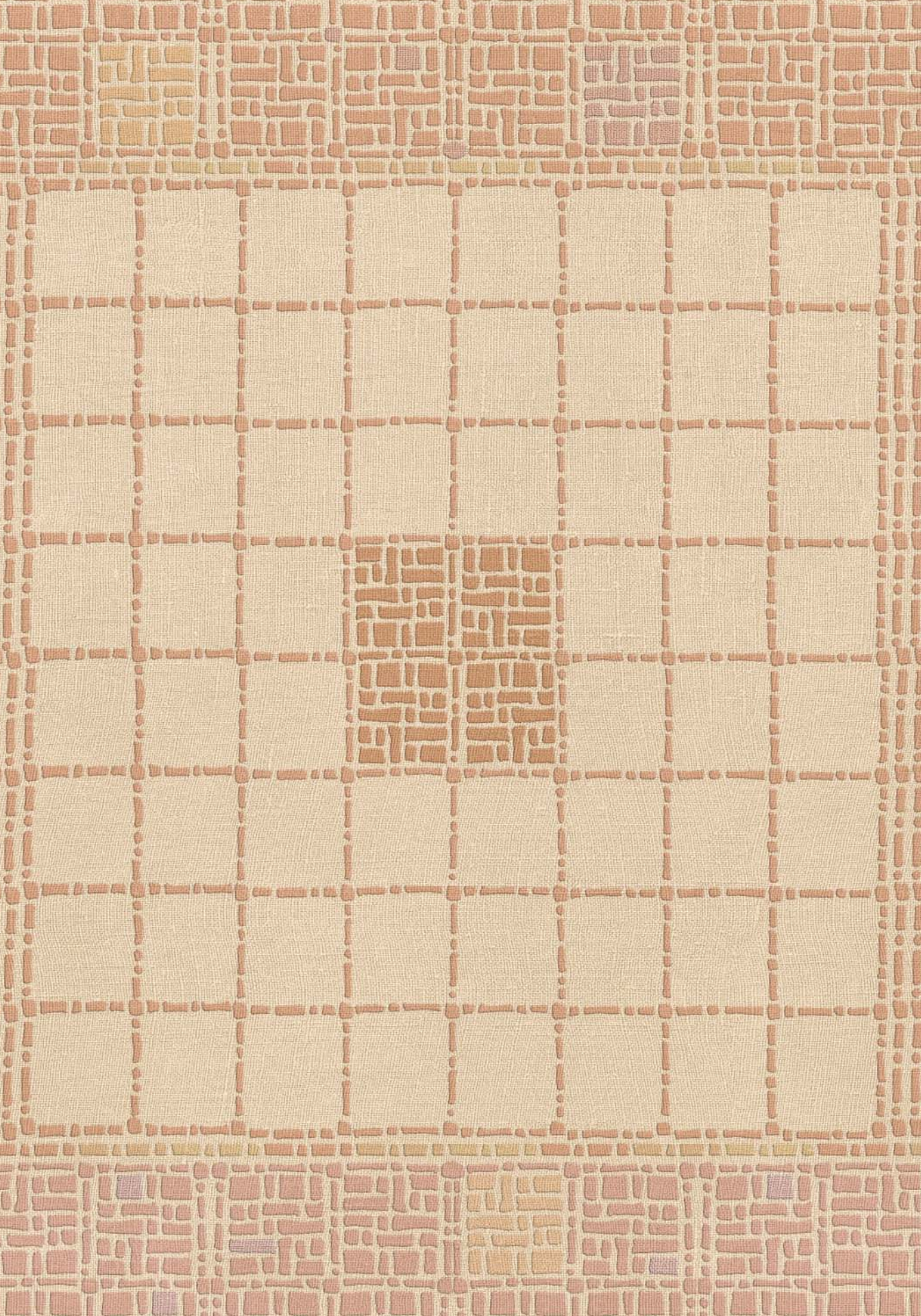


### RESOURCE EIGHT

## Charts

From what I have learned of the scriptures and my own experience of great souls, I can tell you there is no imperfection. God, the Infinite, overwhelms the finite universe. What a rare and beautiful world! The world is sacred and secret. Sacred is secret. Secret is sacred.

*Words of Our Master. WM2, P. 355*





THREE CHARTS ARE GIVEN IN THIS RESOURCE. THE FIRST SHOWS HINDU COSMOLOGY, CORRELATING THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS AND CATEGORIES OF MANIFESTATION, AS WELL AS THE BODIES, SHEATHS, CHAKRAS AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE soul. It is organized with the highest consciousness, or subtlest level of manifestation, at the top, and the lowest, or grossest, at the bottom. In studying the chart, it is important to remember that each level includes within itself all the levels above it. Thus, the element earth, the grossest or outermost aspect of manifestation, contains all the *tattvas* above it on the chart. They are its inner structure. Similarly, the soul encased in a physical body also has all the sheaths named above—*prāṇic*, instinctive-intellectual, cognitive and causal. Here, now, is a brief description of the major parts of the cosmology chart.

***lokas (3 worlds & 14 planes):*** These are the classical divisions of consciousness, traditionally numbering 14, as listed. A simpler breakdown shows in column one the three *lokas*: causal, subtle and gross. The 14 planes correspond directly to the *chakras*, psychic force centers within the inner bodies of the soul, also listed in column two. The 14 *chakras* are “doorways” within man to each of the 14 planes.

***kalā (5 spheres):*** The center of the chart lists the five *kalās*—vast divisions of consciousness or “dimensions” of the mind. Note that the five states of mind—superconscious, subsuperconscious, conscious, subconscious and subsubconscious—are also listed in this column.

***tattva (36 evolutes):*** The 36 *tattvas*, listed to the right of the *kalās*, are the basic “building blocks” of the universe, successively grosser evolutes of consciousness. These are in three groups, as shown.

***kośa & śarīra (3 bodies & 5 sheaths):*** The sheaths or bodies of the soul are given in the two right-hand columns. Note the correlation of these and the worlds by reading across the chart to the left to the two columns named “three worlds,” and “14 planes.”

On the second chart, the 14 *chakras* and their attributes are listed, and on the third, a complete list of all 36 *tattvas* is given. For more insights on the subjects in the chart, please refer to the Glossary.

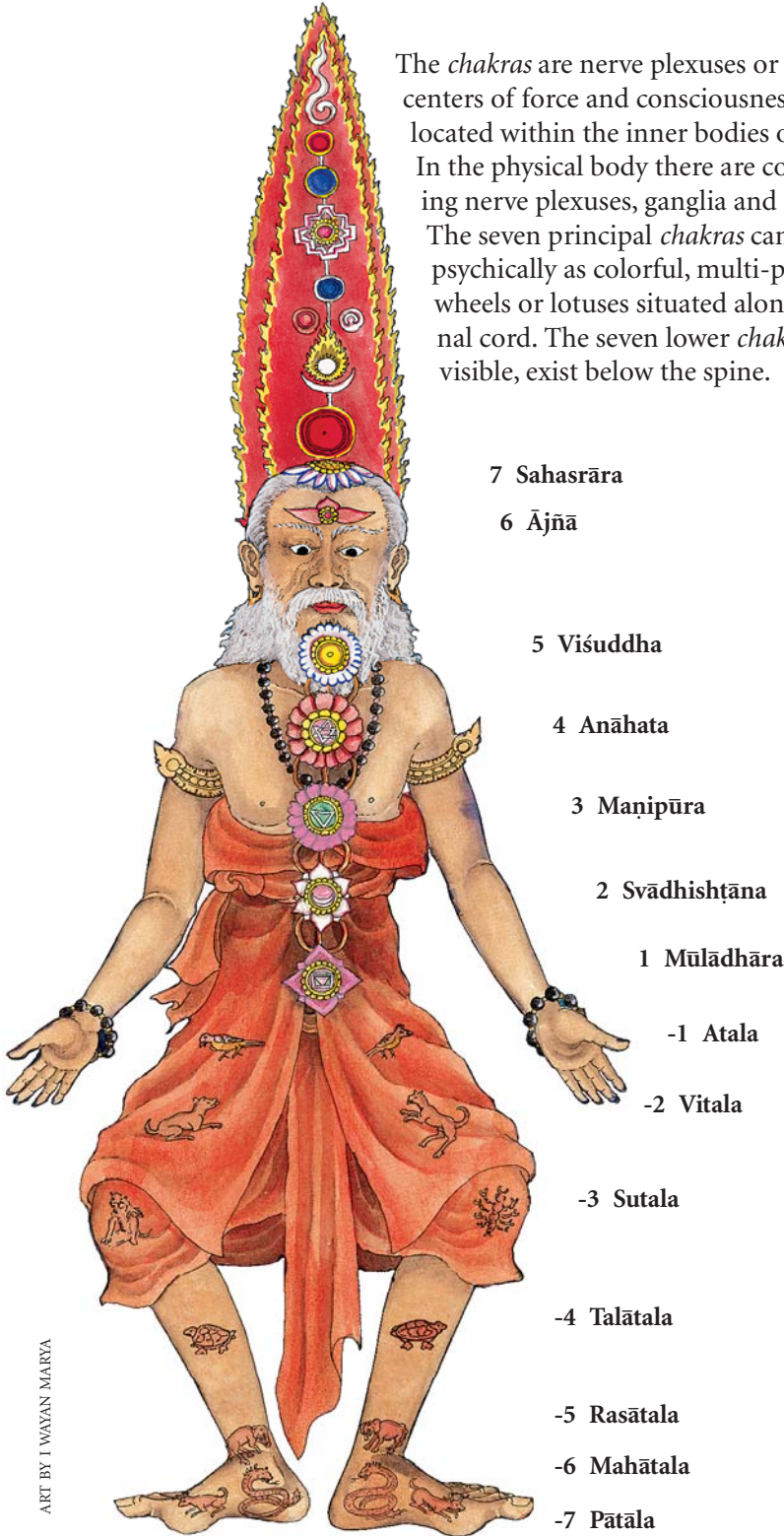


## ॐ Vedic-Āgamic Cosmology ब्रह्माण्ड

३ लोक 3 WORLDS	१४ लोक 14 PLANES (LOKA)	CHAKRAS	५ कला 5 SPHERES (KALĀ)	
<p>THIRD WORLD <b>Śivaloka</b>, “plane of God” and the Gods, also called Kāraṇaloka, the “causal plane”</p>	<p>7. SATYALOKA, “plane of reality,” also called Brahma-loka, region of <i>sahasrāra chakra</i></p>	SAHASRĀRA	<p>5. ŚĀNTYATDĪTAKALĀ Śivānanda, superconsciousness expanded into endless inner space</p>	
	<p>6. TAPOLOKA, “plane of austerity,” <i>ājñā chakra</i></p>	ĀJÑĀ	<p>4. ŚĀNTIKALĀ <i>kāraṇa chitta</i>, superconscious forms made of inner sounds and colors</p>	
	<p>5. JANALOKA, “creative plane,” <i>viśuddha chakra</i></p>	VIŚUDDHA	<p style="text-align: right;">• LIBERATED SOULS</p>	
<div style="border: 1px dashed red; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p>SECOND WORLD <b>Antarloka</b>, the subtle, or astral, plane</p> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">CYCLE OF REINCARNATION <i>samsāra</i></p> </div>	DEVALOKA <small>HIGHER ASTRAL PLANE</small>	<p>4. MAHARLOKA “plane of greatness,” also called Devaloka, “angelic world,” <i>anāhata chakra</i></p>	<p>3. VIDYĀKALĀ <i>anukāraṇa chitta</i>, • subsuperconscious awareness of forms in their totality in progressive states of manifestation • subsuperconscious cognition of the interrelated forces of the spiritual and magnetic energies</p>	
	SVARLOKA <small>MID-ASTRAL</small>	<p>3. SVARLOKA, “celestial plane,” maṇipūra chakra</p>	MAṆIPŪRA	<p>2. PRATIŚHṬHĀKALĀ <i>buddhi chitta and manas chitta</i>, realm of intellect and instinct</p>
	PITRĪLOKA <small>LOWER ASTRAL</small>	<p>2. BHUVARLOKA, “plane of atmosphere,” svādhishṭhāna chakra — PITRĪLOKA, “world of ancestors”</p>	SVĀDHISHṬHĀNA	<p>1. NIVRITTICALĀ: <i>jāgrat chitta, saṃskāra chitta and vāsānā chitta</i>—the conscious, subconscious and subsubconscious mind, the interrelated magnetic forces between people, people and their possessions</p>
	PRETALOKA <small>LOWER ASTRAL</small>	<p>PRETALOKA, “world of the departed,” of earth-bound souls. The astral duplicate of Bhūloka.</p>	MŪLĀDHĀRA	<p>1. NIVRITTICALĀ: <i>jāgrat chitta, saṃskāra chitta and vāsānā chitta</i>—the conscious, subconscious and subsubconscious mind, the interrelated magnetic forces between people, people and their possessions</p>
	BHŪLOKA <small>FIRST WORLD</small>	<p>1. BHŪLOKA, “earth plane,” <i>mūlādhāra chakra</i></p>	MŪLĀDHĀRA	<p>1. NIVRITTICALĀ: <i>jāgrat chitta, saṃskāra chitta and vāsānā chitta</i>—the conscious, subconscious and subsubconscious mind, the interrelated magnetic forces between people, people and their possessions</p>
<p>Antarloka’s netherworld: <b>NARAKA</b></p>	NARAKALOKA <small>SUB-ASTRAL</small>	<p>NARAKALOKA (7 hellish planes of lower consciousness): -1) Put (<i>atala chakra</i>), -2) Avīchi (<i>vitāla chakra</i>), -3) Saṃhāta (<i>sutāla chakra</i>), -4) Tāmisra (<i>talātāla chakra</i>), -5) Rījisha (<i>rasātāla chakra</i>), -6) Kuḍmāla (<i>mahātāla chakra</i>), -7) Kākola (<i>pātāla chakra</i>)</p>	<p>1. NIVRITTICALĀ: <i>jāgrat chitta, saṃskāra chitta and vāsānā chitta</i>—the conscious, subconscious and subsubconscious mind, the interrelated magnetic forces between people, people and their possessions</p>	

## The Inner and Outer Universe

<p><b>Paraśiva (<i>atattva</i>, “beyond existence”)</b></p> <p>३६ तत्त्व 36 EVOLUTES (TATTVA)</p>	<p>३ शरीर <b>3 BODIES</b> (ŚARĪRA)</p> <p>५ कोश <b>5 SHEATHS</b> (KOŚA)</p>	
<p><b>ŚUDDHA MĀYĀ: PURE SPIRITUAL ENERGY</b></p> <p>1) <i>Śiva tattva</i>: Parāśakti-<i>nāda</i>, Satchidānanda, pure consciousness 2) <i>Śakti tattva</i>: Parameśvara-<i>bindu</i>, Personal God</p>	<p><i>viśvagrāsa</i>: final merger of the golden <i>ānandamaya kośa</i> (<i>svarṇaśarīra</i>) in Parameśvara</p>	
<p>3) <i>Sadaśiva tattva</i>: power of revelation 4) <i>Īśvāra tattva</i>: power of concealment 5) <i>Śuddhavidyā tattva</i>: <i>dharma</i>, pure knowing, the powers of dissolution, preservation and creation—Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>SOUL BODY</b></p> <p><b>KĀRAṆA ŚARĪRA</b>, “causal body” or <b>ĀNANDAMAYA KOŚA</b>, “sheath of bliss”—the body of the soul, also called the actinic causal body</p>	
<p><b>ŚUDDHĀŚUDDHA MĀYĀ SPIRITUAL/MAGNETIC ENERGY</b></p> <p>6) <i>māyā tattva</i>: mirific energy 7) <i>kāla tattva</i>: time 8) <i>niyati tattva</i>: <i>karma</i> 9) <i>kalā tattva</i>: creativity, aptitude 10) <i>vidyā tattva</i>: knowledge 11) <i>rāga tattva</i>: attachment, desire 12) <i>puruṣa tattva</i>: shrouded soul</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>REFINED ASTRAL BODY</b></p> <p><b>SŪKSHMA ŚARĪRA</b> the “subtle body,” also called the astral body</p>	<p><b>VIJÑĀNAMAYA KOŚA</b> the “sheath of cognition,” the mental or actinodic causal sheath</p>
<p><b>AŚUDDHA MĀYĀ: MAGNETIC/GROSS ENERGY</b></p> <p>13) <i>prakṛiti tattva</i>: primal nature 14–16) <i>antaḥkaraṇa</i>: mental faculties 17–21) <i>jñānendriyas</i>: organs of perception 22–26) <i>karmendriyas</i>: organs of action 27–31) <i>tanmātras</i>: elements of perception 32–35) <i>ākāśa tattva</i>: (ether), <i>vāyu tattva</i>: (air), <i>tejas tattva</i>: (fire), <i>āpas tattva</i>: (water)</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>GROSS ASTRAL BODY</b></p>	<p><b>MANOMAYAKOŚA</b> the intellectual (odic-causal) and instinctive (odic-astral) sheath</p>
<p>36) <i>prithivī tattva</i>: earth</p>	<p><b>STHŪLA ŚARĪRA</b>, “gross body,” or <b>ANNAMAYA KOŚA</b>, “food-made sheath”—the physical body or odic body</p>	<p><b>PRĀṆAMAYA KOŚA</b> the “sheath of vitality” which enlivens the physical body</p>



**Seven Chakras Above:** The most subtle of the *chakras* lie above and within the crown *chakra* at the top of the head. Buddhist literature cites thirty-two *chakras* above. Āgamic Hindu tradition delineates seven levels of the rarified dimensions of *paranāda*, the first *tattva* and the highest stratum of sound. They are: *vyāpinī*, *vyomāṅga*, *anantā*, *anāthā*, *anāśritā*, *samanā* and *unmanā*. The higher *chakras* have been experienced by a rare few as a conglomerate of *nāḍīs*, spiritual nerve currents, which when stimulated and developed by many *samādhi* experiences, slowly descend into the mental and astral bodies, effecting a permanent transformation of the entire being.

**7. Sahasrāra सहस्रार** Illumination, Godliness. The spiritual mountaintop, pinnacle of light, energy and consciousness. Aham Brahmasmi, “I am That,” is unveiled. Here liberated ones abide in communion with the Self. Meaning: “thousand-petaled.” Location: top of the cranium. Deity: Śiva. Śakti: Nirvāṇaśakti. Color: gold. Petals: 1,008. Plexus: pituitary. Plane: Satyaloka.

**6. Ājñā आज्ञा** Divine sight. Sensitives and clairvoyants reside in the pastel petals of this refined realm, with access to many levels of superconsciousness and inner worlds of light. Meaning: “command.” Location: between the brows. Deity: Ardhanārīśvara. Śakti: Hākinī. Color: lavender. Vehicle: swan. Petals: two. Plexus: cavernous. Plane: Tapoloka.

**5. Viśuddha विशुद्ध** Divine love. Here, limitless love wells up, a vision of all souls as brothers and sisters and all things as sacred. Selfless souls, exceptional artists and mystical poets reside here. Meaning: “purity.” Location: throat. Deity: Sadāśiva. Śakti: Śākinī. Color: smokey purple-blue. Vehicle: peacock. Petals: sixteen. Plexus: pharyngeal. Element: ether. Plane: Janaloka.

**4. Anāhata अनाहत** Direct cognition. Those who reach this realm, with their delicate, penetrating insight into many fields of activity and knowing, are mankind’s guides, counselors, mentors and problem solvers. Meaning: “unsullied.” Location: heart. Deity: Īśvara. Śakti: Kākinī. Color: smokey green. Vehicle: deer. Petals: twelve. Plexus: cardiac. Element: air. Plane: Maharloka.

**3. Maṇipūra मणिपूर** Willpower. This is the hub of willpower. Accomplished men and women perform at high levels mentally and physically when living in this center of energy, discipline and endurance. Meaning: “Jewelled city.” Location: solar plexus. Deity: Mahārudra Śiva. Śakti: Lākinī. Color: yellow-amber. Vehicle: ram. Petals: ten. Plexus: epigastric or solar. Element: fire. Plane: Maharloka-Svarloka.

**2. Svādhisṭhāna स्वाधिष्ठान** Reason. Home of intellect. Educated people work through this center of logic and analysis. Great minds have mastered it. It is the *pandit’s* dwelling place and the pragmatist’s refuge. Meaning: “one’s own place.” Location: lower abdomen. Deity: Viṣṇu. Śakti: Śākinī. Color: reddish orange. Vehicle: crocodile. Petals: six. Plexus: prostatic. Element: Water. Plane: Bhuvarloka.

**1. Mūlādhāra मूलधार** Memory-time-space. The abode of memory, the foundation of all human knowledge, this center is also the seat of our basic instincts of survival, sexuality and others. Meaning: “foundation.” Location: base of spine. Deity: Gaṇeśa and Brahmā. Śakti: Ḍākinī. Color: red. Vehicle: elephant. Petals: four. Plexus: sacral or pelvic. Element: Earth. Plane: Bhūloka.

### Seven Chakras below the *Mūlādhāra*

**1. Atala अतल** Fear and lust. As awareness slips below the *mūlādhāra* into fear, indecision stymies ambition and a licentious lifestyle dulls the *prāṇic* sheath. Meaning: “without bottom.” Plane: Put.

**2. Vitala वितल** Raging anger. Dark red-black streaks emblazen the aura when awareness enters this furnace of instinctive fire and then injures others. Meaning: “region of the lost.” Plane: Avīchi.

**3. Sutala सुतल** Retaliatory jealousy. Wanting what others have and pre-occupation with what one is not gnaws at the mind, instilling ill-will. Meaning: “great lower region.” Plane: Saṁhāta.

**4. Talātala तलातल** Prolonged confusion. Perversions replace natural joys. Negative *karmas* compound and stiffen the flow of awareness. Reason warps. Meaning: “under the bottom level.” Plane: Tāmisra.

**5. Rasātala रसातल** Selfishness. An imprisoning veil of “me” and “mine” blinds the natural instinct to care for others. Every action is for personal gain. Meaning: “lower region of moisture.” Plane: Ṛijisha.

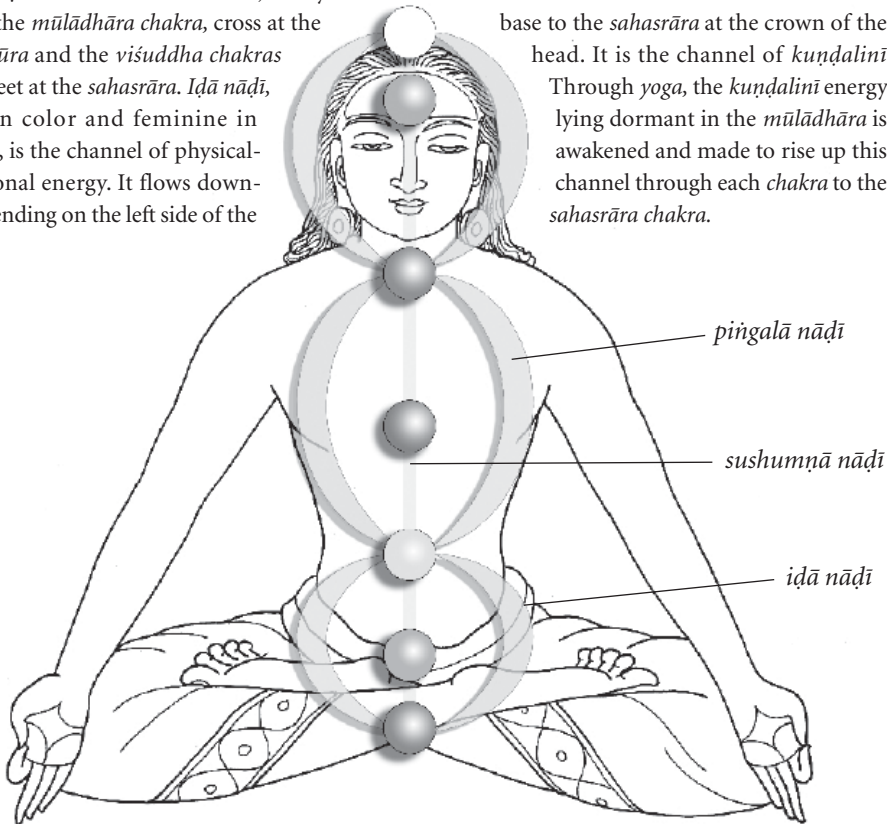
**6. Mahātala महातल** Consciencelessness. Blindness to higher impulses prevails. Guilt, compunction, even fear, are foreign. Criminality is life. Meaning: “greatest lower region.” Plane: Kuḍmala.

**7. Pātāla पाताल** Malice and murder. A virtual hell of hate, hurting, killing for its own sake without remorse. Reason rarely reaches this region. Meaning: “lower region of wickedness.” Plane: Kākola.

***Iḍā, Piṅgalā and Sushumṇā***

Illustrated here are the three main *nāḍīs*: *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *sushumṇā*, psychic nerve currents through which *prāṇa* flows from the central source, Śiva. *Iḍā* and *piṅgalā* intertwine the spinal column (shown diverging far outside the *sushumṇā* for sake of illustration). They begin at the *mūlādhāra chakra*, cross at the *maṇipūra* and the *viśuddha chakras* and meet at the *sahasrāra*. *Iḍā nāḍī*, pink in color and feminine in nature, is the channel of physical-emotional energy. It flows downward, ending on the left side of the

body. *Piṅgalā nāḍī*, blue in color and masculine in nature, is the channel of intellectual-mental energy. It flows upward, ending on the right side of the body. *Sushumṇā*, the major nerve current, pale yellow in color, passes through the spinal column from the *mūlādhāra chakra* at the base to the *sahasrāra* at the crown of the head. It is the channel of *kuṇḍalinī*. Through *yoga*, the *kuṇḍalinī* energy lying dormant in the *mūlādhāra* is awakened and made to rise up this channel through each *chakra* to the *sahasrāra chakra*.



## Twenty-One Chakras

**Seven Upper Chakras:** The most subtle of the 21 *chakras* lie above and within the crown *chakra* at the top of the head. Āgamic Hindu tradition delineates seven levels of *Paranāda*, the first *tattva* and the highest stratum of sound. They are:

NAME	LOCATION/ PLEXUS	ATTRIBUTE	MOTOR ORGAN	ENDOCRINE GLAND	COLOR/ METAL
7) <i>sahasrāra</i>	crown of head/ pituitary	illumination		pituitary	gold
6) <i>ājñā</i>	third eye/ cavernous	divine sight		pineal	lavender
5) <i>viśuddha</i>	throat/ pharyngeal	divine love	mouth	thyroid, parathyroid	smokey purple-blue/ mercury
4) <i>anāhata</i>	heart/ cardiac	direct cognition	hand	thymus	smokey green/ copper
3) <i>maṇipūra</i>	diaphragm/ solar	willpower	feet	pancreas	yellow- amber/ iron
2) <i>svādhiś- thāna</i>	lower abdomen/ hypogastric	reason	genitals	ovaries/ testicles	reddish orange/ tin
1) <i>mūlādhāra</i>	base of spine/ sacral, pelvic	memory, time, space	anus	adrenals	red
1) <i>atala</i>	hips	fear, lust			
2) <i>vitala</i>	thighs	raging anger			
3) <i>sutala</i>	knees	retaliatory jealousy			
4) <i>talātala</i>	calves	prolonged confusion			
5) <i>rasātala</i>	ankles	pure selfishness			
6) <i>mahātala</i>	feet	absence of conscience			
7) <i>pātāla</i>	soles of feet	malice, murder			

## Force Centers of Consciousness

*vyāpinī, vyomāṅga, anantā, anāthā, anāśṛitā, samanā* and *unmanā*, experienced by a rare few as a conglomerate of *nāḍīs*, spiritual nerve currents, stimulated and developed by many *samādhi* experiences.

DEITY/ ŚAKTI	VEHICLE	PLANE	PLANET	ELEMENT/ SENSE	PETALS	LETTER*
Śiva/ Nirvāṇaśakti		Satyaloka	Neptune	Śūnya (void)	1008	
Ardhānar- īśvara/ Hākinī	swan	Tapoloka	Uranus	<i>mahā- tattva/ intuition</i>	2	Aum
Sadaśīva/ Śakinī	peacock	Janaloka	Saturn	ether/ hearing	16	Ham/Ya
Īśvara/Kākinī	deer	Maharloka	Jupiter	air/ touch	12	Yam/Va
Mahārudra/ Lākinī	ram	Svarloka	Mars	fire/ sight	10	Ram/Śi
Vishṇu/ Śakinī	crocodile	Bhuvārloka	Venus	water/ taste	6	Vam/Ma
Gaṇeśa & Brahmā/ Dākinī	elephant	Bhūloka	Mercury	earth/ smell	4	Lam/Na
		Put				
		Avīchi				
		Samhāta				
		Tāmisra				
		Ṛijisha				
		Kuḍmala				
		Kākola				

\* The first sound in the “letter” column is the *bīja mantra* associated with the *chakra*; the second is the syllable of the Pañch-ākshara Mantra associated with the *chakra*.



## The 36 Tattvas: Categories of Existence

Atattva: Paraśiva (Śivaliṅga, Absolute Reality), beyond all categories

### 5 ŚUDDHA TATTVAS

#### Actinic or Pure Spiritual Energy

- 1) *Śiva tattva*: Parāśakti-Nāda (Satchidānanda, pure consciousness)
- 2) *Śakti tattva*: Parameśvara-Bindu (Naṭarāja, Personal God), energy, light and love
- 3) *Sadāśiva tattva*: the power of revelation (Sadāśiva)
- 4) *Īśvāra tattva*: the power of concealment (Maheśvara)
- 5) *Śuddhavidyā tattva*: *dharma*, pure knowing, the powers of dissolution (Rudra), preservation (Viṣṇu) and creation (Brahmā)

### 7 ŚUDDHĀŚUDDHA TATTVAS

#### Actinodic or Spiritual-Magnetic Energy

- 6) *māyā tattva*: mirific energy
- 7) *kāla tattva*: time
- 8) *niyati tattva*: *karma*
- 9) *kalā tattva*: creativity, aptitude
- 10) *vidyā tattva*: knowledge
- 11) *rāga tattva*: attachment, desire
- 12) *puruṣa tattva*: the soul shrouded by the above five *tattvas*

### 24 AŚUDDHA TATTVAS

#### Odic or Gross-Magnetic Energy

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 13) <i>prakṛiti tattva</i> : primal nature         |   |
| 14) <i>buddhi tattva</i> : intellect               |   |
| 15) <i>ahamkāra tattva</i> : external ego          |   |
| 16) <i>manas tattva</i> : instinctive mind         |   |
| 17) <i>śrotra tattva</i> : hearing (ears)          | 27) <i>śabdha tattva</i> : sound          |
| 18) <i>tvak tattva</i> : touching (skin)           | 28) <i>sparsā tattva</i> : feel/palpation |
| 19) <i>chakshu tattva</i> : seeing (eyes)          | 29) <i>rūpa tattva</i> : form             |
| 20) <i>rasanā tattva</i> : tasting (tongue)        | 30) <i>rasa tattva</i> : taste            |
| 21) <i>ghrāṇa tattva</i> : smelling (nose)         | 31) <i>gandha tattva</i> : odor           |
| 22) <i>vāk tattva</i> : speech (voice)             | 32) <i>ākāśa tattva</i> : ether           |
| 23) <i>pāṇi tattva</i> : grasping (hands)          | 33) <i>vāyu tattva</i> : air              |
| 24) <i>pāda tattva</i> : walking (feet)            | 34) <i>tejas tattva</i> : fire            |
| 25) <i>pāyu tattva</i> : excretion (anus)          | 35) <i>āpas tattva</i> : water            |
| 26) <i>upastha tattva</i> : procreation (genitals) | 36) <i>prithivī tattva</i> : earth        |





# Conclusion

## *Samāpanam*

### समापनम्



HERE IS NO COMING. THERE IS NO GOING. YOU AND I ARE EVER ONE. REMAIN SILENT AND KNOW THE SELF WITHIN. “YOU WON’T FIND IT IN BOOKS. YOU WILL FIND IT DEEP WITHIN YOURSELF,” MY SATGURU SAID. SO, *DANCING WITH ŚIVA* IS A SIGNPOST TO point the way. It is a map to give direction. And it is a daily *sādhana*, reading one *śloka* a day, at night just before sleep, to remold the subconscious memory patterns of the base subjective mind into a brand new you. The wisdom of the *Vedas* will be yours when the old *saṁskāras* no longer fight with the new. The old impressions of how you were raised, whom and what you were taught to like and dislike will be erased by the eternal wisdom of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, amplified by the explanations above the verses in each of these daily lessons. All this will bring you new life and new hope. It will bring you solace, contentment and a deep, inner, growing knowledge of the creation of this universe, its preservation and dissolution. It will show you that, yes, you are the center of the universe, the Self, the infinite and supreme Paraśiva. With this goal well in mind, you will persist in working out the patterns of the past, living in the eternal present while being selective in the new patterns you create in the future. As you dance with Śiva from life to life, live with Śiva from life to life, and slowly merge with Śiva, you yourself will fulfill from within yourself the proclamations of the *ṛishis* who spoke forth the *Vedas*, the oldest scripture on our planet. You yourself will find, follow and in joyous discovery fulfill the path which all knowers of God tread. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya! The *Atharva Veda* (*Muṇḍaka Upanishad* 2.1.4 EH) tells us:

*Fire is His head, the sun and moon His eyes, space His ears, the Vedas His speech, the wind His breath, the universe His heart. From His feet the Earth has originated. Verily, He is the inner Self of all beings.*



# Glossary

## Śabda Kośaḥ

### शब्दकोशः



**aadheenam:** ஆதீனம் Endowment, foundation, institution, establishment, estate, property. A Śaivite Hindu monastery and temple complex in the South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta tradition. Also known as *maṭha* or *pīṭha*, as in Kailāsa Pīṭha. The *aadheenam* head, or pontiff, is called the *guru mahāsannidhānam* or *aadheenakartha*. See: *monastery*.

**ābhāsa:** आभास “Shining forth; effulgence, irradiation; manifestation, emanation.” The means by which Śiva creates out of Himself, a concept central to monistic schools. See: *emanation, tattva*.

**abhaya:** अभय Fearlessness, one of the cardinal virtues. “Fearlessness is the fruit of perfect Self Realization—that is, the recovery of nonduality” (*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 1.4.2). Also names the *mudrā* (hand pose) common in Hindu icons, betokening “fear not,” in which the fingers of the right hand are raised and the palm faces forward. See: *mudrā, mūrti*.

**Abhinavagupta:** अभिनवगुप्त Kashmir Śaivite *guru* (ca 950–1015), scholar and adept in the lineage of Vasu-gupta. Among his philosophical writings, *Pratyabhijñā Vimarśiṇī* and *Tantrāloka* are an important basis of Kashmir Śaivism. Also an influential theoretician of poetics, dance, drama and classical music, he is said to have disappeared into a cave near Mangam along with 1,200 disciples. See: *Kashmīr Śaivism*.

**abhisheka:** अभिषेक “Sprinkling; ablution.” Ritual bathing of the Deity’s image with water, curd, milk, honey, *ghee*, rosewater, etc. A special form of *pūjā* prescribed by Āgamic injunction. Also performed in the inauguration of religious and political monarchs and other special blessings. See: *pūjā*.

**abhor (abhorrence):** To detest, hate or find disgusting or repulsive and hence to pull back or shrink from.

**abide:** To stand firm, remain as one is. Not abandoning principles or qualities of character even in the face of difficulties.

**abjuration:** Foreswearing, renouncing on oath, as when a *sannyāsin* gives up family life. See: *sannyāsa dharmā*.

**ablution:** Snāna. A washing of the body, especially as a religious ceremony.

**abode:** Home. Place where one lives or stays.

**abortion:** The deliberate termination of pregnancy. From the earliest times, Hindu tradition and scriptures condemn the practice, except when the mother’s life is in danger. It is considered an act against *ṛita* and *ahimsā*. Hindu mysticism teaches that the fetus is a

living, conscious person, needing and deserving protection (a *Rig Vedic* hymn [7.36.9, RvP, 2469] calls for protection of fetuses). The *Kaushītakī Upanishad* (3.1 UpR, 774) describes abortion as equivalent to killing one’s parents. The *Atharva Veda* (6.113.2 HE, 43) lists the fetus slayer, *brūnaghni*, among the greatest of sinners (6.113.2). The *Gautama Dharma Sāstra* (3.3.9 HD, 214) considers such participants to have lost caste. The *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, a medical treatise (ca 100), stipulates what is to be done in case of serious problems during delivery (*Chikitsāsthāna* Chapter, *Mūḍhagarbha*), describing first the various steps to be taken to attempt to save both mother and child. “If the fetus is alive, one should attempt to remove it from the womb of the mother alive...” (*sūtra* 5). If it is dead, it may be removed. In case the fetus is alive but cannot be safely delivered, surgical removal is forbidden for “one would harm both mother and offspring. In an irredeemable situation, it is best to cause the miscarriage of the fetus, for no means must be neglected which can prevent the loss of the mother” (*sūtras* 10–11).

**Absolute:** Lower case (absolute): real, not dependent on anything else, not relative. Upper case (Absolute): Ultimate Reality, the unmanifest, unchanging and transcendent Paraśiva—utterly nonrelational to even the most subtle level of consciousness. It is the Self God, the essence of man’s soul. Same as *Absolute Being* and *Absolute Reality*. —**absolutely real:** A quality of God Śiva in all three perfections: Paraśiva, Parāśakti and Parameśvara. As such, He is uncreated, unchanging, unevolutionary. See: *Parameśvara, Parāśakti, Paraśiva*.

**absolution (to absolve):** Forgiveness. A freeing from guilt so as to relieve someone from obligation or penalty. —**atone:** to compensate or make up for a wrongdoing. *Atonement* can only be done by the person himself, while *absolution* is granted by others, such as a family head, judge or jury. *Exoneration*, the taking away of all blame and all personal *karmic* burden, can only be given by God Śiva. Society would naturally acknowledge and accept this inner transformation by forgiving and forgetting. See: *penance, sin*.

**absorption:** Taking in and making part of an existent whole. Known in Sanskrit as *saṁhāra*, absorption is one of God’s five powers (*pañcakṛīya*), synonymous with *destruction* or *dissolution*, but with no negative or frightful implications. All form issues from God and eventually returns to Him. See: *Mahēśvara, Naṭarāja*.

**abstain:** To hold oneself back, to refrain from or do without. To avoid a desire, negative action or habit. See: *yama-niyama*.

- abyss:** A bottomless pit. The dark states of consciousness into which one may fall as a result of serious misbehavior; the seven *chakras* (psychic centers), or *talas* (realms of consciousness), below the *mūlādhāra chakra*, which is located at the base of the spine. See: *chakra, loka, Naraka*.
- accelerate:** To increase the speed; to intensify the rate of progress.
- accordant:** In agreement or harmony with.
- āchāra:** आचार “Conduct, mode of action, behavior; good conduct.” Also, custom, tradition; rule of conduct, precept.
- āchārya:** आचार्य A highly respected teacher. The wise one who practices what he preaches. A title generally bestowed through *dikshā* and ordination, such as in the Śivāchārya priest tradition. See: *dikshā*.
- acosmic pantheism:** “No-cosmos, all-is-God doctrine.” A Western philosophical term for the philosophy of Sankara. It is *acosmic* in that it views the world, or cosmos, as ultimately unreal, and *pantheistic* because it teaches that God (Brahman) is all of existence. See: *Sankara, shaḍ darśana*.
- actinic:** Spiritual, creating light. From the Greek *aktis*, meaning “ray.” Of or pertaining to consciousness in its pure, unadulterated state. Describes the extremely rarified superconscious realm of pure *bindu*, of quantum strings, the substratum of consciousness, *śuddha māyā*, from which light first originates. *Actinic* is the adjective form of *actinism*, defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: “1) the radiation of heat or light, or that branch of philosophy that treats of it; 2) that property or force in the sun’s rays by which chemical changes are produced, as in photography.” See: *actinodic, kalā, kośa, odic, tattva*.
- actinodic:** Spiritual-magnetic. Describes consciousness within *śuddhāśuddha māyā*, which is a mixture of odic and actinic force, the spectrum of the *anāhata chakra*, and to a certain degree the *viśuddha chakra*. See: *tattva*.
- adept:** Highly skilled; expert. In religion, one who has mastered certain spiritual practices or disciplines. An advanced *yogi*. See: *siddha yoga*.
- adharmā:** अधर्म The negative or opposite of *dharma*. Thoughts, words or deeds that transgress divine law. Unrighteousness, irreligiousness; demerit. See: *dharma, pāpa, sin, Vaiṣṇavism, victors and vanquished*.
- adhere:** To remain attached or faithful, as to a leader, society, principle, etc.
- adhyātma:** अध्यात्म “Spiritual; soul.” The inner, spiritual self or spirit. See: *ātman*.
- adhyātma prasāra:** अध्यात्मप्रसार “Spiritual evolution.” The gradual maturation of the soul body, *ānanda-maya kośa*, through many lives. *Prasāra* means, “coming forth, spreading; advance, progress.” See: *evolution of the soul*.
- adhyātma vikāśa:** अध्यात्मविकास “Spiritual unfoldment.” The blossoming of inner or higher (*adhi*), soul (*ātma*) qualities as a result of religious striving, *sād-hana*. *Vikāśa* means, “becoming visible, shining forth, manifestation opening,” as a flower unfolds its petals, or the *chakras* unfold theirs as a result of *kuṇḍalīni* awakening. See: *spiritual unfoldment*.
- Ādi Granth:** आदिग्रन्थ “Prime Writ,” “First Book.” The central Sikh scripture, compiled 1603–1604 from the writings of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu holy men, most importantly the beautiful hymns of adoration, called *Japji*, by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru. In 1699, Govind Singh, the tenth preceptor, decreed that the living succession would end with him, and this scripture would henceforth serve as Sikhism’s *guru*. Its eloquent teachings are in harmony with Hinduism, but for the rejection of the *Vedas* and disavowal of image worship and caste. The *Ādi Granth* is enshrined in all Sikh temples (*gurudwaras*). See: *Sikhism*.
- Ādinātha (Ādinātha):** आदिनाथ “First Lord.” A sage considered the first great preceptor (date unknown) of the Ādinātha Sampradāya, a teaching tradition embodied in the Siddha Siddhānta sect of Śaivism. See: *Nātha, Śaivism*.
- Ādinātha Sampradāya:** आदिनाथसंप्रदाय See: *Nātha Sampradāya*.
- Ādiśaiva:** आदिशैव A hereditary priest and teacher of the South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta tradition; Śaivite *brāhmins* descended from the *gotras* of five *ṛishis* and who alone are entitled to conduct rites in Āgamic Śiva temples. *Ādiśaiva* and *Śivāchārya* are synonyms for this hereditary priest lineage. See: *Śivāchārya*.
- adopt:** To take as one’s own, especially an idea, principle, or a religion and henceforth live with it and by it. See: *conversion to Hinduism*.
- adore:** To revere and love greatly; to worship as divine. See: *pūjā*.
- adorn:** To put on ornaments or decorations to make beautiful, attractive or distinguished. See: *kalā-64*.
- adrishṭa:** अदृष्ट “Unseen potency; destiny.” The unseen power of one’s past *karma* influencing the present life. This power is known in the West as fate or destiny, generally not cognized as being of one’s own making, but misunderstood as a mysterious, uncontrollable cosmic force. See: *fate, karma*.
- adulate:** To praise, revere or admire greatly, even uncritically and to excess.
- adultery:** Sexual intercourse between a married man and a woman not his wife, or between a married woman and a man not her husband. Adultery is spoken of in Hindu *śāstras* as a serious breach of *dharma*. See: *sexuality*.
- advaita:** अद्वैत “Non-dual; not twofold.” Nonduality or monism. The philosophical doctrine that Ultimate Reality consists of a one principle substance, or God. Opposite of *dvaita*, dualism. Advaita is the primary philosophical stance of the Vedic *Upanishads*, and of Hinduism, interpreted differently by the many *ṛishis, gurus, paṇḍitas* and philosophers. See: *dvaita-advaita, Vedānta*.
- Advaita Īśvaravāda:** अद्वैत ईश्वरवाद “Nondual and Personal-God-as-Ruler doctrine.” The Sanskrit equivalent of *monistic theism*. A general term that describes

the philosophy of the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*, which believes simultaneously in the ultimate oneness of all things and in the reality of the personal Deity. See: *Advaita*, *Advaita Siddhānta*, *monistic theism*.

**Advaita Īśvaravādin:** अद्वैत ईश्वरवादिन् A follower of Advaita Īśvaravāda.

**Advaita Siddhānta:** अद्वैत सिद्धान्त “Nondual perfect conclusions.” Śaivite philosophy codified in the *Āgamas* which has at its core the nondual (*advaitic*) identity of God, soul and world. This monistic-theistic philosophy, unlike the Sankara, or Smārta view, holds that *māyā* (the principle of manifestation) is not an obstacle to God Realization, but God’s own power and presence guiding the soul’s evolution to perfection. While Advaita Vedānta stresses *Upanishadic* philosophy, Advaita Siddhānta adds to this a strong emphasis on internal and external worship, *yoga sādhanas* and *tapas*. *Advaita Siddhānta* is a term used in South India to distinguish Tirumular’s school from the pluralistic Siddhānta of Meykandar and Aghorasiva. This unified Vedic-Āgamic doctrine is also known as *Suddha Śaiva Siddhānta*. It is the philosophy of this contemporary Hindu catechism. See: *Advaita Īśvaravāda*, *dvaita-advaita*, *monistic theism*, *Śaiva Siddhānta*.

**Advaita Vedānta:** अद्वैत वेदान्त “Nondual end (or essence) of the *Vedas*.” Names the monistic schools, most prominently that of Sankara, that arose from the *Upanishads* and related texts. See: *Vedānta*.

**adversity:** A condition of misfortune, poverty or difficulty.

**advocate:** To speak, act or write in support of a cause, person or idea.

**affirmation:** *Dṛidhāvāchana* (“firm statement”). A positive declaration or assertion. A statement repeated regularly while concentrating on the meaning and mental images invoked, often used to attain a desired result.

**affirmation of faith:** A brief statement of one’s faith and essential beliefs. See: *Anbe Sivamayam Satyame Parasivam*.

**aftermath:** A result or consequence of a happening. The events or repercussions following an experience.

**Āgama:** आगम The tradition; that which has “come down.” An enormous collection of Sanskrit scriptures which, along with the *Vedas*, are revered as *śruti* (revealed scripture). Dating is uncertain. They were part of an oral tradition of unknown antiquity which some experts consider as ancient as the earliest *Vedas*, 5000 to 6000 BCE. The *Āgamas* are the primary source and authority for ritual, *yoga* and temple construction. Each of the major denominations—Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktism—has its unique *Āgama* texts. Smārtas recognize the *Āgamas*, but don’t necessarily adhere to them and rely mainly on the *smṛiti* texts. See: *Śaiva Āgamas*, *śruti*.

**Agastya:** अगस्त्य One of 18 celebrated Śaiva *siddhas* (adepts), and reputed as the first grammarian of Tamil language. He is said to have migrated from North

India to the South. His name appears in the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Purāṇas* and was known to ancient Indonesians. See: *siddha*.

**Aghora:** अघोर “Nonterrifying.” An aspect of Śiva which, like Rudra, personifies of His power of dissolution or reabsorption. *Ghora* means “terrific, frightful, terrible, etc.” See: *Sadaśiva*.

**Aghorasiva (Aghoraśiva):** अघोरशिव A Śaivite philosopher of South India who in the 12th century founded a Siddhānta school emphasizing dualistic passages of the *Āgamas* and other early texts. The later Meykandar pluralistic philosophy is based partly on Aghorasiva’s teachings. See: *dvaita-advaita*, *dvaita Siddhānta*, *Śaiva Siddhānta*.

**Aghori:** अघोरी “Nonterrifying.” An order of Śaiva ascetics thought to be derived from the Kāpālika order (ca 14th century). Following the *vāmāchāra*, “left-hand” ritual of the *tantras*, they are widely censured for radical practices such as living in cemeteries and using human skulls as eating bowls.

**agni:** अग्नि “Fire.” 1) One of the five elements, *pañc-abhūta*. 2) God of the element fire, invoked through Vedic ritual known as *yajña*, *agnikāraka*, *homa* and *havana*. The God Agni is the divine messenger who receives prayers and oblations and conveys them to the heavenly spheres. See: *yajña*.

**agnihotra:** अग्निहोत्र “Fire sacrifice.” Household rite traditionally performed daily, in which an oblation of milk is sprinkled on the fire. See: *yajña*.

**agnikāraka:** अग्निकारक “Fire ritual.” The Āgamic term for *yajña*. See: *yajña*.

**Aham Brahmasmi:** अहं ब्रह्मास्मि “I am God.” Famous phrase often repeated in the *Upanishads*. In this ecstatic statement of enlightenment, “I” does not refer to the individuality or outer nature, but to the essence of the soul which is ever identical to God Śiva (or Brahman, the Supreme Being) as Satchidānanda and Paraśiva. One of four Upanishadic “great sayings,” *mahāvākya*.

**ahankāra:** अहंकार “I-maker.” Personal ego. The mental faculty of individuation; sense of duality and separateness from others. Sense of I-ness, “me” and “mine.” *Ahankāra* is characterized by the sense of I-ness (*abhimāna*), sense of mine-ness, identifying with the body (*maḍiyam*), planning for one’s own happiness (*mamasukha*), brooding over sorrow (*mamaduhkha*), and possessiveness (*mama idam*). See: *āṇava*, *ego*, *mind* (*individual*).

**ahimsā:** अहिंसा “Noninjury,” nonviolence or nonhurtfulness. Refraining from causing harm to others, physically, mentally or emotionally. *Ahimsā* is the first and most important of the *yamas* (restraints). It is the cardinal virtue upon which all others depend. See: *yama-niyama*.

**aikya:** ऐक्य “Union, oneness.” See: *Vīra Śaivism*.

**Aitareya Brāhmaṇa:** ऐतरेयब्राह्मण Part of the *Rig Veda* dealing principally with worship and ceremonies of royal inauguration. See: *Rig Veda*, *Vedas*.

**Aitareya Upanishad:** ऐतरेय उपनिषद् Three chapters



- of the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* of the *Rig Veda* expounding the esoterics of ritual, revealing the means of preparing oneself for the deepest spiritual attainments.
- Ajita Āgama:** अजित आगम Among the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas*, this scripture especially elucidates temple construction, worship and rules for installation of various Śiva icons (*mūrti*). See: *mūrti*, *Śaiva Āgamas*.
- ājñā chakra:** आज्ञाचक्र “Command wheel.” The third-eye center. See: *chakra*.
- ākāśa:** आकाश “Space.” The sky. Free, open space. Ether, the fifth and most subtle of the five elements—earth, air, fire, water and ether. Empirically, the rarified space or ethereal fluid plasma that pervades the universes, inner and outer. Esoterically, mind, the superconscious strata holding all that exists and all that potentially exists, wherein all happenings are recorded and can be read by clairvoyants. It is through psychic entry into this transcendental *ākāśa* that cosmic knowledge is gathered, and the entire circle of time—past, present and future—can be known. Space, *ākāśa*, in this concept is a positive substance, filled with unseen energies and intelligences, in contrast with the Western conception that space is the absence of everything and is therefore nothing in and of itself. The *Advaya-tāraka Upanishad* (2.1.17) describes five levels of *ākāśa* which can be *yogically* experienced: *guṇa rahita ākāśa* (space devoid of qualities); *parama ākāśa* (supreme space), *mahā ākāśa* (great space), *tat-tva ākāśa* (space of true existence) and *sūrya ākāśa* (space of the sun). See: *mind* (*universal*).
- akshata:** अक्षत “Unbroken.” Unmilled, uncooked rice, often mixed with turmeric, offered as a sacred substance during *pūjā*, or in blessings for individuals at weddings and other ceremonies. This, the very best food, is the finest offering a devotee can give to God or a wife can give to her husband. See: *pūjā*.
- Allama Prabhu:** अल्लमप्रभु A contemporary of Basavanna and central figure of Vira Śaivism (ca 1150), the head of an order of 300 enlightened beings which included 60 women. Initially a temple drummer, he became an extraordinary *siddha*, mystic and poet. The *Mantra Gopya* are his collected writings. See: *Basavanna*, *Vira Śaivism*.
- allegory:** A story in which the character, places and events have symbolic meaning, used to teach ideas and moral principles. See: *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*.
- all-pervasive:** Diffused throughout or existing in every part of the universe. See: *Satchidānanda*.
- aloof:** Distant, reserved, withdrawn, drawn back; cool in attitude, not sympathetic with or interested in an idea, project or group of people.
- altruistic:** Unselfish. Showing more concern for others than oneself.
- Alvar:** ஆழ்வார் “One who sways the Lord through bhakti.” A group of renowned saints of the Vaishṇava religion (7th–9th century), devotional mystics whose lives and teachings catalyzed to a resurgence of Vaishṇavism in Tamil Nadu. Their devotional poems are embodied in the *Nalayiram Divya Prabandham*, containing about 4,000 hymns. Among the 12 most famous Alvars are Poykai, Pudam, Tirumalisai, Nammalvar, Kulasekhara (Kulasekhara), Andal, Tiruppan and Tirumangai. A term not to be confused with *Nalvar*, naming the four Samayāchārya Śaivite saints: Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavasagar, who were their contemporaries. See: *Nalvar*, *Nayanar*.
- Āmardaka Order:** आमर्दक An order of *Śaiva sannyāsins* founded by Amardaka Tirthanatha in Andhra Pradesh (ca 775).
- Āmardaka Tirthanatha:** आमर्दक तीर्थनाथ See: *Āmardaka Order*, *Rudrasambhu*.
- Ambikā:** अम्बिका “Mother.” A benign form of the Goddess, one of the central Deities of the Śākta religion, along with Durgā, Kālī and Pārvatī. See: *Śakti*.
- amends:** Recompensation, making up for injury or loss caused to another. This is done through sincere apology, expressing regrets, contrition, public penance, such as *kavadi*, and abundant offering of gifts. See: *pāpa*, *penance*.
- Amman:** அம்மன் “Mother.” Usually refers to Mariyamman, the “smallpox Goddess,” protectress from plagues, a popular Grāmadevatā (“village Deity,” or local tutelary Deity). There are many Mariyamman temples and shrines in Malaysia, Mauritius and rural areas of South India. In the Tamil tradition, *amman* is often the epithet of various Goddesses, as in Kālī Amman or Draupadi Amman (deified heroine of the *Mahābhārata*). One of the distinguishing features of Grāmadevatā shrines is that they are not served by *brāhmin* priests. See: *Śakti*, *Śāktism*.
- amorphous:** Of no definite shape or form. See: *formless*.
- amṛita:** अमृत “Immortality.” Literally, “without death (*mṛita*).” The nectar of divine bliss which flows down from the *sahasrāra chakra* when one enters very deep states of meditation. This word is apparently related to the Greek *ambrotos*, “immortal,” hence ambrosia, the food or drink of the Gods, which has its Vedic equivalent in the legendary elixir called *soma*, a central element in Vedic rites in which it is venerated as a Divinity.
- amṛitātman:** अमृतात्मन “Immortal soul.” See: *ātman*, *jīva*, *purusha*, *soul*.
- anāhata chakra:** अनाहतचक्र The heart center. “Wheel of unstruck [sound].” See: *chakra*.
- analogy:** An explanation or illustration made by comparing one thing with another, similar in some but not all respects. For example, in the analogy of the potter, the potter represents God and the clay represents the primal substance, or “matter.”
- analytical:** Looking closely at things, intellectually studying them to understand their nature, meaning and component parts.
- ānanda:** आनन्द “Bliss.” The pure joy—ecstasy or enstasy—of God-consciousness or spiritual experience. In its highest sense, *ānanda* is expressed in the famous Vedic description of God: *sat-chit-ānanda*, “existence-consciousness-bliss”—the divine or su-

- perconscious mind of all souls. See: *God Realization, Satchidānanda*.
- ānandamaya kośa:** आनन्दमयकोश “Bliss body.” The body of the soul, which ultimately merges with Śiva. See: *kośa, soul*.
- ānanda tāṇḍava:** आनन्दताण्डव “Violent dance of bliss.” See: *Natarāja, tāṇḍava*.
- āṇava mala:** आणवमल “Impurity of smallness; finitizing principle.” God’s individualizing veil of duality that enshrouds the soul. It is the source of finitude and ignorance, the most basic of the three bonds (*āṇava, karma, māyā*) which temporarily limit the soul. *Āṇava mala* has the same importance in Āgamic philosophy that *māyā-avidyā* has in Vedāntic philosophy. The presence of *āṇava mala* is what causes the misapprehension about the nature of God, soul and world, the notion of being separate and distinct from God and the universe. *Āṇava* obscures the natural wisdom, light, unity and humility of the soul and allows spiritual ignorance, darkness, egoity and pride to manifest. It is inherent in a maturing soul, like the shell of a seed. When *āṇava* is ripe, *anugraha*, “grace,” comes, and *āṇava* falls away. *Āṇava* is the root *mala* and the last bond to be dissolved. See: *evolution of the soul, grace, mala, soul*.
- ānavopāya:** आणवोपाय “Minute or individual means.” See: *upāya*.
- Anbe Sivamayam Satyame Parasivam:** அன்பே சிவமயம் சத்தியமே பரசிவம் Tamil for “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality.” The affirmation of faith which capsulizes the entire creed of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta. In Sanskrit it is *Premaiva Śivamaya, Satyam eva Paraśivaḥ*.
- anchorite:** “Hermit.” A monk or aspirant who lives alone and apart from society, as contrasted with *cenobite*, a member of a religious order living in a monastery or convent. See: *monk, nun*.
- ancillary:** Auxiliary. Aiding or supporting. Supplementary; secondary.
- Andal:** ஆண்டாளர் Famed Vaiṣṇava saint of Tamil Nadu. One of the Alvars, she lived in the early 9th century and today is venerated as one of South India’s greatest *bhakta* poets. See: *Alvar, Vaiṣṇavism*.
- Andhra Pradesh (Pradeśa):** ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ Modern Indian state located on the southeast coast of India north of Tamil Nadu. The capital is Hyderabad. Language: Telugu. Dominant faith: Vaiṣṇavism. Area: 106,000 square miles. Population 54 million. Famous for its opulent Tirupati Vaiṣṇava temple.
- anekavāda:** अनेकवाद “Pluralism,” or “not-one theology.” See: *pluralism*.
- anekavādin:** अनेकवादिन् A follower of *anekavāda*.
- aṅga:** अङ्ग “Part; limb.” Term for the individual soul in Vira Śaivism. The *aṅga* is of finite intelligence, while Śiva is of infinite intelligence. See: *Vira Śaivism*.
- aniconic:** “Without likeness; without image.” When referring to a Deity image, *aniconic* denotes a symbol which does not attempt an anthropomorphic (humanlike) or representational likeness. An example is the Śivaliṅga, “mark of God.” See: *mūrti, Śivaliṅga*.
- animate-inanimate:** From the Latin *animatus*, “made alive, filled with breath.” These terms indicate the two poles of manifest existence, that which has movement and life (most expressly animals and other “living” beings) and that which is devoid of movement (such as minerals and, to a lesser degree, plants). From a deeper view, however, all existence is alive with movement and possessed of the potent, divine energy of the cosmos. See: *tattva*.
- animism:** The belief that everything (including inanimate objects) is alive with soul or spirit, a conviction pervasive among most indigenous (tribal, pagan, shamanistic) faiths, including Hinduism, Shintoism and spiritualism.
- añjali mudrā:** अञ्जलिमुद्रा “Reverence gesture.” Also called *praṇāmāñjali*. A gesture of respect and greeting, in which the two palms are held gently together and slightly cupped. Often accompanied by the verbal salutation “*namaskāra*,” meaning “reverent salutation.” The *añjali mudrā* has various forms, e.g., near the chest in greeting equals, at eye level in greeting one’s *guru*, and above the head in salutation to God. One form is with the open hands held side by side, as if by a beggar to receive food, or a worshiper beseeching God’s grace in the temple. See: *mudrā, namaskāra*.
- aṅkuśa:** अङ्कुश Goad, symbol of Lord Gaṇeśa’s power to remove obstacles from the devotee’s path, and to spur the dullards onward.
- annamaya kośa:** अन्नमयकोश “Food sheath.” The physical body. See: *kośa*.
- annaprāsana:** अन्नप्राशन “Feeding.” The childhood sacrament of first solid food. See: *samskāras of childhood*.
- annihilate:** To destroy completely, to reduce to nothing.
- antagonism:** Opposition, hostility.
- antaḥkaraṇa:** अन्तःकरण “Inner faculty.” The mental faculty of the astral body, *sūkshma śarīra*, comprising intellect, instinct and ego—in Sanskrit, *buddhi, manas* and *ahamkāra*—which are a threefold expression of *chitta*, consciousness. In Śaiva Siddhānta, *chitta* is sometimes listed as a *tattva*, or part of a *tattva*, at the *prakṛiti* level. In Vedānta, *chitta*, “mind stuff,” is often understood as a part of *antaḥkaraṇa*; while in the Śaiva Siddhānta, Yoga and Sāṅkhya Darśanas, it is generally viewed as the total mind, of which *manas, buddhi* and *ahamkāra* are the inner faculties. Thus, while Vedānta describes *antaḥkaraṇa* as fourfold, Sāṅkhya and Yoga discuss it as threefold. Siddha Siddhānta views *antaḥkaraṇa* as fivefold, with the inclusion of *chaitanya* as “higher consciousness.” See: *consciousness, mind (individual), tattva*.
- Antarloka:** अन्तर्लोक “Inner or in-between world.” The astral plane. See: *loka*.
- anthology:** A choice “flower collection” of prose or poetry excerpts.
- anthropomorphic:** “In human shape.” From the Greek *anthropos*, “man,” and *morphe*, “shape,” “form.”
- antyaṅganam:** अन्त्यवचनम् “Final word.” Epilogue, colophon, postscript.

- antyeshti:** अन्त्येष्टि “Last rites.” Funeral. See: *death, samskāra*.
- anu:** अनु A common prefix conveying the meanings: “after, near to, under, secondary or subordinate to.”
- anubhava:** अनुभव “Perception, apprehension; experience.” Personal experience; understanding; impressions on the mind not derived from memory.
- anugraha śakti:** अनुग्रहशक्ति “Graceful or favoring power.” Revealing grace. God Śiva’s power of illumination, through which the soul is freed from the bonds of *āṇava, karma* and *māyā* and ultimately attains liberation, *moksha*. Specifically, *anugraha* descends on the soul as *śaktipāta*, the *dikshā* (initiation) from a *sat-guru*. *Anugraha* is a key concept in Śaiva Siddhānta. It comes when *āṇava mala*, the shell of finitude which surrounds the soul, reaches a state of ripeness, *mala-paripakam*. See: *āṇava, grace, Naṭarāja, śaktipāta*.
- anukramanikā:** अनुक्रमणिका “Succession, arrangement.” An index.
- anupāya:** अनुपाय “Without means.” A term used in Kashmir Śaivism to mean spontaneous Self Realization without effort. See: *upāya*.
- anxiety:** State of uneasiness, worry or apprehension. See: *manas*.
- Apasmārapurusha:** अपस्मारपुरुष “Forgetful person.” *Muyalagan* in Tamil. The soul under Śiva’s foot of obscuring grace, depicted in numerous icons. He represents ignorance and heedlessness. (Sometimes simply *Apasmāra*.) See: *Naṭarāja*.
- apatya:** अपत्य “Offspring; child; descendant.”
- apex:** Highest point, peak, summit.
- apex of creation:** The highest or initial movement in the mind that will eventually manifest a creation. The quantum level of manifestation. See: *microcosm-macrocosm, quantum, tattva*.
- apologue:** A short allegorical story with a lesson or moral. Fable.
- Appar:** அப்பர் “Father.” Endearing name for Tirunavukarasu (ca 700), one of four Tamil saints, *Samayāchāryas*, who reconverted errant Śaivites who had embraced Jainism. Calling himself the servant of God’s servants, he composed magnificent hymns in praise of Śiva that are reverently sung to this day. See: *Nalvar, Nayanar, Śaiva Siddhānta*.
- apparent:** Appearing, but not necessarily real or true. Seeming to be.
- Appaya Dikshita (Dikshita):** அப்யயதீக்ஷித Philosophical genius of South India (1554-1626) who worked to reconcile Vaishṇavism and Śaivism, advancing the Śiva Advaita school of Śaivism by his writings, and bolstering other schools by his brilliant summations of their philosophies. He is best known for his commentaries on the teachings of Srikantha. Appaya Dikshita also created a manual of Śaiva temple ritual still in use today. See: *Śiva Advaita*.
- apprehend:** To mentally grasp and hold, to see or understand; to physically detain.
- Āraṇyaka:** आरण्यक “Forest treatise.” Third section of each of the four *Vedas*. Texts containing esoteric, mystical knowledge, largely on the inner meanings and functions of the Vedic *yajña*, or fire ceremonies. See: *Vedas*.
- ārati:** आरती “Light.” The circling or waving of a lamp (usually fed with *ghee*, camphor or oil) before a holy person or the temple Deity at the high point of *pūjā*. The flame is then presented to the devotees, each passing his or her hands through it and bringing them to the eyes three times, thereby receiving the blessings. *Ārati* can also be performed as the briefest form of *pūjā*. See: *archana, pūjā*.
- Arputat Tiru Vanati:** அற்புதத் திரு வந்தாதி Poem of 100 verses in praise of Lord Śiva composed in Tamil by the woman saint Karaikkalammaiyar (ca 5th century). See: *Nayanar*.
- archana:** अर्चन A special, personal, abbreviated *pūjā* done by temple priests in which the name, birthstar and family lineage of a devotee are recited to invoke individual guidance and blessings. *Archana* also refers to chanting the names of the Deity, which is a central part of every *pūjā*. See: *pūjā*.
- Ardhanārī Naṭeśvara Stotram:** अर्धनारीनटेश्वरस्तोत्रम् A short hymn alternately praising Śiva and Śakti as merged in the androgynous image of *Ardhanārīśvara*. See: *Ardhanārīśvara*.
- Ardhanārīśvara:** अर्धनारीश्वर “Half-female Lord.” Lord Śiva in androgynous form, male on the right side and female on the left, indicating that: 1) Śiva (like all *Mahādevas*) is genderless; 2) Śiva is All, inseparable from His energy, Śakti; 3) in Śiva the *iḍā* (feminine) and the *piṅgalā* (masculine) *nāḍīs* (psychic nerve currents) are balanced so that *sushumṇā* is ever active. The meditator who balances these through *sādhana* and *yoga* becomes like Śiva. In the unity of *Ardhanārīśvara* all opposites are reconciled; duality is reduced to the single source. This image especially represents Śiva’s second perfection: Pure Consciousness (*Satchidānanda* or *Parāśakti*). See: *kunḍalini, nāḍī, Śakti, Śiva*.
- Ārdrā Darśanam:** आर्द्रदर्शनम् A ten-day festival ending on *Ārdrā nakshatra*, near the full moon of December-January honoring Śiva *Naṭarāja*. In Tamil Nadu, each morning at 4 AM, the mystical songs of Saint *Manikkavasagar, Tiruvembavai*, are sung or recited. Unmarried girls go to the temple in small groups to pray for rains, for the welfare of the land and for fine, spiritual husbands. At the famed temple of *Chidambaram* in Tamil Nadu, Lord *Naṭarāja*, the presiding Deity, is taken out for a grand procession in a chariot pulled through the streets by thousands of devotees. See: *darśana, Naṭarāja*.
- arduous:** Strenuous, laborious. Difficult to climb, do or accomplish.
- arena:** Any place where an event, usually involving struggle or conflict, takes place. The Earth is the arena of the soul’s evolution. See: *evolution of the soul*.
- Aristotle:** Greek philosopher (384–322 BCE) who left a profound legacy of writings on metaphysics, ethics, logic and law. A disciple of Socrates.

- ārjava:** आर्जव “Straightforwardness.” See: *yama-niyama*.
- Arjuna:** अर्जुन A hero of the *Mahābhārata* and central figure of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. See: *Bhagavad Gītā*.
- artha:** अर्थ “Goal or purpose; wealth, property, money.” Also has the meaning of utility, desire. See: *dharma, purushārtha*.
- Arthaveda:** अर्थवेद “Political science.” A class of ancient texts, also called *Nitiśāstras*, on politics, statecraft and much more, forming the *Upaveda* of the *Rig Veda*. The most important of this literature is Kautilya’s *Arthaśāstra* (ca 300 BCE) which gives detailed instructions on all areas of government. It embodies the *kshatriya* perspective of rulership and society. See: *Upaveda*.
- arul:** அருள் “Grace.” The third of the three stages of the *sakala avasthā* when the soul yearns for the grace of God, *śaktinipāta*. At this stage the soul seeks *Pati-jñāna*, knowledge of God. See: *Pati-jñāna, sakala avasthā, śaktinipāta*.
- Arunagirinathar (Arunagirināthar):** அருணகிரிநாதர் South Indian Śaivite poet saint (ca 1500). See: *Kandar Anubhuti*.
- Aruṇeya Upanishad:** आरुणेय उपनिषद् A short *Upanishad* dealing with *sannyāsa*. See: *sannyāsa*.
- Aryaman:** अर्यमन् “Close friend;” matchmaker; Sun God. A Vedic Deity who personifies hospitality, the household and *grihastha* life. He presides over matrimonial alliances, and protects tradition, custom and religion. He is also invoked during *śrāddha* (funeral-memorial) ceremonies.
- āsana:** आसन “Seat; posture.” In *haṭha yoga*, *āsana* refers to any of numerous poses prescribed to balance and tune up the subtle energies of mind and body for meditation and to promote health and longevity. Examples are the shoulder-stand (*sarvāṅgāsana*, “whole body pose”) and the lotus pose (*padmāsana*). Each *āsana* possesses unique benefits, affecting the varied inner bodies and releasing energies in different parts of the nervous system. While the physical science of *haṭha yoga* can dramatically influence health and general well-being, it is primarily a preparation for the deeper *yogas* and meditations. Sivaya Subramuniyaswami has provided a system of 27 *āsanas* to tune the nervous system for meditation and contemplation and to mitigate the burdensome *karmas*, known by the modern term “stress,” built up through the interaction with other people. His 27 *āsanas* are performed in a meditative sequence, not unlike a serene dance, accompanied by certain visualizations and *prāṇāyāmas*. See: *haṭha yoga, rāja yoga, yoga*.
- ascent:** Rising or climbing higher. A path that leads upward.
- ascetic:** One who leads a life of contemplation and rigorous self-denial, shunning comforts and pleasures for religious purposes. See: *monk, nun*.
- asceticism:** The austerities of an ascetic. See: *sādhana, tapas*.
- ash:** See: *vibhūti*.
- ashtāṅga praṇāma:** अष्टाङ्गप्रणाम “Eight-part salutation.” See: *praṇāma*.
- ashtāṅga yoga:** अष्टाङ्गयोग “Eight-limbed union.” The classical *rāja yoga* system of eight progressive stages or steps as described in numerous Hindu scriptures including various *Upanishads*, the *Tirumantiram* by Saint Tirumular and the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali. The eight limbs are: restraints (*yama*), observances (*niyama*), postures (*āsana*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), sense withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation (*dhyāna*) and contemplation (*samādhi*/Self Realization). See: *āsana, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, rāja yoga, samādhi, yama-niyama, yoga*.
- ashtāvaram:** अष्टावरणम् “Eight shields.” Vīra Śaivism’s eight aids to faith: *guru*, *Liṅga*, *jaṅgama* (monk), *vibhūti*, *rudrāksha*, *pādukā*, *prasāda* (bathing water from Sivaliṅga or *guru*’s feet), and Pañchākshara Mantra (Namaḥ Śivāya). See: *Vīra Śaivism*.
- Asoka (Aśoka):** अशोक The greatest Mauryan Emperor (ca 273-232 bce), grandson of Chandragupta. In his 40-year reign, Buddhism became a world power. The *Rock and Pillar Edicts* preserve his work and teachings.
- āśrama:** आश्रम “Place of striving.” From *śram*, “to exert energy.” Hermitage; order of life. Holy sanctuary; the residence and teaching center of a *sādhu*, saint, *swāmī*, ascetic or *guru*; often includes lodging for students. Also names life’s four stages. See: *āśrama dharma, sādhana*.
- āśrama dharma:** आश्रमधर्म “Laws of life development.” Meritorious way of life appropriate to each of its four successive stages (*āśramas*), observing which one lives in harmony with nature and life, allowing the body, emotions and mind to develop and undergo their natural cycles in a most positive way. The four stages are: 1) *brahmacharya*: Studentship, from age 12 to 24. 2) *grihastha*: Householder, from 24 to 48. 3) *vānaprastha*: Elder advisor, from 48 to 72. 4) *sannyāsa*: Religious solitary, from 72 onward. The first two *āśramas* make up the *pravṛitti mārga*, the way of turning toward the world through the force of desire and ambition. The last two are the *nivṛitti mārga*, moving away from the world through introspection and renunciation. See: *dharma, grihastha dharma, sannyāsa dharma*.
- Assam:** অসম Indian state in the northeast corner of the country, south of Bhutan, almost separated from the rest of India by Bangladesh. Area 30,000 square miles, population 21 million.
- assuage:** To lessen pain or distress; to calm passions or desires.
- asteya:** अस्तेय “Nonstealing.” See: *yama-niyama*.
- āstikya:** आस्तिक्य “Faith.” See: *faith, śrāddhā, yama-niyama*.
- astral body:** The subtle, nonphysical body (*sūkshma śarīra*) in which the soul functions in the astral plane, the inner world also called *Antarloka*. The astral body includes the *prāṇic* sheath (*prāṇamaya kośa*), the instinctive-intellectual sheath (*manomaya kośa*) and the cognitive sheath (*vijñānamaya kośa*)—with the

- prāṇic* sheath discarded at the death of the physical body. See: *kośa, soul*.
- astral plane:** The subtle world, or Antarloka, spanning the spectrum of consciousness from the *viśuddha chakra* in the throat to the *pātāla chakra* in the soles of the feet. The astral plane includes: 1) the higher astral plane, **Maharloka**, “plane of balance,” or Devaloka; 2) mid-astral plane, **Svarloka**, “celestial plane;” 3) lower astral plane, **Bhuhvarloka**, “plane of atmosphere,” a counterpart or subtle duplicate of the physical plane (consisting of the *Pitṛiloka* and *Pretaloka*); and 4) the sub-astral plane, **Naraka**, consisting of seven hellish realms corresponding to the seven *chakras* below the base of the spine. In the astral plane, the soul is enshrouded in the astral body, called *sūkshma śarīra*. See: *astral body, loka, Naraka, three worlds*.
- astrology:** Science of celestial influences. See: *jyotisha, Vedāṅga*.
- asura:** असुर “Evil spirit; demon.” (The opposite of *sura*: “*deva*; God.”) A being of the lower astral plane, *Naraka*. *Asuras* can and do interact with the physical plane, causing major and minor problems in people’s lives. *Asuras* do evolve and do not remain permanently in this state. See: *Naraka*.
- Asvaghosha (Aśvaghosha):** अश्वघोष Buddhist scholar, pantheist philosopher (ca 80 BCE–150 CE), and one of the great poets of Indian literature. A principal architect of the *Mahāyāna* school. See: *pantheism*.
- Aśvin:** अश्विन Vedic twin heroes—youthful, handsome, bright and dashing—who personify the dawn, the transition from darkness to light, and from disease to health. They are physicians of the Gods, honey being one of their symbols. They represent also duality, acting in unison. See: *Rīg Veda, Vedas*.
- atala:** अतल “Bottomless region.” The first *chakra* below the *mūlādhāra*, at the hip region. Region of fear and lust. Corresponds to the first astral netherworld beneath the Earth’s surface, called *Put* (“childless”) or *Atala*, the first of seven hellish regions of consciousness. See: *chakra, loka, Naraka*.
- atattva:** अतत्त्व “Noncategory; beyond existence.” *Atattva*, the negation of *tattva*, is used to describe the indescribable Reality—the Absolute, *Paraśiva*, the Self God—which transcends all 36 categories (*tattvas*) of manifestation. It is beyond time, form and space. And yet, in a mystery known only to the knower—the enlightened mystic—*Paraśakti-nāda*, the first *tattva*, ever comes out of *Paraśiva*. If it were not for *Paraśiva*, nothing could be. *Paraśiva* does not exist to the outer dimensions of cosmic consciousness, but without it, the mind itself would not exist. See: *tattva*.
- atha:** अथ “Now; then; moreover; certainly; herewith.” An inceptive particle and mark of auspiciousness used to begin sacred works. For example, the first *sūtra* of the *Yoga Sūtras* reads, “Now then (*atha*), an exposition on *yoga*.”
- Atharvasīkhā Upanishad:** अथर्वशिखा उपनिषद् A minor *Upanishad* dealing with the interpretation of *Aum*. See: *Upanishad, Vedas*.
- Atharva Veda:** अथर्ववेद From “*Atharva*,” the name of the *rishi* said to have compiled this fourth *Veda*. The *Atharva* consists of 20 books and 720 hymns. Considered the last *Veda* recorded, it consists of mostly original hymns (rather than replications from the *Rīg Veda*). In recognition of its abundant magical charms and spells, it is known as the *Veda* of prayer. It also contains many *Āgama*-like cosmological passages that bridge the earlier Vedic hymns and formulas with the metaphysics of the *Upanishads*. See: *Vedas*.
- atheism:** The rejection of all religion or religious belief, or simply the belief that God or Gods do not exist. See: *Chārvāka, materialism, nāstika*.
- ātman:** आत्मन् “The soul; the breath; the principle of life and sensation.” The soul in its entirety—as the soul body (*ānandamaya kośa*) and its essence (*Parāśakti* and *Paraśiva*). One of Hinduism’s most fundamental tenets is that we are the *ātman*, not the physical body, emotions, external mind or personality. In Hindu scriptures, *ātman* sometimes refers to the ego-personality, and its meaning must be determined according to context. The *Ātma Upanishad* (1–3) describes *ātman*, or *purusha*, as threefold: *bāhyātman*, the outer or physical person; *antarātman*, the inner person, excluding the physical form, who perceives, thinks and cognizes; and *Paramātman*, the transcendent Self God within. See: *kośa, Paramātman, soul*.
- ātmārtha pūjā:** आत्मार्थपूजा “Personal worship rite.” Home *pūjā*. See: *pūjā*.
- ātmavarūpa:** आत्मस्वरूप “Nature of the soul.” See: *ātman, soul*.
- atmosphere:** The pervading or surrounding element, spirit or influence. General mood or environment. See: *sāmnidhya*.
- atone:** To make amends or reconcile. See: *absolution, pāpa, penance, sin*.
- attainment:** Acquisition, achievement or realization through effort. Spiritual accomplishment. Śaiva Siddhānta notes four primary levels of attainment: *sālokya* (sharing God’s world, the goal of *charyā*), *sāmīpya* (nearness to God, the goal of *kriyā*), *sārūpya* (likeness to God, the goal of *yoga*) and *sāyujya* (union with God, the state of *jñāna*). See: *God Realization, pāda, Self Realization, siddha yoga, siddhi*.
- attitude:** Disposition. State of mind. Manner of carrying oneself. Manner of acting, thinking or feeling which reveals one’s disposition, opinions and beliefs. See: *conscience*.
- augural:** Having to do with divination, prediction or interpreting omens.
- Augustine:** Catholic bishop saint (354–430) and highly influential theologian.
- Aum:** ॐ or ओम् Often spelled *Om*. The mystic syllable of Hinduism, placed at the beginning of most sacred writings. As a *mantra*, it is pronounced *aw* (as in *law*), *oo* (as in *zoo*), *mm*. *Aum* represents the Divine, and is associated with Lord *Gaṇeśa*, for its initial sound “aa,” vibrates within the *mūlādhāra*, the *chakra* at the base of the spine upon which this God sits. The second

sound of this *mantra*, “oo,” vibrates within the throat and chest *chakras*, the realm of Lord Murugan, or Kumāra, known by the Hawaiian people as the God Ku. The third sound, “mm,” vibrates within the cranial *chakras*, *ājñā* and *sahasrāra*, where the Supreme God reigns. The dot above, called *anusvāra*, represents the Soundless Sound, *Paranāda*. Aum is explained in the *Upanishads* as standing for the whole world and its parts, including past, present and future. It is from this primal vibration that all manifestation issues forth. Aum is the primary, or *mūla mantra*, and often precedes other *mantras*. It may be safely used for chanting and *japa* by anyone of any religion. Its three letters represent the three worlds and the powers of creation, preservation and destruction. In common usage in several Indian languages, *aum* means “yes, verily” or “hail.” See: *nāda*, *Praṇava*, *sound*.

**aura:** The luminous colorful field of subtle energy radiating within and around the human body, extending out from three to seven feet. The colors of the aura change constantly according to the ebb and flow of one’s state of consciousness, thoughts, moods and emotions. Higher, benevolent feelings create bright pastels; base, negative feelings are darker in color. Thus, auras can be seen and “read” by clairvoyants. The general nature of auras varies according to individual unfoldment. Great mystics have very bright auras, while instinctive persons are shrouded in dull shades. The aura consists of two aspects, the outer aura and the inner aura. The outer aura extends beyond the physical body and changes continuously, reflecting the individual’s moment-to-moment panorama of thought and emotion. The inner aura is much more constant, as it reflects deep-seated subconscious patterns, desires, repressions and tendencies held in the sub-subconscious mind. Those colors which are regularly and habitually reflected in the outer aura are eventually recorded more permanently in the inner aura. The colors of the inner aura permeate out through the outer aura and either shade with sadness or brighten with happiness the normal experiences of daily life. The inner aura hovers deep within the astral body in the chest and torso and looks much like certain “modern-art” paintings, with heavy strokes of solid colors here and there. In Sanskrit, the aura is called *prabhāmaṇḍala*, “luminous enclosure,” or *dīp-tachakra*, “nimbus (circle) of light.” See: *mind* (*five states*), *pāpa*, *puṇya*.

**Aurobindo Ghosh:** A prolific Bengali writer and poet, pantheistic philosopher and *yoga* mystic, widely known as Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950). He perceived the modern global crisis as marking a period of transition from a dark age to a more enlightened one, when Hinduism will play a preponderant role. He founded the Auroville community in Pondichery, based on *puṇya* (integral) *yoga* and contributed much to this century’s Hindu revival.

**auspicious:** Favorable, of good omen, foreboding well. *Maṅgala*. One of the central concepts in Hindu life.

Astrology defines a method for determining times that are favorable for various human endeavors. Much of daily living and religious practice revolves around an awareness of auspiciousness. Endowed with great power and importance, it is associated with times, places and persons. See: *vyotisha*, *muhūrta*, *swastika*, *Tai Pongal*.

**austerity:** Self-denial and discipline, physical or mental, performed for various reasons including acquiring powers, attaining grace, conquering the instinctive nature and burning the seeds of past *karmas*. Ranging from simple deprivations, such as foregoing a meal, to severe disciplines, called *tapas*, such as uninterrupted standing, never sitting or lying down, even for sleep. See: *penance*, *tapas*.

**authenticity:** Quality of being true as claimed, or genuine, trustworthy. Reliable.

**authority:** Influence, power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action or make final decisions.

**Auvaaiyar:** ஔவையார் A saint of Tamil Nadu (ca 200 BCE), a contemporary of Saint Tiruvalluvar, devotee of Lord Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya and one of the greatest literary figures in ancient India. As a young girl, she prayed to have her beauty removed so she would not be forced into marriage and could devote her full life to God. She was a great *bhakta* who wrote exquisite ethical works, some in aphoristic style and some in four-line verse. Among the most famous are *Attī Chudi*, *Konrai Ventan*, *Ulaka Niti*, *Muturai*, and *Nalvali*. Her Tamil primer is studied by children to this day. Another Saint Auvaaiyar may have lived in the ninth century [See: Timeline, p. 669].

**Avantivarman (Avantivarman):** अवन्तीवर्मन् King of Kashmir (855–883) during whose reign lived Kallata, one of the great exponents of Kashmir Śaivism.

**avasthā:** अवस्था (Tamil: *avasthai*). “Condition or state” of consciousness or experience. 1) Any of three stages of the soul’s evolution from the point of its creation to final merger in the Primal Soul. 2) The states of consciousness as discussed in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*: *jāgrat* (or *vaiśvānara*), “wakefulness;” *svapna* (or *taijasa*), “dreaming;” *sushupti*, “deep sleep;” and *turiya*, “the fourth” state, of superconsciousness. A fifth state, “beyond *turiya*,” is *turiyātīta*. See: *kevala avasthā*, *sakala avasthā*, *śuddha avasthā*.

**avatāra:** अवतार “Descent.” A God born in a human (or animal) body. A central concept of Śaktism, Smārtism and Vaiṣṇavism. See: *incarnation*, *Ishta Devatā*, *Vaiṣṇavism*.

**avidyā:** अविद्या Spiritual “ignorance.” Wrongful understanding of the nature of reality. Mistaking the impermanent for the everlasting.

**awareness:** Individual consciousness, perception, knowing; the witness of perception, the “inner eye of the soul.” *Sākshin* or *chit* in Sanskrit. The soul’s ability to sense, see or know and to be conscious of this knowing. When awareness is indrawn (*pratyak chetana*), various states of *samādhi* may occur. Awareness

is known in the Āgamas as *chitsakti*, the “power of awareness,” the inner self and eternal witness. See: *consciousness, sākshin*.

**axiom:** An assumption, rule or maxim that is universally accepted as true.

**axis:** A real or imaginary straight line around which a planet, or any object, rotates. Metaphorically: a central line of development.

**āyurveda:** आयुर्वेद “Science of life.” A holistic system of medicine and health native to ancient India. This sacred Vedic science is an *Upaveda* of the *Atharva Veda*. Three early giants in this field who left voluminous texts are Charaka, Susruta and Vagbhata. *Āyurveda* covers many areas, including: 1) *chikitsā*, general medicine, 2) *salya*, surgery, 3) *dehavṛitti*, physiology, 4) *nidāna*, diagnosis, 5) *dravyavidyā*, materia medica and pharmacology, 6) *agada tantra*, antidotes, 7) *strī-tantra*, gynecology, 8) *paśu vidyā*, veterinary science, 9) *kaumāra bhritya*, pediatrics, 10) *ūrdhvāṅga*, diseases of the organs of the head, 11) *bhūta vidyā*, demonology, 12) *rasayana*, tonics, rejuvenating, 13) *vājī-karaṇa*, sexual rejuvenation. Among the first known surgeons was Susruta (ca 600 BCE), whose *Suśruta Samhitā* is studied to this day. (Hippocrates, Greek father of medicine, lived two centuries later.) The aims of *āyurveda* are *āyus*, “longevity,” and *ārogya*, “diseaselessness,” which facilitate progress toward ultimate spiritual goals. Health is achieved by balancing energies (especially the *doshas*, bodily humors) at all levels of being, subtle and gross, through innumerable methods, selected according to the individual’s constitution, lifestyle and nature. Similar holistic medical systems evolved among many peoples, such as the Chinese, North and South Native Americans and Africans. See: *doshas*.

**āyurveda vaidya:** आयुर्वेद वैद्य A practitioner, or physician, of *āyurveda*.

**Ayyappan:** ഏയപ്പൻ The popular God of a recently formed sect that focuses on pilgrimage to the top of Sabarimalai, a sacred hill in Kerala, where He is said to appear at night as a divine light. Ayyappan is revered as a son of Vishṇu and Śiva (Hari-Hara putra). His *vāhana* is the tiger.



**backbiting:** Speaking maliciously or slanderously about a person who is absent.

**Badarayana (Bādarāyaṇa):** बादरायण Author of the *Brahma Sūtras*. See: *Brahma Sūtra*.

**balipīṭha:** बलिपीठ “Offering place.” An inverted lotus-shaped stone atop a pedestal situated near the temple flagpole, *dhvajastambha*. Here devotees are to leave all negative thoughts as they enter the temple.

**bard:** A singer or reciter of epic poems.

**Basavanna (Basavaṇṇa):** बसवण्ण A 12th-century philosopher, poet and prime minister who reformed and revived Vira Śaivism in Karnataka. See: *Vira Śaivism*.

**Batara:** A name of Śiva used in Indonesia. See: *Śiva*.

**Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra:** बौधायनधर्मशास्त्र A book of laws associated with the *Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda* and governing studentship, marriage, household rituals, civil law, etc. It is followed by *brāhmīns* of Southwest India. See: *Dharma Śāstra, Kalpa Vedāṅga*.

**bce:** Abbreviation (equivalent to BC, “before Christ”) for “before common era,” referring to dating prior to the year one in the Western, or Gregorian calendar, which is now in universal secular use. Thus, 300 BCE was 300 years before the turn of the millennium. Cf: *ce*.

**Being:** When capitalized, *being* refers to God’s essential divine nature—Pure Consciousness, Absolute Reality and Primal Soul (God’s nature as a divine Person). Lower case *being* refers to the essential nature of a person, that within which never changes; existence. See: *Śiva*.

**benediction:** A blessing, especially a spoken one. See: *blessing*.

**benevolence:** Disposition to do good; charitable, kindly. See: *yama-niyama*.

**benign:** Good, kindly, doing no harm. See: *ahimsā*.

**besech:** To ask of someone earnestly. To solicit with fervor.

**bestow:** To offer graciously as a gift. See: *dāna*.

**betoken:** To indicate, show; offer as a sign of the future. Symbolize.

**etrothal:** Mutual pledge to marry; engagement. In Sanskrit, *vāgḍāna* or *nīśchitārtha*. See: *samskāras of adulthood*.

**bewilder:** To baffle or confuse through something puzzling or unexplained.

**Bhaga:** भग “Bestower” of fortune. A God of the *Rig Veda*; Lord of wealth, prowess and happiness. See: *puruśārtha, Rig Veda, wealth*.

**Bhagavad Gītā:** भगवद् गीता “Song of the Lord.” One of the most popular of Hindu writings, a conversation between Lord Kṛishṇa and Arjuna on the brink of the great battle at Kurukshetra. In this central episode of the epic *Mahābhārata* (part of the sixth book), Kṛishṇa illumines the warrior-prince Arjuna on *yoga*, asceticism, *dharma* and the manifold spiritual path. See: *Itihāsa, Mahābhārata*.

**Bhāgavata:** भागवत “Possessor of fortune;” gracious Lord. Relating to God or a God; holy, sacred, divine.” Pertaining to Vishṇu or Kṛishṇa. From *bhaga*, “Bestower, gracious lord; patron.” The name of a sect of Vaishṇavism which arose in the Western part of India after 600 BCE. A highly devotional monotheistic faith worshipping God as Kṛishṇa, Vāsudeva or Vāsudeva-Kṛishṇa. It is believed by scholars to have been one of five religions (along with the Ekāntika, Nārāyaṇīya, Vaikhānasa and Śātvata) that blended to form the Pañcharātra religion prevalent around Mathura ca 300 BCE. Today, the term *Bhāgavata* is often used to refer to the Vaishṇavite religion as a whole. See: *Pañcharātra, Vaishṇavism*.

**Bhāgavata Purāṇa:** भागवतपुराण Also known as *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, a work of 18,000 stanzas. A major *Purāṇa* and primary *Vaishṇava* scripture, from oral

- tradition, written down ca 800. It provides the stories of all incarnations of Vishnu, filled with the *bhakti*, inner current of devotion. See: *Purāṇa*.
- Bhairava:** भैरव “Terrifying.” Lord Śiva as the fiery protector. He carries and is represented by a *triśūla* (trident), a symbol often enshrined as guardian at the entrance to Śiva temples. See: *Śiva, triśūla*.
- bhajana:** भजन Spiritual song. Individual or group singing of devotional songs, hymns and chants. See: *congregational worship, kīrtana*.
- bhakta:** भक्त “Devotee.” A worshiper. One who is surrendered in the Divine.
- bhakti:** भक्ति “Devotion.” Surrender to God, Gods or *guru*. *Bhakti* extends from the simplest expression of devotion to the ego-decimating principle of *prapatti*, which is total surrender. *Bhakti* is the foundation of all sects of Hinduism, as well as *yoga* schools throughout the world. See: *bhakti yoga, darśana, prapatti, prasāda, sacrifice, surrender, yajña*.
- bhakti yoga:** भक्तियोग “Union through devotion.” *Bhakti yoga* is the practice of devotional disciplines, worship, prayer, chanting and singing with the aim of awakening love in the heart and opening oneself to God’s grace. *Bhakti* may be directed toward God, Gods or one’s spiritual preceptor. *Bhakti yoga* seeks communion and ever closer rapport with the Divine, developing qualities that make communion possible, such as love, selflessness and purity. Saint Sambandar described *bhakti* as religion’s essence and the surest means to divine union and liberation. He advised heartfelt worship, unstinting devotion and complete surrender to God in humble, committed service. From the beginning efforts of *bhakti* to advanced devotion, called *prapatti*, self-effacement is an integral part of Hindu, even all Indian, culture. *Bhakti yoga* is embodied in Patanjali’s *Yoga Darśana* in the second limb, *niyamas* (observances), as devotion (Īśvarapraṇidhāna). *Bhakti yoga* is practiced in many Hindu schools, and highly developed in Vaiṣṇavism as a spiritual path in itself, leading to perfection and liberation. In Śaiva Siddhānta, its cultivation is the primary focus during the *kriyā pāda* (stage of worship). See: *bhakti, prapatti, sacrifice, surrender, yajña*.
- Bharata (Bhārata):** भारत “He who supports, maintains, bears a burden.” The ancient, original name of India and its constitutional name in Hindi: *Bharatavarsha* “land of Bharat,” a legendary monarch and sage.
- Bhārata Natyam:** பரதநாட்டியம் A graceful and sophisticated dance style that originated in the Hindu temples of Southern India around the second century BCE.
- bhāshya:** भाष्य “Talking over, discussion.” Commentary on a text. Hindu philosophies are largely founded upon the interpretations, or *bhāshyas*, of primary scripture. Other types of commentaries include: *vṛitti*, a brief note on aphorisms; *tippaṇi*, like a *vṛitti* but less formal, explains difficult words or phrases; *vārttika*, a critical study and elaboration of a *bhāshya*; and *tika* or *vyakhyana*, an explanation of a *bhāshya* or *śāstra* in simpler language.
- Bhaskara (Bhāskara):** भस्कर Philosopher (ca 950). His *Bhāskarabhāshya*, a commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, was the first elaborate criticism of Sankara’s *Advaitic* doctrine of *avidyā-māyā*. See: *Sankara, Vedānta, Viśiṣṭādvaita*.
- Bhāvaliṅga:** भावलिङ्ग “Mark of existence.” Śiva beyond space and time. See: *atattva, Paraśiva, Śivaliṅga, Vira Śaivism*.
- bhedābheda:** भेदाभेद “Difference-nondifference.” A term in Vedānta which means that soul and world are identical with and yet different from God, in the same way that the waves of an ocean can be seen as being nondifferent from the ocean, yet they are not the ocean, only a part of it. See: *Vedānta*.
- Bhogar Rishi:** भोगरूषि One of the 18 *siddhas* of Śaiva tradition, an alchemist and *tantrika yogī*, associated with the Palani Hills Murugan temple in South India, for which he created the Daṇḍayūthapaniswāmī *mūrti* from nine poisonous metals. Bhogar is believed by some to still reside there in a cave. Chinese historical records suggest that he came from China.
- Bhojadeva Paramara (Paramāra):** भोजदेव परमार A Śaivite king, poet, artist and theologian of Gujarat (1018-1060). Author of *Tattvapraśāsa*. Renowned for establishing a systematic, monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, and creating India’s then largest artificial lake, 250 miles in length, called Bhojpur. See: *Tatparyadīpikā*.
- bhṛityāchāra:** भृत्याचार “Servant’s way.” One of the five Vira Śaiva codes of conduct. See: *Pañchāchāra*.
- Bhūloka:** भूलोक “Earth world.” The physical plane. See: *loka*.
- bhūmikā:** भूमिका “Earth; ground; soil.” Preface; introduction to a book. From *bhū*, “to become, exist; arise, come into being.”
- Bhuvanloka:** भुवर्लोक “Plane of atmosphere.” The second of the seven upper worlds, realm of *svādhiṣṭhāna chakra*, consisting of the two astral regions closest to the physical plane: *Pitṛiloka*, “world of ancestors,” and *Pretaloka*, “world of the departed.” See: *loka*.
- Bijjala:** बिज्जल A king in Karnataka associated with the life of Basavanna.
- bilva:** बिल्व Wood-apple (or bael) tree, *Aegle marmelos*, sacred to Lord Śiva. Its leaves, picked in threes, are offered in the worship of the Śivaliṅga. The delicious fruit when unripe is used medicinally.
- bindu:** बिन्दु “A drop, small particle, dot.” 1) The seed or source of creation. In the 36 *tattvas*, the nucleus or first particle of transcendent light, technically called *Parabindu*, corresponding to the Śakti *tattva*. Scientists say the whole universe just before the big bang could fit on the head of a pin—a tremendous point of energy—that is *Parabindu*. 2) Small dot worn on the forehead between the eyebrows, or in the middle of the forehead, made of red powder (*kuṅkuma*), sandalpaste, clay, cosmetics or other substance. It is a sign that one is a Hindu. Mystically, it represents the “third eye,” or the “mind’s eye,” which sees things that the physical eyes cannot see. The forehead dot is a reminder to use and cultivate one’s spiritual vision, to perceive and understand life’s inner workings, as well



as to look into the past to see the future. The *bindu* is also a beauty mark worn by Hindu women, the color red generally a sign of marriage, black often worn before marriage to ward off the evil eye, *kudṛiṣṭi* or *pāpadṛiṣṭi*. The *bindu* is known as *pottu* in Tamil. *Bindu* is also a term for semen. See: *tattva*, *tilaka*.

**birth chart:** *Janmapatrikā*. An astrological map of the sky drawn for a person's moment and place of birth. Also known as *rāśi chakra* or zodiac wheel, it is the basis for interpreting the traits of individuals and the experiences, *prārabdha karmas*, they will go through in life. See: *vyotisha*, *karma*.

**birthstar:** See: *nakshatra*.

**bi-sexual:** Of or characterized by sexual attraction for members of both genders. See: *heterosexual*, *homosexual*, *sexuality*.

**blessing:** Good wishes; benediction. Seeking and giving blessings is extremely central in Hindu life, nurtured in the precepts of *kāruṇya* (grace), *śakti* (energy), *darśana* (seeing the Divine), *prasāda* (blessed offerings), *pūjā* (invocation), *tīrthayātrā* (pilgrimage), *dīkshā* (initiation), *śaktipāta* (descent of grace), *saṁskāras* (rites of passage), *sānmīdhya* (holy presence) and *sādhanā* (inner-attunement disciplines).

**bodhaka:** बोधक "Mentor, teacher." One who awakens or catalyzes knowing; a religious instructor or catalyst.

**Bodhinatha (Bodhinātha):** बोधिनाथ "Lord of Wisdom." (1942–) The current preceptor of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā, and Guru Mahāsannidhānam of Kauai Aadheenam, ordained by his *satguru*, Śivaya Subramuniyaswami, in 2001.

**bodhi tantra:** बोधितन्त्र "Wise methods; ways of wisdom." See: *sādhanā*, *tantra*.

**bodies:** See: *kośa*, *śarīra*, *soul*.

**bodily humor:** Commonly, the fluids of the body, an English equivalent of the *āyurvedic* term *dosha*, which names three fundamental interbalancing principles or constituents of the human constitution. See: *āyurveda*, *dosha*.

**bond (bondage):** See: *evolution of the soul*, *mala*, *pāśa*.

**bone-gathering:** *Asthisañchaya*. Part of Hindu funeral rites. About twelve hours after cremation, family men return to the cremation site to collect the remains. Water is first sprinkled on the ashes to separate the black ash of the wood from the fine, white ash of the body. The white ash and bones (up to four inches long, called "flowers") are collected in a tray or brass pot. Some Hindus send the ashes and bones to India for deposition in the Ganges. Or they may be put into any ocean or river. Arrangements can be made with crematoriums in the East or West for the family to personally gather the ashes and "flowers." See: *cremation*, *saṁskāras of adulthood*.

**boon:** *Varadāna*. A welcome blessing, a benefit received. An unexpected benefit or bonus. See: *blessing*, *grace*.

**Brahmā:** ब्रह्मा The name of God in His aspect of Creator. Śaivites consider Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra to be three of five aspects of Śiva. Smārtas group Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva as a holy trinity in which Śiva is the

destroyer. Brahmā the Creator is not to be confused with 1) Brahman, the Transcendent Supreme of the *Upanishads*; 2) *Brāhmaṇa*, Vedic texts; 3) *brāhmaṇa*, the Hindu priest caste (also spelled *brāhmin*). See: *Brahman*, *Parameśvara*.

**brahmachāri:** ब्रह्मचारी An unmarried male spiritual aspirant who practices continence, observes religious disciplines, including *sādhanā*, devotion and service and who may be under simple vows. Also names one in the student stage, age 12–24, or until marriage. See: *āśrama dharma*, *monk*.

**brahmachārīṇī:** ब्रह्मचारिणी Feminine counterpart of *brahmachāri*. See: *nun*.

**brahmacharya:** ब्रह्मचर्य See: *yama-niyama*.

**brahmacharya āśrama:** ब्रह्मचर्य आश्रम See: *āśrama dharma*.

**brāhma muhūrta:** ब्राह्ममुहूर्त "God's hour." A very favorable time for *sādhanā*. It is traditional to arise before this period, bathe and begin one's morning worship. *Brāhma muhūrta* is defined as roughly 1.5 hours, the last *muhūrta* of the night in the 8-*muhūrta* system. It is understood as comprising the final three *muhūrtas* of the night in 15 or 16-*muhūrta* systems, equalling 144 minutes or 135 minutes respectively. See: *muhūrta*.

**Brahman:** ब्रह्मन् "Supreme Being; Expansive Spirit." From the root *brihi*, "to grow, increase, expand." Name of God or Supreme Deity in the *Vedas*, where He is described as 1) the Transcendent Absolute, 2) the all-pervading energy and 3) the Supreme Lord or Primal Soul. These three correspond to Śiva in His three perfections. Thus, Śaivites know Brahman and Śiva to be one and the same God, as: 1) **Nirguṇa Brahman:** God "without qualities (*guṇa*)," i.e., formless, Absolute Reality, Parabrahman, or Paraśiva, totally transcending *guṇa* (quality), manifest existence and even Paraśakti, all of which exhibit perceivable qualities; and 2) **Saguna Brahman:** God "with qualities;" Śiva in His perfections of Paraśakti and Parameśvara, God as superconscious, omnipresent, all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful. The term *Brahman* should not be confused with 1) *Brahmā*, the Creator God; 2) *Brāhmaṇa*, Vedic texts, or 3) *brāhmaṇa*, Hindu priest caste (popularly, *brāhmin*). See: *Parameśvara*, *Paraśakti*, *Paraśiva*.

**Brāhmaṇa:** ब्राह्मण 1) One of four primary sections of each *Veda*; concerned mainly with details of *yajña*, or sacrificial fire worship, and specific duties and rules of conduct for priests, but also rich in philosophical lore. 2) The first of the four *varṇas*, or social classes, comprising pious souls of exceptional learning, including priests, educators and humanity's visionary guides. Also spelled *brāhmin*. See: *brāhmin*, *varṇa dharma*, *Vedas*.

**Brahmāṇḍa:** ब्रह्माण्ड "Divine Egg." The cosmos; inner and outer universe. See: *loka*, *three worlds*, *world*.

**Brahmarandhra:** ब्रह्मरन्ध्र "Door of Brahman." See: *door of Brahman*.

**Brahma Sūtra(s):** ब्रह्मसूत्र Also known as the *Vedānta Sūtras*, composed by Badarayana (perhaps as early

as 400 BCE) as the first known systematic exposition of Upanishadic thought. Its 550 aphorisms are so brief as to be virtually unintelligible without commentary. It was through interpretations of this text, as well as the *Upanishads* themselves and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, that later schools of Vedānta expressed and formulated their own views of the Upanishadic tenets. A third name for this important work is *Śārīraka Sūtras*, “aphorisms on the embodied” soul. See: *Upanishad*, *Vedānta*.

**Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣhya:** ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य A lengthy 13th-century commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras* by Srikantha to establish a Vedic base for the Śaivite qualified nondualism called Śiva Advaita. See: *Śiva Advaita*, *Vedānta*.

**Brahma Sūtra, Śāṅkara Bhāṣhya:** ब्रह्मसूत्र शाङ्करभाष्य Sankara’s explanation of one of the three major treatises on Vedānta philosophy. See: *Smārta*.

**brāhmin (brāhmaṇa):** ब्राह्मण “Mature” or “evolved” soul. The class of pious souls of exceptional learning. From *Brāhman*, “growth, expansion, evolution, development, swelling of the spirit or soul.” The mature soul is the exemplar of wisdom, tolerance, forbearance and humility. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**brāhminical tradition:** The hereditary religious practices of the Vedic *brāhmins*, such as reciting *mantras*, and personal rules for daily living.

**Brahmotsava:** ब्रह्मोत्सव “God’s principal festival.” Each temple has one most important festival of the year which is its major celebration, called Brahmotsava, often a ten-day event. See: *festival*, *temple*.

**Brihadāranyaka Upanishad:** बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् One of the major *Upanishads*, part of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* of the *Yajur Veda*. Ascribed to Sage Yajnavalkya, it teaches modes of worship, meditation and the identity of the individual self with the Supreme Self. See: *Upanishad*.

**Brihaspati:** बृहस्पति “Lord of Prayer.” Vedic preceptor of the Gods and Lord of the Word, sometimes identified with Lord Gaṇeśa. Also the name of a great exponent of Śaiva Siddhānta (ca 900). See: *Gaṇeśa*.

**brihatkuṭumba:** बृहत्कुटुम्ब “Extended family.” Also called *mahākuṭumba*. See: *extended family*, *joint family*.

**Buddha:** बुद्ध “The Enlightened.” Usually the title of Siddhartha Gautama (ca 624–544 BCE), a prince born of the Śākya clan—a Śaivite Hindu tribe that lived in eastern India on the Nepalese border. He renounced the world and became a monk. After enlightenment he preached the doctrines upon which his followers later founded Buddhism. See: *Buddhism*.

**buddhi:** बुद्धि “Intellect, reason, logic.” The intellectual or disciplined mind. *Buddhi* is characterized by discrimination (*viveka*), voluntary restraint (*vairāgya*), cultivation of calmness (*śānti*), contentment (*santoshā*) and forbearance (*kshamā*). It is a faculty of *manomaya kośa*, the instinctive-intellectual sheath. See: *intellectual mind*, *kośa*, *mind (individual)*.

**buddhi chitta:** बुद्धिचित्त “Intellectual mind.” See: *buddhi*, *intellectual mind*.

**Buddhism:** The religion based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha (ca 624–544 BCE). He refuted the idea of man having an immortal soul and did not preach of any Supreme Deity. Instead he taught that man should seek to overcome greed, hatred and delusion and attain enlightenment through realizing the Four Noble Truths and following the Eightfold Path. Buddhism arose out of Hinduism as an inspired reform movement which rejected the caste system and the sanctity of the *Vedas*. It is thus classed as *nāstika*, “unbeliever,” and is not part of Hinduism. Buddhism eventually migrated out of India, the country of its origin, and now enjoys a following of over 350 million, mostly in Asia. Prominent among its holy books is the *Dhammapada*. See: *Buddha*.



*yama-niyama.*

**camphor:** *Karpura*. An aromatic white crystalline solid derived from the wood of camphor trees (or prepared synthetically from pinene), prized as fuel in temple *ārati* lamps. See: *ārati*, *pūjā*.

**canon:** The religious laws governing a sect or a religion. Body of accepted or authorized scriptures.

**caste:** A hierarchical system, called *varṇa dharma* (or *jāti dharma*), established in India in ancient times, which determined the privileges, status, rights and duties of the many occupational groups, wherein status is determined by heredity. There are four main classes (*varṇas*)—*brāhmin*, *kshatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*—and innumerable castes, called *jāti*. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**catalyst:** A person or thing acting as a stimulus upon another, whose presence brings about change. Difficulties can be a catalyst for spiritual unfoldment. *Catalyst* is sometimes used to name a teacher or facilitator.

**causal body:** *Kāraṇa śarīra*, the inmost body; the soul form, also called *ānandamaya kośa*, “bliss sheath,” and actinic causal body. See: *kośa*, *soul*.

**causal plane:** The highest or most subtle realm of existence, Śivaloka. See: *loka*.

**cause:** *Kāraṇa*. Anything which produces an effect, a result. —**efficient cause:** (*nimitta kāraṇa*) That which directly produces the effect; that which conceives, makes, shapes, etc., such as the potter who fashions a clay pot, or God who creates the world. —**material cause:** (*upādāna kāraṇa*) The matter from which the effect is formed, as the clay which is shaped into a pot, or God as primal substance becoming the world. —**instrumental cause:** (*sahakāri kāraṇa*) That which serves as a means, mechanism or tool in producing the effect, such as the potter’s wheel, used for making a pot, or God’s generative Śakti, or creative energy. See: *māyā*, *tattva*.

**ce:** Abbreviation for “Common Era.” Equivalent to the abbreviation AD (*anno Domini*, “in the Lord’s year”). Following a date, it indicates that the year in question comes after the year one in the Western, or Gregorian (originally Christian) calendar system. E.g., 300 CE is 300 years after the beginning of this era. Cf. *bce*.

**celestial:** “Of the sky or heavens.” Of or relating to the heavenly regions or beings. Highly refined, divine.

**celibacy:** Complete sexual abstinence. Also the state of a person who has vowed to remain unmarried. See: *brahmachārī*, *brahmacharya*.

**centillion:** The number 1 followed by 600 zeros. An unimaginably large figure.

**ceremony:** A formal rite established by custom or authority as proper to special occasions. From the Latin *caerimonia*, “awe; reverent rite.”

**cf:** An abbreviation for Latin *confer*, meaning “compare.”

**chaitanya:** चैतन्य “Spirit, consciousness, especially higher consciousness; Supreme Being.” A widely used term, often preceded by modifiers, e.g., *sākshī chaitanya*, “witness consciousness,” or *bhakti chaitanya*, “devotional consciousness,” or Śivachaitanya, “God consciousness.” See: *chitta*, *consciousness*, *mind* (*five states*), *Śiva consciousness*.

**Chaitanya, Sri:** चैतन्य A renowned Vaiṣṇava saint (1485–1534), revered today especially in Bengal and Orissa, remembered for his ecstatic states of devotion. He taught a dualistic philosophy in which *bhakti* (devotion) to the divine couple Rādhā and Kṛishṇa is the only means to liberation. Practice revolves mainly around *kirtana*, devotional singing and dancing. He gave prominence to the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava sect, of which several branches thrive today, including ISKCON. See: *Kṛishṇa*, *Vaiṣṇavism*, *Vedānta*.

**chakra:** चक्र “Wheel.” Any of the nerve plexes or centers of force and consciousness located within the *inner bodies* of man. In the physical body there are corresponding nerve plexuses, ganglia and glands. The seven principal *chakras* can be seen psychically as colorful, multi-petaled wheels or lotuses. They are situated along the spinal cord from the base to the cranial chamber. Additionally, seven *chakras*, barely visible, exist below the spine. They are seats of instinctive consciousness, the origin of jealousy, hatred, envy, guilt, sorrow, etc. They constitute the lower or hellish world, called *Naraka* or *pātāla*. Thus, there are 14 major *chakras* in all.

The seven upper *chakras*, from lowest to highest, are: 1) *mūlādhāra* (base of spine): memory, time and space; 2) *svādhishthāna* (below navel): reason; 3) *maṇipūra* (solar plexus): willpower; 4) *anāhata* (heart center): direct cognition; 5) *viśuddha* (throat): divine love; 6) *ājñā* (third eye): divine sight; 7) *sahasrāra* (crown of head): illumination, Godliness.

The seven lower *chakras*, from highest to lowest, are 1) *atala* (hips): fear and lust; 2) *vitala* (thighs): raging anger; 3) *sutala* (knees): retaliatory jealousy; 4) *talātala* (calves): prolonged mental confusion; 5) *rasātala* (ankles): selfishness; 6) *mahātala* (feet):

absence of conscience; 7) *pātāla* (located in the soles of the feet): murder and malice. See: *Naraka*, *pradakṣiṇa* (*also: individual chakra entries*).

**Chālukya:** चालुक्य Indian dynasty (450–1189) in the Punjab area. Buddhism and Śaivism were prominent, the Buddhist Cave frescoes at Ajanta were completed and the art of Hindu temple building was advanced.

**chandana:** चन्दन “Sandalwood paste.” One of the sacred substances offered during *pūjā* and afterwards distributed to devotees as a sacrament (*prasāda*).

**Chandas Vedānga:** छन्दस् वेदाङ्ग Auxiliary Vedic texts on the metrical rules of poetic composition. *Chanda*, meter, is among four linguistic skills taught for mastery of the *Vedas* and the rites of *yajña*. *Chandas* means “metrical lore,” or “prosody.” The most important text on *Chandas* is the *Chanda Śāstra*, ascribed to Pingala (ca 200 BCE). See: *Vedānga*.

**Chāndogya Upanishad:** छान्दोग्य उपनिषद् One of the major *Upanishads*, consisting of eight chapters of the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāma Veda*. It teaches the origin and significance of *Aum*, the importance of the *Sāma Veda*, the Self, meditation and life after death. See: *Upanishad*.

**chandra:** चन्द्र “The moon.” Of central importance in Hindu astrology and in the calculation of the festival calendar. Considered the ruler of emotion.

**Charvaka (Chārṇvāka):** चार्वाक “Good” or “sweet voice” or “word.” Indian philosopher (ca 600 BCE) who gave the name to the school of uncompromising materialism. One of the great skeptics of all time. See: *nāstika*.

**charyā pāda:** चर्यापाद “Conduct stage.” Stage of service and character building. See: *pāda*, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, *Śaivism*.

**chaturdharma:** चतुर्धर्म “Four dharmas:” *ṛita*, *āśrama dharma*, *varṇa dharma* and *svadharma*. See: *dharma*.

**chela:** चेला “Disciple.” (Hindi.) A disciple of a *guru*; synonym for *śishya*. The feminine equivalent is *chelinā* or *cheli*.

**Chellappaswami (Chellappaswāmi):** செல்வப்பாசுவாமி “Wealthy father.” Reclusive *siddha* and 160th *satguru* (1840–1915) of the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā, he lived on Sri Lanka’s Jaffna peninsula near Nallur Kandaswāmi Temple in a small hut where today there is a small *samādhi* shrine. Among his disciples was Sage Yogaswami, whom he trained intensely for five years and initiated as his successor. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*, *Nātha Sampradāya*.

**Chennabasavanna (Chennabasavaṇṇa):** चन्नबसवण्ण “Little Basavanna.” The 12th-century theologian who systematized the religious doctrine of Vira Śaivism.

**Chidambaram:** சிதம்பரம் “Hall of Consciousness.” A very famous South Indian Śiva Naṭarāja temple. See: *Naṭarāja*.

**Chinna Bomman:** சின்ன பொம்மன் King of Vellore, an area near Chennai (1559–1579), patron and disciple of Appaya Dikshita.

**chit:** चित् “Consciousness,” or “awareness.” Philosophically, “pure awareness; transcendent consciousness,” as in *Sat-chit-ānanda*. In mundane usage, *chit* means

- “perception; consciousness.” See: *awareness, chitta, consciousness, mind (universal), sākshin*.
- chitsabhā:** चित्सभा “Hall of consciousness.” See: *Naṭarāja*.
- chitta:** चित्त “Mind; consciousness.” Mind-stuff. On the personal level, it is that in which mental impressions and experiences are recorded. Seat of the conscious, subconscious and superconscious states, and of the threefold mental faculty, called *antaḥkāraṇa*, consisting of *buddhi, manas* and *ahamkāra*. See: *awareness, consciousness, mind (individual), mind (universal), sākshin*.
- chūḍākaraṇa:** चूडाकरण Head-shaving sacrament. See: *samskāra*.
- circumambulation:** *Pradakshinā*. Walking around, usually clockwise. See: *pradakshinā, pūjā*.
- citadel:** Fortress, usually situated on a height.
- clairaudience:** “Clear-hearing.” Psychic or divine hearing, *divyaśravaṇa*. The ability to hear the inner currents of the nervous system, the *Aum* and other mystic tones. Hearing in one’s mind the words of inner-plane beings or earthly beings not physically present. Also, hearing the *nāda-nāḍī śakti* through the day or while in meditation. See: *clairvoyance, nāda*.
- clairvoyance:** “Clear-seeing.” Psychic or divine sight, *divyadr̥ṣṭi*. The ability to look into the inner worlds and see auras, *chakras, nāḍīs*, thought forms, non-physical people and subtle forces. The ability to see from afar or into the past or future—*avadhijñāna*, “knowing beyond limits.” Also the ability to separate the light that illumines one’s thoughts from the forms the light illumines. Also, *dūradarśana*, “far-seeing,” the modern Sanskrit term for television in India. *Dūradarśin* names a seer or prophet. See: *ākāśa*.
- coarse:** Of crude quality; gross, rough cut. Not fine or refined.
- coexistent:** “Existing together.”
- cognition:** Knowing; perception. Knowledge reached through intuitive, superconscious faculties rather than through intellect alone.
- cognitive body:** *Vijñānamaya kośa*. The most refined sheath of the astral, or subtle, body (*sūkshma śarīra*). It is the sheath of higher thought and cognition. See: *astral body, kośa*.
- cohesive:** Clinging together; not disintegrating.
- coined:** Made up; artificed; invented.
- commemorative:** Anything that honors the memory of a departed person or past event. See: *śrāddha*.
- commencement:** Beginning.
- commission:** To give an order or power for something to be made or done.
- commitment:** Dedication or engagement to a long-term course of action.
- commune:** To communicate closely, sharing thoughts, feelings or prayers in an intimate way. To be in close rapport.
- compatible:** Capable of combining well; getting along, harmonious.
- compensate:** To make up for; reward for; give an equivalent of; recompense.
- component:** An element; one of the parts constituting a whole.
- comprehend:** Understand; grasp.
- comprehensive:** Including much or all.
- comprise:** To consist of; be composed of.
- concealing grace:** See: *grace, tirodhāna śakti*.
- conceive:** To form or develop an idea, thought, belief or attitude.
- concentration:** Uninterrupted and sustained attention. See: *rāja yoga*.
- concept:** An idea or thought, especially a generalized or abstract idea.
- conception:** Power to imagine, conceive or create. Moment when a pregnancy is begun, a new earthly body generated. —**the point of conception; the apex of creation:** The simple instant that precedes any creative impulse and is therefore the source and summit of the powers of creation or manifestation. To become conscious of the point of conception is a great *siddhi*.
- concomitant:** Accompanying a condition or circumstance.
- concord:** Harmony and agreement; peaceful relations.
- condone:** To permit, tolerate or overlook.
- confer:** To give or grant, especially an honor or privilege.
- confession:** An admission, acknowledgement; as of guilt or wrongdoing.
- confidentiality:** Keeping confidences, or information told in trust, secret; not divulging private or secret matters.
- confine(s):** Boundary, limits, border. To restrict or keep within limits.
- conflagration:** A large, destructive fire.
- conform:** To be in accord or agreement with.
- conformity:** Action in accordance with customs, rules, prevailing opinion.
- congregational worship:** Worship done as a group, such as synchronized singing, community prayers or other participatory worship by individuals sharing a strict membership in a particular organization, with no other religious affiliations. Hindu worship is strongly congregational within *āśramas* and tightly organized societies, but usually noncongregational in the general laity. See: *bhajana, kirtana, pūjā, yajña*.
- conquest:** Act or process of overcoming, defeating and subjugation.
- conscience:** The inner sense of right and wrong, sometimes called “the knowing voice of the soul.” However, the conscience is affected by the individual’s training and belief patterns, and is therefore not necessarily a perfect reflection of *dharma*. In Sanskrit the conscience is known as *antaryāmin*, “inner guide,” or *dharmabuddhi*, “moral wisdom.” Other terms are *sadasadvichāra śakti* “good-bad reflective power” and *samjñāna*, “right conception.” It is the subconscious of the person—the sum total of past impressions and training—that defines the creedal structure and colors the conscience and either clearly reflects or distorts superconscious wisdom. If the subconscious has

been impressed with Western beliefs, for example, of Christianity, Judaism, existentialism or materialism, the conscience will be different than when schooled in the Vedic *dharma* of Śāktism, Smārtism, Śaivism or Vaiṣṇavism. This psychological law has to do with the superconscious mind working through the subconscious (an interface known as the subsuperconscious) and explains why the *dharma* of one's *sampradāya* must be fully learned as a young child for the conscience to be free of conflict. The Sanātana Dharma, fully and correctly understood provides the purest possible educational creedal structure, building a subconscious that is a clear, unobstructing channel for superconscious wisdom, the soul's innate intelligence, to be expressed through the conscience. Conscience is thus the sum of two things: the superconscious knowing (which is the same in all people) and the creedal belief structure through which the superconscious flows. This explains why people in different cultures have different consciences. See: *creed, dharma, mind (individual)*.

**conscious mind:** The external, everyday state of consciousness. See: *mind*.

**consciousness:** *Chitta* or *chaitanya*. 1) A synonym for mind-stuff, *chitta*; or 2) the condition or power of perception, awareness, apprehension. There are myriad gradations of consciousness, from the simple sentience of inanimate matter to the consciousness of basic life forms, to the higher consciousness of human embodiment, to omniscient states of superconsciousness, leading to immersion in the One universal consciousness, Parāśakti. *Chaitanya* and *chitta* can name both individual consciousness and universal consciousness. Modifiers indicate the level of awareness, e.g., *vyashṭi chaitanya*, "individual consciousness;" *buddhi chitta*, "intellectual consciousness;" Śivachaitanya, "God consciousness." Five classical "states" of awareness are discussed in scripture: 1) wakefulness (*jāgrat*), 2) "dream" (*svapna*) or astral consciousness, 3) "deep sleep" (*sushupti*) or subsuperconsciousness, 4) the superconscious state beyond (*turiya*, "fourth") and 5) the utterly transcendent state called *turiyātīta* ("beyond the fourth"). See: *awareness, chitta, chaitanya, mind (all entries)*.

**consecrate:** To declare holy, or designate for sacred or religious use.

**consecrated temple:** A temple duly and fully established in all three worlds through formal religious ceremony known as *kumbhābisheka*.

**consent:** Accord; agreement; approval, especially to a proposal.

**console:** To make someone feel less sad or disappointed. To comfort.

**consolidate:** To make stronger by bringing several things into a single whole.

**consort:** Spouse, especially of a king or queen, God or Goddess. Among the Gods there are actually no sexes or sexual distinctions, though in mythological folk narratives Hinduism traditionally represents

these great beings in elaborate anthropomorphic depictions, Matrimony and human-like family units among the Gods are derived from educational intentions to illustrate the way people should and should not live. See: *Śakti*.

**contemplation:** Religious or mystical absorption beyond meditation. See: *enstasy, rāja yoga, samādhi*.

**contend:** To hold as a belief or assert as fact, especially against scepticism or counter arguments.

**continence (continent):** Restraint, moderation or, most strictly, total abstinence from sexual activity. See: *brahmacharya*.

**conversely:** An adverb used to introduce a concept with terms similar to a previous one, but in reversed order or sense.

**conversion to Hinduism:** Entering Hinduism has traditionally required little more than accepting and living the beliefs and codes of Hindus. This remains the basic factor of adoption, although there are, and always have been, formal ceremonies recognizing an individual's entrance into the religion, particularly the *nāmakaraṇa*, or naming rite. The most obvious sign of true sincerity of adoption or conversion is the total abandoning of the former name and the choosing of the Hindu name, usually a theophoric name derived from the name of a God or Goddess, and then making it legal on one's passport, identity card, social security card and driver's license. This name is used at all times, under all circumstances, particularly with family and friends. This is severance. This is adoption. This is embracing Hinduism. This is conversion. This is true sincerity and considered by born members as the most honorable and trusted testimony of those who choose to join the global congregation of the world's oldest religion. Many temples in India and other countries will ask to see the passport or other legally valid identification before admitting devotees of non-Indian origin for more than casual worship. It requires nothing more than a genuine commitment to the faith. Belief is the keynote of religious conviction, and the beliefs vary greatly among the different religions of the world. What we believe forms our attitudes, shapes our lives and molds our destiny. To choose one's beliefs is to choose one's religion. Those who find themselves at home with the beliefs of Hinduism are, on a simple level, Hindu. Formally entering a new religion, however, is a serious decision. Particularly for those with prior religious ties it is sometimes painful and always challenging.

The acceptance of outsiders into the Hindu fold has occurred for thousands of years. As Swami Vivekananda once said, "Born aliens have been converted in the past by crowds, and the process is still going on." Dr. S. Radhakrishnan confirms the *swāmi's* views in a brief passage from his well known book *The Hindu View of Life*: "In a sense, Hinduism may be regarded as the first example in the world of a missionary religion. Only its missionary spirit is different from that associated with the proselytizing creeds. It did

not regard it as its mission to convert humanity to any one opinion. For what counts is conduct and not belief. Worshipers of different Gods and followers of different rites were taken into the Hindu fold. The ancient practice of *vrātyastoma*, described fully in the *Taṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*, shows that not only individuals but whole tribes were absorbed into Hinduism. Many modern sects accept outsiders. *Dvala's Smṛiti* lays down rules for the simple purification of people forcibly converted to other faiths, or of womenfolk defiled and confined for years, and even of people who, for worldly advantage, embrace other faiths (p. 28-29)." See: *Hindu, Hinduism*.

**cope:** To contend with on equal terms. To face or deal with difficulties.

**cosmic:** Universal; vast. Of or relating to the cosmos or entire universe.

**cosmic cycle:** One of the infinitely recurring periods of the universe, comprising its creation, preservation and dissolution. These cycles are measured in periods of progressive ages, called *yugas*. Satya (or Kṛita), Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali are the names of these four divisions, and they repeat themselves in that order, with the Satya Yuga being the longest and the Kali Yuga the shortest. The comparison is often made of these ages with the cycles of the day: Satya Yuga being morning until noon, the period of greatest light or enlightenment, Tretā Yuga afternoon, Dvāpara evening, and Kali Yuga the darkest part of the night. Four *yugas* equal one *mahāyuga*. Theories vary, but by traditional astronomical calculation, a *mahāyuga* equals 4,320,000 solar years (or 12,000 "divine years;" one divine year is 360 solar years)—with the Satya Yuga lasting 1,728,000 years, Tretā Yuga 1,296,000 years, Dvāpara Yuga 864,000 years, and Kali Yuga 432,000 years. Mankind is now experiencing the Kali Yuga, which began at midnight, February 18, 3102 BCE (year one on the Hindu calendar [see Hindu Timeline]) and will end in approximately 427,000 years. (By another reckoning, one *mahāyuga* equals approximately two million solar years.) A dissolution called *laya* occurs at the end of each *mahāyuga*, when the physical world is destroyed by flood and fire. Each destructive period is followed by the succession of creation (*srishṭi*), evolution or preservation (*sthiti*) and dissolution (*laya*). A summary of the periods in the cosmic cycles:

- 1 *mahāyuga* = 4,320,000 years (four *yugas*)
- 71 *mahāyugas* = 1 *manvantara* or *manu*  
(we are in the 28th *mahayuga*)
- 14 *manvantaras* = 1 *kalpa* or day of Brahmā  
(we are in the 7th *manvantara*)
- 2 *kalpas* = 1 *ahoratra* or day and night of Brahmā
- 360 *ahoratras* = 1 year of Brahmā
- 100 Brahmā years = 309,173,760,000,000 years,  
one "lifetime" of Brahmā, or the universe, (we  
are in Brahmā Year 51 of the current cycle.

At the end of every *kalpa* or day of Brahmā a greater dissolution, called *pralaya* (or *kalpānta*, "end of an eon"), occurs when both the physical and subtle

worlds are absorbed into the causal world, where souls rest until the next *kalpa* begins. This state of withdrawal or "night of Brahmā," continues for the length of an entire *kalpa* until creation again issues forth. After 36,000 of these dissolutions and creations there is a total, universal annihilation, *mahāpralaya*, when all three worlds, all time, form and space, are withdrawn into God Śiva. After a period of total withdrawal a new universe or lifespan of Brahmā begins. This entire cycle repeats infinitely. This view of cosmic time is recorded in the *Purāṇas* and the *Dharma Śāstras*. See: *mahāpralaya*.

**Cosmic Dance:** See: *Naṭarāja*.

**Cosmic Soul:** Purusha or Parameśvara. Primal Soul. The Universal Being; Personal God. See: *Parameśvara, Primal Soul, purusha, Śiva*.

**cosmology:** "Cosmos-knowledge." The area of metaphysics pertaining to the origin and structure of the universe. Hindu cosmology includes both inner and outer worlds of existence. See: *tattva*.

**cosmos:** The universe, or whole of creation, especially with reference to its order, harmony and completeness. See: *Brahmāṇḍa, loka, tattva, three worlds*.

**covenant:** A binding agreement to do or keep from doing certain things.

**covet:** To want ardently, especially something belonging to another. To envy.

**cranial chakras:** The *ājñā*, or third-eye center, and the *sahasrāra*, at the top of the head near the pineal and pituitary glands. See: *chakra*.

**creation:** The act of creating, especially bringing the world into ordered existence. Also, all of created existence, the cosmos. Creation, according to the monistic-theistic view, is an emanation or extension of God, the Creator. It is Himself in another form, and not inherently something other than Him. See: *cause, tattva*.

**creator:** He who brings about creation. Śiva as one of His five powers. See: *creation, Naṭarāja, Parameśvara*.

**creed:** *Sraddhā dhāraṇā*. An authoritative formulation of the beliefs of a religion. Historically, creeds have arisen to protect doctrinal purity when religions are transplanted into foreign cultures. See: *conscience*.

**cremation:** *Dahana*. Burning of the dead. Cremation is the traditional system of disposing of bodily remains, having the positive effect of releasing the soul most quickly from any lingering attachment to the Earth plane. In modern times, cremation facilities are widely available in nearly every country, though gas-fueled chambers generally take the place of the customary wood pyre. Embalming, commonly practiced even if the body is to be cremated, is ill-advised, as it injures the astral body and can actually be felt by the departed soul, as would an autopsy. Should it be necessary to preserve the body a few days to allow time for relatives to arrive, it is recommended that dry ice surround the body and that the coffin be kept closed. Arrangements for this service should be made well in advance with the mortuary. Note that the remains of enlightened masters are sometimes buried or sealed

in a special tomb called a *samādhi*. This is done in acknowledgement of the extraordinary attainment of such a soul, whose very body, having become holy, is revered as a sacred presence, *sānnidhya*, and which not infrequently becomes the spiritual seed of a temple or place of pilgrimage. See: *bone-gathering, death, reincarnation, sānnidhya*.

**cringe:** To retreat, bend or crouch in an attitude of fear, especially from something dangerous or painful.

**crowns *chakra*:** *Sahasrāra chakra*. The thousand-petaled cranial center of divine consciousness. See: *chakra, kuṇḍalinī, yoga*.

**crucial:** From *crux*. Essential; decisive; critical.

**crude:** Raw. Not prepared or refined. Lacking grace, tact or taste. Uncultured.

**crux:** The essential, deciding or difficult point.

**culminate:** To reach the highest point or climax. Result.

**culture:** Development or refinement of intellect, emotions, interests, manners, and tastes. The ideals, customs, skills and arts of a people or group that are transmitted from one generation to another. Culture is refined living that arises in a peaceful, stable society. Hindu culture arises directly out of worship in the temples. The music, the dance, the art, the subtleties of mannerism and interaction between people all have their source in the humble devotion to the Lord, living in the higher, spiritual nature, grounded in the security of the immortal Self within.



**Dakṣiṇāmūrti:** दक्षिणामूर्ति “South-facing form.” Lord Śiva depicted sitting under a banyan tree, silently teaching four *rishis* at His feet.

**dampati:** दम्पती “House master(s).”

An honorific title for husband and wife as the dual masters and sovereign guides of the Hindu home (*dama*). See: *grihasṭha dharma*.

**dāna:** दान Generosity, giving. See: *yama-niyama*.

**dance:** See: *Naṭarāja, tāṇḍava*.

**daṇḍa:** दण्ड “Staff of support.” The staff carried by a *sādhu* or *sannyāsin*, representing the *tapas* which he has taken as his only support, and the vivifying of *sushumṇā* and consequent Realization he seeks. *Daṇḍa* also connotes “penalty” or “sanction.” See: *sādhu, sannyāsin*.

**darśana:** दर्शन “Vision, sight.” Seeing the Divine. Beholding, with inner or outer vision, a temple image, Deity, holy person or place, with the desire to inwardly contact and receive the grace and blessings of the venerated being or beings. Even beholding a photograph in the proper spirit is a form of *darśana*. Not only does the devotee seek to see the Divine, but to be seen as well, to stand humbly in the awakened gaze of the holy one, even if for an instant, such as in a crowded temple when thousands of worshippers file quickly past the enshrined Lord. Gods and *gurus* are thus said to “give” *darśana*, and devotees “take” *darśana*, with the eyes being the mystic locus through which energy is exchanged. This direct and personal two-sided ap-

prehension is a central and highly sought-after experience of Hindu faith. Also: “point of view,” doctrine or philosophy. See: *śaḍ darśana, sound*.

**Darwin’s theory:** Theory of evolution developed by Charles Darwin (1809–1882) stating that plant and animal species develop or evolve from earlier forms due to hereditary transmission of variations that enhance the organism’s adaptability and chances of survival. See: *evolution of the soul, nonhuman birth*.

**daśama bhāga vrata:** दशभागव्रत “One-tenth-part vow.” A promise that tithers make before God, Gods and their family or peers to tithe regularly each month—for a specified time, or for life, as they wish. See: *daśamāṁśa*.

**daśamāṁśa:** दशमांश “One-tenth sharing.” The traditional Hindu practice of tithing, giving one-tenth of one’s income to a religious institution. It was formerly widespread in India. In ancient times the term *makimai* was used in Tamil Nadu. See: *daśama bhāga vrata, puruṣhārtha*.

**dāsa mārḡa:** दासमार्ग “Servant’s path.” See: *pāda*.

**Daśanāmi:** दशनामी “Ten names.” Ten monastic orders organized by Adi Sankara (ca 800): *Āraṇya, Vāna, Giri, Pārvaṭa, Sāgara, Tīrtha, Āśrama, Bhārati, Pūri* and *Sarasvatī*. Also refers to *sannyāsin*s of these orders, each of whom bears his order’s name, with *ānanda* often attached to the religious name. For example, *Ramananda Tīrtha (Rāmānanda Tīrtha)*. Traditionally, each order is associated with one of the main Śaṅkarācārya pīṭhas, or centers. See: *Sankara, Śaṅkarācārya pīṭha, Smārta Sampradāya*.

**daurmanasya:** दौर्मानस्य “Mental pain, dejection, anxiety, sorrow, depression, melancholy and despair.” See: *chakra*.

**dayā:** दया “Compassion.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**death:** Death is a rich concept for which there are many words in Sanskrit, such as: *mahāprasthāna*, “great departure;” *samādhipharaṇa*, dying consciously while in the state of meditation; *mahāsamādhi*, “great merger, or absorption,” naming the departure of an enlightened soul. Hindus know death to be the soul’s detaching itself from the physical body and continuing on in the subtle body (*sūkṣhma śarīra*) with the same desires, aspirations and activities as when it lived in a physical body. Now the person exists in the in-between world, the subtle plane, or *Antarloka*, with loved ones who have previously died, and is visited by earthly associates during their sleep. Hindus do not fear death, for they know it to be one of the most glorious and exalted experiences, rich in spiritual potential. Other terms for death include *pañchatvam* (death as dissolution of the five elements), *mṛityu* (natural death), *prāyopaveśa* (self-willed death by fasting), *māraṇa* (unnatural death, e.g., by murder). See: *reincarnation, suicide, videhamukti*.

**deceit (deception):** The act of representing as true what is known to be false. A dishonest action.

**decentralized:** Whose administrative agencies, power, authority, etc., are distributed widely, rather than

- concentrated in a single place or person. In Hinduism, authority is decentralized.
- decked:** Covered with fine clothing or ornaments.
- defiled:** Polluted, made dirty, impure.
- deformity:** Condition of being disfigured or made ugly in body, mind or emotions.
- deha:** देह “Body.” From the verb *dih*, “to plaster, mold; anoint, fashion.” A term used in the *Upanishads*, *yoga* texts, *Saiva Āgamas*, *Tirumantiram* and elsewhere to name the three bodies of the soul: gross or physical (*sthula*), astral or subtle (*sūkshma*) and causal (*kārāṇa*). A synonym for *śarīra*. See: *śarīra*.
- Deism:** A doctrine which believes in the existence of God based on purely rational grounds; a particular faith prominent in the 17th and 18th centuries adhered to by several founding fathers of the United States, including Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. It holds that God created the world and its natural laws but is not involved in its functioning.
- Deity:** “God.” Can refer to the image or *mūrti* installed in a temple or to the Mahādeva the *mūrti* represents. See: *mūrti*, *pūjā*.
- delineate:** To mark or trace out the boundaries of a thing, concept, etc.
- delude:** To deceive, as by false promises or misleading concepts or thinking.
- delusion:** *Moha*. False belief, misconception.
- denial:** Saying “no.” Opposing or not believing in the truth of something.
- denomination:** A name for a class of things, especially for various religious groupings, sects and subjects. See: *paramparā*, *sampradāya*.
- denote:** To indicate, signify or refer to.
- deplore:** To be regretful or sorry about; to lament, disapprove.
- deploy:** To spread out; arrange into an effective pattern.
- deportment:** The manner of bearing or conducting oneself; behavior.
- depraved:** Immoral; corrupt; bad; perverted.
- desirous:** Having a longing or desire.
- despair:** The state of having lost or given up hope.
- despise:** To strongly dislike; look down upon with contempt or scorn.
- destiny:** Final outcome. The seemingly inevitable or predetermined course of events. See: *adriṣṭa*, *fate*, *karma*.
- Destroyer:** Epithet of God Śiva in His aspect of Rudra. See: *Naṭarāja*.
- deva:** देव “Shining one.” A being inhabiting the higher astral plane, in a subtle, nonphysical body. *Deva* is also used in scripture to mean “God or Deity.” See: *Mahādeva*.
- Devaloka:** देवलोक “Plane of radiant beings.” A synonym of Maharloka, the higher astral plane, realm of *anāhata chakra*. See: *loka*.
- devamandira:** देवमन्दिर “Abode of celestial beings.” From *mand*, “to stand or tarry.” A Hindu temple; also simply *mandira*. See: *temple*.
- Devanāgarī:** देवनागरी “Divine writing of townspeople.” The alphabetic script in which Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi and Marāṭhi are written. A descendant of the Northern type of the Brāhmī script. It is characterized by the connecting, horizontal line at the top of the letters. See: *Sanskrit*.
- Devī:** देवी “Goddess.” A name of Śakti, used especially in Śāktism. See: *Śakti*, *Śāktism*.
- Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa:** देवीभागवतपुराण A subsidiary text of the Śiva Purāṇas.
- Devī Gītā:** देवीगीता Twelve chapters (29 to 40) from the 7th book of *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*, a Śākta scripture. It teaches external worship of the Deity with form and meditation on the Deity beyond form.
- Devikālottara Āgama:** देवीकालोत्तर आगम One recension (edition) of the *Sārḍha Trīṣaṭi Kālottara Āgama*, a subsidiary text of *Vātula Āgama*. Also known as *Skanda Kālottara*, its 350 verses are in the form of a dialog between Kārttikeya and Śiva and deal with esoterics of *mantras*, initiations, right knowledge, faith and worship of Śiva. See: *Saiva Āgamas*.
- Devī Upanishad:** देवी उपनिषद् A Śākta *Upanishad* dealing with the nature and worship of the Goddess. See: *Śāktism*.
- devoid:** Completely without; empty.
- devonic:** Of or relating to the *devas* or their world. See: *deva*.
- devotee:** A person strongly dedicated to something or someone, such as to a God or a *guru*. The term *disciple* implies an even deeper commitment. See: *guru bhakti*.
- Dhammapada:** धम्मपद The holy book of Buddhism. See: *Buddhism*.
- Dhanurveda:** धनुर्वेद “Science of archery.” A class of ancient texts on the military arts, comprising the *Upaveda* of the *Yajur Veda*. *Dhanurveda* teaches concentration, meditation, *haṭha yoga*, etc., as integral to the science of warfare. See: *Upaveda*.
- dhāraṇā:** धारणा “Concentration.” From *dhṛi*, “to hold.” See: *meditation*, *rāja yoga*, *śraddādhāraṇā*, *yoga*.
- dharmā:** धर्म From *dhṛi*, “to sustain; carry, hold.” Hence *dharmā* is “that which contains or upholds the cosmos.” *Dharma* is a complex and comprehensive term with many meanings, including: divine law, ethics, law of being, way of righteousness, religion, duty, responsibility, virtue, justice, goodness and truth. Essentially, *dharmā* is the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature or destiny. Relating to the soul, it is the mode of conduct most conducive to spiritual advancement, the right and righteous path. There are four principal kinds of *dharmā*, known collectively as *chaturdharmā*: “four religious laws.” 1) *ṛita*: “Universal law.” The inherent order of the cosmos. The laws of being and nature that contain and govern all forms, functions and processes, from galaxy clusters to the power of mental thought and perception. 2) *varṇa dharmā*: “Law of one’s kind.” Social duty. *Varṇa* can mean “race, tribe, appearance, character, color, social standing, etc.” *Varṇa dharmā* defines the individual’s obligations and responsibilities within the nation, society, community,



class, occupational subgroup and family. An important part of this *dharma* is religious and moral law. See: *jāti*, *varṇa dharma*. 3) **āśrama dharma**: “Duties of life’s stages.” Human or developmental *dharma*. The natural process of maturing from childhood to old age through fulfillment of the duties of each of the four stages of life—*brahmachāri* (student), *grihastha* (householder), *vānaprastha* (elder advisor) and *sannyāsa* (religious solitaire)—in pursuit of the four human goals: *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (pleasure) and *moksha* (liberation). See: *āśrama dharma*. 4) **svadharmā**: “Personal obligations or duty.” One’s perfect individual pattern through life, according to one’s own particular physical, mental and emotional nature. *Svadharmā* is determined by the sum of past *karmas* and the cumulative effect of the other three *dharmas*. It is the individualized application of *dharma*, dependent on personal *karma*, reflected on one’s race, community, physical characteristics, health, intelligence, skills and aptitudes, desires and tendencies, religion, *sampradāya*, family and *guru*.

Within *āśrama dharma*, the unique duties of man and woman are respectively called *puruṣa dharma* and *strī dharma*. **Puruṣa dharma** is man’s proper pattern of conduct: traditional observances, vocation, behavior and attitudes dictated by spiritual wisdom, characterized by leadership, integrity, accomplishment, sustenance of the family. Notably, the married man works in the world and sustains his family as abundantly as he can. **Strī dharma** is the traditional conduct, observances, vocational and spiritual patterns which bring spiritual fulfillment and societal stability. It is characterized by modesty, quiet strength, religiousness, dignity and nurturing of family. Notably, she is most needed and irreplaceable as the homemaker and the educator of their children to be worthy citizens of tomorrow. See: *grihastha dharma*.

A part of the *varṇa dharma* of each person is **sādhārana dharma**: “duties applicable to all.” These are the principles of good conduct applicable to all people regardless of age, gender or class. They are listed in the *Manu Śāstras* as: *dhairya* (steadfastness), *kṣamā* (forbearance), *dama* (self-restraint), *chauryābhāva* (nonstealing), *śauca* (purity), *indriyanigraha* (sense control), *dhi* (high-mindedness), *vidyā* (learning), *satya* (veracity), *akrodha* (absence of anger). Another term for such virtues is **sāmānya dharma**: “common duty,” under which scriptures offer similar lists of ethical guidelines. These are echoed and expanded in the *yamas* and *niyamas*, “restraints and observances.” See: *yama-niyama*.

Another important division of *dharma* indicates the two paths within Hinduism, that of the family person, and that of the monastic. The former is **grihastha dharma**: “householder duty,” the duties, ideals and responsibilities of all nonmonastics, whether married or unmarried. This *dharma*, which includes the vast majority of Hindus, begins with the completion of the studentship period and extends until the end of

life. See: *grihastha dharma*. Above and beyond all the other *dharmas* (“*ati-varṇāśrama dharma*”) is **sannyāsa dharma**, “monastic virtue,” the ideals, principles and rules of renunciate monks. This is the highest *dharma*. See: *sannyāsa dharma*.

**Āpad dharma**, “exigency conduct,” embodies the principle that the only rigid rule is wisdom, and thus exceptional situations may require deviating from normal rules of conduct, provided that such exceptions are to be made only for the sake of others, not for personal advantage. These are notable exceptions, made in cases of extreme distress or calamity.

**Adharma**: “Unrighteousness.” Thoughts, words or deeds that transgress divine law in any of the human expressions of *dharma*. It brings the accumulation of demerit, called *pāpa*, while *dharma* brings merit, called *puṇya*. *Varṇa adharma* is violating the ideals of social duty, from disobeying the laws of one’s nation to squandering family wealth. *Āśrama adharma* is failure to fulfill the duties of the stages of life. *Sva-adharma* is understood as not fulfilling the patterns of *dharma* according to one’s own nature. The *Bhagavad Gītā* states (18.47), “Better one’s *svadharmā* even imperfectly performed than the *dharma* of another well performed. By performing the duty prescribed by one’s own nature (*svabhāva*) one incurs no sin (*kilbisha*).” See: *pāpa*, *puṇya*, *purity-impurity*, *varṇa dharma*.

**dharmasabhā**: धर्मसभा “Religious assembly, congregation.” A church.

**Dharma Śāstra**: धर्मशास्त्र “Religious jurisprudence.” All or any of the numerous codes of Hindu civil and social law composed by various authorities. The best known and most respected are those by Manu and Yajñavalkya, thought to have been composed as early as 600 BCE. The *Dharma Śāstras*, along with the *Artha Śāstras*, are the codes of Hindu law, parallel to the Jewish *Talmud* and the Muslim *Sharia*, each of which provides guidelines for kings, ministers, judicial systems and law enforcement agencies. These spiritual and ethical codes differ from European and American law, which separate religion from politics. (Contemporary British law is influenced by Anglican Christian thought, just as American democracy was, and is, profoundly affected by the philosophy of the non-Christian, Deistic philosophy of its founders.) The *Dharma Śāstras* also speak of much more, including creation, initiation, the stages of life, daily rites, duties of husband and wife, caste, Vedic study, penances and transmigration. The *Dharma Śāstras* are part of the *Smṛiti* literature, included in the *Kalpa Vedāṅga*, and are widely available today in many languages. See: *Deism*, *Manu Dharma Śāstras*.

**dhōṭī**: धोती (Hindi) A long, unstitched cloth wound about the lower part of the body, and sometimes passed between the legs and tucked into the waist. A traditional Hindu apparel for men. See: *veshti*.

**dhṛiti**: धृति “Steadfastness.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**dhvaja**: ध्वज “Flag.” Part of the pageantry of Hinduism,

- orange or red flags and banners, flown at festivals and other special occasions symbolize the victory of *Sanātana Dharma*. See: *festival*.
- dhvajastambha:** ध्वजस्तम्भ “Flag tree, flagpole.” (*Kodimaram* in Tamil.) A tall cylindrical post usually behind the *vāhana* in Āgamic temples. Metaphysically, it acts as the complementary pole to the enshrined *mūrti*. These two together create an energy field to contain the temple’s power. See: *temple*.
- dhyaṇa:** ध्यान “Meditation.” See: *internalized worship, meditation, rāja yoga*.
- diaspora:** From the Greek *diasperein*, “scattering.” A dispersion of religious or ethnic group(s) in foreign countries.
- dichotomy:** A division into two parts, usually sharply distinguished or contradictory. See: *paradox*.
- Dieu Siva est amour omniprésent et Réalité transcendantante:** French for “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality.” It is an affirmation of faith which capsulizes the entire creed of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta.
- differentiation:** State or condition of making or perceiving a difference.
- dīkshā:** दीक्षा “Initiation.” Solemn induction by which one is entered into a new realm of spiritual awareness and practice by a teacher or preceptor through bestowing of blessings. Denotes initial or deepened connection with the teacher and his lineage and is usually accompanied by ceremony. Initiation, revered as a moment of awakening, may be conferred by a touch, a word, a look or a thought. As the aspirant matures, he may receive deeper initiations, each one drawing him further into his spiritual being. Most Hindu schools, and especially Śaivism, teach that only with initiation from a *satguru* is enlightenment attainable. Sought after by all Hindus is the *dīkshā* called *śaktipāta*, “descent of grace,” which, often coming unbidden, stirs and arouses the mystic *kuṇḍalinī* force. Central Śaivite *dīkshās* include *samaya*, *visheshā*, *nirvāṇa* and *abhiśeka*. See: *grace, śaktipāta, sound*.
- Dīpāvalī:** दीपावली Often spelled *Dīvalī*. “Row of Lights.” A very popular home and community festival in October/November when Hindus of all denominations light oil or electric lights and set off fireworks in a joyful celebration of the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. It is a Hindu solidarity day and is considered the greatest national festival of India. In several countries, such as Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, it is an inter-religious event and a national holiday.
- dipolar:** Relating to two poles instead of only one. A philosophy is said to be dipolar when it embraces both of two contradictory (or apparently contradictory) propositions, concepts, tendencies, etc. For example, panentheism is dipolar in that it accepts the truth of God’s being (and being in) the world, and also the truth that He transcends the world. Instead of saying “it is either this or that,” a dipolar position says “it is both this and that.” See: *dvaita-advaita*.
- discordant:** Not in accord. Disagreeing; clashing; out of harmony.
- discrimination:** *Viveka*. Act or ability to distinguish or perceive differences. In spirituality, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, real and apparent, eternal and transient, as in the Upanishadic maxim, *Neti, neti*, “It is not this, it is not that.” See: *conscience*.
- disheveled:** Untidy hair, clothing or general appearance. Rumpled.
- dismay:** Loss of courage or confidence before danger. Fearful worry.
- dispassionate:** Free from emotion or passion. Calm; impartial; detached.
- dispatch:** To send off promptly, especially on an errand. To finish quickly.
- dispel:** To cause to go in various directions. To scatter and drive away; disperse.
- dissolution:** Dissolving or breaking up into parts. An alternative term for destruction. See: *absorption, mahāpralaya, Naṭarāja*.
- distort:** To twist out of shape. To misrepresent.
- Divalī:** See: *Dīpāvalī*.
- divergent:** Going off in different directions; deviating or varying.
- Divine Mother:** Śakti, especially as Personal Goddess, as conceived of and worshiped by Śāktas. See: *Śakti, Śāktism*.
- dominion:** Rulership; domain; sway. —**hold dominion over:** To be king, ruler, lord, or master of (a world, realm, etc).
- don:** To put on (a piece of clothing).
- door of Brahman:** Brahmarandhra, also called *nirvāṇa chakra*. A subtle or esoteric aperture in the crown of the head, the opening of *sushumṇā nāḍī* through which *kuṇḍalinī* enters in ultimate Self Realization, and the spirit escapes at death. Only the spirits of the truly pure leave the body in this way. *Saṁsārīs* take a downward course. See: *jñāna, kuṇḍalinī, videhamukti*.
- dormant:** Sleeping; inactive; not functioning.
- dosha:** दोष “Bodily humor; individual constitution.” The three bodily humors, which according to *āyurveda* regulate the body, govern its proper functioning and determine its unique constitution. These are *vāta*, the air humor; *pitta*, the fire humor; and *kapha*, the water humor. *Vāta* has its seat in the intestinal area, *pitta* in the stomach, and *kapha* in the lung area. They govern the creation, preservation and dissolution of bodily tissue. *Vāta* humor is metabolic, nerve energy. *Pitta* is the catabolic, fire energy. *Kapha* is the anabolic, nutritive energy. The three *doshas* (*tridoṣha*) also give rise to the various emotions and correspond to the three *guṇas*, “qualities:” *sattva* (quiescence—*vāta*), *rajas* (activity—*pitta*) and *tamas* (inertia—*kapha*). See: *āyurveda, kapha, pitta, vāta*.
- dross:** Waste matter; useless byproduct.
- dual:** Having or composed of two parts or kinds. —**duality:** A state or condition of being dual. —**realm of duality:** The phenomenal world, where each thing exists along with its opposite: joy and sorrow, etc.

**dualism:** See: *dvaita-advaita*.

**duly:** At the proper time, in the proper manner; as required.

**Durgā:** दुर्गा “She who is incomprehensible or difficult to reach.” A form of Śakti worshiped in Her gracious as well as terrifying aspect. Destroyer of demons, She is worshiped during an annual festival called *Durgā pūjā*, especially popular among Bengalis. See: *Śakti, Śāktism*.

**Durvasas (Durvāsas):** दुर्वसिस् A great sage (date unknown) who, according to Kāshmir Śaivism, was commissioned by Lord Śiva to revive the knowledge of the *Śaiva Āgamas*, whereupon he created three “mind-born” sons—Tryambaka to disseminate *advaita*, Srinatha to teach monistic theism, and Amardaka to postulate dualism.

**dvaita-advaita:** द्वैत अद्वैत “Dual-nondual; twoness-not twoness.” Among the most important terms in the classification of Hindu philosophies. *Dvaita* and *advaita* define two ends of a vast spectrum. —**dvaita:** The doctrine of dualism, according to which reality is ultimately composed of two irreducible principles, entities, truths, etc. God and soul, for example, are seen as eternally separate. —**dualistic:** Of or relating to dualism, concepts, writings, theories which treat dualities (good-and-evil, high-and-low, them-and-us) as fixed, rather than transcendable. —**pluralism:** A form of non-monism which emphasizes three or more eternally separate realities, e.g., God, soul and world. —**advaita:** The doctrine of nondualism or monism, that reality is ultimately composed of one whole principle, substance or God, with no independent parts. In essence, all is God. —**monistic theism:** A bipolar view which encompasses both monism and dualism. See: *anekavāda, dipolar, monistic theism, pluralistic realism*.

**Dvaita Siddhānta:** द्वैतसिद्धान्त “Dualistic final conclusions.” Schools of Śaiva Siddhānta that postulate God, soul and world as three eternally distinct and separate realities. See: *Pati-paśu-pāśa, Śaiva Siddhānta*.



**earrings:** Decorative jewelry worn in the ears by Hindu women and many men. *Yogīs*, especially those of the Nātha tradition, wear large earrings to stimulate the psychic *nāḍīs* connected to the ears. Traditionally, the ascetic Kānphaṭī (“split-eared ones”) split the cartilage of their ears to accommodate massive earrings. Ear-piercing for earrings is said to bring health (right ear) and wealth (left ear). See: *Kānphaṭī, sarīskāras of childhood*.

**ecclesiastical:** “Of the church or clergy.” By extension, relating to the authoritative body of any religion, sect or lineage. Having to do with an assembly of spiritual leaders and their jurisdiction.

**ecology:** The science of relations between organisms and their environment.

**ecstasy (ecstatic):** State of being overtaken by emo-

tion such as joy or wonder. Literally, “out-standing;” “standing outside (oneself).” See: *ecstasy, samādhi*.

**ecumenical:** Worldwide. —**ecumenism:** the principles or practices of promoting cooperation and better understanding among differing faiths.

**efficacious:** Producing or capable of producing the desired effect.

**efficient cause:** *Nimitta kāraṇa*. That which directly produces the effect; that which conceives, makes, shapes, etc. See: *cause*.

**effulgent:** Bright, radiant; emitting its own light.

**egalitarian:** Equalitarian. Characterized by the belief in the equal sharing of powers, rights or responsibility among all people.

**ego:** The external personality or sense of “I” and “mine.” Broadly, individual identity. In Śaiva Siddhānta and other schools, the ego is equated with the *tattva* of *ahaṅkāra*, “I-maker,” which bestows the sense of I-ness, individuality and separateness from God. See: *ahaṅkāra, āṇava*.

**eligible:** Qualified; suitable; desirable to choose.

**eliminate:** To sort out; remove; get rid of; reject.

**elixir:** Hypothetical substance that would change any metal into gold or prolong life indefinitely. An English term for *soma*, a magical beverage celebrated in ancient Vedic hymns and which played an important role in worship rites. See: *amṛita*.

**elliptical:** Having the shape of an ellipse (of egg profile, but more regular).

**elusive:** Tending to escape one’s grasp or understanding. Hard to capture.

**emanation:** “Flowing out from.” *Ābhāsa*. Shining forth from a source, emitting or issuing from. A monistic doctrine of creation whereby God issues forth manifestation like rays from the sun or sparks from a fire. See: *ābhāsa*.

**emancipator:** That which, or one who, liberates.

**eminent:** High; above others in stature, rank or achievement. Renowned or distinguished; prominent, conspicuous. Not to be confused with: 1) *imminent*, about to happen; 2) *emanate*, to issue from; 3) *immanent*, inherent or indwelling.

**emulate:** To imitate. To attempt to equal or surpass someone, generally by copying his ways, talents or successes.

**encompass:** To surround or encircle; to include.

**endow:** To equip; to give or support. To provide with a quality or characteristic.

**enlightened:** Having attained enlightenment, Self Realization. A *jñānī* or *jīvanmukta*. See: *jīvanmukta, jñāna, Self Realization*.

**enlightenment:** For Śaiva monists, Self Realization, *samādhi* without seed (*nirvikalpa samādhi*); the ultimate attainment, sometimes referred to as Paramātmā *darśana*, or as *ātma darśana*, “Self vision” (a term which appears in Patanjali’s *Yoga Sūtras*). Enlightenment is the experience-nonexperience resulting in the realization of one’s transcendent Self—Paraśiva—which exists beyond time, form and space. Each

- tradition has its own understanding of enlightenment, often indicated by unique terms. See: *God Realization, kuṇḍalīnī, nirvikalpa samādhi, Self Realization.*
- enshrine:** To enclose in a shrine. To hold as sacred and worthy of worship.
- enstasy:** A term coined in 1969 by Mircea Eliade to contrast the Eastern view of bliss as “standing inside oneself” (enstasy) with the Western view as ecstasy, “standing outside oneself.” A word chosen as the English equivalent of *samādhi*. See: *ecstasy, samādhi, rāja yoga.*
- enthrall:** To hold in a spell; captivate; fascinate.
- entourage:** A group of accompanying attendants, associates or assistants.
- entreat:** To ask earnestly; to beseech, plead or beg.
- epic history:** Long narrative poem in a high style about grand exploits of Gods and heroes. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* are India’s two great epic histories, called *Itihāsa*. See: *Itihāsa, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa.*
- equanimity:** The quality of remaining calm and undisturbed. Evenness of mind; composure.
- equilibrium:** Evenly balanced attitude. A quality of good spiritual leadership. “Having attained an equilibrium of *iḍā* and *pingalā*, he becomes a knower of the known.” See: *jñāna.*
- equivalent:** Equal, or nearly so, in quantity, volume, force, meaning, etc.
- erotic:** “Of physical love” (from the Greek *eros*). Of or arousing sexual passion.
- erroneous:** Containing or based on error; wrong.
- eschew:** To shun, avoid, stay away from.
- esoteric:** Hard to understand or secret. Teaching intended for a chosen few, as an inner group of initiates. Abstruse or private.
- essence (essential):** The ultimate, real and unchanging nature of a thing or being. —**essence of the soul:** See: *ātman, soul.*
- esteem:** To respect highly; to value.
- estranged:** “Made a stranger.” Set apart or divorced from.
- eternity:** Time without beginning or end.
- ether:** *Ākāśa*. Space, the most subtle of the five elements. See: *ākāśa, tattva.*
- ethics:** The code or system of morals of a nation, people, religion, etc. See: *dharma, pañcha nitya karmas, punya, purity-impurity.*
- etymology:** The science of the origin of words and their signification. The history of words. See: *Nirukta Vedāṅga, Sanskrit.*
- evil:** That which is bad, morally wrong, causing harm, pain, misery. In Western religions, evil is often thought of as a moral antagonism to God. This force is the source of sin and is attached to the soul from its inception. Whereas, for Hindus, evil is not a conscious, dark force, such as Satan. It is situational rather than ontological, meaning it has its basis in relative conditions, not in ultimate reality. Evil (wrong, corruption) springs from ignorance (*avidyā*) and immaturity. Nor is one necessarily in conflict with God when one is evil; and God is not standing in final judgment.
- Within each soul, and not external to it, resides the principle of judgment of instinctive-intellectual actions. God, who is ever compassionate, blesses even the worst sinner, the most depraved *asura*, knowing that that individual will one day emerge from lower consciousness into the light of love and understanding. Hindus hold that evil, known in Sanskrit as *pāpa, pāpman* or *dushṭā*, is the result of unvirtuous acts (*pāpa* or *adharmā*) caused by the instinctive-intellectual mind dominating and obscuring deeper, spiritual intelligence. (Note: both *pāpa* and *pāpman* are used as nouns and as adjectives.) The evil-doer is viewed as a young soul, ignorant of the value of right thought, speech and action, unable to live in the world without becoming entangled in *māyā*. —**intrinsic evil:** Inherent, inborn badness. Some philosophies hold that man and the world are *by nature* imperfect, corrupt or evil. Hinduism holds, on the contrary, that there is no intrinsic evil, and the real nature of man is his divine, soul nature, which is goodness. See: *hell, karma, pāpa, Satan, sin.*
- evoke:** To call forth; to conjure up; to summon, as to summon a Mahādeva, a God. See: *pūjā, yajña.*
- evolution of the soul:** *Adhyātma prasāra*. In Śaiva Siddhānta, the soul’s evolution is a progressive unfolding, growth and maturing toward its inherent, divine destiny, which is complete merger with Śiva. In its essence, each soul is ever perfect. But as an individual soul body emanated by God Śiva, it is like a small seed yet to develop. As an acorn needs to be planted in the dark underground to grow into a mighty oak tree, so must the soul unfold out of the darkness of the *malas* to full maturity and realization of its innate oneness with God. The soul is not created at the moment of conception of a physical body. Rather, it is created in the Śivaloka. It evolves by taking on denser and denser sheaths—cognitive, instinctive-intellectual and *prāṇic*—until finally it takes birth in physical form in the Bhūloka. Then it experiences many lives, maturing through the reincarnation process. Thus, from birth to birth, souls learn and mature.
- Evolution is the result of experience and the lessons derived from it. There are young souls just beginning to evolve, and old souls nearing the end of their earthly sojourn. In Śaiva Siddhānta, evolution is understood as the removal of fetters which comes as a natural unfolding, realization and expression of one’s true, self-effulgent nature. This ripening or dropping away of the soul’s bonds (*mala*) is called *malaparipakam*. The realization of the soul nature is termed *svānubhūti* (experience of the Self).
- Self Realization leads to *moksha*, liberation from the three *malas* and the reincarnation cycles. Then evolution continues in the celestial worlds until the soul finally merges fully and indistinguishably into Supreme God Śiva, the Primal Soul, Parameśvara. In his *Tirumantiram*, Rishi Tirumular calls this merger *viśvagṛāsa*, “total absorption.” The evolution of the soul is not a linear progression, but an intricate, cir-

cular, many-faceted mystery. Nor is it at all encompassed in the Darwinian theory of evolution, which explains the origins of the human form as descended from earlier primates. See: *Darwin's theory, mala, moksha, reincarnation, saṃsāra, viśvagrāsa.*

**exalt:** To make high. To raise in status, glorify or praise.

**excel:** To stand out as better, greater, finer than others. To do well at something.

**exclusive:** Excluding all others. Śaivites believe that there is no exclusive path to God, that no spiritual path can rightly claim that it alone leads to the goal.

**exemplar:** One regarded as worthy of imitation; a model. An ideal pattern to be followed by others.

**exhaustive:** "Drawn out." Very thorough; covering all details; leaving nothing out.

**existence:** "Coming or standing forth." Being; reality; that which is.

**experience:** From the Latin *experior*, "to prove; put to the test." Living through an event; personal involvement. In Sanskrit, *anubhava*.

**expound:** To explain or clarify, point by point.

**extant:** Still existing; not lost or destroyed.

**extended family:** *Bṛihatkuṭumba* or *mahākuṭumba*.

One or more joint families plus their broader associations and affiliations. Unlike the joint family, whose members live in close proximity, the extended family is geographically widespread. The extended family is headed by the patriarch, called *bṛihatkuṭumba pramukha* (or *mukhya*), recognized as the leader by each joint family. He, in turn is under the guidance of the *kulaguru*, or family preceptor. It includes the following, in order of their precedence: priests of one's faith; elder men and women of the community; in-laws of married daughters; married daughters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters, and the spouses and children of these married girls; members of the staff and their families and those closely associated with the joint family business or home; maternal great-grandparents and grandparents, parents, uncles and their spouses, aunts and their spouses, children and grandchildren of these families; very close friends and their children; members of the community at large. See: *grihastha, grihastha dharma, joint family.*

**extol:** "Raise up; lift up." Praising highly.

**exultant:** "Leaping (for joy)." Rejoicing greatly. Immensely happy or triumphant.



**fable:** Myth or legend. A story, usually with animal characters, meant to illustrate moral principles. See: *mythology, Pañchatantra.*

**faith:** Trust or belief. Conviction. From the Latin *fides*, "trust." Faith in

its broadest sense means "religion," "dharma." More specifically, it is the essential element of religion—the belief in phenomena beyond the pale of the five senses, distinguishing it sharply from rationalism. Faith is established through intuitive or transcendent experience of an individual, study of scripture and hearing

the testimony of the many wise *rishis* speaking out the same truths over thousands of years. This inner conviction is based in the divine sight of the third eye center, *ājñā chakra*. Rightly founded, faith transcends reason, but does not conflict with reason. Faith also means confidence, as in the testimony and reputation of other people. The Sanskrit equivalent is *śraddhā*. Synonyms include *āstikya, viśvāsa, dharma* and *mati*.

**family life:** See: *extended family, grihastha āśrama, joint family.*

**far-seeing:** *Dūrdarśana*. Having the power of clairvoyance, also known as *divyadr̥ṣṭi*, "divine sight." See: *clairvoyance, siddhi.*

**fast:** Abstaining from all or certain foods, as in observance of a vow or holy day. Hindus fast in various ways. A simple fast may consist of merely avoiding certain foods for a day or more, such as when vegetarians avoid *tamasic* or *rajasic* foods or when nonvegetarians abstain from fish, fowl and meats. A moderate fast would involve avoiding heavier foods, or taking only juices, teas and other liquids. Such fasts are sometimes observed only during the day, and a normal meal is permitted after sunset. Serious fasting, which is done under supervision, involves taking only water for a number of days and requires a cessation of most external activities.

**fate:** From the Latin *fatum*, prophetic "declaration," "oracle." A destiny once decreed ("said"), hence inevitable. In Western thought, fate is the force or agency, God or other power, outside man's control, believed to determine the course of events before they occur. In Hindu thought, man is not ruled by fate but shapes his own destiny by his actions, which have their concomitant reactions. The Hindu view acknowledges fate only in the limited sense that man is subject to his own past *karmas*, which are a driving force in each incarnation, seemingly out of his own control. But they can be mitigated by how he lives life, meaning how he faces and manages his *prārabdha* ("begun, undertaken") *karmas* and his *kriyamāna* ("being made") *karmas*. See: *adriṣṭa, destiny, karma.*

**fellowship:** Companionship. Mutual sharing of interests, beliefs or practice. A group of people with common interests and aspirations.

**festival:** A time of religious celebration and special observances. Festivals generally recur yearly, their dates varying slightly according to astrological calculations. They are characterized by acts of piety (elaborate *pūjās*, penance, fasting, pilgrimage) and rejoicing (songs, dance, music, parades, storytelling and scriptural reading). See: *sound, teradi.*

**fetch:** Retrieve. To go get a thing and bring it back.

**First World:** The physical universe. See: *loka, three worlds.*

**firewalking:** The trance-inducing ceremonial practice of walking over a bed of smoldering, red-hot coals as an expression of faith and sometimes as a form of penance. Participants describe it as a euphoric experience in which no pain is felt and no burns received.

Many lose body consciousness during the walk. Fire-walking is associated with folk-shamanic Śāktism and is popular among Hindu communities in and outside of India. The practice is known also from other religions, times and places of the world. See: *folk-shamanic, penance, Śāktism*.

**five acts of Śiva:** *Pañchakṛitya*. Creation, preservation, destruction, veiling and revealing. See: *Naṭarāja, Parameśvara*.

**flux:** Continuous flowing movement or change.

**folk narratives:** Popular or village stories passed orally from generation to generation through verbal telling—often a mixture of fact and fancy, allegory and myth, legend and symbolism, conveying lessons about life, character and conduct. India's most extensive and influential of this kind of literature are the *Purāṇas*. While they are broadly deemed to be scriptural fact, this contemporary Hindu catechism accepts them as edifying mythology meant to capture the imagination of the common folk and to teach them moral living. See: *fable, Itihāsa, kathā, mythology, Purāṇa*.

**folk-shamanic:** Of or related to a tribal or village tradition in which the mystic priest, shaman, plays a central role, wielding powers of magic and spirituality. Revered for his ability to influence and control nature and people, to cause good and bad things to happen, he is the intermediary between man and divine forces. The term *shaman* is from the Sanskrit *śramaṇa*, "ascetic," akin to *śram*, "to exert." See: *Śāktism, shamanism*.

**forbearance:** Self-control; responding with patience and compassion, especially under provocation. Endurance; tolerance. See: *yama-niyama*.

**formless:** Philosophically, *atattva*, beyond the realm of form or substance. Used in attempting to describe the wondersome, indescribable Absolute, which is "timeless, formless and spaceless." God Śiva has form and is formless. He is the immanent Pure Consciousness or pure form. He is the Personal Lord manifesting as innumerable forms; and He is the impersonal, transcendent Absolute beyond all form. Thus we know Śiva in three perfections, two of form and one formless. This use of the term *formless* does not mean *amorphous*, which implies a form that is vague or changing. Rather, it is the absence of substance, sometimes thought of as a void, an emptiness beyond existence from which comes the fullness of everything. In describing the Self as formless, the words *timeless* and *spaceless* are given also to fully indicate this totally transcendent noncondition. See: *atattva, Paraśiva, Satchidānanda, void*.

**fountainhead:** A spring that is the source of a stream. The source of anything.

**fruition:** The bearing of fruit. The coming to fulfillment of something that has been awaited or worked for.

**funeral rites:** See: *bone-gathering, cremation, saṁskāras of later life*.



**gaja:** गज The elephant, king of beasts, representative of Lord Gaṇeśa and sign of royalty and power. Many major Hindu temples keep one or more elephants.

**galactic:** Of or pertaining to our galaxy, the Milky Way (from the Greek *gala*, "milk") and/or other galaxies.

**gaṇa(s):** गण "Throng; troop; retinue; a body of followers or attendants." A troop of demigods—God Śiva's attendants, devonic helpers under the supervision of Lord Gaṇeśa. See: *Gaṇapati, Gaṇeśa*.

**gaṇāchāra:** गणाचार Loyalty to the community. One of five Vīra Śaiva codes of conduct. See: *pañchāchāra, Vīra Śaivism*.

**Ganachara (Gaṇāchāra):** गणाचार Name of a Vīra Śaiva saint.

**Gaṇapati:** गणपति "Leader of the *gaṇas*." A name of *Gaṇeśa*.

**Gaṇapati Upanishad:** गणपति उपनिषद् A later *Upanishad* on Lord Gaṇeśa, not connected with any *Veda*; date of composition is unknown. It is a major scripture for the Gaṇapatians, a minor Hindu sect which reveres Gaṇeśa as Supreme God and is most prevalent in India's Maharashtra state. See: *Gaṇeśa*.

**Gāndharvaveda:** गान्धर्ववेद "Science of music." A class of ancient tracts on music, song and dance. It is the *Upaveda* of the *Sāma Veda*. See: *Upaveda*.

**Gaṇeśa:** गणेश "Lord of Categories." (From *gaṇ*, "to count or reckon," and *śa*, "lord.") Or: "Lord of attendants (*gaṇa*)," synonymous with *Gaṇapati*. Gaṇeśa is a Mahādeva, the beloved elephant-faced Deity honored by Hindus of every sect. He is the Lord of Obstacles (*Vighneśvara*), revered for His great wisdom and invoked first before any undertaking, for He knows all intricacies of each soul's *karma* and the perfect path of *dharma* that makes action successful. He sits on the *mūlādhāra chakra* and is easy of access. Lord Gaṇeśa is sometimes identified with the *Rig Vedic* God Bṛihaspati ("Lord of Prayer," the "Holy Word"), *Rig Veda* 2.23.1. See: *gaṇa, Gaṇapati, Mahādeva*.

**Gaṇeśa Chaturthi:** गणेश चतुर्थी The birthday of Lord Gaṇeśa, a ten-day festival of August-September that culminates in a spectacular parade called *Gaṇeśa Visarjana*. It is a time of rejoicing, when all Hindus worship together.

**Gaṇeśa Visarjana:** गणेश विसर्जन "Gaṇeśa departure." A parade usually occurring on the 11th day after *Gaṇeśa Chaturthi*, in which the *Gaṇeśa mūrtis* made for the occasion are taken in procession to a body of water and ceremoniously immersed and left to dissolve. This represents *Gaṇeśa's* merging with the ocean of consciousness. See: *Gaṇeśa*.

**Ganges (Gaṅgā):** गंगा India's most sacred river, 1,557 miles long, arising in the Himalayas above Hardwar under the name *Bhagīratha*, and being named *Gaṅgā* after joining the *Alakanada* (where the *Sarasvatī* is said to join them underground). It flows southeast across the densely populated Gangetic plain, joining

- its sister Yamunā (or Jumnā) at Prayaga (Allahabad) and ending at the Bay of Bengal. See: *Gangetic Plain*.
- Gangetic Plain:** The densely populated plain surrounding India's most sacred river, the Ganges (Gaṅgā), an immense, fertile area of 300,000 square miles, 90 to 300 miles wide. See: *Ganges*.
- garbha:** गर्भ "Womb; interior chamber." The inside or middle of anything.
- garbhādhāna:** गर्भाधान "Womb-impregnation." The rite anticipating conception. See: *reincarnation, saṃskāras of birth*.
- garbhagrīha:** गर्भगृह The "innermost chamber," sanctum sanctorum, of a Hindu temple, where the primary *mūrti* is installed. It is a small, cave-like room, usually made of granite stone, to which only priests are permitted access. Esoterically it represents the cranial chamber. See: *temple*.
- Gargya (Gārgya):** गर्ग्य One of the known disciples of Lakulisa. See: *Lakulisa*.
- Gautama:** गौतम The name of the founder of the Nyāya school of Śaivism, author of the *Nyāya Sūtras*. See: *śaḍ darśana*
- Gautama, Siddhartha (Siddhārtha):** गौतम सिद्धार्थ The Buddha. See: *Buddha, Buddhism*.
- gay:** "Joyous, merry, happy." Homosexual (preferred self-appellation), especially male, though may also refer to females. See: *bisexual, heterosexual, homosexual, sexuality*.
- gāyatrī:** गायत्री According with the *gāyatrī* verse form, an ancient meter of 24 syllables, generally as a triplet with eight syllables each. From *gāya*, "song." — **Gāyatrī:** The Vedic Gāyatrī Mantra personified as a Goddess, mother of the four *Vedas*.
- Gāyatrī Mantra:** गायत्रीमन्त्र 1) Famous Vedic *mantra* used in *pūjā* and personal chanting. *Om [bhūr bhuvah svah] tatsavitur vareṇyam, bhargo devasya dhīmahi, dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt.* "[O Divine Beings of all three worlds,] we meditate upon the glorious splendor of the Vivifier divine. May He illumine our minds." (*Rig Veda* 3.62.10. व१). This sacred verse is also called the Sāvitrī Mantra, being addressed to Sāvitrī, the Sun as Creator, and is considered a universal mystic formula so significant that it is called Vedamātrī, "mother of the *Vedas*." 2) Any of a class of special *tantric mantras* called Gāyatrī. Each addresses a particular Deity. The Śiva Gāyatrī Mantra is: *Tryambakam yajāmahe sugandhim puṣṭivardhanam, urvārukamiva bandhanān mṛtyormukshīya māmṛtāt.* "We adore the fragrant three-eyed one who promotes prosperity. May we be freed from the bondage of death as a cucumber from its stalk, but not from immortality." This is a famous verse of the *Yajur Veda* (from *Rudranāmaka*, or *Śrī Rudram*), considered an essential *mantra* of Śiva worship, used in all Śiva rites.
- germinate:** To sprout. To begin to develop.
- ghaṅṭā:** घण्टा "Bell." Akin to *ghaṅṭā*, "to speak." An important implement in Hindu worship (*pūjā*), used to chase away *asuras* and summon *devas* and Gods. See: *pūjā*.
- ghee:** घी Hindi for clarified butter; *ghṛita* in Sanskrit. Butter that has been boiled and strained. An important sacred substance used in temple lamps and offered in fire ceremony, *yajña*. It is also used as a food with many *āyurvedic* virtues. See: *yajña*.
- Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā:** घेरण्डसंहिता A Vaiṣṇava manual on *haṭha yoga* (ca 1675), still influential today, presented as a dialog between Sage Gheranda and a disciple. See: *haṭha yoga*.
- gloom:** Darkness. Deep sadness or despair.
- go:** गो The cow, considered especially sacred for its unbounded generosity and usefulness to humans. It is a symbol of the Earth as the abundant provider. For the Hindu, the cow is a representative of all living species, each of which is to be revered and cared for.
- God:** Supernal being. Either the Supreme God, Śiva, or one of the Mahādevas, great souls, who are among His creation. See: *Gods, Mahādeva, Śiva*.
- Goddess:** Female representation or manifestation of Divinity; Śakti or Devī. *Goddess* can refer to a female perception or depiction of a causal-plane being (Mahādeva) in its natural state, which is genderless, or it can refer to an astral-plane being residing in a female astral body. To show the Divine's transcendence of sexuality, sometimes God is shown as having qualities of both sexes, e.g., Ardhanaṛīśvara, "Half-woman God;" or Lord Natarāja, who wears a feminine earring in one ear and a masculine one in the other.
- Godhead:** God; Divinity. A term describing the essence or highest aspect of the Supreme Being.
- God Realization:** Direct and personal experience of the Divine within oneself. It can refer to either 1) *savikalpa samādhi* ("ecstasy with form") in its various levels, from the experience of inner light to the realization of Satchidānanda, the pure consciousness or primal substance flowing through all form, or 2) *nirvikalpa samādhi* ("ecstasy without form"), union with the transcendent Absolute, Paraśiva, the Self God, beyond time, form and space. In *Dancing with Śiva*, the expression *God Realization* is used to name both of the above *samādhis*, whereas *Self Realization* refers only to *nirvikalpa samādhi*. See: *rāja yoga, samādhi, Self Realization*.
- Gods:** Mahādevas, "great beings of light." In *Dancing with Śiva*, the plural form of *God* refers to extremely advanced beings existing in their self-fulgent soul bodies in the causal plane. The meaning of *Gods* is best seen in the phrase, "God and the Gods," referring to the Supreme God—Śiva—and the Mahādevas who are His creation. See: *Mahādeva*.
- God's power:** See: *Śakti*.
- gopura:** गोपुर South Indian temple entrance tower, often quite tall with ornate carvings. See: *balipīṭha, temple*.
- Gorakshanatha (Gorakshanātha):** गोरक्षनाथ Profound *siddha yoga* master of the Ādinātha Sampradāya (ca 950). Expounder and foremost *guru* of Siddha Siddhānta Śaivism. He traveled and extolled the greatness of Śiva throughout North India and Nepal where

he and his *guru*, Matsyendranatha, are still highly revered. See: *haṭha yoga*, *Siddha Siddhānta*, *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati*.

**Gorakshanātha Śaivism:** गोरक्षनाथशैव One of the six schools of Śaivism, also called Siddha Siddhānta. See: *Siddha Siddhānta*, *siddha yoga*.

**Gorakshapantha:** गोरक्षपन्थ “Path of Gorakshanatha.” A synonym for Siddha Siddhānta. See: *Śaivism* (six schools), *Siddha Siddhānta*.

**Gorakshaśataka:** गोरक्षशतक “A Hundred Verses by Goraksha.” Along with *Siddha Siddhānta Pradīpikā*, this work extols the path of “Śiva yoga,” which is *haṭha-kunḍalinī yoga* emphasizing control over body and mind, awakening of higher *chakras* and *nāḍī* nerve system with the intent of realizing the Absolute, Parāsamvid, and residing in the *sahasrāra chakra* in perfect identity with Śiva. See: *Gorakshanatha*, *Siddha Siddhānta*.

**gotra:** गोत्र “Cowshed.” Family lineage or subcaste stemming from a *rishi* or *satguru* and bearing his name. Originally described as several joint families sharing a common cowshed. See: *caste*, *jāti*, *varṇa dharma*.

**grace:** “Benevolence, love, giving,” from the Latin *gratia*, “favor,” “goodwill.” God’s power of revealment, *anugraha śakti* (“kindness, showing favor”), by which souls are awakened to their true, Divine nature. Grace in the unripe stages of the spiritual journey is experienced by the devotee as receiving gifts or boons, often unbidden, from God. The mature soul finds himself surrounded by grace. He sees all of God’s actions as grace, whether they be seemingly pleasant and helpful or not. For him, his very love of God, the power to meditate or worship, and the spiritual urge which drives his life are entirely and obviously God’s grace, a divine endowment, an intercession, unrelated to any deed or action he did or could perform.

In Śaiva Siddhānta, it is grace that awakens the love of God within the devotee, softens the intellect and inaugurates the quest for Self Realization. It descends when the soul has reached a certain level of maturity, and often comes in the form of a spiritual initiation, called *śaktipāta*, from a *satguru*.

Grace is not only the force of illumination or revealment. It also includes Śiva’s other four powers—creation, preservation, destruction and concealment—through which He provides the world of experience and limits the soul’s consciousness so that it may evolve. More broadly, grace is God’s ever-flowing love and compassion, *kāruṇya*, also known as *kṛpā* (“tenderness, compassion”) and *prasāda* (literally, “clearness, purity”).

To whom is God’s grace given? Can it be earned? Two famous analogies, that of the monkey (*markaṭa*) and that of the cat (*mārjāra*) express two classical viewpoints on salvation and grace. The *markaṭa* school, perhaps represented more fully by the *Vedas*, asserts that the soul must cling to God like a monkey clings to its mother and thus participate in its “salvation.” The *mārjāra* school, which better reflects the

position of the *Āgamas*, says that the soul must be like a young kitten, totally dependent on its mother’s will, picked up in her mouth by the scruff of the neck and carried here and there. This crucial state of loving surrender is called *prapatti*. See: *anugraha śakti*, *prapatti*, *śaktipāta*, *tirodhāna śakti*.

**grandeur:** Greatness, magnificence; of lofty character; sublime nobility.

**grantha:** ग्रन्थ Literally, “knot,” a common name for book—a term thought to refer to the knot on the cord that bound ancient palm-leaf or birch-bark manuscripts. Books are accorded deep respect in Hinduism, always carefully treated, never placed directly on the floor. Special books are not uncommonly objects of worship. *Grantha* also names an ancient literary script developed in South India. See: *olai*.

**granthavidyā:** ग्रन्थविद्या “Book knowledge.” Bibliography; booklist, recommended reading.

**grihastha:** गृहस्थ “Householder.” Family man or woman. Family of a married couple and other relatives. Pertaining to family life. The purely masculine form of the word is *grihasthin*, and the feminine *grihasthī*. *Griha* names the home itself. See: *āśrama dharma*, *extended family*, *grihastha dharma*, *joint family*.

**grihastha āśrama:** गृहस्थ आश्रम “Householder stage.” See: *āśrama dharma*.

**grihastha dharma:** गृहस्थधर्म “Householder law.” The virtues and ideals of family life. This *dharma* includes all nonmonastics, whether married or single. In general, *grihastha dharma* begins with the completion of the period of studentship and extends throughout the period of raising a family (called the *grihastha āśrama*). Specific scriptures, called *Dharma Śāstras* and *Grihya Śāstras*, outline the duties and obligations of family life. In Hinduism, family life is one of serving, learning and striving within a close-knit community of many relatives forming a joint family and its broader connections as an extended family under the aegis of a spiritual *guru*. Each is expected to work harmoniously to further the wealth and happiness of the family and the society, to practice religious disciplines and raise children of strong moral fiber to carry on the tradition. Life is called a *jīvayajña*, “self-sacrifice,” for each incarnation is understood as an opportunity for spiritual advancement through fulfilling one’s *dharma* of birth, which is the pattern one chose before entering this world, a pattern considered by many as bestowed by God. In the majority of cases, sons follow in the footsteps of their father, and daughters in those of their mother. All interrelate with love and kindness. Respect for all older than oneself is a keynote. Marriages are arranged and the culture is maintained.

The householder strives to fulfill the four *puruṣārthas*, “human goals” of righteousness, wealth, pleasure and liberation. While taking care of one’s own family is most central, it is only part of this *dharma*’s expectations. *Grihasthas* must support the religion by building and maintaining temples, monasteries and other religious institutions, supporting the monastics



and disseminating the teachings. They must care for the elderly and feed the poor and homeless. Of course, the duties of husband and wife are different. The *Tirukural* describes the householder's central duties as serving these five: ancestors, God, guests, kindred and himself. The *Dharma Śāstras*, similarly, enjoin daily offerings to *ṛishis*, ancestors, Gods, creatures and men. See: *āśrama dharma, extended family, joint family, yajña*.

**griheśvara and grihiṇī:** गृहेश्वर गृहिणी From *griha*, “home,” hence “lord and lady of the home.” The family man, *griheśvara* (or *grihapati*), and family woman, *grihiṇī*, considered as master and mistress of their respective realms, so they may fulfill their *purusha* and *strī dharmas*. Implies that both of their realms are equally important and inviolable. See: *dharma*.

**Grihya Sūtras:** गृह्यसूत्र “Household maxims or codes.” An important division of classical *smṛiti* literature, designating rules and customs for domestic life, including rites of passage and other home ceremonies, which are widely followed to this day. The *Grihya Sūtras* (or *Śāstras*) are part of the *Kalpa Sūtras*, “procedural maxims” (or *Kalpa Vedāṅga*), which also include the *Śrauta* and *Śulba Śāstras*, on public Vedic rites, and the *Dharma Śāstras* (or *Sūtras*), on domestic-social law. Among the best known *Grihya Sūtras* are *Āśvalāyana's Grihya Sūtras* attached to the *Rīg Veda*, *Gobhila's Sūtras* of the *Sāma Veda*, and the *Sūtras* of *Pāraskara* and *Baudhāyana* of the *Yajur Veda*. See: *Kalpa Vedāṅga, Vedāṅga*.

**gross plane:** The physical world. See: *loka, tattva, world*.  
**Guha:** गुह An epithet of Kārttikeya. “The interior one.” —*guhā:* “Cave.” See: *Kārttikeya*.

**Guhavāsi:** “Cave-dweller; he who is hidden”—a name of Lord Śiva.

**Guhavasi Siddha (Guhavāsi):** गुहावासी सिद्ध A *guru* of central India (ca 675) credited with the modern founding of Śaiva Siddhānta in that area, based fully in Sanskrit.

**Guheśvara:** गृहेश्वर “Lord of the cave.” A name of Lord Śiva implying His presence in the heart or the interior of all beings.

**Gujarat (Gujarāt):** गुजरात State of West India. Capital is Ahmedabad, population 40,000,000, area 75,670 square miles.

**guṇa:** गुण “Strand; quality.” The three constituent principles of *prakṛiti*, primal nature. The three *guṇas* are —*sattva:* Quiescent, rarified, translucent, pervasive, reflecting the light of Pure Consciousness. —*rajas:* “Passion,” inherent in energy, movement, action, emotion, life. —*tamas:* “Darkness,” inertia, density, the force of contraction, resistance and dissolution. The *guṇas* are integral to Hindu thought, as all things are composed of the combination of these qualities of nature, including *āyurveda*, arts, environments and personalities. See: *āyurveda, prakṛiti, tattva*.

**Gurkhā:** गुर्खा A Rajput people of the mountains of Nepal; famed warriors.

**guru:** गुरु “Weighty one,” indicating an authority of

great knowledge or skill. A term used to describe a teacher or guide in any subject, such as music, dance, sculpture, but especially religion. For clarity, the term is often preceded by a qualifying prefix. Hence, terms such as *kulaguru* (family teacher), *vīnaguru* (*vīna* teacher) and *satguru* (spiritual preceptor). In Hindu astrology, *guru* names the planet Jupiter, also known as *Bṛihaspati*. According to the *Advayatāraka Upaniṣhad* (14–18), *guru* means “dispeller (*gu*) of darkness (*ru*).” See: *guru-śiṣya system, satguru*.

**guru bhakti:** गुरुभक्ति Devotion to the teacher. The attitude of humility, love and ideation held by a student in any field of study. In the spiritual realm, the devotee strives to see the *guru* as his higher Self. By attuning himself to the *satguru's* inner nature and wisdom, the disciple slowly transforms his own nature to ultimately attain the same peace and enlightenment his *guru* has achieved. *Guru bhakti* is expressed through serving the *guru*, meditating on his form, working closely with his mind and obeying his instructions. See: *guru, guru-śiṣya system, Kulārṇava Tantra, satguru*.

**Gurudeva:** गुरुदेव “Divine or radiant preceptor.” An affectionate, respectful name for the *guru*. See: *guru*.

**Guru Gītā:** गुरु गीता “Song of the *guru*.” A popular 352-verse excerpt from the *Skanda Purāṇa*, wherein Lord Śiva tells Pārvatī of the *guru-disciple* relationship. See: *guru*.

**Guru Jayanti:** गुरु जयन्ती Preceptor's birthday, celebrated as an annual festival by devotees. A *pādapūjā*, ritual bathing of his feet, is usually performed. If he is not physically present, the *pūjā* is done to the *śrī pādūkā*, “revered sandals,” which represent the *guru* and hold his vibration. See: *pādapūjā*.

**gurukula:** गुरुकुल A training center where young boys live and learn in residence with their teacher. *Kula* means “family.” See: *āśrama, brahmacharya*.

**Guru Nanak (Nānak):** See: *Ādi Granth, Sikhism*.

**guru paramparā:** गुरुपरंपरा “Preceptorial succession” (literally, “from one to another”). A line of spiritual *gurus* in authentic succession of initiation; the chain of mystical power and authorized continuity, passed from *guru* to *guru*. Cf: *sampradāya*.

**Guru Pūrṇimā:** गुरु पूर्णिमा Occurring on the full moon of July, *Guru Pūrṇimā* is for devotees a day of rededication to all that the *guru* represents. It is occasioned by *pādapūjā*—ritual worship of the *guru's* sandals, which represent his holy feet. See: *guru-śiṣya system*.

**guru-śiṣya system:** गुरुशिष्य “Master-disciple system.” An important education system of Hinduism whereby the teacher conveys his knowledge and tradition to a student. Such knowledge, whether it be Vedic-Āgamic art, architecture or spirituality, is imparted through the developing relationship between *guru* and disciple. The principle of this system is that knowledge, especially subtle or advanced knowledge, is best conveyed through a strong human relationship based on ideals of the student's respect, commitment, devotion and obedience, and on personal instruction by which the student eventually masters the knowl-

edge the *guru* embodies. See: *guru, guru bhakti, Hindu, satguru*.

**gush:** To flow out suddenly and plentifully.



**hallowed:** Sacred.

**hamsa:** हंस “Swan;” more accurately, the high-flying wild goose *Anser indicus*. The *vāhana*, vehicle, of the God Brahmā. It has various meanings, including Supreme Soul and individual soul. It is a noble symbol for an adept class of renunciates (*paramahansa*)—winging high above the mundane, driving straight toward the goal, or of the discriminating *yogī* who—like the graceful swan said to be able to extract milk from water—can see the Divine and leave the rest. The *hamsa mantra* indicates the sound made by the exhalation (*ha*) and inhalation (*sa*) of the breath. See: *paramahansa*.

**Hari-Hara:** हरिहर “Vishṇu-Siva.” Also known as Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, an icon of the Supreme One, in which the right half is Siva and left half is Vishṇu. It symbolizes the principle that Siva and Vishṇu are not two separate Deities. See: *Brahmā, mūrti, Parameśvara, Vishṇu*.

**haṭha yoga:** हठयोग “Forceful yoga.” *Haṭha yoga* is a system of physical and mental exercise developed in ancient times as a means of rejuvenation by *rishis* and *tapasvins* who meditated for long hours, and used today in preparing the body and mind for meditation. Its elements are 1) postures (*āsana*), 2) cleansing practices (*dhauti* or *shodhana*), 3) breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), 4) locks (*bandha*, which temporarily restrict local flows of *prāṇa*) and 5) hand gestures (*mudrā*), all of which regulate the flow of *prāṇa* and purify the inner and outer bodies. *Haṭha yoga* is broadly practiced in many traditions. It is the third limb (*aṅga*) of Patanjali’s *rāja yoga*. It is integral to the Śaiva and Śakta *tantra* traditions, and part of modern *āyurveda* treatment. In the West, *haṭha yoga* has been superficially adopted as a health-promoting, limbering, stress-reducing form of exercise, often included in aerobic routines. Esoterically, *ha* and *ṭha*, respectively, indicate the microcosmic sun (*ha*) and moon (*ṭha*), which symbolize the masculine current, *piṅgalā nāḍī*, and feminine current, *iḍā nāḍī*, in the human body. The most popular *haṭha yoga* manuals are *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* and the *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā*. See: *āsana, kuṇḍalīnī, nāḍī, rāja yoga, yoga*.

**Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā:** हठयोगप्रदीपिका “Elucidation of *haṭha yoga*.” A 14th-century text of 389 verses by Svāmarama Yogin that describes the philosophy and practices of *haṭha yoga*. It is widely used in *yoga* schools today.

**havana:** हवन “Fire pit for sacred offering; making oblations through fire.” Same as *homa*. *Havis* and *havya* name the offerings. See: *Agni, homa, yajña*.

**heart chakra:** *Anāhata chakra*. Center of direct cognition. See: *chakra*.

**heaven:** The celestial spheres, including the causal plane

and the higher realms of the subtle plane, where souls rest and learn between births, and mature souls continue to evolve after *moksha*. *Heaven* is often used by translators as an equivalent to the Sanskrit *Svarga*. See: *loka*.

**hell:** Naraka. An unhappy, mentally and emotionally congested, distressful area of consciousness. Hell is a state of mind that can be experienced on the physical plane or in the sub-astral plane (Naraka) after death of the physical body. It is accompanied by the tormented emotions of hatred, remorse, resentment, fear, jealousy and self-condemnation. However, in the Hindu view, the hellish experience is not permanent, but a temporary condition of one’s own making. See: *asura, loka, Naraka, purgatory, Satan*.

**heterodox:** “Different opinion.” Opposed to or departing from established doctrines or beliefs. Opposite of *orthodox*, “straight opinion.” See: *nāstika*.

**heterosexual:** Of or characterized by sexual attraction for only members of the opposite sex. See: *bisexual, homosexual, sexuality*.

**hierarchy:** A group of beings arranged in order of rank or class; as a hierarchy of God, Gods and *devas*.

**higher-nature, lower nature:** Expressions indicating man’s refined, soulful qualities on the one hand, and his base, instinctive qualities on the other. See: *kośa, mind (five states), soul*.

**Himalayan Academy:** An educational and publishing institution of Saiva Siddhanta Church founded by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami in 1957. The Academy’s objective is to share the teachings of Sanātana Dharma through The Master Course trilogy, travel-study programs, the magazine HINDUISM TODAY and other publications as a public service to Hindus worldwide. See: *Hinduism Today, Subramuniyaswami*.

**Himalayas (Himālayas):** हिमालय “Abode of snow.” The mountain system extending along the India-Tibet border and through Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan.

**himsā:** हिंसा “Injury; harm; hurt.” Injuriousness, hostility—mental, verbal or physical. See: *ahimsā*.

**Hindu:** हिन्दु A follower of, or relating to, Hinduism. Generally, one is understood to be a Hindu by being born into a Hindu family and practicing the faith, or by professing oneself a Hindu. Acceptance into the fold is recognized through the name-giving sacrament, a temple ceremony called *nāmakaraṇa saṃskāra*, given to born Hindus shortly after birth, and to self-declared Hindus who have proven their sincerity and been accepted by a Hindu community. Full conversion is completed through disavowal of previous religious affiliations and legal change of name. While traditions vary greatly, all Hindus rely on the *Vedas* as scriptural authority and generally attest to the following nine principles: 1) There exists a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being who is both immanent and transcendent, both creator and unmanifest Reality. 2) The universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution. 3) All souls are evolving toward God and will ultimately find *moksha*:

spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of rebirth. Not a single soul will be eternally deprived of this destiny. 4) *Karma* is the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds. 5) The soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all *karmanas* have been resolved. 6) Divine beings exist in unseen worlds, and temple worship, rituals, sacraments, as well as personal devotionals, create a communion with these *devas* and Gods. 7) A spiritually awakened master or *satguru* is essential to know the transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification, self-inquiry and meditation. 8) All life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore one should practice *ahimsā*, nonviolence. 9) No particular religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others. Rather, all genuine religious paths are facets of God's pure love and light, deserving tolerance and understanding. See: *Hinduism*.

**Hindu cosmology:** See: *loka, three worlds*.

**Hinduism (Hindu Dharma):** हिन्दुधर्म India's indigenous religious and cultural system, followed today by nearly one billion adherents, mostly in India, but with the large diaspora in many other countries. Also called Sanātana Dharma, "Eternal Religion" and Vaidika Dharma, "Religion of the *Vedas*." Hinduism is the world's most ancient religion and encompasses a broad spectrum of philosophies ranging from pluralistic theism to absolute monism. It is a family of myriad faiths with four primary denominations: Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śāktism and Smārtism. These four hold such divergent beliefs that each is a complete and independent religion. Yet, they share a vast heritage of culture and belief—*karma, dharma, reincarnation, all-pervasive Divinity, temple worship, sacraments, manifold Deities, the guru-śishya tradition and a reliance on the Vedas as scriptural authority.* From the rich soil of Hinduism long ago sprang various other traditions. Among these were Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, which rejected the *Vedas* and thus emerged as completely distinct religions, dissociated from Hinduism, while still sharing many philosophical insights and cultural values with their parent faith. Though the genesis of the term is controversial, the consensus is that the term *Hindu* or *Indu* was used by the Persians to refer to the inhabitants of the Indus Valley as early as 500 BCE. Additionally, Indian scholars point to the appearance of the related term *Sindhu* in the ancient *Rig Veda Samhitā*. Janaki Abhisheki writes (*Religion as Knowledge: The Hindu Concept*, p. 1): "Whereas today the word *Hindu* connotes a particular faith and culture, in ancient times it was used to describe those belonging to a particular region. About 500 BCE we find the Persians referring to 'Hapta Hindu.' This referred to the region of Northwest India and the Punjab (before partition). The *Rig Veda* (the most ancient scripture of the Hindus) uses the word *Sapta Sindhu* singly or in plural at least 200 times. *Sindhu* is the River Indus. Panini,

the great Sanskrit grammarian, also uses the word *Sindhu* to denote the country or region." While the Persians substituted *h* for *s*, the Greeks ignored the *h* and pronounced the word as 'India' for the country and 'Indoi' for the people.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan similarly observed, "The Hindu civilization is so called since its original founders or earliest followers occupied the territory drained by the *Sindhu* River system corresponding to the Northwest Frontier Province and the Punjab. This is recorded in the *Rig Veda*, the oldest of the *Vedas*, the Hindu scriptures, which give their name to this period of Indian history. The people on the Indian side of the *Sindhu* were called Hindus by the Persians and the later Western invaders. That is the genesis of the word *Hindu*" (*The Hindu View of Life*, p. 12). See: *Hindu*. **HINDUISM TODAY:** The Hindu family magazine founded by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami in 1979 and published by Himalayan Academy to affirm Sanātana Dharma and record the modern history of a billion-strong global religion in renaissance. This award-winning, lavishly illustrated, all color, computer-produced news and information resource reaches thousands of readers in over 150 countries throughout the world. See: *Himalayan Academy*.

**Hindu solidarity:** Hindu unity in diversity. A major contemporary theme according to which Hindu denominations are mutually supportive and work together in harmony, while taking care not to obscure or lessen their distinctions or unique virtues. The underlying belief is that Hinduism will be strong if each of its sects, and lineages is vibrant. See: *Hinduism*.

**holy feet:** The feet of God, a God, *satguru* or any holy person, often represented by sacred sandals, called *śrī pādūkā* in Sanskrit and *tiruvadi* in Tamil. The feet of a divine one are considered especially precious as they represent the point of contact of the Divine and the physical, and are thus revered as the source of grace. The *guru's* sandals or his feet are the object of worship on his *jayantī* (birthday), on *Guru Pūrṇimā* and other special occasions. See: *pādapūjā, pādūkā, satguru*.

**holy orders:** A divine ordination or covenant, conferring religious authority. Vows that members of a religious body make, especially a monastic body or order, such as the vows of renunciation made by a *sannyāsīn* at the time of his initiation (*sannyāsa dikshā*), which establish a covenant with the ancient holy order of *sannyāsa*. *Sannyāsīns*, the wearers of the ochre robe, are the ordained religious leaders of Hinduism. See: *sannyāsa dikshā*.

**homa:** होम "Fire-offering." A sacred ceremony in which the Gods are offered oblations through the medium of fire in a sanctified fire pit, *homakuṇḍa*, usually made of earthen bricks. *Homa* rites are enjoined in the *Vedas, Āgamas* and *Dharma* and *Grīhya Sāstras*. Many domestic rites are occasions for *homa*, including *upanayana* and *vivāha*. Major *pūjās* in temples are often preceded by a *homa*. See: *agni, havana, yajña*.

**homosexual:** Of or characterized by sexual attraction

for members of one's own gender. Self-appellation is *gay*, especially for males, while female homosexuals generally use the term *lesbian*. See: *bisexual, gay, heterosexual, sexuality*.

**hri:** ह्रीं "Remorse; modesty." See: *yama-niyama*.

**Hsüen Tsang (Xuan-zang):** Chinese pilgrim who toured India ca 630. His travel diary is a rare and colorful source of information about the India of his day.

**hued:** Having specific color.

**human dharma:** The natural growth and expression through four stages of life. Known as *āśrama dharma*. See: *āśrama dharma, dharma*.

**humors (or bodily humors):** See: *āyurveda, bodily humor, dosha*.



**icchā śakti:** इच्छाशक्ति "Desire; will." See: *Śakti, trīśūla*.

**icon:** A sacred image, usually of God or a God. English for *mūrti*. See: *aniconic, mūrti*.

**iconoclastic:** Literally "icon breaker."

Also opposed to the worship or use of religious icons, or advocating their destruction. Metaphorically: irreverently opposed to, or disparaging widely accepted ideas, beliefs and customs.

**idā nādi:** इडानाडी "Soothing channel." The feminine psychic current flowing along the spine. See: *kuṇḍalinī, nādi, oḍic, piṅgalā*.

**illusion (illusory):** A belief, opinion or observation that appears to be, but is not in accord with the facts, truth or true values, such as the illusion created by a magician. See: *avidyā*.

**illustrious:** Very luminous or bright; distinguished, famous; outstanding.

**immanent:** Indwelling; inherent and operating within. Relating to God, the term *immanent* means present in all things and throughout the universe, not aloof or distant. Not to be confused with *imminent*, threatening (about) to happen; *emanate*, to issue from; *eminent*, high in rank.

**immature:** Not ripe; not fully grown, undeveloped. Still young. —**immature soul:** See: *ātman, evolution of the soul, soul*.

**immemorial (from time immemorial):** From a time so distant that it extends beyond history or human memory.

**immutable:** Never changing or varying. See: *Absolute Reality, relative*.

**impassé:** A dead end; a point of no progress. A difficulty with no solution.

**impede:** To obstruct or delay something; make difficult to accomplish. (Noun form: *impediment*.)

**impediment:** "That which holds the feet." Hindrance; obstacle. Anything that inhibits or slows progress.

**impending:** About to happen; "overhanging" and thus threatening.

**imperishable:** That which cannot die or decay; indestructible; immortal. With capital *I*, *Imperishable* denotes God—the Eternal, Beginningless and Endless.

**impermanence:** The quality of being temporary and nonlasting.

**impersonal:** Not personal; not connected to any person. See: *Satchidānanda*

**impersonal being:** One's innermost nature, at the level of the soul's essence, where one is not distinguished as an individual, nor as separate from God or any part of existence. The soul's essential being—Satchidānanda and Paraśiva. See: *ātman, essence, evolution of the soul, soul*.

**impersonal God:** God in His perfections of Pure Consciousness (Parāśakti) and Absolute Reality beyond all attributes (Paraśiva) wherein He is not a person. (Whereas, in His third perfection, Parameśvara, Śiva *is* someone, has a body and performs actions, has will, dances, etc.)

**impetus:** Anything that stimulates activity. Driving force; motive, incentive.

**implore:** To ask, beseech or entreat earnestly.

**impoverished:** Poor; reduced to a condition of severe deprivation.

**inanimate:** See: *animate-inanimate*.

**inauspicious:** Not favorable. Not a good time to perform certain actions or undertake projects. Ill-omened. See: *auspiciousness, muhūrta*.

**incandescent:** Glowing with heat; white-hot. Radiant; luminous; very bright.

**incantation:** *Mantraprayoga*. The chanting of prayers, verses or formulas for magical or mystical purposes. Also refers to such chants (*mantra*). *Vaśakriyā* is the subduing or bewitching by charms, incantation or drugs. Incantation for malevolent purposes (black magic) is called *abhichāra*. See: *mantra*.

**incarnation:** From *incarnate*, "made flesh." The soul's taking on a human body. —**divine incarnation:** The concept of *avatāra*. The Supreme Being's (or other Mahādeva's) taking of human birth, generally to re-establish *dharma*. This doctrine is important to several Hindu sects, notably Vaishṇavism, but not held by most Śaivites. See: *avatāra, Vaishṇavism*.

**incense:** *Dhūpa*. Substance that gives off pleasant aromas when burned, usually made from natural substances such as tree resin. A central element in Hindu worship rites, waved gently before the Deity as an offering, especially after ablution. Hindi terms include *sugandhi* and *lobāna*. A popular term for stick incense is *agarbatti* (Gujarati). See: *pūjā*.

**incisive:** "Cutting into." Sharp or keen, such as a penetrating and discriminating mind. See: *discrimination*.

**incognito:** Without being recognized; keeping one's true identity unrevealed or disguised.

**increment:** An amount of increase, usually small and followed by others; a measure of growth or change.

**individuality:** Quality that makes one person or soul other than, or different from, another. See: *ahamkāra, āṇava, ego, soul*.

**individual soul:** A term used to describe the soul's nature as a unique entity, emanated by God Śiva (the Primal Soul), as a being which is evolving through

- experience to its fully mature state, which is complete, indistinguishable oneness with God. See: *ātman, essence, kośa, Paramēśvara, soul*.
- indomitable:** Not easily discouraged, defeated or subdued. Unconquerable.
- Indra:** इन्द्र “Ruler.” Vedic God of rain and thunder, warrior king of the *devas*.
- indriya:** इन्द्रिय “Agent, sense organ.” The five agents of perception (*jñānendriyas*), hearing (*śrotra*), touch (*tvak*), sight (*chakshus*), taste (*rasana*) and smell (*ghrāṇa*); and the five agents of action (*karmendriyas*), speech (*vāk*), grasping with hands (*pāṇi*), movement (*pāda*), excretion (*pāyu*) and generation (*upastha*). See: *kośa, soul, tattva*.
- induce:** To bring about, cause, persuade.
- Indus Valley:** Region of the Indus River, now in Pakistan, where in 1924 archeologists discovered the remains of a high civilization which flourished between 5000 and 1000 BCE. There, a “seal” was found with the effigy of Śiva as Paśupati, “Lord of Creatures,” seated in a *yogic* posture. Neither the language of these people nor their exact background is known. They related culturally and carried on an extensive trade with peoples of other civilizations, far to the West, using sturdy ships that they built themselves. For centuries they were the most advanced civilization on Earth. See: *Saivism*.
- indwell:** To dwell or be in. “The priest asks the Deity to indwell the image,” or come and inhabit the *mūrti* as a temporary physical body. See: *mūrti*.
- I-ness:** The conceiving of oneself as an “I,” or ego, which Hinduism considers a state to be transcended. See: *ahaṅkāra, āṇava, mind (individual)*.
- inexhaustible:** Cannot be exhausted, used up or emptied. Tireless.
- inexplicable:** Beyond explaining or accounting for.
- inextricable:** Cannot be disentangled or separated from another thing.
- infatuation:** The magnetic condition of being captured by a foolish or shallow love or affection.
- infinitesimal:** Infinitely small; too small to measure.
- inflict:** To give or cause pain, wounds, damage, etc.
- infuse:** To transmit a quality, idea, knowledge, etc., as if by pouring. To impart, fill or inspire.
- ingest:** To take food, medicine, etc., into the body by swallowing or absorbing.
- inherent (to inhere in):** Inborn. Existing in someone or something as an essential or inseparable quality. —**inherent sin:** See: *sin*.
- inherit:** To receive from an ancestor, as property, title, etc.—or to reap from our own actions: “...seed *karmas* we inherit from this and past lives.”
- initiation (to initiate):** Entering into; admission as a member. In Hinduism, initiation from a qualified preceptor is considered invaluable for spiritual progress. See: *dikshā, śaktipāta, sanmyāsa dikshā*.
- injunction:** An urging; an order or firm instruction.
- inmost:** Located deepest within.
- innate:** Naturally occurring; not acquired. That which belongs to the inherent nature or constitution of a being or thing.
- inner (innermost):** Located within. Of the depths of our being. —**inner advancement (or unfoldment):** Progress of an individual at the soul level rather than in external life. —**inner bodies:** The subtle bodies of man within the physical body. —**inner discovery:** Learning from inside oneself, experiential revelation; one of the benefits of inner life. —**inner form (or nature) of the guru:** The deeper levels of the *guru*’s being that the disciple strives to attune himself to and emulate. —**inner law:** The principles or mechanism underlying every action or experience, often hidden. *Karma* is one such law. —**inner life:** The life we live inside ourselves, at the emotional, mental and spiritual levels, as distinguished from outer life. —**inner light:** A moonlight-like glow that can be seen inside the head or throughout the body when the *vṛitti*s, mental fluctuations, have been sufficiently quieted. To be able to see and bask in the inner light is a milestone on the path. See: *vṛitti*. —**inner mind:** The mind in its deeper, intuitive functions and capacities—the subsuperconscious and superconscious. —**innermost body:** The soul body. —**inner planes:** Inner worlds or regions of existence. —**inner self:** The real, deep Self; the essence of the soul, rather than the outer self with which we usually identify. —**inner sky:** The area of the mind which is clear inner space, free of mental images, feelings, identifications, etc. Tranquility itself. The superconscious mind, Satchidānanda. See: *ākāśa*. —**inner truth:** Truth of a higher order. —**inner universes (or worlds):** The astral and causal worlds. See: *kośa, three worlds*.
- innumerable:** So many as to be beyond counting.
- inscrutable:** That cannot be analyzed or understood. Mysterious; beyond examining.
- insignia:** Sign or symbol of identity, rank or office, such as a badge or emblem.
- instinctive:** “Natural” or “innate.” From the Latin *instinctus*, “impelling, instigating.” The drives and impulses that order the animal world and the physical and lower *astral* aspects of humans—for example, self-preservation, procreation, hunger and thirst, as well as the emotions of greed, hatred, anger, fear, lust and jealousy. The first steps on the spiritual path consist in learning to harness these tendencies and impulses and transmute their energies into the higher nature. See: *manas, mind (individual), mind (three phases), yama-niyama*.
- instinctive mind:** *Manas chitta*. The lower mind, which controls the basic faculties of perception, movement, as well as ordinary thought and emotion. *Manas chitta* is of the *manomaya kośa*. See: *manas, manomaya kośa, yama-niyama*.
- instrumental cause:** *Sahakāri kāraṇa*. Cosmologically, the means of implementing creation. See: *cause*.
- intellect:** The power to reason or understand; power of thought; mental acumen. See: *buddhi, intellectual mind*.

**intellectual mind:** *Buddhi chitta*. The faculty of reason and logical thinking. It is the source of discriminating thought, rather than the ordinary, impulsive thought processes of the lower or instinctive mind, called *manas chitta*. *Buddhi chitta* is of the *manomaya kośa*. See: *buddhi, mind (individual)*.

**internalize:** To take something inside of oneself.

**internalized worship:** *Yoga*. Worship or contact with God and Gods via meditation and contemplation rather than through external ritual. This is the *yogī's* path, preceded by the *charyā* and *kriyā pādas*. See: *meditation, yoga*.

**interplay:** Interaction between two or more factors.

**intervene:** To come between, especially two people or parties, with the intent to effect a change between them. See: *mediatrix*.

**interweave (interwoven):** To weave together, as threads into cloth. To closely interrelate; to blend.

**intimacy:** The state of being intimate or very close. Having a close rapport.

**intrigue:** Secret plotting or scheming.

**intrinsic:** Essential; inherent. Belonging to the real nature of a being or thing. —**intrinsic evil:** See: *evil*.

**intuition (to intuit):** Direct understanding or cognition, which bypasses the process of reason. Intuition is a far superior source of knowing than reason, but it does not contradict reason. See: *cognition, mind (five states)*.

**invigorate:** To give vigor, life or energy.

**invocation (to invoke):** A “calling or summoning,” as to a God, saint, etc., for blessings and assistance. Also, a formal prayer or chant. See: *mantra*.

**Iraivan:** இறைவன் “Worshipful one; divine one.” One of the most ancient Tamil appellations for God. See: *San Marga Sanctuary*.

**Iraivan Temple:** See: *San Marga Sanctuary*.

**irul:** இருள் “Darkness.” The first of three stages of the *sakala avasthā* where the soul’s impetus is toward *pāśa-jñāna*, knowledge and experience of the world. See: *pāśa-jñāna, sakala avasthā*.

**iruvinaḥ oppu:** இருவினையொப்பு “Balance.” The balance which emerges in the life of a soul in the stage of *marul*, or *paśu-jñāna*, the second stage of the *sakala avasthā*, when the soul turns toward the good and holy, becomes centered within himself, unaffected by the ups and downs in life. See: *marul, paśu-jñāna, sakala avasthā*.

**Īśa:** ईश “Lord,” master of all; superior, commanding, reigning. *Īśa* and its derivative *Īśāna* are very old names of God Śiva found in the *Rig Veda*.

**Isanya Guru (Īśānya Guru):** ईशान्यगुरु Śaivite *brāhmin* of the Kālāmukha sect from whom Basavanna, principal founding teacher of Vīra Śaivism, received instruction in his youth. See: *Basavanna, Vīra Śaivism*.

**Īśa Upanishad:** ईश उपनिषद् Last of the 40 chapters of *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* of the *Yajur Veda*. A short, highly mystical scripture. See: *Upanishad*.

**Ishta Devatā:** इष्टदेवता “Cherished or chosen Deity.” The Deity that is the object of one’s special pious

attention. *Ishta Devatā* is a concept common to all Hindu sects. Vaishṇavas may choose among many Divine forms, most commonly Vishṇu, Bālāji, Kṛishṇa, Rādhā, Rāma, Lakshmi, Hanumān and Narasiṅha, as well as the aniconic *śālagrāma*, a sacred river rock. Traditionally, Smārtas choose from among six Deities: Śiva, Śakti, Vishṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa and Kumāra (or any of their traditional forms). For Śāktas, the Divine is worshiped as the Goddess, Śakti, in Her many fierce and benign forms, invoking the furious power of Kālī or Durgā, or the comforting grace of Pārvatī, Ambikā and others. Śaivites direct their worship primarily to Śiva as represented by the aniconic Śiva Liṅga, and the anthropomorphic *mūrtis*, Naṭarāja and Ardhanārīśvara. In temples and scriptural lore, Śiva is venerated in a multitude of forms, including the following 23 additional anthropomorphic images: Somāskanda, Ṛishabarudra, Kalyānasundara, Chandraśekhara, Bhikshātana, Kāmadahanamūrti, Kālārī, Jalandara, Tripurārī, Gajārī, Virābhadrā, Dakshināmūrti, Kirātāmūrti, Nilakaṅṭha, Kaṅkāla, Chakradāna, Gajamukhānugraha, Chandesaṅugraha, Ekapāda, Liṅgodbhava, Sukhāsana, Umā Maheśvara and Haryardha. See: *mūrti, Śakti, Śiva*.

**Ishtalinga:** इष्टलिङ्ग “Cherished, chosen or personal mark of God.” (*Ishta*: “sought, desired.”) For Vīra Śaivites it is the personal Śivaliṅga, ceremonially given by a priest shortly after birth, and worn on a chain or cord around the neck thereafter. See: *Śivaliṅga, Vīra Śaivism*.

**Islam:** The religion founded by Prophet Mohammed in Arabia about 625 CE. Islam connotes submission to Allah, the name for God in this religion. Adherents, known as Muslims, follow the “Five Pillars” enjoined in their scripture, the *Koran*: faith in Allah, praying five times daily facing Mecca, giving of alms, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and pilgrimage. One of the fastest growing religions, Islam has over one billion followers, mostly in the Middle East, Pakistan, Africa, China, Indochina, Russia and neighboring countries. See: *Koran, Mohammed*.

**issue forth:** To come out; be created. To start existing as an entity, e.g., as creation issues forth from Naṭarāja’s drum. See: *emanation, Naṭarāja, tattva*.

**Īśvara:** ईश्वर “Highest Lord.” Supreme or Personal God. See: *Parameśvara*.

**Īśvarapūjana:** ईश्वरपूजन “Worship of God.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**Itihāsa:** इतिहास “So it was.” Epic history, particularly the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* (of which the famed *Bhagavad Gītā* is a part). This term sometimes includes the *Purāṇas*, especially the *Skānda Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (or *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*). See: *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Smṛiti*.

**itinerant:** Traveling from place to place, with no permanent home. Wandering. See: *monk, sādhu, vairāgi*.



**Jābāla Upanishad:** जाबाल उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Atharva Veda*. This short scripture teaches of knowledge attained in renunciation.

**Jagadāchārya:** जगदाचार्य “World teacher.” In 1986 the World Religious

Parliament of New Delhi named five world leaders who were most active in spreading Sanātana Dharma outside India: H.H. Swami Chinmayananda of Chinmaya Missions, India; Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami of Saiva Siddhanta Church and Himalayan Academy, USA; Yogiraj Amrit Desai of Kripalu Yoga Center, USA; Pandit Tej Ramji Sharma of Nepali Baba, Nepal; and Swami Jagpurnadas Maharaj, Mauritius.

**Jaimini:** जैमिनि Founder of the Mīmāṃsā Darśana. See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa Upanishad:** जैमिनीय ब्राह्मण उपनिषद् A philosophical discourse of the *Sāma Veda* dealing with death, passage to other worlds and reincarnation. See: *Upanishad*.

**Jainism: (Jaina) जैन** An ancient non-Vedic religion of India made prominent by the teachings of Mahavira (“Great Hero”), ca 500 BCE. The *Jain Āgamas* teach reverence for all life, vegetarianism and strict renunciation for ascetics. Jains focus great emphasis on the fact that all souls may attain liberation, each by his own effort. Their worship is directed toward their great historic saints, called Tirthaṅkaras (“Ford-Crossers”), of whom Mahavira was the 24th and last. Jains number about six million today, living mostly in India. See: *Mahavira*.

**Janaloka:** जनलोक “Plane of creativity, or of liberated mortals.” The third highest of the seven upper worlds, realm of *viśuddha chakra*. See: *loka*.

**jaṅgama:** जङ्गम “Moving; wanderer.” A term used by Vira Śaivites, originally to name their mendicant, renunciates who walked as homeless *sādhus*, uplifting others. Now an order of Vira Śaivite teachers. See: *Vira Śaivism*.

**japa:** जप “Recitation.” Practice of concentrated repeating of a *mantra*, often while counting the repetitions on a *mālā* or strand of beads. It may be done silently or aloud. Sometimes known as *mantra yoga*. A major *sādhana* in Hindu spiritual practice, from the simple utterance of a few names of God to extraordinary feats of repeating sacred syllables millions of times for years on end. It is recommended as a cure for pride and arrogance, jealousy, fear and confusion. It harmonizes the *doṣhas* and quiets the *vr̥ttis*. Filling the mind with divine syllables, awakening the divine essence of spiritual energies in the physical body, *japa* brings forth the *amṛita*. For Śaivites, Namaḥ Śivāya in its various forms is the most treasured *mantra* used in *japa*. The *mantra* Hare-Rāma-Hare-Kṛishṇa is among the foremost Vaishṇava *mantras*. *Japa yoga* is said to be of 14 kinds: daily (*nitya*), circumstantial (*naimittika*), the *japa* of desired results (*kāmya*), forbidden (*nishiddha*), penitential (*prāyaśchitta*), unmoving (*achala*), moving (*chala*), voiced (*vāchika*), whispered

(*upāṅśu*), bee, or murmured (*bhramara*), mental (*mānasa*), uninterrupted (*akhandā*), nonuttered (*ajapa*) and circumambulatory (*pradakshina*). See: *amṛita*, *mantra*, *yama-niyama*, *yoga*.

**jātakarma:** जातकर्म “Rite of birth.” See: *saṁskāras of birth*.

**jāti:** जाति “Birth; genus; community or caste.” See: *varṇa dharmā*.

**jayanti:** जयन्ती “Birthday.” See: *Guru Jayantī*.

**jīva:** जीव “Living, existing.” From *jiv*, “to live.” The individual soul, *ātman*, during its embodied state, bound by the three *malas* (*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*). The *jīvanmukta* is one who is “liberated while living.” See: *ātman*, *evolution of the soul*, *jīvanmukta*, *puruṣa*, *soul*.

**jīvanmukta:** जीवन्मुक्त “Liberated soul.” One who has attained *nirvikalpa samādhi*—the realization of the Self, Paraśiva—and is liberated from rebirth while living in a human body. (Contrasted with *videhamukta*, one liberated at the point of death.) This attainment is the culmination of lifetimes of intense striving, *sādhana* and *tapas*, requiring total renunciation, *sannyāsa* (death to the external world, denoted in the conducting of one’s own funeral rites), in the current incarnation. While completing life in the physical body, the *jīvanmukta* enjoys the ability to reenter *nirvikalpa samādhi* again and again. At this time, *siddhis* can be developed which are carried to the inner worlds after *mahāsamādhi*. Such an awakened *jñānī* benefits the society by simply being who he is. When he speaks, he does so without forethought. His wisdom is beyond reason, yet it does not conflict with reason. Nor does he arrive at what he says through the process of reason, but through the process of *ājñā-chakra* sight. See: *jīvanmukti*, *jñāna*, *kaivalya*, *moksha*, *Self Realization*, *Śivasāyujya*, *videhamukti*.

**jīvanmukti:** जीवन्मुक्ति “Liberation while living.” The state of the *jīvanmukta*. Contrasted with *videhamukti*, liberation at the point of death. See: *death*, *jīvanmukta*, *moksha*, *reincarnation*, *videhamukti*.

**jīvayajña:** जीवयज्ञ “Self sacrifice.” See: *yajña*.

**jñāna:** ज्ञान “Knowledge; wisdom.” The matured state of the soul. It is the wisdom that comes as an aftermath of the *kuṇḍalinī* breaking through the door of *Brahman* into the realization of Paraśiva, Absolute Reality. The repeated *samādhis* of Paraśiva ever deepen this flow of divine knowing which establishes the knower in an extraordinary point of reference, totally different from those who have not attained this enlightenment. *Jñāna* is the awakened, superconscious state (*kāraṇa chitta*) working within the ordinary experience of the world, flowing into daily life situations. It is the fruition of the progressive stages of *charyā*, *kriyā* and *yoga* in the Śaiva Siddhānta system of spiritual unfoldment. *Jñāna* is sometimes misunderstood as book knowledge, as a maturity or awakening that comes from simply understanding a complex philosophical system or systems. Those who define *jñāna* in this way deny that the path is a

progression of *charyā-kriyā-yoga-jñāna* or of *karma-bhakti-rāja-jñāna*. Rather, they say that one can choose his path, and that each leads to the ultimate goal. See: *door of Brahman, God Realization, Śaivism, samādhi, Self Realization*.

**Jnanadeva (Jñānadeva):** ज्ञानदेव See: *Jñāneśvari*.

**Jñānāmṛta:** ज्ञानामृत A versified treatise by Gorakshanatha on the duties of a *yogī*. See: *Gorakshanatha*.

**jñāna pāda:** ज्ञानपाद “Stage of wisdom.” According to the Śaiva Siddhānta *ṛishis*, *jñāna* is the last of the four successive *pādas* (stages) of spiritual unfoldment. It is the culmination of the third stage, the *yoga pāda*. Also names the knowledge section of each *Āgama*. See: *jñāna, pāda*.

**jñāna śakti:** ज्ञानशक्ति “Power of wisdom.” One of Śiva’s three primary *śaktis*. Also a name for Lord Kārtikeya’s *vel*. See: *Kārtikeya, śakti, trīśūla*.

**jñāna yoga:** ज्ञानयोग “Union of knowledge.” Describes the esoteric spiritual practices of the fully enlightened being, or *jñāni*. An alternative meaning, popularized by Swami Vivekananda, is the quest for cognition through intellectual religious study, as one of four alternate paths to truth, the other three being *bhakti yoga, karma yoga* and *rāja yoga*. See: *jñāna, yoga*.

**Jnanesvar (Jñāneśvara):** ज्ञानेश्वर See: *Jñāneśvari*.

**Jñāneśvari:** ज्ञानेश्वरी Foremost religious treatise in the Marāṭhi language. Written by the Nātha saint Jnanesvar (or Jnanadeva) about 1290. It is a verse-by-verse commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

**jñāni:** ज्ञानी “Sage.” One who possesses *jñāna*. See: *jīvanmukta, jñāna*.

**joint family:** *Kuṭumba* or *kula*. The Hindu social unit consisting of several generations of kindred living together under the same roof or in a joining compound. Traditionally, joint families live in a large single home, but in modern times accommodations are often in individual, nuclear homes within a shared compound. The joint family includes the father and mother, sons, grandsons and great-grandsons with their spouses, as well as the daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters until they are married—thus often comprising several married couples and their children. The head of the joint family, called *kuṭumba mukhya* (also *mukhya* or *kartṛi*), is the father, supported by the mother, and in his absence, the elder son, guided by his mother and supported by his spouse. From an early age, the eldest son is given special training by his father to assume this future responsibility as head of the family. In the event of the father’s death, sacred law does allow for the splitting of the family wealth between the sons. Division of family assets may also be necessary in cases where sons are involved in different professions and live in different places, with an inability for all to get along under one roof, or when the family becomes unmanageably large.

The main characteristics of the joint family are that its members 1) share a common residence, 2) partake of food prepared in the same kitchen, 3) hold their property in common and, 4) ideally, profess the same

religion, sect and *sampradāya*. Each individual family of husband, wife and children is under the guidance of the head of the joint family. All work together unselfishly to further the common good. Each joint family extends out from its home to include a second level of connections as an “extended family (*brihatkuṭumba* or *mahākuṭumba*).” See: *extended family, grihastha dharma*.

**juncture:** A critical point in the development of events.

**jyotisha:** ज्योतिष From *jyoti*, “light.” “The science of the lights (or stars).” Hindu astrology, the knowledge and practice of analyzing events and circumstances, delineating character and determining auspicious moments, according to the positions and movements of heavenly bodies. In calculating horoscopes, *jyotisha* uses the sidereal (fixed-star) system, whereas Western astrology uses the tropical (fixed-date) method.

**jyotisha śāstri:** ज्योतिषशास्त्री “Astrologer.” A person well versed in the science of *jyotisha*. See: *jyotisha*.

**Jyotisha Vedāṅga:** ज्योतिषवेदाङ्ग “Veda-limb of celestial science (astronomy-astrology).” Ancient texts giving knowledge of astronomy and astrology, for understanding the cosmos and determining proper timing for Vedic rites. (*Jyoti* means light, of the sun, fire, etc.) See: *jyotisha, Vedāṅga*.



**Kadaitswami (Kadaitswāmi):** கடைசிற் சுவாமி “Marketplace *swāmi*.”

The 159th *satguru* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā. Born ca 1804; attained *mahāsamādhi* October 13, 1891. Renouncing his

career as a judge in Bangalore, South India, Kadaitswami became a *sannyāsīn* and trained under the Rishi from the Himalayas, who sent him on mission to Sri Lanka. He performed severe *tapas* on an island off the Jaffna coast, awakening many *siddhis*. For decades he spurred the Sri Lankan Śaivites to greater spirituality through inspired talks and demonstrating *siddhis*. He initiated Chellappaswami as the next *satguru* in the *paramparā*. Kadaitswami’s initiation name was Muthyanandaswami (Muthyanandaswāmi). See: *Kailāsa Paramparā, Nātha Sampradāya*.

**Kadavul:** கடவுள் “Beyond and within.” An ancient Tamil appellation for Lord Śiva meaning, “He who is both immanent and transcendent, within and beyond.” See: *Śiva*.

**Kailasa (Kailāsa):** कैलास “Crystalline” or “abode of bliss.” The four-faced Himalayan peak in Western Tibet; the earthly abode of Lord Śiva. Associated with Mount Meru, the legendary center of the universe, it is an important pilgrimage destination for all Hindus, as well as for Tibetan Buddhists. Kailasa is represented in Śāktism by a certain three-dimensional form of the Śrī Chakra *yantra* (also called *kailāsa chakra*). See: *Śrī Chakra*.

**Kailāsa Paramparā:** कैलासपरंपरा A spiritual lineage of 162 *siddhas*, a major stream of the Nandinātha Sampradāya, proponents of the ancient philosophy



of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta. The first of these masters that history recalls was Maharishi Nandinatha (or Nandikesvara) 2,250 years ago, *satguru* to the great Tirumular, ca 200 BCE, and seven other disciples (as stated in the *Tirumantiram*): Patanjali, Vyaghrapada, Sanatkumara, Sivayogamuni, Sanakar, Sanadanar and Sananthanar. Tirumular had seven disciples: Malan-gam, Indiran, Soman, Brahman, Rudran, Kalanga, and Kanjamalayam, each of whom established one or more monasteries and propagated the Āgamic lore. In the line of Kalanga came the sages Righama, Maligaideva, Nadantar, Bhogadeva and Paramananda. The lineage continued down the centuries and is alive today—the first recent *siddha* known being the “Rishi from the Himalayas,” so named because he descended from those holy mountains. In South India, he initiated Kadaitswami (ca 1810–1875), who in turn initiated Chellappaswami (1840–1915). Chellappan passed the mantle of authority to Sage Yogaswami (1872–1964), who in 1949 initiated Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927–2001), who in 2001 ordained the current preceptor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami (1942–). See: *Chellappaswami, Kadaitswami, Nātha Sampradāya, Patanjali, Subramuniyaswami, Tirumular, Yogaswami*.

**kaivalya:** कैवल्य “Absolute oneness, aloneness; perfect detachment, freedom.” Liberation. *Kaivalya* is the term used by Patanjali and others in the *yoga* tradition to name the goal and fulfillment of *yoga*, the state of complete detachment from transmigration. It is virtually synonymous with *moksha*. *Kaivalya* is the perfectly transcendent state, the highest condition resulting from the ultimate realization. It is defined uniquely according to each philosophical school, depending on its beliefs regarding the nature of the soul. See: *jñāna, moksha, samarasa, Śivasāyujya*.

**Kaivalya Upanishad:** कैवल्य उपनिषद् A philosophical text of the *Atharva Veda*. This treatise teaches how to reach Śiva through meditation.

**kalā:** काल 1) “Time,” “calculation.” 2) “Black” (of a black or dark blue color); “death.”

**kalā:** कला “Part, segment;” “art or skill.” 1) Cultural arts. (See: *kalā–64*.) 2) A fivefold division of the cosmos based on the 36 *tattvas*, as explained in the *Śaiva Āgamas*. The five *kalās*—spheres, or dimensions of consciousness—are: 1) Śāntyatitakalā, “sphere beyond peace,” the extremely rarified level of *śuddha māyā* (actinic energy) in which superconsciousness is expanded into endless inner space, the realm of God Śiva and the Gods; 2) Śāntikalā, “sphere of peace,” the level within *śuddha māyā* where forms are made of inner sounds and colors, where reside great *devas* and *ṛishis* who are beyond the reincarnation cycles; 3) Vidyakalā, “sphere of knowing,” the level within *śuddhāśuddha māyā* (actinodic energy) of superconscious awareness of forms in their totality in progressive states of manifestation, and of the interrelated forces of the actinodic energies; 4) Pratiṣṭhākalā, “sphere of resting, tranquility,” the level within *asuddha māyā* (odic en-

ergy) of intellect and instinct; 5) Nivṛittikalā, “sphere of perdition, destruction; returning,” the level within *asuddha māyā* of physical and near-physical existence, conscious, subconscious and sub-subconscious mind. See: *tattva*.

**kalā–64 (chatuḥ shasṭī kalā):** चतुः षष्टिकला “Sixty-four arts.” A classical curriculum of sacred sciences, studies, arts and skills of cultured living listed in various Hindu *śāstras*. Its most well-known appearance is in the *Kāma Sūtra*, an extensive manual devoted to sensual pleasures. The *Kāma Sūtra* details as its primary subject matter the 64 secret arts, *abhyantara kalā*, of erotic love. In addition to these it lists 64 *bāhya kalās*, or practical arts, as required study for cultured persons. They are: 1) singing, 2) instrumental music, 3) dancing, 4) painting, 5) forehead adornments, 6) making decorative floral and grain designs on the floor, 7) home and temple flower arranging, 8) personal grooming, 9) mosaic tiling, 10) bedroom arrangements, 11) creating music with water, 12) splashing and squirting with water, 13) secret *mantras*, 14) making flower garlands, 15) head adornments, 16) dressing, 17) costume decorations, 18) perfumery, 19) jewelry making, 20) magic and illusions, 21) ointments for charm and virility, 22) manual dexterity, 23) skills of cooking, eating and drinking, 24) beverage and dessert preparation, 25) sewing (making and mending garments), 26) embroidery, 27) playing *vina* and drum, 28) riddles and rhymes, 29) poetry games, 30) tongue twisters and difficult recitation, 31) literary recitation, 32) drama and story telling, 33) verse composition game, 34) furniture caning, 35) erotic devices and knowledge of sexual arts, 36) crafting wooden furniture, 37) architecture and house construction, 38) distinguishing between ordinary and precious stones and metals, 39) metal-working, 40) gems and mining, 41) gardening and horticulture, 42) games of wager involving animals, 43) training parrots and mynas to speak, 44) hairdressing, 45) coding messages, 46) speaking in code, 47) knowledge of foreign languages and dialects, 48) making flower carriages, 49) spells, charms and omens, 50) making simple mechanical devices, 51) memory training, 52) game of reciting verses from hearing, 53) decoding messages, 54) the meanings of words, 55) dictionary studies, 56) prosody and rhetoric, 57) impersonation, 58) artful dressing, 59) games of dice, 60) the game of *akarsha* (a dice game played on a board), 61) making dolls and toys for children, 62) personal etiquette and animal training, 63) knowledge of *dharmic* warfare and victory, and 64) physical culture.

These are among the skills traditionally taught to both genders, while emphasizing masculinity in men and femininity in women. Their subject matter draws on such texts as the *Vedāngas* and *Upavedas*, and the *Silpa Śāstras*, or craft manuals. Through the centuries, writers have prescribed many more skills and accomplishments. These include sculpture, pottery, weaving, astronomy and astrology, mathematics, weights and

- measures, philosophy, scriptural study, agriculture, navigation, trade and shipping, knowledge of time, logic, psychology and *āyurveda*. In modern times, two unique sets of 64 *kalās* have been developed, one for girls and one for boys. See: *Śilpa Śāstra*.
- Kālāmukha:** कालामुख “Black-faced” (probably for a black mark of renunciation worn on the forehead). A Śaiva sect issued from Pāsupata Śaivism at its height (ca 600–1000). As no Kālāmukha religious texts exist today, this sect is known only indirectly. They were said to be well organized in temple construction and worship, as well as eccentric and unsocial: eating from human skulls, smearing their bodies with ashes from the cremation ground, carrying a club, wearing matted hair, etc. See: *left-handed, Pāsupata Śaivism, tantrism*.
- Kalanga (Kalaṅga):** कलंग One of the seven disciples of Rishi Tirumular. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.
- kalaśa:** कलश “Water pot,” “pitcher,” “jar.” In temple rites, a pot of water, *kalaśa*, topped with mango leaves and a husked coconut represents the Deity during special *pūjās*. *Kalaśa* also names the pot-like spires that adorn temple roofs.
- Kālī:** काली “Black” Goddess. A form of Śakti in Her fierce aspect, worshiped by various sects within Śāktism. She is dark, nude, primordial and fiercely powerful, as of a naked energy untamed. But from the perspective of devotees, She is the incomparable protectress, champion of *sādhana* and mother of liberation. The Goddess Durgā, seated on a tiger, has similar characteristics and is often identified with Kālī. See: *Śakti, Śāktism*.
- Kali Yuga:** कलियुग “Dark Age.” The Kali Yuga is the last age in the repetitive cycle of four phases of time the universe passes through. It is comparable to the darkest part of the night, as the forces of ignorance are in full power and many subtle faculties of the soul are obscured. See: *cosmic cycle, mahāpralaya, Timeline, –3102, yuga*.
- Kallata (Kallaṭa):** कल्लट An exponent of Kashmir Śaivism (ca 875) who wrote the *Spaṇḍa Kārikās*. Kallata was a disciple of Vasugupta. See: *Kashmir Śaivism*.
- kalpa:** कल्प From *kṛlip*, “arranged, ordered.” 1) Rules for ceremony or sacred living, as in the *Kalpa Vedāṅga*. 2) Determination or resolve, as in *saṅkalpa*. 3) A vast period of time also known as a day of *Brahmā*, equaling 994 *mahāyugas*, or 4,294,080,000 years. See: *cosmic cycle, Kalpa Vedāṅga, saṅkalpa, yuga*.
- Kalpa Vedāṅga:** कल्पवेदाङ्ग “Procedural (or ceremonial) Veda-limb.” Also known as the *Kalpa Sūtras*—a body of three groups of auxiliary Vedic texts: 1) the *Śrauta Sūtras* and *Śulba Sūtras*, on public Vedic rites (*yajña*), 2) the *Gṛihya Sūtras* (or *Śāstras*), on domestic rites and social customs, and 3) the *Dharma Śāstras* (or *Sūtras*), on religious law. There are numerous sets of *Kalpa Sūtras*, composed by various *rishis*. Each set is associated with one of the four *Vedas*. See: *Dharma Śāstra, Gṛihya Sūtras, Śrauta Śāstras, Śulba Śāstras, Vedāṅgas*.
- Kalyan (Kalyāṇa):** कल्याण A town in Maharashtra, South India.
- kāma:** काम “Pleasure, love; desire.” Cultural, intellectual and sexual fulfillment. One of four human goals, *purushārtha*. See: *Kāma Sūtras, purushārtha*.
- kamaṇḍalu:** कमण्डलु “Vessel, water jar.” Traditionally earthen or wooden, carried by *sannyāsins*, it symbolizes the renunciate’s simple, self-contained life. The tree from which *kamaṇḍalus* are traditionally made is the *kamaṇḍalutaru*. See: *sannyāsa dharma, sannyāsin*.
- Kāma Sūtra(s):** कामसूत्र “Aphorisms on pleasure.” A fifth-century text by Vātsyāyana on erotics. The *Kāma Sūtra* and other *Kāma Śāstras* are sometimes classed as an *Upaveda*. See: *Upaveda*.
- Kāmika Āgama:** कामिक आगम An important scripture among the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas*, widely available today. The verses from its *kriyā pāda*, on ritual and temple construction, are a crucial reference for South Indian priests. See: *Śaiva Āgamas*.
- Kanada (Kaṇāda):** कणाद Founder of the Vaiśeshika Darśana, author of the *Vaiśeshika Sūtras*. See: *śaḍ darśana*.
- Kandar Anubhuti:** கந்தர் அனுபுதி A mystical 51-verse poem in praise of Lord Kārttikeya-Murugan composed by the Tamil saint, Arunagirinathar (ca 1500). It describes the narrator’s arduous path to Ultimate Reality.
- Kanjamalayam (Kaṅjamalayam):** கஞ்சமலயம் One of the seven disciples of Rishi Tirumular. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.
- Kannada:** One of four modern Dravidian languages, and principal medium for Vira Śaivism. It is spoken by 20 million people, mostly in Karnataka.
- Kānpaṭi:** कान्फटि (Hindi.) “Split-eared,” from the custom of splitting the cartilage of the ear to insert large earrings. The name of the ascetic order of men and women founded by Gorakshanatha (ca 950), proponents of *kuṇḍalīnī-haṭha yoga* still today. See: *earrings, Gorakshanatha, Siddha Siddhānta*.
- Kāpālīka:** कापालिक An ascetic sect which developed out of the Pāsupatas around 500 CE and largely vanished around 1400. They earned a reputation for extreme practices. Possible predecessors of Gorakshanātha Siddha Siddhānta *yogīs*. See: *Pāsupata Śaivism*.
- kapha:** कफ “Biological water.” One of the three bodily humors, called *dosha*, *kapha* is known as the water humor. Principle of cohesion. *Kapha* gives bodily structure and stability, lubricates, heals and bestows immunity. See: *āyurveda, dosha*.
- Kapila:** कपिल Founder (ca 500 BCE) of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, one of the six *darśanas* of Hinduism. See: *śaḍ darśana*.
- Karaikkal Ammaiyar:** காரைக்காலம்மையார் “Respected lady from Karaikkal.” The 23rd of the 63 canonized saints of Tamil Śaivism. Great mystic, poet and *yoginī*, she composed important hymns, which are part of *Tirumurai*.
- Kāraṇa Āgama:** कारण आगम One of the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas* widely available today. Its *kriyā pāda* forms the basis for temple rituals performed in nearly

all South Indian Śiva temples. See: *Śaiva Āgamas*.

**kāraṇa chitta:** कारणचित्त “Causal mind.” The intuitive-superconscious mind of the soul. It corresponds to the *ānandamaya kośa*, bliss sheath, also called *kāraṇa śarīra*, causal body. See: *kośa*, *mind (five states)*, *soul*.

**Kāraṇa Hasuge:** कारणहसुगे A central Vīra Śaiva scripture authored by Chennabasavanna. See: *Chennabasavanna*.

**kāraṇa śarīra:** कारणशरीर “Causal body,” the actinic body or soul body. See: *actinic*, *actinodic*, *kośa*, *odic*, *soul*, *subtle body*.

**Kāraṇa Mahātmya:** करवणमाहात्म्य See: *Pāśupata Śaivism*.

**karma:** कर्म “Action,” “deed.” One of the most important principles in Hindu thought, *karma* refers to 1) any act or deed; 2) the principle of cause and effect; 3) a consequence or “fruit of action” (*karmaphala*) or “after effect” (*uttaraphala*), which sooner or later returns upon the doer. What we sow, we shall reap in this or future lives. Selfish, hateful acts (*pāpakarma* or *kukarma*) will bring suffering. Benevolent actions (*punyakarma* or *sukarma*) will bring loving reactions. *Karma* is a neutral, self-perpetuating law of the inner cosmos, much as gravity is an impersonal law of the outer cosmos. In fact, it has been said that gravity is a small, external expression of the greater law of *karma*. The impelling, unseen power of one’s past actions is called *adrishṭa*.

The law of *karma* acts impersonally, yet we may meaningfully interpret its results as either positive (*puṇya*) or negative (*pāpa*)—terms describing actions leading the soul either toward or away from the spiritual goal. *Karma* is further graded as: white (*śukla*), black (*krishṇa*), mixed (*śukla-krishṇa*) or neither white nor black (*aśukla-akrishṇa*). The latter term describes the *karma* of the *jñānī*, who, as Rishi Patanjali says, is established in *kaivalya*, freedom from *prakṛiti* through realization of the Self. Similarly, one’s *karma* must be in a condition of *aśukla-akrishṇa*, quiescent balance, in order for liberation to be attained. This equivalence of *karma* is called *karmasāmya*, and is a factor that brings *malaparipakam*, or maturity of *āṇava mala*. It is this state of resolution in preparation for *samādhi* at death that all Hindus seek through making amends and settling differences.

*Karma* is threefold: *sañchita*, *prārabdha* and *kriyamāna*. —**sañchita karma:** “Accumulated actions.” The sum of all *karmas* of this life and past lives. —**prārabdha karma:** “Actions begun; set in motion.” That portion of *sañchita karma* that is bearing fruit and shaping the events and conditions of the current life, including the nature of one’s bodies, personal tendencies and associations. —**kriyamāna karma:** “Being made.” The *karma* being created and added to *sañchita* in this life by one’s thoughts, words and actions, or in the inner worlds between lives. *Kriyamāna karma* is also called *āgāmi*, “coming, arriving,” and *vartamāna*, “living, set in motion.” While some *kriyamāna karmas* bear fruit in the current life, others are

stored for future births. Each of these types can be divided into two categories: *ārabdha* (literally, “begun, undertaken;” *karma* that is “sprouting”), and *anārabdha* (“not commenced; dormant”), or “seed *karma*.”

In a famed analogy, *karma* is compared to rice in its various stages. *Sañchita karma*, the residue of one’s total accumulated actions, is likened to rice that has been harvested and stored in a granary. From the stored rice, a small portion has been removed, husked and readied for cooking and eating. This is *prārabdha karma*, past actions that are shaping the events of the present. Meanwhile, new rice, mainly from the most recent harvest of *prārabdha karma*, is being planted in the field that will yield a future crop and be added to the store of rice. This is *kriyamāna karma*, the consequences of current actions.

In Śaivism, *karma* is one of three principal bonds of the soul, along with *āṇava* and *māyā*. *Karma* is the driving force that brings the soul back again and again into human birth in the evolutionary cycle of transmigration called *saṁsāra*. When all earthly *karmas* are resolved and the Self has been realized, the soul is liberated from rebirth. This is the goal of all Hindus.

For each of the three kinds of *karma* there is a different method of resolution. Nonattachment to the fruits of action, along with daily rites of worship and strict adherence to the codes of *dharma*, stops the accumulation of *kriyamāna*. *Prārabdha karma* is resolved only through being experienced and lived through. *Sañchita karma*, normally inaccessible, is burned away only through the grace and *dikshā* of the *satguru*, who prescribes *sādhana* and *tapas* for the benefit of the *śishya*. Through the sustained *kuṇḍalīnī* heat of this extreme penance, the seeds of unsprouted *karmas* are fried, and therefore will never sprout in this or future lives. See: *dikshā*, *grace*.

Like the fourfold edict of *dharma*, the threefold edict of *karma* has both individual and impersonal dimensions. Personal *karma* is thus influenced by broader contexts, sometimes known as family *karma*, community *karma*, national *karma*, global *karma* and universal *karma*. See: *āṇava*, *fate*, *māyā*, *moksha*, *pāpa*, *pāśa*, *puṇya*, *sin*, *soul*.

**karmasāmya:** कर्मसाम्य “Balance or equipoise of *karma*.”

See: *karma*.

**karmāsaya:** कर्मशय “Holder of *karma*.” Describes the body of the soul, or *ānandamaya kośa*. See: *karma*, *kośa*.

**karma yoga:** कर्मयोग “Union through action.” The path of selfless service. See: *yoga*.

**Karnataka (Karnāṭaka):** कर्णाटक Southwest state of modern India, where Vijayanagara flourished. Vira Śaivism is centered here. Population 25 million, area 74,043 square miles.

**karnavedha:** कर्णविध “Ear-piercing.” See: *saṁskāras of childhood*.

**Kārtikeya:** कार्तिकेय Child of the Pleiades, from *Kṛittikā*, “Pleiades.” A son of Śiva. A great Mahādeva worshiped in all parts of India and the world. Also known as

- Murugan, Kumāra, Skanda, Shaṅmukhanātha, Subrahmaṇya and more, He is the God who guides that part of evolution which is religion, the transformation of the instinctive into a divine wisdom through the practice of *yoga*. He holds the holy *vel* of *jñāna śakti*, which is His Power to vanquish darkness or ignorance.
- Kārttikeya Stotram:** कार्तिकेयस्तोत्रं A subdivision (*Rudrāyamala Tantra*) of the *Śākta Tantras* dedicated to God Kārttikeya. See: *Kārttikeya*.
- karuṇā:** करुणा “Compassionate; loving, full of grace.”
- Kāruṇa Āgama:** कारुण आगम One of the 28 *Āgamas* of Śaiva Siddhānta. See: *Śaiva Āgamas*.
- Karunakara Kadavul:** கருணாகரக் கடவுள் Hymn by the Tamil saint, Tayumanavar (1705–1742), in praise of Lord Śiva. See: *Tayumanavar*.
- karuṇya:** कारुण्य “Compassion, kindness, love.” In Śaivism, an alternate term for Śiva’s revealing grace, *anugraha śakti*. See: *anugraha śakti, grace*.
- kāshāya:** काषाय “Brownish-red.” The color of *sannyāsins’* robes. See: *kavi*.
- Kashmir (Kaśmīra):** कश्मीर The northernmost area of India, part of the present-day state of Jammu and Kashmir. It figures prominently in the history of Śaivism. Area 115,000 square miles, under dispute between India and Pakistan. Population is six million in the Indian sector.
- Kashmīr Śaivism:** कश्मीरशैव In this mildly theistic and intensely monistic school founded by Vasugupta around 850, Śiva is immanent and transcendent. Purification and *yoga* are strongly emphasized. Kashmir Śaivism provides an extremely rich and detailed understanding of the human psyche, and a clear and distinct path of *kunḍalīni-siddha yoga* to the goal of Self Realization. The Kashmir Śaivite is not so much concerned with worshiping a personal God as he is with attaining the transcendental state of Śiva consciousness. *Sādhana* leads to the assimilation of the object (world) in the subject (I) until the Self (Śiva) stands revealed as one with the universe. The goal—liberation—is sustained recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) of one’s true Self as nothing but Śiva. There are three *upāya*, or stages of attainment of God consciousness: *āṇavopāya (yoga)*, *śāktopāya* (spiritual discrimination), *śāmbhavopāya* (attainment through the guru’s instruction) and *anupāya*, or “no means” (spontaneous realization without effort). Kashmir Śaivite literature is in three broad divisions: *Āgama Śāstras*, *Spanda Śāstras* and *Pratyabhijñā Śāstras*. Today various organizations promulgate the esoteric teachings. While the number of Kashmir Śaivite formal followers is uncertain, the school remains an important influence in India. See: *Śaivism, upāya*.
- kathā:** कथा “Story; discussion.” Also, the literary form involving the telling of stories. *Kathakas* are bards, storytellers. See: *folk-narratives, mythology*.
- Kaṭha Upanishad:** कठ उपनिषद् One of the major *Upanishads*, belonging to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* of the *Yajur Veda*. This scripture contains the famous story of Nachiketas who extracts from Yama, Lord of Death, the knowledge of liberation to be had through realization of the Supreme.
- Kathirgāma Purāṇa:** कथिर्गमिपुराण A secondary scripture regarding the famous central Sri Lankan abode of Lord Murugan (*Kārttikeya*).
- Kaundinya (Kaunḍīnya):** कौण्डिन्य Author of a commentary on the *Pāśupata Sūtras* (ca 500). See: *Pāśupata Śaivism, Pāśupata Sūtras*.
- Kaurusha:** कौरुष One of four known disciples of *Lakulisa*. See: *Lakulisa, Pāśupata Śaivism*.
- Kaushītaki Upanishad:** कौषीतकी उपनिषद् A major *Upanishad* belonging to the *Rīg Veda*. It discusses: 1) the course of souls after death, 2) the doctrine of *prāṇa* as related to *ātman*, 3) attainment of *moksha*.
- Kautīliya (Kauṭīliya):** कौटिलीय See: *Arthaveda*.
- kavadi:** कावाடி A penance offered to Lord Murugan-Kārttikeya, especially during Tai Pusam, consisting of carrying in procession a heavy, beautifully decorated, wooden object from which pots of milk hang which are to be used for His *abhisheka*. Often the penitent’s tongue and other parts of the body are pierced with small silver spears or hooks. See: *penance*.
- kavi:** कावी “Ocher-saffron color.” A Tamil term referring to the color taken on by the robes of *sādhus* who sit, meditate or live on the banks of the Ganges. Names the color of the *sannyāsins’* robes. The Sanskrit equivalent is *kāshāya*.
- kāya siddhi:** कायसिद्धि In Siddha Siddhānta, as well as Śaiva Siddhānta and other *yoga* traditions, the process by which a *yogī* transforms his body from physical to spiritual substance to attain deathlessness. See: *siddhi*.
- Kayavarohana (Kāyāvarohaṇa):** कायवरोहण Birthplace of Lakulisa, most prominent *guru* of *Pāśupata Śaivism*, in India’s present-day state of Baroda. See: *Lakulisa*.
- Kedaresvara Temple:** केदारेश्वर A temple in Karnataka which belonged to the *Kālāmukha* sect of Śaivism. Inscriptions upon it (1162) are a main source of knowledge about this now nearly extinct sect. See: *Kālāmukha*.
- Kena Upanishad:** केन उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāma Veda*. It is a discourse upon Brahman, Absolute Reality and His worship as personal God. See: *Upanishad*.
- Kerala:** केरल The small Indian state, formerly called Konkan (Koṅkaṇ), along the southwestern tip of India. Area 15,000 square miles, population 25 million.
- keśānta:** केशान्त “Beard-shaving.” See: *saiṅskāras of adulthood*.
- kevala avasthā:** केवल अवस्था “Stage of oneness, aloneness.” (Tamil: *avasthai*.) In Śaiva Siddhānta, the first of three stages of the soul’s evolution, a state beginning with its emanation or spawning by Lord Śiva as an etheric form unaware of itself, a spark of the Divine shrouded in a cloud of darkness known as *āṇava*. Here the soul is likened to a seed hidden in the ground, yet to germinate and unfold its potential. See: *āṇava, avasthā, evolution of the soul, sakala avasthā, soul, śuddha avasthā*.

**kindred:** Family, relatives, kin. See: *extended family, joint family.*

**kīrtana:** कीर्तन “Praising.” Devotional singing and dancing in celebration of God, Gods and *guru*. An important form of congregational worship in many Hindu sects. See: *bhajana, congregational worship.*

**knower:** One who knows. In philosophy, that within conscious beings which understands or is conscious. See: *awareness, chit, jñāna, sākshin.*

**korai:** கொள்ளை The Golden Shower tree, *Cassia fistula*; symbol of Śiva’s cascading, abundant, golden grace.

**Koran:** The Islamic religion’s sacred book, God’s word transmitted through the angel Gabriel to Mohammed, the prophet of Islam. Its official version appeared around 650, 18 years after Mohammed’s death.

**kośa:** कोश “Sheath; vessel, container; layer.” Philosophically, five sheaths through which the soul functions simultaneously in the various planes or levels of existence. They are sometimes compared to the layers of an onion. The *kośas*, in order of increasing subtlety, are as follows. —**annamaya kośa:** “Sheath composed of food.” The physical or odic body, coarsest of sheaths in comparison to the faculties of the soul, yet indispensable for evolution and Self Realization, because only within it can all fourteen *chakras* fully function. See: *chakra.* —**prāṇamaya kośa:** “Sheath composed of *prāṇa* (vital force).” Also known as the *prāṇic* or health body, or the etheric body or etheric double, it coexists within the physical body as its source of life, breath and vitality, and is its connection with the astral body. *Prāṇa* moves in the *prāṇamaya kośa* as five primary currents or *vayus*, “vital airs or winds.” *Prāṇamaya kośa* disintegrates at death along with the physical body. See: *prāṇa* —**manomaya kośa:** “Mind-formed sheath.” The lower astral body, from *manas*, “thought, will, wish.” The instinctive-intellectual sheath of ordinary thought, desire and emotion. It is the seat of the *indriyas*, sensory and motor organs, respectively called *jñānendriyas* and *karmendriyas*. The *manomaya kośa* takes form as the physical body develops and is discarded in the inner worlds before rebirth. It is understood in two layers: 1) the odic-causal sheath (*buddhi*) and 2) the odic-astral sheath (*manas*). See: *indriya, manas.* —**vijñānamaya kośa:** “Sheath of cognition.” The mental or cognitive-intuitive sheath, also called the actinodic sheath. It is the vehicle of higher thought, *vijñāna*—understanding, knowing, direct cognition, wisdom, intuition and creativity. —**ānandamaya kośa:** “Body of bliss.” The intuitive-superconscious sheath or actinic-causal body. This inmost soul form (*svarūpa*) is the ultimate foundation of all life, intelligence and higher faculties. Its essence is Parāśakti (Pure Consciousness) and Parāśiva (the Absolute). *Ānandamaya kośa* is not a sheath in the same sense as the four outer *kośas*. It is the soul itself, a body of light, also called *kāraṇa śarīra*, causal body, and *karmāśaya*, holder of *karmas* of this and all past lives. *Kāraṇa chitta*, “causal mind,” names

the soul’s superconscious mind, of which Parāśakti (or Satchidānanda) is the rarified substratum. *Ānandamaya kośa* is that which evolves through all incarnations and beyond until the soul’s ultimate, fulfilled merger, *viśvaḡrāsa*, in the Primal Soul, Paramēśvara. Then *ānandamaya kośa* becomes Śivamayakośa, the body of God Śiva.

The physical body (*annamaya kośa*) is also called *sthūla śarīra*, “gross body.” The soul body (*ānandamaya kośa*) is also called *kāraṇa śarīra*, “causal body.” The *prāṇamaya, manomaya* and *vijñānamaya kośas* together comprise the *sūkshma śarīra*, “subtle body,” with the *prāṇamaya* shell disintegrating at death. See: *actinic, actinodic, manomaya kośa, niyati, odic, śarīra, soul, subtle body.*

**Kṛishṇa:** कृष्ण “Black.” Also related to *kṛishṭih*, meaning “drawing, attracting.” One of the most popular Gods of the Hindu pantheon. He is worshiped by Vaishṇavas as the eighth *avatāra*, incarnation, of Viṣṇu. He is best known as the Supreme Personage depicted in the *Mahābhārata*, and specifically in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. For Gauḍiya Vaishṇavism, Kṛishṇa is the Godhead.

**Kṛittikā Dipam:** कृत्तिकादीपम् A joyous one-day festival on the Kṛittikā *nakshatra* (Pleiades constellation), in November-December, when God Śiva is worshiped as an infinite pillar of light. Great bonfires are lit at night on hills and in villages in India and elsewhere to represent the divine, all-permeating light of Parāśakti. See: *festival.*

**kriyā:** क्रिया “Action.” 1) In a general sense, *kriyā* can refer to doing of any kind. Specifically, it names religious action, especially rites or ceremonies. 2) In *yoga* terminology, *kriyā* names involuntary physical movements occurring during meditation that are pretended or caused by lack of emotional self-control or by the premature or unharnessed arousal of the *kuṇḍalīni*. 3) Various traditional *haṭha yoga* techniques for cleansing the mucous membranes. 4) The second stage of the Śaiva path, religious action, or *kriyā pāda*. See: *pāda.*

**Kriyākramadyotikā:** क्रियाक्रमद्योतिका A manual by Āg-horasiva (ca 1050) detailing Āgamic Śaiva ritual. It is used widely by South Indian priests today.

**kriyamāna karma:** क्रियमानकर्म “Actions being made.” See: *karma.*

**kriyā pāda:** क्रियापाद “Stage of religious action; worship.” The stage of worship and devotion, second of four progressive stages of maturation on the Śaiva Siddhānta path of attainment. See: *pāda.*

**kriyā śakti:** क्रियाशक्ति “Action power.” The universal force of doing. See: *Śakti, trīśūla.*

**kshamā:** क्षमा “Forebearance.” See: *yama-niyama.*

**kshatriya:** क्षत्रिय “Governing; sovereign.” The social class of lawmakers, law-enforcers and military. See: *varṇa dharma.*

**Kūḍalasāṅgama:** कूडलसङ्गमदेव A name of Śiva meaning “Lord of rivers’ confluence.”

**kula:** कुल “Family; home; group of families.” See: *ex-*

tended family, joint family.

**kula guru:** कुलगुरु The spiritual preceptor of the family or extended family.

**Kulārṇava Tantra:** कुलार्णवतन्त्र A leading scripture of the Kaula school of Śāktism. It comprises 17 chapters totaling 2,058 verses which focus on ways to liberation, with notable chapters on the *guru-śishya* relationship.

**Kumāra:** कुमार “Virgin youth; ever-youthful.” A name of Lord Kārttikeya as an eternal bachelor. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**kumbha:** कुम्भ “Jar or pot; water vessel.”

**kuṇḍalini:** कुण्डलिनी “She who is coiled; serpent power.” The primordial cosmic energy in every individual which, at first, lies coiled like a serpent at the base of the spine and eventually, through the practice of *yoga*, rises up the *sushumṇā nāḍī*. As it rises, the *kuṇḍalini* awakens each successive *chakra*. *Nirvikalpa samādhi*, enlightenment, comes as it pierces through the door of Brahman at the core of the *sahasrāra* and enters! *Kuṇḍalini śakti* then returns to rest in any one of the seven *chakras*. Śivasāyujya is complete when the *kuṇḍalini* arrives back in the *sahasrāra* and remains coiled in this crown *chakra*. See: *chakra*, *door of Brahman*, *nāḍī*, *samādhi*, *spiritual unfoldment*, *tantrism*.

**kuṇḍalini yoga:** कुण्डलिनीयोग “Uniting the serpent power.” Advanced meditative practices and *sādhana* techniques, a part of *rāja yoga*, performed to deliberately arouse the *kuṇḍalini* power and guide it up the spine into the crown *chakra*, *sahasrāra*. In its highest form, this *yoga* is the natural result of *sādhana*s and *tapas* well performed, rather than a distinct system of striving and teaching in its own right.

**kūnkuma:** कुंकुम “Saffron; red.” The red powder, made of turmeric and lime, worn by Hindus as the *pottu* or *bindu*, dot, at the point of the third eye on the forehead. Names the saffron plant, *Crocus sativus*, and its pollen.

**Kūrma Purāṇa:** कूर्मपुराण “The Tortoise Saga.” One of the six *Śiva Purāṇas*, it glorifies the worship of Śiva and Durgā.

**Kuruksheṭra:** कुरुक्षेत्र An extensive plain near Delhi, scene of the great war between the Kauravas and Pandavas (Pāṇḍavas). See: *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Mahābhārata*.

**Kusika (Kuśika):** कुशिक One of four known disciples of Lakulisa.

**kuttuvilaku:** குத்துவிளக்கு A standing metal lamp kept in the temple, shrine room or home. It is made of metal, with several wicks fed by *ghee* or special oils. Used to light the home and used in *pūjā*. Part of temple and shrine altars, the standing lamp is sometimes worshiped as the divine light, Parāśakti or Parajyoti. Returning from the temple and lighting one’s *kuttuvilaku* courts the accompanying *devas* to remain in the home and channels the vibration of the temple sanctum sanctorum into the home shrine. Called *dīpastambha* in Sanskrit.

**kuṭumba:** कुटुम्ब “Joint family.” See: *extended family*, *joint family*.



**Lakshmi:** लक्ष्मी “Mark or sign,” often of success or prosperity. Śakti, the Universal Mother, as Goddess of wealth. The mythological consort of Viṣṇu. Usually depicted on a lotus flower. Prayers are offered to Lakshmi for wealth, beauty and peace. See: *Goddess*, *Śakti*.

**Lakulisa (Lakuliśa):** लकुलीश The most prominent *guru* (ca 200) of the ancient Pāśupata school of Śaivism. The *Pāśupata Sūtras* are attributed to him. See: *Śaivism*.

**Lalla (Lallā):** (Lalāsa ललासा in Sanskrit.) A Kashmir Śaivite saint (ca 1300) whose intensely mystical poems, *Lallā Vākyaṇi*, describe her inner experiences of oneness with Śiva. See: *Kashmir Śaivism*.

**lance:** A spear. See: *Kārttikeya*, *vel*.

**larder:** Pantry; room where food supplies are kept.

**laud:** To praise. To sing, chant or speak the glories of.

**lavish:** Very abundant in giving or spending.

**left-handed:** *Vāma mārga*. A term describing certain *tantric* practices where the instincts and intellect are transcended, and detachment is sought through practices and behavior which are contrary to orthodox social norms. See: *tantra*, *tantrika*, *tantrism*.

**legend:** A story of uncertain historical basis, transmitted from generation to generation. See: *folk narratives*, *kathā*, *mythology*.

**legislate:** To make or pass laws.

**legitimate:** According to the rules or the law. Authentic; reasonable.

**lekhaprārtha havana:** लेखप्रार्थहवन “Written-prayer-burning rite.” A term coined for the ancient practice of sending written prayers to the Gods by burning them in a sanctified fire in a temple or shrine. Alternately this rite can be performed at other appropriate sites, with four persons sitting around a fire and chanting to create a temporary temple. Prayers can be written in any language, but should be clearly legible, in black ink on white paper. The *devas* have provided a special script, called Tyēif, especially for this purpose. Its letters, from A to Z, which replace the letters of the Roman script, looks like this:



**lest:** For fear that a thing might happen.

**liberal Hinduism:** A synonym for Smārtism and the closely related neo-Indian religion. See: *neo-Indian religion*, *Smārtism*, *universalist*.

**liberation:** *Moksha*, release from the bonds of *pāśa*, after which the soul is liberated from *samsāra* (the round of births and deaths). In Śaiva Siddhānta, *pāśa* is the threefold bondage of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*, which limit and confine the soul to the reincarnational cycle so that it may evolve. *Moksha* is freedom from the fettering power of these bonds, which do not cease to exist, but no longer have the power to fetter or bind the soul. See: *jīvanmukti*, *mala*, *moksha*,

*pāśa, reincarnation, satguru, Self Realization, soul.*

**licentious:** Morally unrestrained, especially in sexual behavior.

**light:** In an ordinary sense, a form of energy which makes physical objects visible to the eye. In a religious-mystical sense, light also illumines inner objects (i.e., mental images). —**inner light:** light perceived inside the head and body, of which there are varying intensities. When the *karmas* have been sufficiently quieted, the meditator can see and enjoy inner light independently of mental images. —**moon-like inner light:** Inner light perceived at a first level of intensity, glowing softly, much like the moon. The meditator's first experience of it is an important milestone in unfolding. —**clear white light:** Inner light at a high level of intensity, very clear and pure. When experienced fully, it is seen to be permeating all of existence, the universal substance of all form, inner and outer, pure consciousness, Satchidānanda. This experience, repeated at regular intervals, can yield "a knowing greater than you could acquire at any university or institute of higher learning." See: *Śiva consciousness, tattva.*

**Liṅga:** लिङ्ग "Mark." See: *Śivaliṅga, svayambhū Liṅga.*

**Liṅgāchāra:** लिङ्गाचार Daily worship of the Śivaliṅga. One of the five essential codes of conduct for Vira Śaivites. See: *Pañchāchāra, Vira Śaivism.*

**Liṅga Dikshā:** लिङ्गदीक्षा The Vira Śaiva initiation ceremony in which the *guru* ties a small Śivaliṅga (Ishṭaliṅga) around the neck of the devotee and enjoins him to worship it twice daily. This initiation replaces the sacred thread ceremony, *upanayana*. See: *Vira Śaivism.*

**Liṅga Purāṇa:** लिङ्ग पुराण One of the six principal *Śiva Purāṇas*. This text explains the *purushārthas* (the four goals of life) and the significance of Śivaliṅga worship. See: *Purāṇa.*

**Liṅgāshṭakam:** लिङ्गाष्टकम् A short hymn of eight verses in praise of the Śivaliṅga.

**Liṅgavanta:** लिङ्गवन्त "Wearer of the Liṅga." (Hindi: Liṅgāyat.) Alternate term for Vira Śaivite. See: *Vira Śaivism.*

**liturgy:** The proper, prescribed forms of ritual.

**loka:** लोक "World, habitat, realm, or plane of existence." From *loc*, "to shine, be bright, visible." A dimension of manifest existence; cosmic region. Each *loka* reflects or involves a particular range of consciousness. The three primary *lokas* are 1) —**Bhūloka:** "Earth world." The world perceived through the five senses, also called the gross plane, as it is the most dense of the worlds. 2) —**Antarloka:** "Inner or in-between world." Known in English as the subtle or astral plane, the intermediate dimension between the physical and causal worlds, where souls in their astral bodies sojourn between incarnations and when they sleep. 3) —**Śivaloka:** "World of Śiva," and of the Gods and highly evolved souls. The causal plane, also called *Kāraṇaloka*, existing deep within the *Antarloka* at a higher level of vibration, it is a world of superconsciousness and extremely refined energy. It is the plane of creativity and

intuition, the quantum level of the universe, where souls exist in self-effulgent bodies made of actinic particles of light. It is here that God and Gods move and lovingly guide the evolution of all the worlds and shed their ever-flowing grace. Its vibratory rate is that of the *viśuddha, ājñā* and *sahasrāra chakras* and those above. From the perspective of the seven worlds, the Śivaloka is of three levels: *Janaloka*, "creative plane" (*viśuddha chakra*); *Tapoloka*, "plane of austerity" (*ājñā chakra*); and *Satyaloka*, "plane of reality" (*sahasrāra chakra*); also called *Brahmaloka*.

The *Antarloka* and Śivaloka are the ever-present substratum of physical existence, most frequently experienced by humans during sleep and deep meditation. Each *loka* is a microcosm of the next higher world, which is its macrocosm, e.g., the physical plane is a microcosm (a smaller and less-refined version) of the *Antarloka*. See: *three worlds.*

**lotus āsana:** The most famous of *haṭha yoga* poses and the optimum position for meditation. It is known as the *padmāsana* (lotus pose), as the legs are crossed, turning the soles of the feet up, which then resemble a lotus flower. See: *āsana, haṭha yoga.*

**lute:** A stringed instrument of highly pleasant sound.



**macrocosm:** "Great world or universe." See: *microcosm-macrocosm, piṇḍa, three worlds.*

**Madhmateya:** मधुमतेय A Śaiva Siddhānta monastic order founded by Pavanāsiva, preceptor of the Kalachuri kings of Central India.

**Madhva (Mādhva):** माध्व South Indian Vaishṇava saint (1197–1278) who expounded a purely dualistic (pluralistic) Vedānta in which there is an essential and eternal distinction between God, soul and world, and between all beings and things. He is also one of the few Hindus to have taught the existence of an eternal hell where lost souls would be condemned to suffer forever. See: *dvaita-advaita, Vedānta.*

**mahā:** महा An adjective or prefix meaning "great."

**Mahābhārata:** महाभारत "Great Epic of India." The world's longest epic poem. It revolves around the conflict between two kingdoms, the Pandavas (Pāṇḍavas) and Kauravas, and their great battle of Kurukshetra near modern Delhi in approximately 1424 BCE. Woven through the plot are countless discourses on philosophy, religion, astronomy, cosmology, polity, economics and many stories illustrative of simple truths and ethical principles. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is one section of the work. The *Mahābhārata* is revered as scripture by Vaishṇavites and Smārtas. See: *Bhagavad Gītā, Itihāsa.*

**Mahādeva:** महादेव "Great shining one; God." Referring either to God Śiva or any of the highly evolved beings who live in the Śivaloka in their natural, effulgent soul bodies. God Śiva in His perfection as Primal Soul is one of the Mahādevas, yet He is unique and incomparable in that He alone is uncreated, the Father-Mother and Destiny of all other Mahādevas. He

- is called Parameśvara, “Supreme God.” He is the Primal Soul, whereas the other Gods are individual souls. It is said in scripture that there are 330 million Gods. See: *Gods, monotheism, Parameśvara, Śiva*.
- Mahādeva Mountain:** See: *Vasugupta*.
- Mahākāla:** महाकाल “Great time,” or “dissolver of time.” One of the names and forms of Śiva. Mahākāla is Time beyond time, who devours all things and forms and, by so doing, helps the soul transcend all dualities. Mystically, time devours itself and thus the timeless state is achieved. See: *tattva*.
- mahākūṭumba:** महाकुटुम्ब “Great or extended family.” See: *extended family*.
- mahāmaṇḍapa:** महामण्डप “Great hall.” Main, outer assembly hall in the temple where devotees gather for ceremony. See: *maṇḍapa, temple*.
- Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad:** महानारायण उपनिषद् A philosophical text of the *Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda*.
- Mahānirvāṇa Tantra:** महानिर्वाणतन्त्र “Treatise on the great emancipation.” An 11th-century *advaita* scripture dealing with *mantra* and esoteric rituals.
- mahāpralaya:** महाप्रलय “Great dissolution.” Total annihilation of the universe at the end of a *mahākālpa*. It is the absorption of all existence, including time, space and individual consciousness, all the *lokas* and their inhabitants into God Śiva, as the water of a river returns to its source, the sea. Then Śiva alone exists in His three perfections, until He again issues forth creation. During this incredibly vast period there are many partial dissolutions, *pralayas*, when either the Bhūloka or the Bhūloka and the Antarloka are destroyed. See: *cosmic cycle, pralaya*.
- mahāprasthāna:** महाप्रस्थान “Great departure.” Death. See: *death, transition*.
- mahārāja:** महाराज “Great king.” Indian monarch. Title of respect for political or (in modern times) spiritual leaders.
- Maharashtra (Mahārāshtra):** महाराष्ट्र Central state of modern India whose capital is Mumbai. Area 118,717 square miles, population 63 million.
- maharishi (maharshi):** महर्षि “Great seer.” Title for the greatest and most influential of *siddhas*.
- Maharloka:** महर्लोक “Plane of greatness.” From *mahas*, “greatness, might, power, glory.” Also called the Devaloka, this fourth highest of the seven upper worlds is the mental plane, or higher astral plane, realm of *anāhata chakra*. See: *loka*.
- mahāsākāra-piṇḍa:** महासाकार पिण्ड “Great manifest body.” In Siddha Siddhānta Śaivism, the first manifestation of Śiva out of the transcendent state. From it all of existence issues forth. See: *piṇḍa*.
- mahāsamādhi:** महासमाधि “Great ecstasy.” The death, or dropping off of the physical body, of a great soul, an event occasioned by tremendous blessings. Also names the shrine in which the remains of a great soul are entombed. **mahāsamādhi day:** Anniversary of the transition of a great soul. See: *cremation, death, reincarnation, samādhi, transition*.
- Mahāśivarātri:** महाशिवरात्रि “Śiva’s great night.” Śaivism’s foremost festival, celebrated on the night before the new moon in February-March. Fasting and an all-night vigil are observed as well as other disciplines: chanting, praying, meditating and worshiping Śiva as the Source and Self of all that exists. See: *festival*.
- mahātala:** महातल Sixth netherworld. Region of consciencelessness. See: *chakra*.
- mahātma:** महान्म “Great soul.” Honorific title for those held in highest esteem, especially saints. See: *ātman*.
- mahāvākya:** महावाक्य “Great saying.” A profound aphorism from scripture or a holy person. The most famous are four Upanishadic proclamations: *Prājanam Brahma*, “Pure consciousness is God,” (*Aitareya Upanishad*); *Aham Brahmāsmi*, “I am God” (*Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad*); *Tat tvam asi*, “Thou art That” (*Chandogya Upanishad*); and *Ayam ātma Brahma*, “The soul is God” (*Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*).
- Mahavira (Mahāvira):** महावीर Founder of Jainism, ca 500 BCE.. See: *Jainism*.
- maheśa:** महेश “Great God.” Term used by Vira Śaivites to mean charity, seeing all as God. See: *śaṭsthala*.
- Maheśvara:** महेश्वर “Great Lord.” In Śaiva Siddhānta, the name of Śiva’s energy of veiling grace, one of five aspects of Parameśvara, the Primal Soul. *Maheśvara* is also a popular name for Lord Śiva as Primal Soul and personal Lord. See: *Cosmic Dance, Naṭarāja, Parameśvara*.
- Maitreya:** मैत्रेय One of four known disciples of Lakulisa. See: *Pāśupata Śaivism*.
- Maitri Upanishad:** मैत्री उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Maitrāyaṇiya* branch of the *Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda*. A later *Upanishad* covering Aum, outer nature, the Self, control of the mind, etc.
- mala:** मल “Impurity.” An important term in Śaivism referring to three bonds, called *pāśa*—*āṇava*, *karma*, and *māyā*—which limit the soul, preventing it from knowing its true, divine nature. See: *liberation, pāśa*.
- mālā:** माला “Garland.” A strand of beads for holy recitation, *japa*, usually made of *rudrāksha*, *tulasī*, sandalwood or crystal. Also a flower garland.
- Malangam (Malaṅgam):** मलगम् One of the seven disciples of Rishi Tirumular. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.
- malaparipakam:** मलपरिपाक “Ripening of bonds.” The state attained after the three *malas*, *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*, are brought under control during *marul*, the second stage of the *sakala avasthā*. At this time, the Lord’s concealing grace, *tirodhāna śakti*, has accomplished its work, giving way to *anugraha*, His revealing grace, leading to the descent of grace, *śaktinipāta*. See: *āṇava, anugraha, karma, malas, marul, māyā, sakala avasthā, śaktinipāta, tirodhāna śakti*.
- Mālati-Mādhava:** मालतीमाधव A Sanskrit play by Bhavabhūti (Bhavabhūti) (ca 500). Primarily a love story, it contains incidental descriptions of the Kāpālika Śaivite sect of ascetics.
- malice:** Ill will; desire or intent to do harm to another, generally without conscience. See: *mahātala, pātāla*.
- Maligaideva (Māligaideva):** मलिगैदेव See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.



**manana:** मनन “Thinking; deep reflection.” See: *self-reflection*.

**manas:** मनस् “Mind; understanding.” The lower or instinctive mind, seat of desire and governor of sensory and motor organs, called *indriyas*. *Manas* is termed the undisciplined, empirical mind. *Manas* is characterized by desire, determination, doubt, faith, lack of faith, steadfastness, lack of steadfastness, shame, intellection and fear. It is a faculty of *manomaya kośa*, the lower astral or instinctive-intellectual sheath. See: *awareness, indriya, instinctive mind, manomaya kośa, mind (individual)*.

**manas chitta:** मनस् चित्त “Instinctive mind.” See: *instinctive mind, manas, manomaya kośa*.

**maṇḍala:** मण्डल “Circle; orb;” “mystic diagram.” A circle. Name of the chapters of the *Rig Veda Samhitā*. A circular diagram without beginning or end—which indicates the higher and the lower and other possibilities—upon which one meditates. A tapestry, picture or grouping of words used in meditation to enter the realms depicted.

**maṇḍapa:** मण्डप From *maṇḍ*, “to deck, adorn.” Temple precinct; a temple compound, open hall or chamber. In entering a large temple, one passes through a series of *maṇḍapas*, each named according to its position, e.g., *mukhamaṇḍapa*, “front chamber.” In some temples, *maṇḍapas* are concentrically arranged. See: *mahāmaṇḍapa, temple*.

**mandira:** मन्दिर Temple; abode.” See: *devamandira, temple*.

**Māṇḍūkya Upanishad:** माण्डूक्य उपनिषद् A “principal” *Upanishad* (belonging to the *Atharva Veda*) which, in 12 concise verses, teaches of Aum and the four states (*avasthā*) of awareness: waking (*viśva*), dreaming (*taijasa*), dreamless sleep (*prājña*) and transcendent, spiritual consciousness (*turiya*).

**maṅgala kriyā:** मङ्गलक्रिया “Auspicious action or practice.” Hindu culture.

**Mangalavade (Maṅgalavade):** मङ्गलवेदे A town in Karnataka, South India.

**manifest:** To show or reveal. Perceivable or knowable, therefore having form. The opposite of unmanifest or transcendent. See: *formless, tattva*.

**manifold:** Varied. Having many forms, aspects, parts.

**Manikkavasagar:** மாணிக்கவாசகர் “He of ruby-like utterances.” Tamil saint who contributed to the medieval Śaivite renaissance (ca 850). He gave up his position as prime minister to follow a renunciate life. His poetic *Tiruvāṣagam*, “Holy utterances”—a major Śaiva Siddhānta scripture (part of the eighth *Tirumurai*) and a jewel of Tamil literature—express his aspirations, trials and *yogic* realizations. See: *Nalvar, Tirumurai*.

**maṅḍipūra chakra:** मणिपूरचक्र “Wheeled city of jewels.” Solar-plexus center of willpower. See: *chakra*.

**mankolam:** மாங்கோலம் “Mango design.” The paisley, a stylized image of the mango, symbol of auspiciousness, associated with Lord Gaṇeśa.

**manomaya kośa:** मनोमयकोश “Mind-made sheath.” The

instinctive-intellectual aspect of the soul’s subtle body (*sūkshma sarīra*), also called the odic-astral sheath. It is the sheath of ordinary thought, desire and emotion. The *manomaya kośa* is made up of odic *prāṇa* and is almost an exact duplicate of the physical body. However, changes that appear upon the physical body, such as aging, first occur within the structure of this sheath of the astral body. This is the sheath of the subconscious mind; it can be easily disturbed and is sometimes called the emotional body. See: *astral body, instinctive mind, kośa, odic, soul, subtle body, vāsanā*.

**mānsāhāra:** मासाहार “Meat-eating.”

**mānsāhāri:** मासाहारी “Meat-eater.” Those who follow a non-vegetarian diet. See: *meat-eater, vegetarian*.

**mantra:** मन्त्र “Mystic formula.” A sound, syllable, word or phrase endowed with special power, usually drawn from scripture. *Mantras* are chanted loudly during *pūjā* to invoke the Gods and establish a spiritual force field. Certain *mantras* are repeated softly or mentally for *japa*, the subtle tones quieting the mind, harmonizing the inner bodies and stimulating latent spiritual qualities. Hinduism’s universal *mantra* is Aum. To be truly effective, such *mantras* must be given by the preceptor through initiation. See: *Aum, incantation, japa, pūjā, yajña*.

**Mantra Gopya:** मन्त्रगोप्य The collected writings of Allama Prabhu. See: *Allama Prabhu*.

**Manu Dharma Sāstra:** मनुधर्मशास्त्र Sage “Manu’s law book.” An encyclopedic treatise of 2,685 verses on Hindu law assembled as early as 600 BCE. Among its major features are the support of *varṇa dharma*, *āśrama dharma*, *strī dharma* and seeing the Self in all beings. Despite its caste-based restrictions, which determine one’s status in life unrelentingly from birth to death, it remains the source of much of modern Hindu culture and law. These “Laws of Manu” are the oldest and considered the most authoritative of the greater body of *Dharma Sāstras*. Even during the time of the British Raj in India, law was largely based on these texts. The text is widely available today in several languages. (Bühler’s English translation is 500 pages.) See: *caste, dharma, Dharma Sāstras, Kalpa Vedāṅga*.

**mārga:** मार्ग “Path; way.” From *mārg*, “to seek.” See: *pāda*.

**marital:** Having to do with marriage. See: *grihastha, griheśvara and grihaṇī*.

**Mariyamman:** மாரியம்மன் “Smallpox Goddess,” protectress from plagues. See: *Amman, Śakti, Śāktism*.

**marriage:** The joining of a man and woman for a lifetime as husband and wife for the purpose of establishing a stable family unit in which to experience the joys and challenges of bringing forth and rearing their children and perpetuating the Śaiva Dharma. Marriage is a threefold bond: a religious sacrament, a human contract and a civil institution.

**marriage covenant:** The written (or verbal) statements of bride and groom expressing the promises and expectations of their marriage. Known in Sanskrit as *vāñniśchaya*, “settlement by word.”

**marul:** மருள் “Confusion.” The second of the three

- stages of the *sakala avasthā*, when the soul is “caught” between the world and God and begins to seek knowledge of its own true nature (*paśu-jñāna*). See: *paśu-jñāna*, *sakala avasthā*.
- Mātāṅga Parameśvara Āgama:** मातङ्गपरमेश्वर आगम Among the 28 Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas, containing 3,500 verses, deals at length with the categories of existence (*tattvas*). The Angkor Wat temple in Cambodia is thought to have been built using the temple section of this scripture. See: *Śaiva Āgamas*.
- material cause:** *Upādāna kāraṇa*. The substance of creation, *māyā*, Śiva’s “mirific energy.” In Śaivism, material cause, *māyā*, is threefold: *śuddha* (“pure”) *māyā*, *śuddhāśuddha* (“pure-impure”) *māyā* and *aśuddha* (“impure”) *māyā*. *Śuddha māyā*, or *bindu*, is the material cause of the causal plane. *Śuddhāśuddha māyā* is the material cause of the subtle plane. *Aśuddhamāyā* (or *prakṛiti*) is the material cause of the gross plane. See: *cause*, *māyā*, *tattva*.
- materialism (materialistic):** The doctrine that matter is the only reality, that all life, thought and feelings are but the effects of movements of matter, and that there exist no worlds but the physical. Materialists usually hold that there is no God—a cosmic, material, prime mover perhaps, but no personal God. An Indian school of thought which propounded this view was the Chārvāka. See: *atheism*, *Chārvāka*, *worldly*.
- mati:** मति “Cognition, understanding; conviction.” See: *yama-niyama*.
- matrimonial:** Related to marriage.
- Matsyendranatha (Matsyendranātha):** मत्स्येन्द्रनाथ A patron saint of Nepal, *guru* of Gorakshanatha and a mystic in the Nātha tradition (ca 900). Some consider him to have been the foremost teacher of *haṭha yoga*. See: *haṭha yoga*.
- Mattamayūra Order:** मत्तमयूर A Śaiva Siddhānta monastic order founded by Purandara (successor to Rudra-sambhu), centered in the Punjab. Members of this order served as advisors to the king.
- matter:** Substance, especially of the physical world. May also refer to all of manifest existence, including the subtle, nonphysical dimensions. See: *māyā*.
- mature:** Ripe; fully grown or developed.
- mauna:** मौन The discipline of remaining silent.
- maya:** मय “Consisting of; made of,” as in *manomaya*, “made of mind.”
- māyā:** माया “She who measures;” or “mirific energy.” The substance emanated from Śiva through which the world of form is manifested. Hence all creation is also termed *māyā*. It is the cosmic creative force, the principle of manifestation, ever in the process of creation, preservation and dissolution. *Māyā* is a key concept in Hinduism, originally meaning “supernatural power; God’s mirific energy;” often translated as “illusion.” The *Upanishads* underscore *māyā*’s captivating nature, which blinds souls to the transcendent Truth. In Adi Sankara’s Vedāntic interpretation, *māyā* is taken as pure illusion or unreality. In Śaivism it is one of the three bonds (*pāśa*) that limit the soul and thereby facilitate its evolution. For Śaivites and most other non-dualists, it is understood not as illusion but as relative reality, in contrast to the unchanging Absolute Reality. In the Śaiva Siddhānta system, there are three main divisions of *māyā*, the pure, the pure-impure and the impure realms. Pure or *śuddha māyā* consists of the first five *tattvas*—Śiva *tattva*, Śakti *tattva*, Sadāśiva *tattva*, Īśvara *tattva* and Śuddhavidyā *tattva*. The pure-impure realm consists of the next seven *tattvas*. The impure realm consists of the *māyā tattva* and all of its evolutes—from the *kāla tattva* to *prithivī*, the element earth. Thus, in relation to the physical universe, *māyā* is the principle of ever-changing matter. In Vaiṣṇavism, *māyā* is one of the nine Śaktis of Viṣṇu. See: *loka*, *mind (universal)*, *mirific*, *tattva*, *world*.
- mayil:** மயில் “Peacock.” See: *mayūra*.
- mayūra:** मयूर “Peacock.” The *vāhana*, or mount, of Lord Kārttikeya, symbolizing effulgent beauty and religion in full glory. The peacock can control powerful snakes, such as the cobra, symbolizing the soulful domination of the instinctive elements—or control of the *kuṇḍalīnī*, which is *yoga*. See: *Kārttikeya*, *vāhana*.
- mean:** As a verb: “to signify.” As an adjective: base, low-minded; selfish.
- meat-eater:** *Mānsāhāri*. Those who follow a nonvegetarian diet. They are described in a passage from the obscure *Mānsāhāra Parihāsajalpita Stotram* as “Those who eat the flesh of other creatures are nothing less than gristle-grinders, blood-drinkers, muscle-munchers, sinew-chewers, carcass-crunchers, flesh-feeders—those who make their throat a garbage pit and their stomach a graveyard—mean, angry, loathsome jealous, confused and beset by covetousness, who without restraint would lie, deceive, kill or steal to solve immediate problems. They are flesh-feeders, loathsome to the Gods, but friendly to the *asuras*, who become their Gods and Goddesses, the blood-sucking monsters who inhabit Naraka and deceptively have it decorated to look like the Piṭiloka, the world of the fathers. To such beings the deluded meat-eaters pay homage and prostrate while munching the succulent flesh off bones.” See: *vegetarianism*.
- mediatrix:** The feminine form of *mediator*. A go-between, intermediary or reconciler between two parties.
- meditation:** *Dhyāna*. Sustained concentration. Meditation describes a quiet, alert, powerfully concentrated state wherein new knowledge and insights are awakened from within as awareness focuses one-pointedly on an object or specific line of thought. See: *internalized worship*, *rāja yoga*, *Satchidānanda*.
- mediumship:** Act or practice of serving as a channel through which beings of inner worlds communicate with humans. See: *folk-shamanic*, *trance*.
- mendicant:** A beggar; a wandering monk, or *sādhu*, who lives on alms.
- menses:** A woman’s monthly menstruation period, during which, by Hindu tradition, she rests from her usual activities and forgoes public and family religious functions.

**mental body (sheath):** The higher-mind layer of the subtle or astral body in which the soul functions in the Maharloka of the Antarloka or subtle plane. In Sanskrit, the mental body is *viññānamaya kośa*, “sheath of cognition.” See: *intellectual mind, kośa, subtle body*.

**mental plane:** Names the refined strata of the subtle world. It is called Maharloka or Devaloka, realm of *anāhata chakra*. Here the soul is shrouded in the mental or cognitive sheath, called *viññānamaya kośa*.

**merge:** To lose distinctness or identity by being absorbed. To unite or become one with.

**merger of the soul:** See: *evolution of the soul, viśvagrāsa*.

**meritorious:** Having merit, deserving of praise or reward. See: *puṇya*.

**mesmerizing:** Hypnotizing; spell-binding; fascinating.

**metamorphosis:** Complete transformation, as in a caterpillar’s becoming a butterfly. See: *kuṇḍalinī, re-incarnation*.

**metaphysics:** 1) The branch of philosophy dealing with first causes and nature of reality. 2) The science of mysticism. See: *darśana, mysticism*.

**Meykandar:** மெய் கண்டாரர் “Truth seer.” The 13th-century Tamil theologian, author (or translator from the *Raurava Āgama*) of the *Śivajñānabodham*. Founder of the Meykandar Sampradāya of pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta. See: *Śaiva Siddhānta, Śivajñānabodham*.

**Meykandar Śāstras:** Fourteen Tamil works on Śaiva Siddhānta written during the 13th and 14th centuries by seven authors—Meykandar, Arulnandi, Uyyavanda Deva I and II, Umapati, Sivajnana (Śivajñāna) Yogin and Manavasagam Kadandar. See: *Śaiva Siddhānta, Śivajñānabodham*.

**microcosm-macrocosm:** “Little world” or “miniature universe” as compared with “great world.” *Microcosm* refers to the internal source of something larger or more external (macrocosm). In Hindu cosmology, the outer world is a macrocosm of the inner world, which is its microcosm and is mystically larger and more complex than the physical universe and functions at a higher rate of vibration and even a different rate of time. The microcosm precedes the macrocosm. Thus, the guiding principle of the Bhūloka comes from the Antarloka and Śivaloka. Consciousness precedes physical form. In the *tantric* tradition, the body of man is viewed as a microcosm of the entire divine creation. “Microcosm-macrocosm” is embodied in the terms *piṇḍa* and *aṇḍa*. See: *apex of creation, piṇḍa, quantum, tantra, tattva*.

**milestone:** An event which serves as a significant marker in the progress of a project, history, etc. Originally a stone marking distances on a road.

**milieu:** Environment; social or cultural setting.

**millennium:** A period of 1,000 years. **millennia:** Plural of millennium.

**Mīmāṃsā:** मीमांसा “Inquiry.” See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**mind (five states):** A view of the mind in five parts. —**conscious mind:** *Jāgrat chitta* (“wakeful consciousness”). The ordinary, waking, thinking state of mind in which the majority of people function most of

the day. —**subconscious mind:** *Samskāra chitta* (“impression mind”). The part of mind “beneath” the conscious mind, the storehouse or recorder of all experience (whether remembered consciously or not)—the holder of past impressions, reactions and desires. Also, the seat of involuntary physiological processes. —**subsubconscious mind:** *Vāsanā chitta* (“mind of subliminal traits”). The area of the subconscious mind formed when two thoughts or experiences of the same rate of intensity are sent into the subconscious at different times and, intermingling, give rise to a new and totally different rate of vibration. This subconscious formation later causes the external mind to react to situations according to these accumulated vibrations, be they positive, negative or mixed. —**superconscious mind:** *Kāraṇa chitta*. The mind of light, the all-knowing intelligence of the soul. The Sanskrit term is *turiya*, “the fourth,” meaning the condition beyond the states of wakefulness (*jāgrat*), “dream” (*svapna*), and “deep sleep” (*sushupti*). At its deepest level, the superconscious is Parāśakti, or Sat-chidānanda, the Divine Mind of God Śiva. In Sanskrit, there are numerous terms for the various levels and states of superconsciousness. Specific superconscious states such as: *viśvachaitanya* (“universal consciousness”), *advaita chaitanya* (“nondual consciousness”), *adhyātma chetanā* (“spiritual consciousness”). —**subsuperconscious mind:** *Anukāraṇa chitta*. The superconscious mind working through the conscious and subconscious states, which brings forth intuition, clarity and insight. See: *chitta, consciousness, samskāra, Satchidānanda, vāsanā*.

**mind (individual):** At the microcosmic level of individual souls, mind is consciousness and its faculties of memory, desire, thought and cognition. Individual mind is *chitta* (mind, consciousness) and its threefold expression is called *antahkaraṇa*, “inner faculty” composed of: 1) *buddhi* (“intellect, reason, logic,” higher mind); 2) *ahamkāra* (“I-maker,” egoity); 3) *manas* (“lower mind,” instinctive-intellectual mind, the seat of desire). From the perspective of the 36 *tattvas* (categories of existence), each of these is a *tattva* which evolves out of the one before it. Thus, from *buddhi* comes *ahamkāra* and then *manas*. *Manas, buddhi* and *ahamkāra* are faculties of the *manomaya kośa* (astral or instinctive-intellectual sheath). *Anukāraṇa chitta*, subsuperconsciousness, the knowing mind, is the mind state of the *viññānamaya kośa* (mental or intuitive-cognitive sheath). The aspect of mind corresponding directly to the *ānandamaya kośa* (causal body) is *kāraṇa chitta*, superconsciousness. See: *ahamkāra, antahkaraṇa, buddhi, chitta, manas, mind (universal)*.

**mind (three phases):** A perspective of mind as instinctive, intellectual and superconscious. —**instinctive mind.** *Manas chitta*, the seat of desire and governor of sensory and motor organs. —**intellectual mind.** *Buddhi chitta*, the faculty of thought and intelligence. —**superconscious mind:** *Kāraṇa chitta*, the strata of intuition, benevolence and spiritual sustenance. Its

- most refined essence is Parāsakti, or Satchidānanda, all-knowing, omnipresent consciousness, the One transcendental, self-luminous, divine mind common to all souls. See: *awareness, consciousness, mind (five states)*.
- mind (universal):** In the most profound sense, mind is the sum of all things, all energies and manifestations, all forms, subtle and gross, sacred and mundane. It is the inner and outer cosmos. Mind is *māyā*. It is the material matrix. It is everything but That, the Self within, Paraśiva, which is timeless, formless, causeless, spaceless, known by the knower only after Self Realization. The Self is the indescribable, unnameable, Ultimate Reality. Mind in its subtlest form is undifferentiated Pure Consciousness, primal substance (called Parāśakti or Satchidānanda), out of which emerge the myriad forms of existence, both psychic and material. See: *chitta, consciousness, māyā, tattva, world*.
- minister:** Someone charged with a specific function on behalf of a religious or political body, especially in serving the spiritual needs of the people. In Hinduism, this term may be applied to temple priests, monks, preceptors, scriptural scholars and others.
- minutiae:** Small or relatively unimportant details.
- Mirabai (Mirābāi):** मीराबाई A Vaishṇava saint (ca 1420), poet and mystic, said to be a Rajput princess who abandoned the world in total surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Her life story and songs are popular today, especially in Gujarat.
- mirific:** “Wonder-making; magical; astonishing.” See: *material cause, māyā*.
- misconception:** A wrong idea or concept; misunderstanding, *avidyā*. See: *avidyā, illusion*.
- mitāhāra:** मितहाहार “Measured eating; moderate appetite.” A requisite to good health and an essential for success in *yoga*. The ideal portion per meal is described as no more than would fill the two hands held side by side and slightly cupped piled high, an amount called a *kuḍava*. All the six tastes should be within these foods (sweet, salty, sour, pungent, bitter and astringent), and the foods should be well cooked and highly nutritious. See: *yama-niyama*.
- modaka:** मोदक “Sweets.” A round, lemon-sized sweet made of rice, coconut, sugar, etc. It is a favorite treat of Gaṇeśa. Esoterically, it corresponds to *siddhi* (attainment or fulfillment), the gladdening contentment of pure joy, the sweetest of all things sweet. See: *Gaṇeśa*.
- Mohammed:** Founder of the Islam religion (570–632), a preacher of the Quraysh Bedouin tribe, who called for an end to the “demons and idols” of the Arab religion and conversion to the ways of the one God, Allah. See: *Islam*.
- moksha:** मोक्ष “Liberation.” Release from transmigrating, *saṃsāra*, the round of births and deaths, which occurs after *karma* has been resolved and *nirvikalpa samādhi*—realization of the Self, Paraśiva—has been attained. Same as *mukti*. See: *jīvanmukta, kaivalya, kuṇḍalinī, nirvikalpa samādhi, Paraśiva, rāja yoga, videhamukti*.
- monastic:** A monk or nun (based on the Greek *monos*, “single,” “alone”). A man or woman who has withdrawn from the world and lives an austere, religious life, either alone or with others in a monastery. (Not to be confused with *monistic*, having to do with the doctrine of monism.) Terms for Hindu monastics include *sādhaka, sādhu, muni, tapasvin, vairāgī, ūdāsīn* and *sannyāsīn*. (Feminine: *sādhikā, sādhvī, munī, tapasvinī, vairāgīnī*, and *sannyāsīnī*.) A monastery-dweller is a *maṭhavāsi*, and *sādhu* is a rough equivalent for mendicant. See: *monk, nun, sannyāsīn, sannyāsīnī, vairāgī*.
- monism:** “Doctrine of oneness.” 1) The philosophical view that there is only one ultimate substance or principle. 2) The view that reality is a unified whole without independent parts. See: *dvaita-advaita, pluralism*.
- monistic theism:** Advaita Īśvaravāda. Monism is the doctrine that reality is a one whole or existence without independent parts. Theism is the belief that God exists as a real, conscious, personal Supreme Being. Monistic theism is the dipolar doctrine, also called panentheism, that embraces both monism and theism, two perspectives ordinarily considered contradictory or mutually exclusive, since theism implies dualism. Monistic theism simultaneously accepts that God has a personal form, that He creates, pervades and *is* all that exists—and that He ultimately transcends all existence and that the soul is, in essence, one with God. Advaita Siddhānta (monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, or Advaita Īśvaravāda Śaiva Siddhānta) is a specific form of monistic theism. See: *advaita, Advaita Īśvaravāda, Advaita Siddhānta, dvaita-advaita, panentheism, theism*.
- monk:** A celibate man wholly dedicated to religious life, either cenobitic (residing with others in a monastery) or anchoritic (living alone, as a hermit or mendicant). Literally, “one who lives alone” (from the Greek *monachos*, “alone”). Through the practice of *yoga*, the control and transmutation of the masculine and feminine forces within himself, the monk is a complete being, free to follow the contemplative and mystic life toward realization of the Self within. Benevolent and strong, courageous, fearless, not entangled in the thoughts and feelings of others, monks are affectionately detached from society, defenders of the faith, kind, loving and ever-flowing with timely wisdom. A synonym for *monastic*. Its feminine counterpart is *nun*. See: *monastic, nun, sannyāsīn*.
- monotheism:** “Doctrine of one God.” Contrasted with polytheism, meaning belief in many Gods. The term *monotheism* covers a wide range of philosophical positions, from exclusive (or pure) monotheism, which recognizes only one God (such as in Semitic faiths), to inclusive monotheism, which also accepts the existence of other Gods. Generally speaking, the sects of Hinduism are inclusively monotheistic in their belief in a one Supreme God, and in their reverence for other Gods, or Mahādevas. However, such terms

which arose out of Western philosophy do not really describe the fullness of Hindu thinking. Realizing this, Raimundo Panikkar, author of *The Vedic Experience*, offered a new word: *cosmotheandricism*, “world-God-man doctrine,” to describe a philosophy that views God, soul and world (Pati, *paśu*, *pāśa*) as an integrated, inseparable unity. See: *Advaita Īśvaravāda*, *monistic theism*, *Pati-paśu-pāśa*.

**mortal:** Subject to death. Opposite of *immortal*. See: *amṛita*, *death*.

**mortal sin:** See: *sin*.

**Mṛigendra Āgama:** मृगेन्द्र आगम First subsidiary text (*Upāgama*) of the *Kāmika Āgama*, one of the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas*. It is especially valuable because its *jñāna pāda* (philosophical section) is complete and widely available. Other noted sections are on hand gestures (*mudrā*) used in *pūjā* and on establishing temporary places (*yāgaśālā*) of special worship. See: *pāda*, *Śaiva Āgamas*.

**mudrā:** मुद्रा “Seal.” Esoteric hand gestures which express specific energies or powers. Usually accompanied by precise visualizations, *mudrās* are a vital element of ritual worship (*pūjā*), dance and *yoga*. Among the best-known *mudrās* are: 1) *abhaya mudrā* (gesture of “fear not”), in which the fingers are extended, palm facing forward; 2) *añjali mudrā* (gesture of reverence); 3) *jñāna mudrā* (also known as *chin mudrā* and *yoga mudrā*), in which the thumb and index finger touch, forming a circle, with the other fingers extended; 4) *dhyāna mudrā* (seal of meditation), in which the two hands are open and relaxed with the palms up, resting on the folded legs, the right hand atop the left with the tips of the thumbs gently touching. See: *abhaya mudrā*, *añjali mudrā*, *haṭha yoga*, *namaskāra*.

**muhūrta:** मुहूर्त “Moment,” “hour.” 1) A period of time. 2) A certain division of a day or night. *Muhūrtas* vary slightly in length as the lengths of days and nights change through the year. There are at least three *muhūrta* systems. The first defines one *muhūrta* as 1/8th of a day or night (90 minutes in a 12-hour night), the second as 1/15th of a day or night (48 minutes), and the third as 1/16th of a day or night (45 minutes). 3) *Muhūrta* also refers to the astrological science of determining the most auspicious periods for specific activities. See: *auspiciousness*, *brāhma muhūrta*, *sandhyā upāsanā*.

**mukhya:** मुख्य “Head,” “chief.” From *mukha*, “face, countenance.” Leader, guide; such as the family head, *kuṭumba mukhya* (or *pramukha*). See: *extended family*, *joint family*.

**Muktananda, Swami (Muktānanda):** स्वामी मुक्तानन्द A *satguru* of the Kashmir Śaiva tradition (1908-1982) who brought Siddha Yoga to the West in the 1970s, teaching meditation, establishing coed *aśramas* and giving *śaktipāta* initiation to thousands of spiritual seekers. He founded Gurudev Siddha Peeth as a public trust in India to administer the work there, and the SYDA Foundation in the United States. He was succeeded by Swami Chidvilasananda.

**mukti:** मुक्ति “Release,” “liberation.” A synonym for *moksha*. See: *moksha*.

**Mukti Upanishad:** मुक्ति उपनिषद् A 14th-century writing dealing, in part, with *yoga*.

**mūla:** मूल “Root,” “foundational.” The root, base or bottom or basis of anything, as in *mūlādhāra cakra*. Foundational, original or causal, as in *mūlagrantha*, “original text.”

**mūlādhāra cakra:** मूलधारचक्र “Root-support wheel.” Four-petaled psychic center at the base of the spine; governs memory. See: *chakra*.

**mūla mantra:** मूलमन्त्र “Root mystic formula.” See: *Aum*.

**multitude:** A very large number of things or people.

**Muṇḍaka Upanishad:** मुण्डक उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Atharva Veda* and teaches the difference between the intellectual study of the *Vedas* and their supplementary texts and the intuitive knowledge by which God is known.

**muni:** मुनि “Sage.” A sage or *sādhu*, especially one vowed to complete silence or who speaks but rarely and who seeks stillness of mind. A hermit. The term is related to *mauna*, “silence.” In the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, *munis* are mystic shamans associated with the God Rudra.

**mūrti:** मूर्ति “Form; manifestation, embodiment, personification.” An image, icon or effigy of God or a God used during worship. *Mūrtis* range from aniconic (*avyakta*, “nonmanifest”), such as the Śivaliṅga, to *vyakta* “fully manifest,” e.g., anthropomorphic images such as Natarāja. In-between is the partially manifest (*vyaktāvyakta*), e.g., the Mukhaliṅga, a Śivaliṅga on which the face of Śiva is carved. Other Deity representations include symbols, e.g., the banyan tree, and geometric emblems or designs such as *yantras* and *maṇḍalas*. Another important term for the Deity icon or idol is *pratimā*, “reflected image.” See: *aniconic*, *Īṣṭa Devatā*, *teradī*.

**Murugan:** முருகன் “Beautiful one,” a favorite name of Kārttikeya among the Tamils of South India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**muse:** To think deeply. Contemplate.

**Mūshika:** मूषिक From *mūsh*, “to steal.” The mouse, Lord Gaṇeśa’s mount, traditionally associated with abundance. Symbolically, the mouse carries Lord Gaṇeśa’s grace into every corner of the mind. See: *Gaṇeśa*, *vāhana*.

**Muslim:** Literally, “surrendered,” “submitted” to, or “reconciled” with God’s will. “True believer.” A follower of Islam. See: *Islam*, *Mohammed*.

**mutual:** Something thought, done or felt by two or more agents toward each other. Shared.

**mysticism:** Spirituality; the pursuit of direct spiritual or religious experience. Spiritual discipline aimed at union or communion with Ultimate Reality or God through deep meditation or trance-like contemplation. From the Greek *mystikos*, “of mysteries.” Characterized by the belief that Truth transcends intellectual processes and must be attained through transcendent

means. See: *clairaudient, clairvoyance, psychic, trance.*

**myth:** Traditional story, usually ancient and of no known author, involving Gods, *devas* and heroes, and serving to illustrate great principles of life, customs, the origin of the universe, etc. See: *folk narratives, kathā.*

**mythology:** Body of tales and legends. All the myths of a given people, culture or religion. India's mythology is among the world's most bountiful. See: *folk narratives, kathā.*



**nāda:** नाद "Sound; tone, vibration."

Metaphysically, the mystic sounds of the Eternal, of which the highest is the transcendent, Soundless Sound, Paranāda, the first vibration from which creation emanates. Paranāda is so pure and subtle that it cannot be identified to the denser regions of the mind. From Paranāda comes Pranava, Aum, and further evolutes of *nāda*. These are experienced by the meditator as the *nāda-nāḍī śakti*, "energy current of sound," heard pulsing through the nerve system as a steady high-pitched *hum*, much like a *tambura*, an electrical transformer, a swarm of bees or a *śruti* box. Listening to the inner sounds is a contemplative practice called *nāda upāsana*, "worship through sound," *nāda anusandhāna*, "cultivation of inner sound," or *nāda yoga* "union through sound." Subtle variations of the *nāda-nāḍī śakti* represent the psychic wavelengths of established *guru* lineages of many Indian religions. *Nāda* also refers to other psychic sounds heard during deep meditation, including those resembling various musical instruments. *Nāda* also refers to ordinary sound. See: *Aum, nāḍī, praṇava, sound.*

**nāda-nāḍī śakti:** नादनाडी शक्ति "Energy current of sound." See: *nāda.*

**Nadantar:** नदन्तर See: *Kailāsa Paramparā.*

**nāḍī:** नाडी "Conduit; river." A nerve fiber or energy channel of the subtle (inner) bodies of man. It is said there are 72,000 *nāḍīs*. These interconnect the *chakras*. The three main *nāḍīs* are *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *sushumṇā*. *Iḍā* and *piṅgalā* intertwine the spinal column, beginning at the *mūlādhāra chakra*, ending at the *sahasrāra* and crossing at the *maṇipūra* and the *viśuddha chakras*. —*iḍā*, also known as *chandra* (moon) *nāḍī*, is pink in color. Its flows downward, ending on the left side of the body. This current is feminine in nature and is the channel of physical-emotional energy. —*piṅgalā*, also known as *sūrya* (sun) *nāḍī*, is blue in color. It flows upward, ending on the right side of the body. This current is masculine in nature and is the channel of intellectual-mental energy. —*sushumṇā* is the major nerve current which passes through the spinal column from the *mūlādhāra chakra* at the base to the *sahasrāra* at the crown of the head. It is the channel of *kuṇḍalīni*. Through *yoga*, the *kuṇḍalīni* energy lying dormant in the *mūlādhāra* is awakened and made to rise up this channel through each *chakra* to

the *sahasrāra chakra*. [See illustration, page 745.] See: *chakra, kuṇḍalīni, rāja yoga, tantrism.*

**nāga:** नाग "Serpent," often the cobra; symbol of the *kuṇḍalīni* coiled on the four petals of the *mūlādhāra chakra*. See: *kuṇḍalīni, mūlādhāra chakra.*

**naivedya:** नैवेद्य Food offered to the Deity at the temple or home altar. An important element in *pūjā*. See: *prasāda, pūjā.*

**nakshatra:** नक्षत्र "Star cluster." Central to astrological determinations, the *nakshatras* are 27 star-clusters, constellations, which lie along the ecliptic, or path of the sun. An individual's *nakshatra*, or birth star, is the constellation the moon was aligned with at the time of birth. See:  *jyotisha.*

**Nalvar:** நால்வாரர் "Four devout beings." Four renowned saints of the Śaiva religion (7th to 9th century): Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavasagar—devotional mystics whose lives and teachings helped catalyze a resurgence of Śaivism in Tamil Nadu. All but Manikkavasagar are among the Nayanars, 63 saints canonized by Sekkilar in his *Periyapurāṇam* (ca 1140). These four are also known as the Samayāchāryas, "teachers of the faith." Their devotional poems are embodied in the *Tirumurai*, along with the writings of other Nayanars. Numerous South Indian temples celebrate their historic pilgrimages from shrine to shrine where they beseeched the grace of Śiva through heartfelt song. *Nalvar* is a term not to be confused with *Alvar*, naming certain Vaishṇava saints of the same period. See: *Alvar, Nayanar, Tirumurai.*

**nāmadikshā:** नामदीक्षा "Name initiation." Also known as *nāmakaraṇa saṁskāra*. See: *saṁskāras of childhood.*

**Namaḥ Śivāya:** नमः शिवाय "Adoration (homage) to Śiva." The supreme *mantra* of Śaivism, known as the *Pañchākshara*, or "five syllables." *Na* is the Lord's veiling grace; *Ma* is the world; *Śi* is Śiva; *Vā* is His revealing grace; *Ya* is the soul. The syllables also represent the physical body: *Na* the legs, *Ma* the stomach, *Śi* the shoulders, *Vā* the mouth and *Ya* the eyes. Embodying the essence of Śaiva Siddhānta, this *mantra* is found in the center of the central *Veda* (the *Yajur*) of the original three *Vedas* (*Rig, Yajur* and *Sāma*). *Namas-tārāya namaḥ śaṁbhave cha mayabhve cha, namaḥ śaṅkarāya cha mayaskarāya cha, namaḥ śivāya cha śivayatarāya cha.* "Homage to the source of health and to the source of delight. Homage to the maker of health and to the maker of delight. Homage to the Auspicious, and to the more Auspicious" (*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Samhitā* 4.5.8). When applied to the symbolism of Lord Naṭarāja, a second and partly differing rendering relates Na-Ma-Śi-Vā-Ya to Śiva's five actions as follows. *Na* represents *samhāra*, destruction or dissolution, corresponding to the hand which holds a blazing flame. *Ma* stands for His concealing grace, *tirodhāna śakti*, symbolized by Lord Naṭarāja's planted foot. *Vā* indicates revealing grace, *anugraha śakti*, by which souls return to Him, reflected in the left front hand in the elephant trunk pose, *gajahasta*, pointing to His left foot, source of

revealing grace. Śī stands for *śṛiṣṭī*, creation, and Śiva's back right hand holding the drum. Ya stands for Śiva's power of *stithi*, preservation and protection, shown in His hand gesturing *abhaya*, "fear not." Na-Ma-Śi-Vā-Ya also stands for the five elements: Na as earth; Ma, water; Śi, fire; Vā, air; and Ya, *ākāśa*. See: *japa, mantra*.

**nāmakaraṇa:** नामकरण "Name giving." See: *samskāras of childhood*.

**namaskāra:** नमस्कार "Reverent salutations." The traditional Hindu verbal greeting and *mudrā* in which the palms are joined together and held before the heart or raised to the level of the forehead. The *mudrā* is also called *añjali*. It is a devotional gesture made equally before a Deity, holy person, friend or momentary acquaintance. Holding the hands together connects the right side of the body with the left, and brings the nerve and *nāḍī* currents into poised balance, into a consciousness of the *sushumṇā*, awakening the third eye within the greeter to worship God in the greeted. See: *añjali mudrā, praṇāma*.

**namaste:** नमस्ते "Reverent salutations to you." A traditional verbal greeting. A form of *namas*, meaning "bowing, obeisance." See: *namaskāra*.

**Namo Nārāyaṇāya:** नमो नारायणाय "Salutations to Nārāyaṇa (Lord Viṣṇu)." The great *mantra* of the Vaiṣṇava faith. Also a popular greeting among Vaiṣṇavites and Smārtas. See: *Vaiṣṇavism, Viṣṇu*.

**Nandi:** नन्दि "The joyful." A white bull with a black tail who is the *vāhana*, or mount, of Lord Śiva, symbol of the powerful instinctive force tamed by Him. Nandi is the perfect devotee, the soul of man, kneeling humbly before God Śiva, ever concentrated on Him. The ideal and goal of the Śiva *bhakta* is to behold Śiva in everything.

**Nandikeśvara:** नन्दिकेश्वर "Lord of Nandi." A name of Śiva. Also another name for Nandinātha, the first historically known *guru* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā, Nātha Sampradāya*.

**Nandikeśvara Kāśikā:** नन्दिकेश्वरकाशिका The only surviving work of Nandikesvara (ca 250 BCE). Its 26 verses are the earliest extant exposition of advaitic Śaivism, aside from the *Śaiva Āgamas*.

**Nandinātha (Nandinātha):** नन्दिनाथ Another name of Nandikesvara. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**Nandinātha Sampradāya:** नन्दिनाथसंप्रदाय See: *Nātha Sampradāya*.

**Nārada Parivrajaka:** नारदपरिव्राजक An *Upanishad* of the *Atharva Veda* which teaches of asceticism, *sannyāsa*, true *brāhminhood*, and more.

**Nārada Sūtra(s):** नारदसूत्र A Vaiṣṇava text of 84 aphorisms in which Sage Nārada (Nārada) explains *bhakti yoga* (ca 1200).

**Naraka:** नरक Abode of darkness. Literally, "pertaining to man." The nether worlds. Equivalent to the Western term *hell*, a gross region of the Antarloka. Naraka is a congested, distressful area where demonic beings and young souls may sojourn until they resolve the darksome *karmas* they have created. Here beings

suffer the consequences of their own misdeeds in previous lives. Naraka is understood as having seven regions, called *tala*, corresponding to the states of consciousness of the seven lower *chakras* as follows: 1) Put, "childless"—*atala chakra*, "wheel of the bottomless region." Fear and lust (located in the hips). 2) Avichi, "joyless"—*vitala chakra*: "wheel of negative region." Center of anger (thighs). 3) Sainhāta, "abandoned"—*sutala chakra*: "Great depth." Region of jealousy (knees). 4) Tāmisra, "darkness"—*talātala chakra*: "wheel of the lower region." Realm of confused thinking (calves). 5) Rījisha, "expelled"—*rasātala chakra*: "wheel of subterranean region." Selfishness (ankles). 6) Kuḍmala, "leprous"—*mahātala chakra*: "wheel of the great lower region." Region of consciencelessness (feet). The intensity of "hell" begins at this deep level. 7) Kākola, "black poison"—*pātāla chakra*, "wheel of the fallen or sinful level." Region of malice (soles of the feet). The sevenfold hellish region in its entirety is also called *pātāla*, "fallen region." Scriptures offer other lists of hells, numbering 7 or 21. They are described as places of torment, pain, darkness, confusion and disease, but these are only temporary abodes for the evolving soul. Hinduism has no eternal hell. See: *hell, loka, purgatory (also, individual tala entries)*.

**Narasinha Pūrvatāpaniya:** नरसिंह पूर्वतापनीय "The ascetic's surrender to Narasinha (incarnation of Viṣṇu as half-man, half-lion)." An *Upanishad* of the *Atharva Veda* which deals with worship of Viṣṇu.

**Nārāyaṇa:** नारायण "Abode of men." A name of Lord Viṣṇu. See: *Viṣṇu*.

**Narayanakantha (Nārāyaṇakanṭha):** नारायणकण्ठ A great exponent of Śaiva Siddhānta (ca 1050).

**nāstika:** नास्तिक "One who denies; unbeliever." Opposite of *āstika*, "one who affirms." The terms *āstika* (orthodox) and *nāstika* (unorthodox) are a traditional classification of Indian schools of thought. *Nāstika* refers to traditions that reject and deny the scriptural authority of the *Vedas*. This includes Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism and Chārvāka materialists. *Āstika* refers to those schools that accept the revealed authority of the *Vedas* as supreme scripture. This includes the four major sects: Śaivism, Śāktism, Vaiṣṇavism and Smārtism. See: *atheism, Chārvāka, materialism*.

**Naṭarāja:** नटराज "King of Dance, or King of Dancers." God as the Cosmic Dancer. Perhaps Hinduism's richest and most eloquent symbol, Naṭarāja represents Śiva, the Primal Soul, Parameśvara, as the power, energy and life of all that exists. This is Śiva's intricate state of Being in Manifestation. The dance of Śiva as Naṭeśa, Lord of Dancers, is the dance of the entire cosmos, the rhythmic movements in all. All that is, whether sentient or insentient, pulsates in His body. Naṭarāja is art and spirituality in perfect oneness, chosen to depict the Divine because in dance that which is created is inseparable from its creator, just as the universe and soul cannot be separated from God. Naṭarāja is also stillness and motion wrought together. The stillness speaks of the peace and poise that

lies within us all, at the center. The intense motion, depicted by His hair flying wildly in all directions, is an intimation of the fury and ferocity, the violent vigor, which fills this universe wherein we dwell. The implication of these opposites is that God contains and allows them both, that there is divine purpose at work in our life, whether we find ourselves engaged in its beauty or its “madness.” Dance and dancer are one; not an atom moves on any plane of existence but by His Will. Thus, this elegant symbol embodies the underlying unity of all.

Śiva’s Dance, or all that happens, is composed of an ever-flowing combination of His five potent actions, *pañcakṛitya*: 1) *śṛiṣṭi*: creation, or emanation, represented by His upper right hand and the *ḍamaru* (drum), upon which he beats Paranāda, the Primal Sound from which issue forth the rhythms and cycles of creation; 2) *sthiti*: preservation, represented by His lower right hand in a gesture of blessing, *abhaya mudrā*, saying “fear not;” 3) *samhāra*: destruction, dissolution or absorption, represented by the fire in His upper left hand, posed in *ardhachandra mudrā*, “half-moon gesture;” 4) *tirobhāva*: obscuring grace, the power which hides the truth, thereby permitting experience, growth and eventual fulfillment of destiny, represented by His right foot upon the prostrate figure (Apasmārapurusha), the principle of ignorance, or *āṇava*; 5) *anugraha*: revealing grace—which grants knowledge and severs the soul’s bonds—represented by Śiva’s raised left foot, and by His lower left hand, held in *gajahasta* (“elephant trunk”) *mudrā*, inviting approach. These five cosmic activities are sometimes personalized respectively as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Maheśvara and Sadāśiva—or as Sadyojāta (creation), Vāmadeva (preservation), Aghora (reabsorption), Tatpurusha (obscuration) and Iśāna (granting grace).

The ring of fire (*prabhāmaṇḍala*), in which Śiva dances is the hall of consciousness, *chitsabhā*; in other words, the light-filled heart of man, the central chamber of the manifest cosmos. Śiva dances the universe into and out of existence, veiling Ultimate Reality for most, unveiling it for devotees who draw near and recognize Paraśiva, Ultimate Reality, in the chamber of their own inner being. Yea, all are dancing with Śiva. See: *nāda*, *Paramēśvara*, *Parāśakti*, *Paraśiva*, *Sadāśiva*.

**Natchintanai**: நற்சிந்தனை The collected songs of Sage Yogaswami (1872–1964) of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, extolling the power of the *satguru*, worship of Lord Śiva, the path of *dharma* and the attainment of Self Realization. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**Nātha**: नाथ “Master, lord; adept.” Names an ancient Himalayan tradition of Śaiva-yoga mysticism whose first historically known exponent was Nandikesvara (ca 250 BCE). *Nātha*—Self-Realized adept—designates the extraordinary ascetic masters (or devotees) of this school, who through *siddha yoga* have attained tremendous powers, *siddhis*, and are sometimes called *siddha yogīs* (accomplished or fully enlightened ones). The words of such beings naturally penetrate deeply

into the psyche of their devotees, causing mystical awakenings. Like all *tantrics*, Nāthas have refused to recognize caste distinctions in spiritual pursuits. Their *satgurus* bestow initiation according to spiritual worthiness, accepting devotees from the lowest to the highest rungs of society. *Nātha* also designates a follower of the Nātha tradition. The *Nāthas* are considered the source of *haṭha* as well as *rāja yoga*. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*, *Nātha Sampradāya*, *siddha yoga*.

**Nātha Maṭha**: नाथमठ “Adepts’ monastery.” As a proper noun, a synonym for Siddha Siddhānta. See: *Siddha Siddhānta*.

**Nātha Sampradāya**: नाथसंप्रदाय “Traditional doctrine of knowledge of masters.” *Sampradāya* means a living stream of tradition or theology. Nātha Sampradāya is a philosophical and *yogic* tradition of Śaivism whose origins are unknown. This oldest of Śaivite *sampradāyas* existing today consists of two major streams: the Nandinātha and the Ādinātha. The Nandinātha Sampradāya has had as exemplars Maharishi Nandinātha and his disciples: Patanjali (author of the *Yoga Sūtras*) and Tirumular (author of *Tirumantiram*). Among its representatives today are the successive *siddhars* of the Kailāsa Paramparā. The Ādinātha lineage’s known exemplars are Maharishi Adinātha, Matsyendranātha and Gorakshanātha, who founded a well-known order of *yogīs*. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*, *Nātha*, *Śaivism*, *sampradāya*.

**Nayanar**: நாயனார் “Teacher.” The 63 canonized Tamil saints of South India, as documented in the *Periyapurāṇam* by Sekkilar (ca 1140). All but a few were householders, recognized as outstanding exemplars of devotion to Lord Śiva. Several contributed to the Śaiva Siddhānta scriptural compendium called *Tirumurai*. See: *Nalvar*, *Tirumurai*.

**neo-Indian religion**: Navabhārata Dharma. A modern form of liberal Hinduism that carries forward basic Hindu cultural values—such as dress, diet and the arts—while allowing religious values to subside. It emerged after the British Raj, when India declared itself an independent, secular state. It was promoted by the Macaulay educational system, installed in India by the British, which aggressively undermined Hindu thought and belief. Neo-Indian religion encourages Hindus to follow any combination of theological, scriptural, *sādhana* and worship patterns, regardless of sectarian or religious origin. Extending out of and beyond the Smārta system of worshiping the Gods of each major sect, it incorporates holy icons from all religions, including Jesus, Mother Mary and Buddha. Many Navabhāratīs choose not to call themselves Hindus but to declare themselves members of all the world’s religions. See: *pañchāyatana pūjā*, *Smārta Sampradāya*, *Smārtism*, *syncretism*, *universalist*.

**Nepal (Nepāl)**: नेपाल Ancient land between India and Tibet—50,000 sq. miles, population 24 million. It was the birthplace of Buddha and Sātā, the home of Matsyendranātha and is renowned for its Pāsupatinātha Śiva temple. Hinduism is the state religion.



**neti neti:** नेति नेति “Not this, not that.” An Upanishadic formula connoting, through negation, the undefinable and inconceivable nature of the Absolute. It is an affirmation which the meditating *yogī* applies to each thought and phase of the mind as he penetrates deeper and deeper in his quest for Truth. Ultimately he transcends all “this-ness” to realize That which is beyond the mind. See: *kuṇḍalīnī, samādhi, rāja yoga*.

**neuter:** “Neither one, nor the other.” Often: “having no sex or gender.”

**neutron star:** A star of such strong gravitational force that the atomic structure collapses, leaving only the nucleus; hence the name. A neutron star the size of an orange would weigh more than the entire Earth.

**New Age:** According to *Webster’s New World Dictionary*: “Of or pertaining to a cultural movement popular in the 1980s [and 90s] characterized by a concern with spiritual consciousness, and variously combining belief in reincarnation and astrology with such practices as meditation, vegetarianism and holistic medicine.”

**New Year:** The religious New Year is celebrated by the majority of Hindus in India according to traditional, pre-colonial calendars, several of which are still in use. There are, therefore, various New Year’s days in different states of India, the two major ones being Dipāvalī in October-November, observed in North India, and the day when the sun enters Mesha (Aries) in April, celebrated in Tamil Nadu, Bengal and Nepal.

**Nimbarka (Nimbārka):** निम्बार्क Mystic, philosopher and founder of the Minandi Vaishṇava school of Vedānta (ca 1150). He acclaimed the *guru’s* grace as the only true means to salvation. See: *Vedānta*.

**Nirguṇa Brahman:** निर्गुणब्रह्मन् “God without qualities.” See: *Brahman*.

**Nirukta Vedāṅga:** निरुक्तवेदाङ्ग “Etymology *Veda*-limb.” Auxiliary treatises discussing the origin and development of words; one of the four linguistic skills taught for mastery of the *Vedas* and the rites of *yajña*. Nirukta relies upon ancient lexicons, *nighaṇṭu*, as well as detailed hymn indices, *anukramaṇi*. Five *nighaṇṭus* existed at the time of Yaska (Yāska) (320 BCE), whose compilation is regarded a standard work on Vedic etymology. See: *Vedāṅga*.

**nirvāhaṇa:** निर्वहण “End; completion.” Conclusion.

**nirvāṇi and upadeśi:** निर्वाणी उपदेशी *Nirvāṇi* means “extinguished one,” and *upadeśi* means “teacher.” In general, *nirvāṇi* refers to a liberated soul, or to a certain class of monk. *Upadeśi* refers to a teacher, generally a renunciate. In *Dancing with Śiva*, these two terms have special meaning, similar to the Buddhist *arhat* and *bodhisattva*, naming the two earthly modes of the realized, liberated soul. After full illumination, the *jīvanmukta* has the choice to return to the world to help others along the path. This is the way of the *upadeśi* (akin to *bodhisattva*), exemplified by the benevolent *satguru* who leads seekers to the goal of God Realization. He may found and direct institutions and monastic lineages. The *nirvāṇi* (akin to *arhat*) abides at the pinnacle of consciousness, shunning all worldly

involvement. He is typified by the silent ascetic, the reclusive sage. See: *satguru, viśvagṛāsa*.

**nirvikalpa samādhi:** निर्विकल्पसमाधि “Undifferentiated trance, ecstasy (*samādhi*) without form or seed.” The realization of the Self, Paraśiva, a state of oneness beyond all change or diversity; beyond time, form and space. The prefix *vi* connotes “change, differentiation.” *Kalpa* means “order, arrangement; a period of time.” Thus *vikalpa* means “diversity, thought; difference of perception, distinction.” *Nir* means “without.” See: *ecstasy, kalpa, rāja yoga, samādhi*.

**niśchītārtha:** निश्चितार्थ “Engagement (to marry);” “declaration of intention.” Same as *vāgdāna*. See: *marriage covenant, saṁskāras of adulthood*.

**Nityananda, Swami (Nityānanda):** नित्यानन्द The reclusive sage (?–1961) known as Bhagavan, “the exalted one,” who lived an extraordinary mystic life near Mumbai, India, and initiated a number of disciples, including Swami Muktananda.

**nivedana:** निवेदन “Announcement, presentation, making known.”

**niyama:** नियम “Restraint.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**niyati:** नियति “Necessity, restriction; the fixed order of things, destiny.” A synonym for *karma*, *niyati* is the eighth *tattva*. It is part of the soul’s fivefold “sheath,” *pañcha kañchuka* (or *viññānamaya kośa*), along with *kāla* (time), *kalā* (creativity), *vidyā* (knowing) and *rāga* (attachment, desire). The soul thus encased is called *puruṣa*. See: *karma, tattva*.

**nondual (nondualism):** See: *dvaita-advaita, monistic theism, Vedānta*.

**nonhuman birth:** The phenomenon of the soul being born as nonhuman life forms, explained in various scriptures. For example, Saint Manikkavasagar’s famous hymn (*Tiruvasagam* 8.14): “I became grass and herbs, worm and tree. I became many beasts, bird and snake. I became stone and man, goblins and sundry celestials. I became mighty demons, silent sages and the Gods. Taken form in life, moveable and immovable, born in all, I am weary of birth, my Great Lord.” The *Upanishads*, too, describe the soul’s course after death and later taking a higher or lower birth according to its merit or demerit of the last life (*Kaushītakī Upanishad* 1.2, *Ṇhandoga Upanishad* 5.3–5.10, *Bṛihad-āraṇyaka Upanishad* 6.2).

These statements are sometimes misunderstood to mean that each soul must slowly, in sequential order incarnate as successively higher beings, beginning with the lowest organism, to finally obtain a human birth. In fact, as the *Upanishads* explain, after death the soul, reaching the inner worlds, reaps the harvest of its deeds, is tested and then takes on the appropriate incarnation—be it human or nonhuman—according to its merit or demerit. Souls destined for human evolution are human-like from the moment of their creation in the Śivaloka. This is given outer expression in the Antarloka and Bhūloka, on Earth or other similar planets, as the appropriate sheaths are developed. However, not all souls are human souls.

There are many kinds of souls, such as genies, elements and certain Gods, who evolve toward God through different patterns of evolution than do humans.

One cause of unclarity is to confuse the previously mentioned scriptural passages with the theory of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin (1809–1882), which states that plant and animal species develop or evolve from earlier forms due to hereditary transmission of variations that enhance the organism's adaptability and chances of survival. These principles are now considered the kernel of biology. Modern scientists thus argue that the human form is a development from earlier primates, including apes and monkeys. The Darwinian theory is reasonable but incomplete, as it is based in a materialistic conception of reality that does not encompass the existence of the soul. While the Upanishadic evolutionary vision speaks of the soul's development and progress through reincarnation, the Darwinian theory focuses on evolution of the biological organism, with no relation to a soul or individual being. See: *evolution of the soul, kośa, reincarnation, soul*.

**noninjurious:** Which does not cause harm or injury.

—**noninjuriousness:** A translation of *ahimsā*, the principle of not causing harm or injury to living beings, whether by thought, word or deed. See: *ahimsā*.

**nonperseverance:** The act, practice or attitude of not persisting, giving up too easily. See: *yama-niyama*.

**nonviolence:** See: *ahimsā*.

**Northern Śaivism:** A name for Kashmir Śaivism. See: *Kashmīr Śaivism*.

**notable:** Worthy of being noted. Remarkable.

**novelty:** Newness. The constant changes and enchantments of life.

**novitiate:** The state or period of being a *novice*. i.e., a newcomer on probation to a monastic or religious community before taking final vows.

**nucleus of the soul:** See: *ātman, impersonal being, soul*.

**nun:** A nun is a celibate woman following strict, perhaps austere and usually solitary, spiritual disciplines and lifestyle. By balancing the masculine and feminine energies within herself through *sādhana* and *yoga*, she is a complete being, detached from the thoughts and feelings of others, free to follow the contemplative and mystical life in pursuit of the Self within. To accomplish this, she works to permanently conquer her feminine instincts and the emotional tendencies of a woman's body. She strives to transmute her sexuality into the Divine, giving up her womanliness so thoroughly that she is indistinguishable from a monk. In Hinduism, nuns may be *sannyāsīnīs*, *yogīnīs* or *sādhikās*. See: *monastic, sannyāsīn, monk*.

**nurturing (nurturance):** The act or process or furnishing nurture, nourishment for growth, development or education.

**Nyāya:** न्याय “System; rule; logic.” See: *Gautama, śaḍdarśana*.



**objective:** 1) Quality of thinking or perception relating to the object as it truly is. Not biased or colored by one's personal point of view or prejudices, which then would be subjective thinking. 2) A target, goal or any-

thing sought for or aimed at. Cf: *subjective*.

**oblation:** An offering or sacrifice ceremoniously given to a God or *guru*. See: *sacrifice, yajña*.

**obliteration:** A thorough blotting out; wiping out.

**obscuration:** The power to make obscure, to conceal or veil, as in Śiva's veiling or obscuring grace. See: *grace, Naṭarāja*.

**obscuring grace:** See: *grace, Naṭarāja*.

**obstacle:** See: *upasarga*.

**obstinate (obstinacy):** Overly determined to have one's own way. Stubborn.

**occult:** Hidden, or kept secret; revealed only after initiation. See: *mysticism*.

**odic:** Spiritually magnetic—of or pertaining to consciousness within *aśuddha māyā*, the realm of the physical and lower astral planes. Odic force in its rarified state is *prakṛiti*, the primary gross energy of nature, manifesting in the three *guṇas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is the force of attraction and repulsion between people, people and their things, and manifests as masculine (aggressive) and feminine (passive), arising from the *piṅgalā* and *iḍā* currents. These two currents (*nāḍī*) are found within the spine of the subtle body. Odic force is a magnetic, sticky, binding substance that people seek to develop when they want to bind themselves together, such as in partnerships, marriage, *guru-śishya* relationships and friendships. Odic energy is the combined emanation of the *prāṇamaya* and *annamaya kośas*. The term *odic* is the adjective form of *od* (pronounced like *mode*), defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “a hypothetical force held by Baron von Reichenbach (1788–1869) to pervade all nature, manifesting itself in certain persons of sensitive temperament (streaming from their fingertips), and exhibited especially by magnets, crystals, heat, light and chemical action; it has been held to explain the phenomena of mesmerism and animal magnetism.” See: *actinic, actinodic, guṇa, kośa, odic, subtle body, tattva*.

**offset:** Made up for, compensated for, counterbalanced.

**offspring:** The young of animals or humans. Children. Sanskrit: *apatya*.

**olai:** ஒலை “Leaf.” An ancient form of Indian books used in India, made of strips of fronds from the palmyra (*triṅḍruma*) and talipot (*tālapatra*, “fan-leaf”) palms. Prepared birch bark (*bhūrja patra*) was the medium in the North. The pages were loosely tied, with cord passed between one or two holes and usually bound between wooden covers. Ink, made from lampblack or charcoal, was applied with a reed pen. Or, more commonly in the South, the letters were scribed with a stylus, then rubbed with powdered lampblack. These books are small in size, averaging

about 2 inches high and 8 inches wide and up to 11 or 12 inches thick, wound with string and generally protected in colored cloth. See: *grantha*.

**old soul:** One who has reincarnated many times, experienced much and is therefore further along the path than young souls. Old souls may be recognized by their qualities of compassion, self-effacement and wisdom. See: *evolution of the soul, soul*.

**Om:** ओम् “Yes, verily.” The most sacred *mantra* of Hinduism. *Om* is an alternate transliteration of *Aum* (the sounds A and U blend to become O). See: *Aum*.

**ominous:** Foreboding; frightening, sinister.

**omnipotent:** All-powerful. Able to do anything.

**omnipresent:** Present everywhere and in all things.

**omniscient:** Possessing infinite knowledge.

**oneness:** Quality or state of being one. Unity, identity, especially in spite of appearances to the contrary—e.g., the oneness of soul and God. See: *monism*.

**ontology:** The branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of reality.

**orbit:** The path taken by a celestial body revolving around another.

**ordain (ordination):** To bestow the duties and responsibilities, authority and spiritual power of a religious office, such as priest, minister or *satguru*, through religious ceremony or mystical initiation. See: *dikshā*.

**original sin:** See: *sin*.

**orthodox:** “Of right (correct) opinion.” Conforming to established doctrines or beliefs. Opposite of *heterodox*, “different opinion.”

**outgrow (outgrown):** To grow faster or larger than and, therefore, to lose or be rid of in the process of growing.

**overshadow:** To cast a shadow over or be more important than; to dominate.

**overwhelm:** To overcome or overpower as with great force or emotion.



**pada:** पद “A step, pace, stride; foot-step, trace.”

**pāda:** पाद “The foot (of men and animals); quarter-part, section; stage; path.” Names the major sections of the Āgamic texts and the corresponding stages of practice and unfoldment on the path to *moksha*. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, there are four *pādas*, which are successive and cumulative; i.e. in accomplishing each one the soul prepares itself for the next. (In Tamil, Śaiva Siddhānta is also known as Nalu-pāda, “four-stage,” Śaivism.)—**charyā pāda:**

“Good conduct stage.” The first stage where one learns to live righteously, serve selflessly, performing *karma yoga*. It is also known as *dāsa mārga*, “servitor’s path,” a time when the aspirant relates to God as a servant to a master. Traditional acts of *charyā* include cleaning the temple, lighting lamps and collecting flowers for worship. Worship at this stage is mostly external. —**kriyā pāda:** “Religious action; worship stage.” Stage of *bhakti yoga*, of cultivating devotion through

performing *pūjā* and regular daily *sādhana*. It is also known as the *satputra mārga*, “true son’s way,” as the soul now relates to God as a son to his father. A central practice of the *kriyā pāda* is performing daily *pūjā*.

—**yoga pāda:** Having matured in the *charyā* and *kriyā pādas*, the soul now turns to internalized worship and *rāja yoga* under the guidance of a *satguru*. It is a time of *sādhana* and serious striving when realization of the Self is the goal. It is the *sakhā mārga*, “way of the friend,” for now God is looked upon as an intimate friend. —**jñāna pāda:** “Stage of wisdom.” Once the soul has attained Realization, it is henceforth a wise one who lives out the life of the body, shedding blessings on mankind. This stage is also called the San Mārga, “true path,” on which God is our dearest beloved; implying transcendence of individuality and merger with the Divine. The *Tirumantiram* describes the fulfillment of each stage as follows. In *charyā*, the soul forges a kindred tie in “God’s world” (*sālokya*). In *kriyā* it attains “nearness” (*sāmīpya*) to Him. In *yoga* it attains “likeness” (*sārūpya*) with Him. In *jñāna* the soul enjoys the ultimate bliss of union or identity (*sāyujya*) with Śiva. See: *jñāna, nirvāṇi and upadeśi*.

**pādapūjā:** पादपूजा “Foot worship.” Ceremonial worship of the *guru*’s sandals or holy feet, often through ablution with precious substances and offering of fruit and flowers. After the ceremony, the water of the bath, the fruit and other precious substances are partaken of as *prasāda* by the devotees. See: *guru, guru bhakti, pādūkā, prasāda, ucchishṭa*.

**padārtha:** पदार्थ “Constituent substance.” Primary categories or essential elements of existence, defined differently or uniquely by each philosophical school. For example, in the Sāṅkhya Darśana, the *padārthas* are *purusha* (spirit) and *prakṛiti* (matter). According to Advaita Vedānta, they are *chit* (spirit) and *achit* (non-spirit), which from an absolute perspective are taken as the One *padārtha*, Brahman. In Śākta and Śaiva traditions, the *padārthas* are Pati (God), *paśu* (soul) and *pāśa* (world, or bonds).

**paddhati:** पद्धति “Foot-path; track; guideline.” A class of expository writings, e.g., Gorakshanatha’s *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati* and the many *paddhatīs* that are guidebooks for temple rituals. There are *paddhatīs* for the *Vedas* and for the *Āgamas*.

**padma:** पद्म The lotus flower, *Nelumbo nucifera*, symbol of spiritual development and the *chakras*. Because it grows out of mud and rises to perfect purity and glory, it is an apt representation of the soul’s mystical growth and maturity.

**Padma Purāṇa:** पद्मपुराण One of the six main *Vishṇu Purāṇas*.

**pādūkā:** पादुका “Sandals.” *Śrī Pādūkā* refers to the sandals of the preceptor, the traditional icon of the *guru*, representing his venerable feet and worshiped as the source of grace. *Pādūkā* also names one of Vīra Śaivism’s eight aids (*ashṭāvaram*) to faith—the practice of drinking the water from the ceremonial ablution of the Śivalīnga or the *guru*’s feet. See: *guru bhakti, pāda-*

*pūjā, prasāda, satguru, uc̥chishṭa.*

**pagan:** From the Latin *paganus*, “villager.” A term used disparagingly by Semitic faiths for a member of another religion or of no religion, originally for the pre-Christian religions of the Roman Empire, and then for the rest of Europe. Akin to shamanism and other of the world’s indigenous faiths, which have survived to this day despite organized persecution. Pagans are gradually surfacing again, and have acknowledged an affinity with Hinduism. See: *mysticism, shamanism.*

**pageantry:** A spectacular and grand representation, elaborately decorated show, procession, drama, etc. See: *festival.*

**Paingala Upanishad:** पैङ्गल उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Sukla Yajur Veda*. A 12-verse dialog between Sage Yajnavalkya and his disciple Paingala covering a wide range of topics, including liberation and the five sheaths of man.

**pañchabhūta:** पञ्चभूत “Five elements.” Earth, water, fire, air and ether. Also called *mahābhūta*. See: *tattva.*

**pañchāchāra:** पञ्चाचार “Five rules.” The fivefold Vira Śaivite code of conduct. 1) *Liṅgāchāra:* Daily worship of the Śivaliṅga. 2) *sadāchāra:* attention to vocation and duty. 3) *Śivāchāra:* Acknowledging Śiva as the one God and observing equality among members. 4) *bhṛityāchāra:* Humility toward all creatures. 5) *gaṇāchāra:* defense of the community and its tenets. See: *Vira Śaivism.*

**Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava:** पञ्चगणपतिउत्सव “Fivefold Gaṇapati festival.” A modern five-day festival observed from the 21st through 25th of December. *Pañcha* (five) denotes Gaṇeśa’s five faces, each representing a specific power (*śakti*). One face is worshiped each day, creating 1) harmony in the home, 2) concord among relatives, neighbors and friends, 3) good business and public relations, 4) cultural upliftment and 5) heartfelt charity and religiousness. The festival, a favorite among children, was conceived in 1985 by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami along with elders of various Hindu sects. It is a time of sharing gifts, renewing ties of family and friendship while focusing inwardly on this great God of abundance. See: *Gaṇeśa.*

**Pañchākshara Mantra:** पञ्चाक्षरमन्त्र “Five-lettered chant.” Śaivism’s most sacred *mantra*. See: *Namaḥ Śivāya.*

**Pañchamukha Gaṇapati:** पञ्चमुखगणपति “Five-faced Gaṇapati.” A special form of Lord Gaṇeśa with five faces; similar to Siddhi Gaṇapati.

**pañcha nitya karma(s):** पञ्चनित्यकर्म “Five constant duties.” A traditional regimen of religious practice for Hindus: 1) *dharma*, virtuous living, 2) *upāsana*, worship, 3) *utsava*, holy days, 4) *tīrthayātrā*, pilgrimage and 5) *saṁskāras*, sacraments. See: *dharma, festival, saṁskāra, tīrthayātrā*. See also: *Primer, p. 711*

**Pañcharātra:** पञ्चरात्र An ancient form of Vaiṣṇavism. Literally “five nights,” but this may be a corruption of *pañcharatha* (“five vehicles, ways or paths”), thought to indicate five ancient sects in the vicinity of Mathura that eventually merged into one with the worship

of Kṛiṣṇa.

**Pañcharātra Āgama(s):** पञ्चरात्र आगम The most popular of the two major groups of Vaiṣṇava Āgamas (the other being the *Vaikhānasa Āgamas*).

**Pañchārtha Bhāṣya:** पञ्चार्थभाष्य Commentary by Kaundinya (ca 100) on Lakulisa’s *Pāsupata Sūtras*, one of the few extant philosophical texts of Pāsupata Śaivism. It was rediscovered in 1930. See: *Pāsupata Śaivism.*

**pañcha śraddhā:** पञ्चश्रद्धा “Five faiths.” A concise summary of Hindu belief exactly correlated to the “five constant practices,” *pañcha nitya karmas*. The *pañcha śraddhā* are 1) *sarva* Brahman: God is All in all, soul is divine; 2) *maṇḍira*: belief in temples and divine beings; 3) *karma*: cosmic justice; 4) *saṁsāra–moksha*: rebirth brings enlightenment and liberation; 5) *Vedas* and *satguru*: the necessity of scripture and preceptor. See: *pañcha nitya karma.*

**Pañchatantra:** पञ्चतन्त्र The collection of animal fables used by sage Vishnu (Vishṇu) Sharma to teach the king’s sons the “art of practical life.” They were written down in Sanskrit in about 200 BCE, but had circulated previously as part of oral tradition. The engaging apologues have migrated all over the world to reappear in *Aesop’s Fables, Arabian Nights, Canterbury Tales* and in ancient Chinese and Japanese literature. See: *apologue, folk-narratives, mythology.*

**pañchāyatana pūjā:** पञ्चायतनपूजा “Five-shrine worship.” A system of personal worship, thought to have developed after the 7th century, in the Smārta *brāhminical* tradition, and which is now part of orthodox daily practice for Smārtas. The ritual involves the worship of five Deities: Vishṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa and Śakti. The five are represented by small *mūrtis*, or by five kinds of stones, or by five marks drawn on the floor. One is placed in the center as the devotee’s preferred God, *Ishta Devatā*, and the other four in a square around it. *Kumāra*, often added as a sixth Deity, is generally situated behind the *Ishta Devatā*. Philosophically, all are seen by Smārtas as equal reflections of the one *Saguṇa Brahman*, rather than as distinct beings. This arrangement is also represented in Smārta temples, with one in a central sanctum, and the others installed in smaller shrines. Each God may be worshiped in any of His/Her traditional aspects or incarnations, allowing for much variety (e.g., Śakti as *Lakshmi*, Vishṇu as *Rāma*, and Śiva as *Bhairava*). With the addition of the sixth Deity, *Kumāra*, the system is known as *ṣaṣṭmata*, “sixfold path.” This system has laid the foundation for the modern secular or neo-Indian religion, in which Hindus freely add Jesus, Mother Mary, Mohammed, Buddha or other holy personages to their altars. This modern syncretism has no basis in traditional scripture. See: *Ishta Devatā, neo-Indian religion, ṣaṣṭmata sthāpanāchārya, Smārtism.*

**pandit (pandita):** पण्डित (Also, *pundit*.) A Hindu religious scholar or theologian, one well versed in philosophy, liturgy, religious law and sacred science.

**pantheism:** “All-in-God doctrine.” The view that the

universe is part of the being of God, as distinguished from *pantheism* (“all-is-God doctrine”), which identifies God with the total reality. In contrast, panentheism holds that God pervades the world, but is also beyond it. He is immanent and transcendent, relative and Absolute. This embracing of opposites is called dipolar. For the panentheist, God is in all, and all is in God. Panentheism is the technical term for monistic theism. See: *Advaita Īśvaravāda, dvaita-advaita, monistic theism, pantheism*.

**Panini (Pāṇini):** पाणिनि Great Sanskrit grammarian, author of the 4,000-*sūtra Aṣṭādhyāyī*, which set the linguistic standards for classical Sanskrit (ca 400 BCE). See: *Vyākaraṇa Vedāṅga*.

**pantheism:** “All-is-God doctrine.” A term applied to a variety of philosophical positions in which God and the world are identical. To the pantheist, God is not a Personal Lord, nor a transcendent or formless Being, but is the totality of all existence, including universal laws, movement, matter, etc. See also: *monistic theism, panentheism*.

**pāpa:** पाप “Wickedness or sin;” “crime.” 1) Bad or evil. 2) Wrongful action. 3) Demerit earned through wrongdoing. Pāpa includes all forms of wrongdoing, from the simplest infraction to the most heinous crime, such as premeditated murder. Each act of *pāpa* carries its *karmic* consequence, *karmaphala*, “fruit of action,” for which scriptures delineate specific penance for expiation. Those who have awakened psychic sight can clearly see *pāpa* in the inner subconscious aura as a colorful, sticky, astral substance. *Pāpa* is seen as dark unrelated colors, whereas its counterpart, *puṇya*, is seen as pastels. The color arrangements are not unlike modern art murals. *Pāpa* colors can produce disease, depression, loneliness and such, but can be dissolved through penance (*prāyaścitta*), austerity (*tapas*) and good deeds (*sukṛityā*).

There are specific consequences, *karmaphala*, “fruit of action,” that result from each type of transgression of *dharma*. For example, a man who steals from his neighbors creates a cosmic debt which may be repaid later by having his own possessions taken away. There are also specific penances, *prāyaścitta*, that can be performed for atonement and the accrual of *puṇya* (merit) to balance out the *pāpa*, the negative *karma* of the wrongful act. Such disciplines are provided in the various *Dharma Śāstras* and prescribed by knowing preceptors, *paṇḍitas*, *śāstrīs*, *swāmīs*, *yogīs* and village elders according to the *varṇa* and education of the individual.

For example, the *Laws of Manu* give several types of penance for the crime of murder, including 1) making a forest hut and subsisting there on alms for twelve years and using a human skull as one’s emblem; or 2) walking 100 *yojanas* (900 miles), while reciting the *Vedas*, eating little and remaining continent. A contemporary example: if a man fells a large healthy tree, he may atone by planting ten trees and ensuring that at least one grows to replace it.

The degree of *pāpa* accrued from an action depends on various factors, including the *karma*, *dharma* and spiritual advancement of the individual, the intent or motivation, as well as the time and place of the action (for example, unvirtuous deeds carry great demerit when performed in holy places). *Pāpa* is the opposite of *puṇya* (merit, virtue). See: *evil, karma, penance, puṇya, sin*.

**pāpa-duḥkha:** पापदुःख “Sin and suffering.” See: *karma, pāpa, sin*.

**pāpman:** पापमन् “Evil; sin.” See: *evil, pāpa, Satan, sin*.

**para:** पर “Supreme; beyond.” A prefix referring to the highest dimension of what it precedes, as in *Paraśiva* or *Parabrahman*. (Sometimes *parā*, as in *Parāśakti*.)

**parable:** A short, simple story illustrating a moral or religious principle.

**Parabrahman:** परब्रह्मन् “Supreme (or transcendent) God.” A synonym for Nirguṇa Brahman, Absolute Reality, beyond time, form and space. Same as *Paraśiva*. See: *Brahman, Paraśiva*.

**paradox:** “Side-by-side opinion or thought.” An apparent contradiction according to conventional logic and reason.

**Parākhyā Āgama:** पराख्य आगम A subsidiary Śaiva Āgamic text (*Upāgama*).

**parama:** परम “Highest; supreme.” See: *para*.

**paramaguru:** परमगुरु “Grand preceptor.” The *guru* of a disciple’s *guru*.

**paramahansa:** परमहंस “Supreme swan.” From *hansa*, meaning swan or, more precisely, the high-flying Indian goose, Anser Indicus. A class of liberated renunciates. See: *hansa*.

**Paramananda (Paramānanda):** परमानन्द See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**Paramātman:** परमात्मन् “Supreme Self,” or “transcendent soul.” *Paraśiva*, Absolute Reality, the one transcendent Self of every soul. Contrasted with *ātman*, which includes all three aspects of the soul: *Paraśiva*, *Parāśakti* and *ānandamaya kośa*. See: *ātman, kośa, Parāśakti, Paraśiva, soul*.

**Parameśvara:** परमेश्वर “Supreme Lord or Ruler.” God Śiva’s third perfection, Supreme Mahādeva, Śiva-Śakti, mother of the universe. In this perfection, as personal, father-mother God, Śiva is a person—who has a body, with head, arms and legs, etc.—who acts, wills, blesses, gives *darśana*, guides, creates, preserves, reabsorbs, obscures and enlightens. In Truth, it is Śiva-Śakti who does all. The term *Primal Soul*, *Paramapurusha*, designates *Parameśvara* as the original, uncreated soul, the creator of all other souls. *Parameśvara* has many other names and epithets, including those denoting the five divine actions—*Sadāśiva*, the revealer; *Maheśvara*, the obscurer; *Brahmā*, the creator; *Viṣṇu* the preserver; and *Rudra* the destroyer. See: *Naṭarāja, Parāśakti, Paraśiva, Sadāśiva*.

**paramparā:** परंपरा “Uninterrupted succession.” A lineage. See: *guru paramparā*.

**parārtha pūjā:** परार्थपूजा “Public liturgy and worship.” See: *pūjā*.

**Parāśakti:** पराशक्ति “Supreme power; primal energy.”

God Śiva’s second perfection, which is impersonal, immanent, and with form—the all-pervasive, Pure Consciousness and Primal Substance of all that exists. There are many other descriptive names for Parāśakti—Satchidānanda (“existence-consciousness-bliss”), light, silence, divine mind, superconsciousness and more. Parāśakti can be experienced by the diligent *yogī* or meditator as a merging in, or identification with, the underlying oneness flowing through all form. The experience is called *savikalpa samādhi*. See: *rāja yoga, Śakti, Satchidānanda, tattva*.

**Parasamvid:** परासंविद् In Siddha Siddhānta, the highest, transcendental state of Śiva. A synonym of *Paraśiva*.

**Paraśiva:** परशिव “Transcendent Śiva.” The Self God, Śiva’s first perfection, Absolute Reality. Paraśiva is *That* which is beyond the grasp of consciousness, transcends time, form and space and defies description. To merge with the Absolute in mystic union is the ultimate goal of all incarnated souls, the reason for their living on this planet, and the deepest meaning of their experiences. Attainment of this is called Self Realization or *nirvikalpa samādhi*. See: *samādhi, Śiva*.

**Pārvati:** पार्वती “Mountain’s daughter.” One of many names for the Universal Mother. Prayers are offered to Her for strength, health and eradication of impurities. Mythologically, Pārvati is wedded to Śiva. See: *Goddess, Śakti*.

**pāśa:** पाश “Tether; noose.” The whole of existence, manifest and unmanifest. That which binds or limits the soul and keeps it (for a time) from manifesting its full potential. *Pāśa* consists of the soul’s threefold bondage of *ānava, karma* and *māyā*. See: *liberation, mala, Pati-paśu-pāśa*.

**pāśa-jñāna:** पाशज्ञान “Knowledge of the world.” That which is sought for by the soul in the first stage of the *sakala avasthā*, known as *irul*. See: *irul, sakala avasthā*.

**paśu:** पशु “Cow, cattle, kine; fettered individual.” Refers to animals or beasts, including man. In philosophy, the soul. Śiva as lord of creatures is called Paśupati. See: *pāśa, Pati-paśu-pāśa*.

**paśu-jñāna:** पशुज्ञान “Soul-knowledge.” The object of seeking in the second stage of the *sakala avasthā*, called *marul*. See: *marul, sakala avasthā*.

**paśupālaka:** पशुपालक “Herdsman.” One who protects, nourishes and guards. A Hindu chaplain or missionary.

**Pāśupata Śaivism:** पाशुपतशैव Monistic and theistic, this school of Śaivism reveres Śiva as Supreme Cause and Personal Ruler of soul and world, denoted in His form as Paśupati, “Lord of souls.” This school centers around the ascetic path, emphasizing *sādhana*, detachment from the world and the quest for “internal *kuṇḍalīnī* grace.” The *Kāraṇa Māhātmya* recounts the birth of Lakulisa (ca 200 BCE), a principal Pāśupata *guru*, and refers to the temple of Somanatha as one of the most important Pāśupata centers. Lakulisa propounded a Śaiva monism, though indications are that Pāśupata philosophy was previously dualistic,

with Śiva as efficient cause of the universe but not material cause. It is thought to be the source of various ascetic streams, including the Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas. This school is represented today in the broad *sādhū* tradition, and numerous Pāśupata sites of worship are scattered across India. See: *Śaivism*.

**Pāśupata Sūtra(s):** पाशुपतसूत्र The recently rediscovered (1930) central scripture of the Pāśupata school of Śaivism, attributed to Lakulisa. It covers asceticism at great length, and the five subjects of Pāśupata theology: effect, cause, meditation, behavior and dissolution of sorrow. It urges the ascetic to go unrecognized and even invite abuse. See: *Pāśupata Śaivism*.

**Paśupati:** पशुपति “Herdsman; lord of animals.” An ancient name and attribute of Śiva, first appearing in the *Atharva Veda*. This form of Śiva, seated in *yogic* pose, was found on a seal from the 6,000-year-old Indus Valley civilization. See: *Pāśupata Śaivism, Śaivism*.

**Pasupatinatha mandira:** पाशुपतिनाथमन्दिर Foremost temple of Nepal, linked to the ancient Pāśupata sect of Śaivism.

**pātāla:** पाताल “Fallen or sinful region.” The seventh *chakra* below the *mūlādhāra*, centered in the soles of the feet. Corresponds to the seventh and lowest astral netherworld beneath the Earth’s surface, called Kākola (“black poison”) or Pātāla. This is the realm in which misguided souls indulge in destruction for the sake of destruction, of torture, and of murder for the sake of murder. *Pātāla* also names the netherworld in general, and is a synonym for *Naraka*. See: *chakra, loka, Naraka*.

**Patanjali (Patañjali):** पतञ्जलि A Śaivite Nātha *siddha* (ca 200 BCE) who codified the ancient *yoga* philosophy which outlines the path to enlightenment through purification, control and transcendence of the mind. One of the six classical philosophical systems (*darśanas*) of Hinduism, known as Yoga Darśana. His great work, the *Yoga Sūtras*, comprises some 200 aphorisms delineating *ashṭāṅga* (eight-limbed), *rāja* (kingly) or *siddha* (perfection) *yoga*. Still today it is the foremost ancient text on meditative *yoga*. Different from the namesake grammarian. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā, rāja yoga, shaḍ darśana, yoga*.

**path:** Mārga or pantha. A trail, road or way. In Hinduism the term *path* is used in various ways. —**path of enlightenment/salvation/moksha:** The way to the ultimate goals of Self Realization and liberation. —**universal path:** The spiritual path followed by all of existence, progressing to Godhood. —**path of dharma:** Following principles of good conduct and virtue. —**the two paths:** The way of the monk and that of the householder, a choice to be made by each Hindu young man. —**peerless/highest path:** The spiritual path (or the path of renunciation) as the noblest of human undertakings. —**the straight path:** The way that leads directly to the goal, without distraction or *karmic* detour. —**on the path:** one seriously studying, striving and performing *sādhana* to perfect the inner and outer nature. —**our right path in life:** The best

way for us personally to proceed; personal *dharma*, *svadharmā*. —“**Truth is one, paths are many:**” Hinduism’s affirmation for tolerance. It accepts that there are various ways to proceed toward the ultimate goal. See: *dharma*, *pāda*.

**pāthaka:** पाठक “Reader, reciter.” An inspired reader of scripture and sacred literature.

**Pati:** पति “Master; lord; owner.” A name for God Śiva indicating His commanding relationship with souls as caring ruler and helpful guide. In Śaiva Siddhānta the term is part of the analogy of cowherd (*pati*), cows (*paśu*, souls) and the tether (*pāśa*—*aṅṅava*, *karma* and *māyā*) by which cows are tied. See: *monotheism*, *Pati-paśu-pāśa*, *Śiva*.

**Pati-jñāna:** पतिज्ञान “Knowledge of God,” sought for by the soul in the third stage of the *sakala avasthā*, called *arul*. See: *arul*, *sakala avasthā*, *śaktinipāta*.

**Pati-paśu-pāśa:** पति पशु पाश Literally: “master, cow and tether.” These are the three primary elements (*padārtha*, or *tattvatrayī*) of Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy: God, soul and world—Divinity, man and cosmos—seen as a mystically and intricately interrelated unity. Pati is God, envisioned as a cowherd. *Paśu* is the soul, envisioned as a cow. *Pāśa* is the all-important force or fetter by which God brings souls along the path to Truth. The various schools of Hinduism define the rapport among the three in varying ways. For pluralistic Śaiva Siddhāntins they are three beginningless verities, self-existent, eternal entities. For monistic Śaiva Siddhāntins, *paśu* and *pāśa* are the emanational creation of Pati, Lord Śiva, and He alone is eternal reality. See: *pāśa*, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, *soul*.

**Paushkara Āgama:** पौष्कर आगम Subsidiary text (*Up-āgama*) of the *Mataṅga Parameśvara Śaiva Āgama*, containing 977 verses divided into 90 chapters. A mostly philosophic treatise dealing with God, soul and world and the instruments of knowledge. See: *Śaiva Āgama*.

**penance:** प्रयाश्चिन्ता. Atonement, expiation. An act of devotion (*bhakti*), austerity (*tapas*) or discipline (*sukṛitya*) undertaken to soften or nullify the anticipated reaction to a past action. Penance is uncomfortable *karma* inflicted upon oneself to mitigate one’s *karmic* burden caused by wrongful actions (*kukarma*). It includes such acts as prostrating 108 times, fasting, self-denial, or carrying *kavadi* (*public penance*), as well as more extreme austerities, or *tapas*. Penance is often suggested by spiritual leaders and elders. Penitence or repentance, suffering regret for misdeeds, is called *anutāpa*, meaning “reheating.” See: *evil*, *kavadi*, *pāpa*, *prāyaśchitta*, *sin*, *tapas*.

**pendant:** An ornament or piece of jewelry “appended” to a necklace. See: *wedding pendant*.

**perfections:** Qualities, aspects, nature or dimensions that are perfect. God Śiva’s three perfections are Paraśiva, Paraśakti and Parameśvara. Though spoken of as threefold for the sake of understanding, God Śiva ever remains a one transcendent-immanent Being. See: *Śiva*.

**Periyapurānam:** பெரிய புராணம் Twelfth book of the *Tirumurai*. Lives of the 63 Śaiva Nayanar saints of Tamil Nadu, by Sekkilar (ca 1140). See: *Tirumurai*.

**personal dharma:** Svadharmā. An individual’s unique path in life in conformance with divine law. See: *dharma*, *karma*.

**Personal God:** See: *Iṣṭha Devatā*, *Parameśvara*.

**perspective:** Point of view.

**pilgrimage:** *Tirthayātrā*. Journeying to a holy temple, near or far, performed by all Hindus at least once each year. See: *tirthayātrā*.

**piṇḍa:** पिण्ड Roundish “pellet; mass; body;” part of the whole, individual; microcosm.” In worship rites, small balls of cooked rice set aside daily in remembrance of ancestors. Philosophically, and emphasized in Siddha Siddhānta, the human body as a replica of the macrocosm, *mahāsākāra piṇḍa*, also called *Brahmāṇḍa* (cosmic egg), or simply *aṅḍa* (egg). Within the individual body of man is reflected and contained the entire cosmos. Each *chakra* represents a world or plane of consciousness with the highest locus in the head and the lowest in the feet. “Microcosm-macrocosm” is embodied in the terms *piṇḍa-aṅḍa*. *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati* lists six *piṇḍas*, from the *garbhapiṇḍa*, “womb-born body;” to *parapiṇḍa*, “transcendental body.” See: *Brahmāṇḍa*, *microcosm-macrocosm*.

**piṅgalā:** पिंगला “Tawny channel.” The masculine psychic current flowing along the spine. See: *kuṇḍalinī*, *nāḍī*, *rāja yoga*.

**pir:** Holy “father.” Muslim title for a religious leader; applied to leaders of a few Gorakshanātha monasteries. See: *Siddha Siddhānta*.

**piṭha:** पीठ “Seat; pedestal; foundation.” 1) The base or pedestal of the Śivaliṅga, or of any Deity idol. 2) A religious seat, such as the throne of the abbot of a monastery. 3) An *aadheenam*, *āśrama* or *maṭha* established around such a seat of spiritual authority. See: *Śivaliṅga*.

**Pitṛiloka:** पितृलोक “World of ancestors.” The upper region of *Bhuvraloka*. See: *loka*.

**pitta:** पित्त “Bile; fire.” One of the three bodily humors, called *doshas*, *pitta* is known as the fire humor. It is the *āyurvedic* principle of bodily heat-energy. *Pitta dosha* governs nutritional absorption, body temperature and intelligence. See: *āyurveda*, *dosha*.

**plague:** To distress, afflict, trouble or torment.

**plane:** A stage or level of existence; e.g., the causal plane (*Śivaloka*). See: *loka*.

**Pleiades:** A cluster of stars in the Taurus constellation, six of which are now visible from Earth. This group of stars is known in Sanskrit as *Kṛittikā*, an important *nakshatra* for Lord Kārttikeya and believed to be this Deity’s place of origin before He came to the star system of Earth. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**pliant:** Flexible, adaptable, not rigid.

**Plotinus:** Egypt-born Greek philosopher (205–270), one of the Western world’s greatest known mystics, who extended and revived the work of the Greek philosopher Plato in the Roman Empire. His philosophy, known as Neo-Platonism, posits concentric levels of

reality, not unlike the Hindu cosmology of *lokas*, with a central source of sublime existence and values and an outer sheath of physical matter. Man, he said, is a microcosm of this system, capable of attaining the sublime inner state through ecstasy. He practiced and taught *ahimsā*, vegetarianism, *karma*, reincarnation and belief in Supreme Being as both immanent and transcendent. His writings, in six divisions, are called the *Enneads*. He was apparently familiar with Hindu wisdom through reading *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, a partly fictionalized biography of a Greek renunciate who is said to have visited India.

**pluralism (pluralistic):** Doctrine that holds existence to be composed of three or more distinct and irreducible components, such as God, souls and world. See: *dvaita-advaita*.

**pluralistic realism:** A term for pluralism used by various schools including Meykandar Śaiva Siddhānta, emphasizing that the components of existence are absolutely real in themselves and not creations of consciousness or God.

**polygamy:** Practice of having more than one spouse.

**polytheism:** Belief in or worship of many Gods. See also: *monotheism*.

**pomp:** A dignified or brilliant display. Splendor and pageantry.

**pontifical:** Having to do with pontiffs, or high priests. Having all the dignity, respect, and influence of a spiritual leader endowed with great authority.

**potent:** Having power, authority. Effective, able.

**potentialities:** A state of latency, something that has power but is not developed or manifest, such as a talent yet to be matured.

**pradakshina:** प्रदक्षिण “Moving to the right.” Worshipful circumambulation, walking clockwise around the temple sanctum or other holy place, with the intention of shifting the mind from worldly concerns to awareness of the Divine. *Clockwise* has esoteric significance in that the *chakras* of *mūlādhāra* and above spin clockwise, while those below spin counterclockwise, taking one down into the lower regions of selfishness, greed, conflict and turmoil.

**pradosha:** प्रदोष The auspicious 3-hour period, 1½ hours before and after sunset. *Pradosha* especially refers to this period on the 13th (*trayodaśī*) *tithi* of each fortnight, an optimum time of the month for meditation. Its observance, prepared for by fasting, is called *pradosha vrata*. See: *fast*, *tithi*.

**pragmatic:** Practical. Concerned with application, not theory or speculation.

**prakṛiti:** प्रकृति “Primary matter; nature.” In the 25-*tattva* Sāṅkhya system—which concerns itself only with the tangible spectrum of creation—*prakṛiti*, or *pradhāna*, is one of two supreme beginningless realities: matter and spirit, *Prakṛiti* and *Puruṣa*, the female and male principles. *Prakṛiti* is the manifesting aspect, as contrasted with the quiescent unmanifest—*Puruṣa*, which is pure consciousness. In Śāktism, *Prakṛiti*, the active principle, is personified as *Devī*, the Goddess,

and is synonymous with *Māyā*. *Prakṛiti* is thus often seen, and depicted so in the *Purānas*, as the Divine Mother, whose love and care embrace and comfort all beings. In Śaivite cosmology, *prakṛiti* is the 24th of 36 *tattvas*, the potentiality of the physical cosmos, the gross energy from which all lower *tattvas* are formed. Its three qualities are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. See: *odic*, *puruṣa*, *tattva*.

**pralaya:** प्रलय “Dissolution, reabsorption; destruction; death.” A synonym for *sainhāra*, one of the five functions of Śiva. Also names the partial destruction or reabsorption of the cosmos at the end of each eon or *kalpa*. There are three kinds of periods of dissolution: 1) *laya*, at the end of a *mahāyuga*, when the physical world is destroyed; 2) *pralaya*, at the end of a *kalpa*, when both the physical and subtle worlds are destroyed; and 3) *mahāpralaya* at the end of a *mahākalpa*, when all three worlds (physical, subtle and causal) are absorbed into Śiva. See: *cosmic cycle*, *mahāpralaya*.

**pramukha:** प्रमुख Literally, “forward-face.” “Head; chief; principal.” Leader, guide; such as the family head, *kuṭumba pramukha*. See: *joint family*.

**prāṇa:** प्राण Vital energy or life principle. Literally, “vital air,” from the root *pran*, “to breathe.” *Prāṇa* in the human body moves in the *prāṇamaya kośa* as five primary life currents known as *vāyus*, “vital airs or winds.” These are *prāṇa* (outgoing breath), *apāna* (incoming breath), *vyāna* (retained breath), *udāna* (ascending breath) and *samāna* (equalizing breath). Each governs crucial bodily functions, and all bodily energies are modifications of these. While *prāṇa* usually refers to the life principle, it sometimes denotes energy, the interrelated odic and actinic forces, the power or the animating force of the cosmos, the sum total of all energy and forces. See: *kośa*, *tattva*.

**Prāṇāgnihotra Upanishad:** प्राणनिहोत्र उपनिषद् A minor *Upanishad* which explains how to transform the external ritual of the fire sacrifice into *prāṇāgnihotra*, “the sacrifice offered in the *prāṇa* fire” of one’s own being.

**Prāṇaliṅga:** प्राणलिङ्ग “Living mark.” Personally experiencing God in the Śivaliṅga. A term used especially in Vira Śaivism. See: *Śivaliṅga*, *Vira Śaivism*.

**praṇāma:** प्रणाम “Obeisance; bowing down.” Reverent salutation in which the head or body is bowed. —**ash-tāṅga praṇāma:** “Eight-limbed obeisance.” The full prostration for men, in which the hands, chest, forehead, knees and feet touch the ground. (The same as *śaṣṭiṅga praṇāma*.) —**pañchāṅga praṇāma:** “Five-limbed obeisance.” The woman’s form of prostration, in which the hands, head and legs touch the ground (with the ankles crossed, right over the left). A more exacting term for prostration is *praṇipāta*, “falling down in obeisance.” See: *bhakti*, *namaskāra*, *prapatti*.

**prāṇamaya kośa:** प्राणमयकोश “Life-energy sheath.” See: *kośa*, *prāṇa*.

**prāṇatyāga:** प्राणत्याग “Abandoning life force.” A term for suicide but without the connotation of violence



expressed in the more common terms *svadehaghāta*, “murdering one’s body,” and *ātmaghāta*, “self-murder.” See: *death, suicide*.

**Praṇava:** प्रणव “Humming.” The mantra *Aum*, denoting God as the Primal Sound. It can be heard as the sound of one’s own nerve system, like the sound of an electrical transformer or a swarm of bees. The mediator is taught to inwardly transform this sound into the inner light which lights the thoughts, and bask in this blissful consciousness. Praṇava is also known as the sound of the *nāda-nāḍī śakti*. See: *Aum, Śiva Consciousness*.

**prāṇāyāma:** प्राणायाम “Breath control.” See: *rāja yoga*.

**prāṇic body:** The subtle, life-giving sheath called *prāṇamaya kośa*. See: *kośa*.

**prapatti:** प्रपत्ति “Throwing oneself down.” *Bhakti*, total, unconditional submission to God, often coupled with the attitude of personal helplessness, self-effacement and resignation. A term especially used in Vaiṣṇavism to name a concept extremely central to virtually all Hindu schools. In Śaiva Siddhānta, *bhakti* is all important in the development of the soul and its release into spiritual maturity. The doctrine is perhaps best expressed in the teachings of the four Samayāchārya saints, who all shared a profound and mystical love of Śiva marked by 1) deep humility and self-effacement, admission of sin and weakness; 2) total surrender in God as the only true refuge and 3) a relationship of lover and beloved known as bridal mysticism, in which the devotee is the bride and Śiva the bridegroom. The practice of *yoga*, too, is an expression of love of God in Śaiva Siddhānta, and it is only with God’s grace that success is achieved. Rishi Tirumular states: “Unless your heart melts in the sweet ecstasy of love—my Lord, my treasure-trove, you can never possess” (*Tirumantiram* 272). It is in this concept of the need for self-effacement and total surrender, *prapatti*, that the members of all sects merge in oneness, at the fulfillment of their individual paths. Similarly, they all meet in unity at the beginning of the path with the worship of Lord Gaṇeśa. See: *bhakti, grace, pāda, surrender*.

**prārabdha karma:** प्रारब्धकर्म “Action that has been unleashed or aroused.” See: *karma*.

**prasāda:** प्रसाद “Clarity, brightness; grace.” 1) The virtue of serenity and graciousness. 2) Food offered to the Deity or the *guru*, or the blessed remnants of such food. 3) Any propitiatory offering. See: *sacrament, Vira Śaivism*.

**Prāśna Upanishad:** प्रश्न उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Atharva Veda* and is divided into six sections addressing six questions asked of sage Pippalada (Pippalāda) by his disciples, regarding life, Realization and the *mantra Aum*.

**praśnottaram:** प्रश्नोत्तरम् “Question-answer (*praśna-uttaram*).” A term used in *Dancing with Śiva* for *catechism*, an interrogatory summation of religious doctrine. See: *Upanishad*.

**pratyabhijñā:** प्रत्यभिज्ञा “Recognition or recollection,”

from “knowledge” (*jñāna*) which “faces” (*abhi*) the knower and toward which he eventually “turns” (*prati*). A concept of Kashmir Śaivism which denotes the devotee’s recognition, as a result of the *guru*’s grace, of the Truth that ever was—that Śiva is indeed everywhere, and the soul is already united with Him.

**Pratyabhijñā Darśana:** प्रत्यभिज्ञादर्शन The philosophical name for Kashmir Śaivism.

**Pratyabhijñā Sūtra(s):** प्रत्यभिज्ञासूत्र A foundational Kashmir Śaiva scripture, 190 *sūtras*.

**pratyāhāra:** प्रत्याहार “Withdrawal.” The drawing in of forces. In *yoga*, the withdrawal from external consciousness. (Also a synonym for *pralaya*.) See: *rāja yoga, mahāpralaya, meditation*.

**prāyāschitta:** प्रायश्चित्त “Predominant thought or aim.” Penance. Acts of atonement. See: *pāpa, penance, puṇya*.

**prayojaka:** प्रयोजक “An instigator, manager, promoter, agent.” Also a designation of a coordinator of religious outreach activities and literature distribution.

**prāyopaveśa:** प्रायोपवेश “Resolving to die through fasting.” Self-willed death by fasting. See: *death, suicide*.

**precede:** To come before in time, importance, influence or rank.

**precinct:** An enclosed or delimited area. Also the grounds surrounding a religious edifice.

**precursor:** Forerunner. A person or thing that goes before. Predecessor.

**Premaiva Śivamaya, Satyam eva Paraśivaḥ:** प्रेमैव शिवमय सत्यम् एव परशिवः “God Śiva is immanent love and transcendent Reality.” A Śaivite Hindu affirmation of faith. See: *affirmation*.

**prenatal:** Existing or occurring before physical birth, or relating to the time before birth. See: *samskāras of birth*.

**preservation:** The act of maintaining or protecting. One of the five cosmic powers. See: *Naṭarāja*.

**preside:** To be chairman at a gathering, in a position of authority within a group. To have charge of; to dominate.

**Pretaloka:** प्रेतलोक “World of the departed.” The realm of the earth-bound souls. This lower region of *Bhuvraloka* is an astral duplicate of the physical world. See: *loka*.

**prevail:** To be strong and victorious; overcome all obstacles. To exist widely.

**Primal Soul:** The uncreated, original, perfect soul—Śiva Parameśvara—who emanates from Himself the inner and outer universes and an infinite plurality of individual souls whose essence is identical with His essence. God in His personal aspect as Lord and Creator, depicted in many forms: Naṭarāja by Śaivites, Viṣṇu by Vaiṣṇavites, Devī by Śaktas. See: *Naṭarāja, Parameśvara*.

**Primal Sound:** In Hinduism, sound is the first manifestation, even before light, in the creative scheme of things. The Primal Sound is also known as *Praṇava*, the sound of the *mula mantra*, “Aum.” See: *sound*.

**Primal Substance:** The fundamental energy and rari-

fied form from which the manifest world in its infinite diversity is derived. See: *Parāśakti*.

**principle:** An essential truth, law or rule upon which others are based.

**pristine:** Pure, unspoiled; original condition.

**procreation:** The process of begetting offspring.

**procurer:** Provider.

**progeny:** Offspring, children; descendants.

**prohibit:** To forbid or prevent by authority.

**prominent:** Conspicuous, noticeable at once. Widely known.

**promiscuity:** Engaging in sex indiscriminantly or with many persons.

**prone:** Tending or inclined toward.

**pronged:** Having one or several pointed ends.

**propel:** To push, impel, or drive forward.

**prophecy:** Divination. Act or practice of predicting the future.

**propound:** To set forth. To put forward.

**protest:** To state positively, affirm solemnly; or speak strongly against.

**protocol:** Customs of proper etiquette and ceremony, especially in relation to religious or political dignitaries.

**protrude:** To jut out or project.

**province:** Sphere, area or division.

**prow:** The forward part of a ship; any similar projecting or leading part.

**prudent:** Careful. Showing wisdom and good judgment in practical matters.

**psalm:** A sacred hymn, song or poem.

**psychic:** “Of the psyche or soul.” Sensitive to spiritual processes and energies. Inwardly or intuitively aware of nonphysical realities; able to use powers such as clairvoyance, clairaudience and precognition. Non-physical, subtle; pertaining to the deeper aspects of man. See: *mysticism, odic*.

**pūjā:** पूजा “Worship, adoration.” An Āgamic rite of worship performed in the home, temple or shrine, to the *mūrti*, *śrī pādūkā*, or other consecrated object, or to a person, such as the *satguru*. Its inner purpose is to purify the atmosphere around the object worshiped, establish a connection with the inner worlds and invoke the presence of God, Gods or one’s *guru*. During *pūjā*, the officiant (*pujārī*) recites various chants praising the Divine and beseeching divine blessings, while making offerings in accordance with established traditions. *Pūjā*, the worship of a *mūrti* through water, lights and flowers in temples and shrines, is the Āgamic counterpart of the Vedic *yajña* rite, in which offerings are conveyed through the sacred *homa* fire. These are the two great streams of adoration and communion in Hinduism. Central steps of *pūjā* include: 1) *āchamana*, water sipping for purification; 2) *Gaṇapati prārthanā*, prayers to Gaṇeśa; 3) *saṅkalpa*, declaration of intent; 4) *ghaṇṭā*, ringing bell, inviting *devas* and dismissing *asuras*; 5) *āvāhana*, inviting the Deity; 6) *mantras* and *dhyāna*, meditating on the Deity; 7) *svāgata*, welcoming; 8) *na-*

*maskāra*, obeisance; 9) *arghyam*, water offerings; 10) *pradakṣiṇa*, circumambulation; 11) *abhisheka*, bathing the *mūrti*; 12) *dhūpa*, incense-offering; 13) *dīpa*, offering lights; 14) *naivedya*, offering food; 15) *archana*, chanting holy names; 16) *ārati*, final offering of lights; 17) *prārthanā*, personal requests; 18) *visarjana*, dismissal-farewell. Also central are *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *guru vandana* (adoration of the preceptor), *nyāsa* (empowerment through touching) and *mudrā* (mystic gestures). *Pūjā* offerings also include *pushpa* (flowers), *arghya* (water), *tāmbūla* (betel leaf) and *chandana* (sandalpaste). —**ātmārtha pūjā:** *Kāraṇa Āgama*, v. 2, states: *Ātmārtha cha parārtha cha pūjā dvividhamuchyate*, “Worship is twofold: for the benefit of oneself and for the benefit of others.” *Ātmārtha pūjā* is done for oneself and immediate family, usually at home in a private shrine. —**parārtha pūjā:** “*Pūjā* for others.” *Parārtha pūjā* is public *pūjā*, performed by authorized or ordained priests in a public shrine or temple. See: *pujārī, yajña*.

**pujārī:** पुजारी “Worshiper.” A general term for Hindu temple priests, as well as anyone performing *pūjā*. *Pujārī* (sometimes *pūjārī*) is the Hindi form of the Sanskrit *pūjaka*; *pūsārī* in Tamil. *Archaka* is another term for priest used in the southern tradition. *Purohita* is a Smārta *brāhmin* priest who specializes in domestic rites. See: *pūjā*.

**pulsate:** To beat or throb in rhythm, as the heart.

**punarjanma:** पुनर्जन्म “Reincarnation.” From *punaḥ*, “again and again,” and *janma*, “taking birth.” See: *reincarnation*.

**pundit (paṇḍita):** पण्डित A Hindu religious scholar or theologian, a man well versed in philosophy, liturgy, religious law and sacred science.

**Punjab (Puñjab):** पंजाब The area of ancient India between the Indus and Sutlej, below Kashmir. It is now divided between India and Pakistan. It was a center of Śaivism prior to the Muslim invasions. The modern Indian state is 19,445 square miles in area with a population of 18 million.

**punsavana:** पुंसवन “Male rite; bringing forth a male.” Traditional sacrament performed during early pregnancy in prayer of a son. See: *saṁskāras of birth*.

**punya:** पुण्य “Holy; virtuous; auspicious.” 1) Good or righteous. 2) Meritorious action. 3) Merit earned through right thought, word and action. *Punya* includes all forms of doing good, from the simplest helpful deed to a lifetime of conscientious beneficence. Each act of *punya* carries its *karmic* consequence, *karmaphala*, “fruit of action”—the positive reward of actions, words and deeds that are in keeping with *dharma*. Awakened psychics who have developed clairvoyant sight can clearly see the *punya* accrued in the inner subconscious aura as a colorful, free-flowing, astral, light-energy, *prānic* substance. *Punya* is seen as light-hued, pastel colors, whereas its counterpart, *pāpa*, is seen as shades of darker colors which are usually static and immovable. These variegations of the *pāpa* shades and *punya* hues are not unlike

the free-expression paintings found in modern art. *Punya* colors produce inner contentment, deep joy, the feeling of security and fearlessness. *Pāpa* can be dissolved and *punya* created through penance (*prāyāścitta*), austerity (*tapas*) and good deeds (*sukṛityā*). *Punya* is earned through virtuous living, following the multi-faceted laws of *dharma*. *Punya* depends on purity of acts according to various factors including 1) the *karma* and evolution of the individual, 2) degree of sacrifice and unselfish motivation and 3) time and place. For example, virtuous deeds, *sādhana*, *tapas* and penance have greater merit when performed in holy places and at auspicious times. The *Tirukural* (105) states that “Help rendered another cannot be measured by the extent of the assistance given. Its true measure is the worth of the recipient.” In other words, a small act done for a great and worthy soul carries more *punya* than even a large act performed for a lesser person. (Opposite of *pāpa*.) See: *aura*, *karma*, *pāpa*, *penance*.

**Purāṇa:** पुराण “Ancient lore.” Hindu folk narratives containing ethical and cosmological teachings relative to Gods, man and the world. They revolve around five subjects: primary creation, secondary creation, genealogy, cycles of time and history. There are 18 major *Purāṇas* which are designated as either Śaivite, Vaiṣṇavite or Śākta. See: *folk narratives*, *mythology*.

**Pure Consciousness:** See: *Parāśakti*, *Satchidānanda*, *tattva*.

**purgatory:** A state or place of temporary punishment or expiation. A hellish condition that is not eternal. *Purgatory* is actually more fitting than the term *hell* as an equivalent for the Sanskrit *Naraka*. See: *hell*, *loka*, *Naraka*.

**puritan:** A person who is overly strict or rigid regarding morals and religion.

**purity-impurity:** *Sauca*-*asauca*. Purity and its opposite, pollution, are a fundamental part of Hindu culture. While they refer to physical cleanliness, their more important meanings extend to social, ceremonial, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual cleanliness or contamination. Freedom from all forms of contamination is a key to Hindu spirituality, and is one of the *yamas*. Physical purity requires a clean and well-ordered environment, *yogic* purging of the internal organs and frequent cleansing with water. Mental purity derives from meditation, right living and right thinking. Emotional purity depends on control of the mind, clearing the subconscious and keeping good company. Spiritual purity is achieved through following the *yamas* and *niyamas*, study of the *Vedas* and other scriptures, pilgrimage, meditation, *jāpa*, *tapas* and *ahimsā*. Ritual purity requires the observance of certain *prāyāścittas*, or penances, for defilement derived from foreign travel, contact with base people or places, conversion to other faiths, contact with bodily wastes, attending a funeral, etc. Purity is of three forms—purity in mind, speech and body, or thought, word and deed. Purity is the pristine and natural state

of the soul. Impurity, or pollution, is the obscuring of this state by adulterating experience and beclouding conceptions. In daily life, the Hindu strives to protect this innate purity by wise living, following the codes of *dharma*. This includes harnessing the sexual energies, associating with other virtuous Hindu devotees, never using harsh, angered or indecent language, and keeping a clean and healthy physical body. See: *dharma*, *pāpa*, *penance*, *punya*, *yama-niyama*.

**pūrṇimā:** पूर्णिमा “Fullness.” Full moon. See: *Guru Pūrṇimā*.

**purohita:** पुरोहित “Front-most; leader; family priest.” A Smārta *brāhmin* priest who specializes in home ceremonies. See: *pujārī*, *Smārta*.

**pursue (pursuit):** To go with determination after a goal. To follow.

**purusha:** पुरुष “The spirit that dwells in the body/in the universe.” Person; spirit; man. Metaphysically, the soul, neither male nor female. Also used in Yoga and Sāṅkhya for the transcendent Self. A synonym for *ātman*. *Purusha* can also refer to the Supreme Being or Soul, as it sometimes does in the *Upanishads*. In the *Rig Veda* hymn “Purusha Sūkta,” Purusha is the cosmic man, having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet and encompassing the Earth, spreading in all directions into animate and inanimate things. In the Sāṅkhya system, Purusha is one of two supreme, beginningless realities: spirit and matter, Purusha and Prakṛiti, the male and female principles. It is the quiescent unmanifest, pure consciousness, contrasted with Prakṛiti, the manifesting, primal nature from which the cosmos unfolds. In Śaiva cosmology, *purusha* is the 25th of 36 *tattvas*, one level subtler than *prakṛiti*. Beyond these lie the subtle realms of *śuddha māyā*. Transcending all the *tattvas* is Paraśiva. See: *ātman*, *jīva*, *prakṛiti*, *soul*, *tattva*.

**purusha dharma:** पुरुषधर्म “A man’s code of duty and conduct.” See: *dharma*.

**purushārtha:** पुरुषार्थ “Human wealth or purpose.” The four pursuits in which people may legitimately engage, also called *chaturvarga*, “fourfold good”—a basic principle of Hindu ethics. —**dharma:** “Righteous living.” The fulfillment of virtue, good works, duties and responsibilities, restraints and observances—performing one’s part in the service and upliftment of society. This includes pursuit of truth under a *guru* of a particular *paramparā* and *sampradāya*. *Dharma* is of four primary forms. It is the steady guide for *artha* and *kāma*. See: *dharma*. —**artha:** “Wealth.” Material welfare and abundance, money, property, possessions. *Artha* is the pursuit of wealth, guided by *dharma*. It includes the basic needs—food, money, clothing and shelter—and extends to the wealth required to maintain a comfortable home, raise a family, fulfill a successful career and perform religious duties. The broadest concept of wealth embraces financial independence, freedom from debt, worthy children, good friends, leisure time, faithful servants, trustworthy employees, and the joys of giving, including tithing

(*daśamāṃsha*), feeding the poor, supporting religious mendicants, worshipping devoutly, protecting all creatures, upholding the family and offering hospitality to guests. *Artha* measures not only riches but quality of life, providing the personal and social security needed to pursue *kāma*, *dharma* and *moksha*. It allows for the fulfillment of the householder's five daily sacrifices, *pañcha mahāyajña*: to God, ancestors, *devas*, creatures and men. See: *yajña*. —**kāma**: "Pleasure, love; enjoyment." Earthly love, aesthetic and cultural fulfillment, pleasures of the world (including sexual), the joys of family, intellectual satisfaction. Enjoyment of happiness, security, creativity, usefulness and inspiration. See: *Kāma Sūtras*. —**moksha**: "Liberation." Freedom from rebirth through the ultimate attainment, realization of the Self God, Paraśiva. The spiritual attainments and superconscious joys, attending renunciation and *yoga* leading to Self Realization. *Moksha* comes through the fulfillment of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* (known in Tamil as *aram*, *porul* and *inbam*, and explained by Tiruvalluvar in *Tirukural*) in the current or past lives, so that one is no longer attached to worldly joys or sorrows. It is the supreme goal of life, called *paramārtha*. See: *liberation*, *moksha*.



**qualified nondualism**: Nearly monistic; a translation of *Viśiṣṭādvaita*. See: *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.

**quantum**: Quantity or amount. In the quantum theory of modern science: a fixed basic unit, usually of energy. —**quantum particles of light**: Light understood not as a continuum, but as traveling bundles each of a same intensity. Deeper still, these particles originate and resolve themselves in a one divine energy. —**at the quantum level** (of the mind): Deep within the mind, at a subtle energy level. See: *apex of creation*, *microcosm-macrocosm*, *tattva*.

**quell**: To put an end to, subdue or make quiet.



**race**: Technically speaking, each of the five varieties of man (Caucasoid, Congoid, Mongoloid, Australoid and Capoid) is a *Homo sapiens* subspecies. A subspecies is a branch showing slight but significant differences from another branch living in a different area. Few traits are unique to any one race. It is the combination of several traits that indicate racial identity. Accurate race determination can be made by blood analysis or by measuring and comparing certain body dimensions. Ninety-eight percent of all Hindus belong to the Caucasoid race. There are also large numbers of Hindu Mongoloids in Nepal and Assam and some Australoids, such as the Gond and Bhil tribes of India. North and South Indians are among Earth's 2.5 billion Caucasoids, whose traits include straight to wavy hair, thin lips, small to medium teeth, blue to dark brown eyes and a high incident of A<sub>2</sub>-Rh and Gm

blood genes. Skin color, often erroneously attached to the idea of race, is now known to be adaptation to climate: over generations, people in northern climates have developed lighter complexions than their southern brothers.

In a more general sense, the term *race* can apply to any geographical, national or tribal ethnic group, or to mankind as a whole, as "the human race."

**Radhakrishnan (Rādhākṛiṣṇan), Dr. S.**: राधाकृष्णन् (1888-1975) The President of India from 1962 to 1967, an outstanding scholar, philosopher, prolific writer, compelling speaker and effective spokesman for Hinduism. Along with Vivekananda, Tagore, Aurobindo and others, he helped bring about the current Hindu revival. He made Hinduism better known and appreciated at home and abroad, especially in the intellectual world. He was a foremost proponent of panentheism. See: *Vedānta*.

**rage**: Uncontrolled anger. Fuming fit of fury. See: *vitala chakra*.

**Rāhu**: राहु "The seizer." In Hindu astrology, Rāhu is one of the nine important planets (*graha*), but is an invisible or "astral" one, along with its counterpart, Ketu. Physically speaking, it is one of two points in the heavens where the Moon crosses the ecliptic or path of the Sun. The point where the Moon crosses the ecliptic moving from south to north is Rāhu, the north node. The south node is Ketu. Rāhu and Ketu are depicted as a serpent demon who encircles the Earth. Ketu is the dragon's tail and Rāhu is the head. Both are believed to cause general consternation among people. See: *vyotisha*.

**rājanya**: राजन्य "Rulership." A synonym for *kshatriya*. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**rajas**: रजस् "Passion; activity." See: *guṇa*.

**rāja yoga**: राजयोग "King of *yogas*," also known as *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, "eight-limbed *yoga*." The classical *yoga* system of eight progressive stages to Illumination as described in various *yoga Upanishads*, the *Tirumantiram* and, most notably, the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali. The eight limbs are as follows. 1) —**yama**: "Restraint." Virtuous and moral living, which brings purity of mind, freedom from anger, jealousy and subconscious confusion which would inhibit the process of meditation. 2) —**niyama**: "Observance." Religious practices which cultivate the qualities of the higher nature, such as devotion, cognition, humility and contentment—giving the refinement of nature and control of mind needed to concentrate and ultimately plunge into *samādhi*. 3) —**āsana**: "Seat or posture." A sound body is needed for success in meditation. This is attained through *haṭha yoga*, the postures of which balance the energies of mind and body, promoting health and serenity, e.g., *padmāsana*, the "lotus pose," for meditation. The *Yoga Sūtras* indicate that *āsanas* make the *yogī* impervious to the impact of the pairs of opposites (*dvaṇḍva*), heat-cold, etc. 4) —**prāṇāyāma**: "Mastering life force." Breath control, which quiets the *chitta* and balances *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*. Science of

controlling *prāṇa* through breathing techniques in which the lengths of inhalation, retention and exhalation are modulated. *Prāṇāyāma* prepares the mind for deep meditation. 5) —**pratyāhāra**: “Withdrawal.” The practice of withdrawing consciousness from the physical senses first, such as not hearing noise while meditating, then progressively receding from emotions, intellect and eventually from individual consciousness itself in order to merge into the Universal. 6) —**dhāraṇā**: “Concentration.” Focusing the mind on a single object or line of thought, not allowing it to wander. The guiding of the flow of consciousness. When concentration is sustained long and deeply enough, meditation naturally follows. 7) —**dhyaṇa**: “Meditation.” A quiet, alert, powerfully concentrated state wherein new knowledge and insight pour into the field of consciousness. This state is possible once the subconscious mind has been cleared or quieted. 8) —**samādhi**: “Enstasy,” which means “standing within one’s self.” “Sameness, contemplation/realization.” The state of true *yoga*, in which the meditator and the object of meditation are one. See: *āsana, samādhi, yoga*.

**Rāma**: राम Venerated hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic, and one of the two most popular incarnations of Viṣṇu, along with Kṛiṣṇa. His worship is almost universal among Vaiṣṇavas, and extensive among Smārtas and other liberal Hindus. He was a great worshiper of Śiva, and a Śiva temple, called Rameshvaram, was built in his name at the southern tip of India.

**Ramakantha (Rāmakantha) I**: रामकण्ठ A great exponent of Śaiva Siddhānta, ca 950. In the lineage of Aghorasiva.

**Ramakantha II**: रामकण्ठ Great exponent of Śaiva Siddhānta, ca 1150. Aghorasiva’s teacher.

**Ramakrishna (Rāmakṛiṣṇa)**: रामकृष्ण (1836–1886) One of the great saints and mystics of modern Hinduism, and an exemplar of monistic theism—fervent devotee of Mother Kālī and staunch monist who taught oneness and the pursuit of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, realization of the Absolute. He was *guru* to the great Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), who internationalized Hindu thought and philosophy.

**Ramanuja (Rāmānuja)**: रामानुज Philosopher saint, great *bhakta* (1017–1137), founder of one of five major Vaiṣṇava schools, and considered the greatest critic of *advaita*. In his famous *Śrī Bhāṣya* on the *Brahma Sūtras*, he countered Sankara’s absolute monism, point-by-point, with his qualified monism, called *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta*. See: *śaḍ darśana, Vedānta*.

**Ramaraja (Rāmarāja)**: रामराज (1478–1565). The last king of South India’s Vijayanagara Empire.

**Rāmāyaṇa**: रामायण “Life of Rāma.” One of India’s two grand epics (*Itihāsa*) along with the *Mahābhārata*. It is Valmiki’s tragic love story of Rāma and Sitā, whose exemplary lives have helped set high standards of dignity and nobility as an integral part of Hindu *dharma*. Astronomical data in the story puts Rāma’s reign at about 2015 BCE. See: *Rāma*.

**Ramprasad (Rāmprasād)**: रामप्रसाद Great Bengali devotional saint-poet (1718–1775) who composed hymns to Śakti.

**rasātala**: रसातल “Subterranean region.” The fifth *chakra* below the *mūlādhāra*, centered in the ankles. Corresponds to the fifth astral netherworld beneath the Earth’s surface, called Rijisha (“expelled”) or Rasātala. Region of selfishness, self-centeredness and possessiveness. *Rasā* means “earth, soil,” or “moisture.” See: *chakra, loka, Naraka*.

**rationalize**: Excuse through reason. Making plausible explanations.

**Raurava Āgama**: रौरव आगम Among the 28 Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas, this scripture was conveyed by Lord Śiva to sage Ruru (hence the name). Its extensive *kriyā pāda* section details the structure of the Śiva temple and its annexes.

**Ravana (Rāvāṇa)**: रावण Villain of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic. A legendary demon-king of Sri Lanka, adversary of Rāma, eventually defeated by Rāma and his armies.

**reabsorption (reabsorb)**: Taking in again, as water is squeezed from and then drawn back into a sponge. See: *cosmic cycle, mahāpralaya, pralaya*.

**reaffirmation**: A new affirming or a declaration about a thing as true or still pertinent. See: *affirmation*.

**reality**: See: *Absolute Reality, relative*.

**realm**: A kingdom, region, area or sphere. See: *loka*.

**reap**: To cut for harvest. To gain as a result of effort.

**rebellious**: Resisting authority or any form of control.

**recluse**: One who retreats from the world and lives in seclusion.

**reconcile (reconciliation)**: To settle or resolve, as a dispute. To make consistent or compatible, e.g., two conflicting ideas.

**redeem**: To recover, to set free from penalty or deliver from sin. —**redemption**: Act of redeeming. See: *absolution, penance*.

**reembody**: To come into a body again. To reincarnate.

**reincarnation**: “Re-entering the flesh.” *Punarjanma*; metempsychosis. The process wherein souls take on a physical body through the birth process. Reincarnation is one of the fundamental principles of Hindu spiritual insight, shared by the mystical schools of nearly all religions, including Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism (and even Christianity until condemned by the Nicene Council of 787). It is against the backdrop of this principle of the soul’s enjoying many lives that other aspects of Hinduism can be understood. It is a repetitive cycle, known as *punarjanma*, which originates in the subtle plane (*Antarloka*), the realm in which souls live between births and return to after death. Here they are assisted in readjusting to the “in-between” world and eventually prepared for yet another birth. The quality and nature of the birth depends on the merit or demerit of their past actions (*karma*) and on the needs of their unique pattern of development and experience (*dharma*). The mother, the father and the soul together create a new body for the soul. At the moment of conception, the soul con-

nects with and is irrevocably bound to the embryo. As soon as the egg is fertilized, the process of human life begins. It is during the mid-term of pregnancy that the full humanness of the fetus is achieved and the soul fully inhabits the new body, a stage which is acknowledged when the child begins to move and kick within the mother's womb. (*Tirumantiram*, 460: "There in the pregnant womb, the soul lay in primordial quiescence [*turiya*] state. From that state, Māyā [or Prakṛiti] and Her tribe aroused it and conferred consciousness and *māyā*'s evolutes eight—desires and the rest. Thus say scriptures holy and true.") Finally, at birth the soul emerges into Earth consciousness, veiled of all memory of past lives and the inner worlds. The cycle of reincarnation ends when *karma* has been resolved and the Self God (Paraśiva) has been realized. This condition of release is called *moksha*. Then the soul continues to evolve and mature, but without the need to return to physical existence. How many earthly births must one have to attain the unattainable? Many thousands to be sure, hastened by righteous living, *tapas*, austerities on all levels, penance and good deeds in abundance. See: *evolution of the soul, karma, moksha, nonhuman birth, saṁsāra, soul*.

**relative:** Quality or object which is meaningful only in relation to something else. Not absolute. —**relative reality:** *Māyā*. That which is ever changing and changeable. Describes the nature of manifest existence, indicating that it is not an illusion but is also not Absolute Reality, which is eternal and unchanging. See: *Absolute Reality, māyā*.

**religion:** From Latin *religare*, "to bind back." Any system of belief and worship of superhuman beings or powers and/or of a Supreme Being or Power. Religion is a structured vehicle for soul advancement which often includes theology, scripture, spiritual and moral practices, priesthood and liturgy. See: *Hinduism*.

**relinquish:** To give up, let go of or abandon. See: *sacrifice, tyāga*.

**remorse:** Deep, painful regret or guilt over a wrong one has done. Moral anguish. See: *absolution, hrī, penance*.

**remote:** Distant, secluded; difficult to reach.

**renaissance:** "Rebirth" or "new birth." A renewal, revival or reawakening.

**render:** To cause to be or to become.

**renowned:** Famous.

**Renukacharya (Reṇukāchārya):** रेणुकाचार्य A Vira Śaiva philosopher and saint.

**renunciation:** See: *sannyāsa, tyāga, vairāgya*.

**replenish:** To fill up or cause to be full again.

**repose:** To rest peacefully. —**to repose in one's realization:** To cease outward activity and enjoy communion with the Divine.

**repudiation:** Public rejection of a condition, habit or way of being.

**rescind:** To cancel or revoke.

**resemble:** To look like, or have similar qualities.

**resent (resentment):** A feeling of ill-will, indignation or hostility from a sense of having been wronged.

**residue:** Remainder. That which is left over.

**resplendence:** Radiance; brilliance.

**restive:** Nervous, eager to go forward; hard to control.

**restraints:** See: *yama-niyama*.

**retaliation:** Paying back an injury, returning like for like, hurt for hurt. Getting even; vengeance.

**revealing grace:** See: *anugraha śakti, grace*.

**Righama (Righama):** ऋचम See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**rigorous:** Very strict or severe.

**Rig Veda:** ऋग्वेद "Veda of verse (*rik*)."  
The first and oldest of the four *Veda* corpora of revealed scriptures (*śruti*), including a hymn collection (*Saṁhitā*), priestly explanatory manuals (*Brāhmaṇas*), forest treatises (*Āraṇyakas*) elaborating on the Vedic rites, and philosophical dialogs (*Upanishads*). Like the other *Vedas*, the *Rig Veda* was brought to Earth consciousness not all at once, but gradually, over a period of perhaps several thousand years. The oldest and core portion is the *Saṁhitā*, believed to date back, in its oral form, as far as 8,000 years, and to have been written down in archaic Sanskrit some 3,000 years ago. It consists of more than 10,000 verses, averaging three or four lines (*riks*), forming 1,028 hymns (*sūktas*), organized in ten books called *maṇḍalas*. It embodies prayerful hymns of praise and invocation to the Divinities of nature and to the One Divine. They are the spiritual reflections of a pastoral people with a profound awe for the powers of nature, each of which they revered as sacred and alive. The *rishis* who unfolded these outpourings of adoration perceived a well-ordered cosmos in which *dharma* is the way of attunement with celestial worlds, from which all righteousness and prosperity descends. The main concern is man's relationship with God and the world, and the invocation of the subtle worlds into mundane existence. Prayers beseech the Gods for happy family life, wealth, pleasure, cattle, health, protection from enemies, strength in battle, matrimony, progeny, long life and happiness, wisdom and realization and final liberation from re-birth. The *Rig Veda Saṁhitā*, which in length equals Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined, is the most important hymn collection, for it lends a large number of its hymns to the other three *Veda Saṁhitās* (the *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*). Chronologically, after the *Saṁhitās* came the *Brāhmaṇas*, followed by the *Āraṇyakas*, and finally the *Upanishads*, also called the *Vedānta*, meaning "Veda's end." See: *śruti, Vedas*.

**rishi:** ऋषि "Seer." A term for an enlightened being, emphasizing psychic perception and visionary wisdom. In the Vedic age, *rishis* lived in forest or mountain retreats, either alone or with disciples. These *rishis* were great souls who were the inspired conveyers of the *Vedas*. Seven particular *rishis* (the *sapta-rishis*) mentioned in the *Rig Veda* are said to still guide mankind from the inner worlds. See: *śruti*.

**Rishi from the Himalayas:** First recent known *siddha* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā Nandinātha Sampradāya*.

**rita:** ऋत "Sacred order, cosmic law; truth." See: *dharma*.

**rite (or ritual):** A religious ceremony. See: *sacrament, sacrifice, saṁskāra*.

**rites of passage:** Sacraments marking crucial stages of life. See: *saṁskāra*.

**ritu kāla:** ऋतुकाल “Fit or proper season.” Time of menses. Traditional ceremony marking a young woman’s coming of age. *Ritu kāla* thus means “onset of puberty.” See: *saṁskāras of adulthood*.

**Rudra:** रुद्र “Controller of terrific powers,” or “red, shining one.” A name of Śiva as the God of dissolution, the universal force of reabsorption. *Rudra-Śiva* is revered both as the “terrifying one” and the “lord of tears,” for He wields and controls the terrific powers which may cause lamentation among humans. See: *Naṭarāja*.

**rudrāksha:** रुद्राक्ष “Eye of Rudra; or red-eyed.” Refers to the third eye, or *ājñā chakra*. Marble-sized, multi-faceted, reddish-brown seeds from the *Eleocarpus ganitrus*, or blue marble tree, which are sacred to Śiva and a symbol of His compassion for humanity. Garlands, *rudrāksha mālā*, of larger seeds are worn around the neck by monks, and nonmonastics often wear a single bead on a cord at the throat. Smaller beads (usually numbering 108) are strung together for *japa* (recitation). See: *japa, mantra*.

**Rudrasambhu (Rudrasāmbhu):** रुद्रसम्भु Principal *guru* in the Āmardaka order of Śaiva monastics, about 775 in Ujjain, one of Śaivism’s holiest cities. The sect served as advisors to the king prior to the Muslim domination around 1300.

**Rudrāyamala Tantra:** रुद्रायमलतन्त्र A little-known text dealing with worship.



**śabda kośa:** शब्दकोश “Sheath of sounds, or words.” Vocabulary; a dictionary or glossary of terms.

**sacrament:** 1) Holy rite, especially one solemnized in a formal, consecrated manner which is a bonding between the recipient and God, Gods or *guru*. This includes rites of passage (*saṁskāra*), ceremonies sanctifying crucial events or stages of life. 2) *Prasāda*. Sacred substances, grace-filled gifts, blessed in sacred ceremony or by a holy person. See: *prasāda, saṁskāra*.

**sacred thread:** *Yajñopavīta*. See: *upanayana*.

**sacrifice:** *Yajña*. 1) Presenting offerings to a Deity as an expression of homage and devotion. 2) Giving up something, often one’s own possession, advantage or preference, to serve a higher purpose. The literal meaning of *sacrifice* is “to make sacred,” implying an act of worship. It is the most common translation of the term *yajña*, from the verb *yuj*, “to worship.” In Hinduism, all of life is a sacrifice—called *jīvayajña*, a giving of oneself—through which comes true spiritual fulfillment. *Tyāga*, the power of detachment, is an essential quality of true sacrifice. See: *tyāga, yajña*.

**sadāchāra:** सदाचार “Proper conduct; virtue, morality.” It is embodied in the principles of *dharma*. See: *dharma, pāda, yama-niyama*.

**Sadāśiva:** सदाशिव “Ever-auspicious.” A name of the

Primal Soul, Śiva, a synonym for Parameśvara, which is expressed in the physical being of the *satguru*. *Sadāśiva* especially denotes the power of revealing grace, *anugraha śakti*, the third *tattva*, after which emerge Śiva’s other four divine powers. This fivefold manifestation or expression of God’s activity in the cosmos is depicted in Hindu *mantras*, literature and art as the five-faced *Sadāśivamūrti*. Looking upward is *Īśāna*, “ruler” (the power of revelation). Facing east is *Tatpurusha*, “supreme soul” (the power of obscuration). Westward-looking is *Sadyojāta*, “quickly birthing” (the power of creation). Northward is *Vāmadeva*, “lovely, pleasing” (the power of preservation). Southward is *Aghora*, “nonterrifying” (the power of reabsorption). The first four faces revealed the *Vedas*. The fifth face, *Īśāna*, revealed the *Āgamas*. These five are also called *Sadāśiva*, the revealer; *Maheśvara*, the obscurer; *Brahmā*, the creator; *Viṣṇu*, the preserver; and *Rudra*, the destroyer. See: *grace, Parameśvara, Sadāśiva, Śiva, tattva*.

**sādhaka:** साधक “Accomplished one; a devotee who performs *sādhana*.” A serious aspirant who has undertaken spiritual disciplines, is usually celibate and under the guidance of a *guru*. He wears white and may be under vows, but is not a *sannyāsīn*. See: *sādhana*.

**sādhana:** साधन “Effective means of attainment.” Religious or spiritual disciplines, such as *pūjā, yoga*, meditation, *japa*, fasting and austerity. The effect of *sādhana* is the building of willpower, faith and confidence in oneself and in God, Gods and *guru*. *Sādhana* harnesses and transmutes the instinctive-intellectual nature, allowing progressive spiritual unfoldment into the superconscious realizations and innate abilities of the soul. See: *pāda, purity-impurity, rāja yoga, sādhana mārga, spiritual unfoldment*.

**sādhana mārga:** साधनमार्ग “The way of *sādhana*.” A term used by Sage Yogaswami to name his prescription for seekers of Truth—a path of intense effort, spiritual discipline and consistent inner transformation, as opposed to theoretical and intellectual learning. See: *mysticism, pāda, sādhana, spiritual unfoldment*.

**sādhū:** साधु “Virtuous one; straight, unerring.” A holy man dedicated to the search for God. A *sādhū* may or may not be a *yogī* or a *sannyāsīn*, or be connected in any way with a *guru* or legitimate lineage. *Sādhū*s usually have no fixed abode and travel unattached from place to place, often living on alms. There are countless *sādhū*s on the roads, byways, mountains, riverbanks, and in the *āśramas* and caves of India. They have, by their very existence, a profound, stabilizing effect on the consciousness of India and the world. See: *vairāgi*.

**sādhvī:** साध्वी Feminine of *sādhū*. See: *sādhū*.

**Saṅu Brahman:** सगुणब्रह्मन् “God with qualities.” The Personal Lord. See: *Brahman, Parameśvara*.

**sahasra lekhana sādhana:** सहस्रलेखनसाधन “Thousand-times writing discipline.” The spiritual practice of writing a sacred *mantra* 1,008 times.

**sahasrāra chakra:** सहस्रारचक्र The cranial psychic force

center. “Thousand-spoked wheel.” See: *chakra*.

**Śaiva:** शैव Of or relating to Śaivism or its adherents, of whom there are about 400 million in the world today. Same as *Saivite*. See: *Saivism*.

**Śaiva Āgamas:** शैव आगम The sectarian revealed scriptures of the Śaivas. Strongly theistic, they identify Śiva as the Supreme Lord, immanent and transcendent. They are in two main divisions: the 64 *Kashmīr Śaiva Āgamas* and the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas*. The latter group are the fundamental sectarian scriptures of Śaiva Siddhānta. Of these, ten are of the *Sivabheda* division and are considered dualistic: 1) *Kāmika*, 2) *Yogaja*, 3) *Chintya*, 4) *Kāraṇa*, 5) *Ajita*, 6) *Dīpta*, 7) *Sūkshma*, 8) *Sāhasraka*, 9) *Amśumat* and 10) *Suprabheda*. There are 18 in the *Rudrabheda* group, classed as dual-nondual: 11) *Vijaya*, 12) *Niḥśvāsa*, 13) *Svāyambhuva*, 14) *Aṅala*, 15) *Vīra* (*Bhadra*), 16) *Raurava*, 17) *Makuṭa*, 18) *Vimala*, 19) *Chandrajñāna* (or *Chandrahāsa*), 20) *Mukhabimba* (or *Bimba*), 21) *Prodgītā* (or *Udgītā*), 22) *Lalīta*, 23) *Siddha*, 24) *Santāna*, 25) *Sarvokta* (*Narasimha*), 26) *Parameśvara*, 27) *Kirana* and 28) *Vātula* (or *Parahita*). Rishi Tirumular, in his *Tirumantiram*, refers to 28 *Āgamas* and mentions nine by name. Eight of these—*Kāraṇa*, *Kāmika*, *Vīra*, *Chintya*, *Vātula*, *Vimala*, *Suprabheda* and *Makuṭa*—are in the above list of 28 furnished by the French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry. The ninth, *Kalottāra*, is presently regarded as an *Upāgama*, or secondary text, of *Vātula*. The *Kāmika* is the *Āgama* most widely followed in Tamil Śaiva temples, because of the availability of Aghorasiva’s manual-commentary (*paddhati*) on it. *Vīra* Śaivites especially refer to the *Vātula* and *Vīra Āgamas*. The *Śaiva Āgama* scriptures, above all else, are the connecting strand through all the schools of Śaivism. The *Āgamas* themselves express that they are entirely consistent with the teachings of the *Veda*, that they contain the essence of the *Veda*, and must be studied with the same high degree of devotion. See: *Āgamas*, *Vedas*.

**Śaiva Neri:** சைவநெறி “Śaiva path.” Tamil term for Śaivism. See: *Saivism*.

**Śaiva Samayam:** சைவ சமயம் “Śaiva religion.” See: *Saivism*.

**Śaiva Siddhānta:** शैवसिद्धान्त “Final conclusions of Śaivism.” The most widespread and influential Śaivite school today, predominant especially among the Tamil people of Sri Lanka and South India. It is the formalized theology of the divine revelations contained in the twenty-eight *Śaiva Āgamas*. The first known *guru* of the Śuddha (“pure”) Śaiva Siddhānta tradition was Maharishi Nandinatha of Kashmir (ca BCE 250), recorded in Panini’s book of grammar as the teacher of *ṛishis* Patanjali, Vyaghrapada and Vasishtha. Other sacred scriptures include the *Tirumantiram* and the voluminous collection of devotional hymns, the *Tirumurai*, and the masterpiece on ethics and statecraft, the *Tirukural*. For Śaiva Siddhāntins, Śiva is the totality of all, understood in three perfections: Parameśvara (the Personal Creator Lord), Parāśakti

(the substratum of form) and Paraśiva (Absolute Reality which transcends all). Souls and world are identical in essence with Śiva, yet also differ in that they are evolving. A pluralistic stream arose in the middle ages from the teachings of Aghorasiva and Meykandar. For Aghorasiva’s school (ca 1150) Śiva is not the material cause of the universe, and the soul attains perfect “sameness” with Śiva upon liberation. Meykandar’s (ca 1250) pluralistic school denies that souls ever attain perfect sameness or unity with Śiva. See: *Saivism*.

**Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita:** शैवविशिष्टाद्वैत The philosophy of Śiva Advaita. See: *Śiva Advaita*.

**Śaivism (Śaiva):** शैव The religion followed by those who worship Śiva as supreme God. Oldest of the four sects of Hinduism. The earliest historical evidence of Śaivism is from the 8,000-year-old Indus Valley civilization in the form of the famous seal of Śiva as Lord Paśupati, seated in a *yogic* pose. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, dated astronomically at 2000 BCE, Lord Rāma worshiped Śiva, as did his rival Ravana. Buddha in 624 BCE was born into a Śaivite family, and records of his time speak of the Śaiva ascetics who wandered the hills looking much as they do today. There are many schools of Śaivism, six of which are Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāśupata Śaivism, Kashmir Śaivism, *Vīra* Śaivism, Siddha Siddhānta and Śiva Advaita. They are based firmly on the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*, and thus have much in common, including the following principle doctrines: 1) the five powers of Śiva—creation, preservation, destruction, revealing and concealing grace; 2) The three categories: *Paṭi*, *paśu* and *pāśa* (“God, souls and bonds”); 3) the three bonds: *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*; 4) the threefold power of Śiva: *içṇā śakti*, *kriyā śakti* and *jñāna śakti*; 5) the thirty-six *tattvas*, or categories of existence; 6) the need for initiation from a *satguru*; 7) the power of *mantra*; 8) the four *pādas* (stages): *charyā* (selfless service), *kriyā* (devotion), *yoga* (meditation), and *jñāna* (illumination); 9) the belief in the Pañchākshara as the foremost *mantra*, and in *rudrāksha* and *vibhūti* as sacred aids to faith; 10) the beliefs in *satguru* (preceptor), Śivaliṅga (object of worship) and *saṅgama* (company of holy persons). See: *individual school entries*, *Śaivism (six schools)*.

**Śaivism (six schools):** Through history Śaivism has developed a vast array of lineages. Philosophically, six schools are most notable: Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāśupata Śaivism, Kashmir Śaivism, *Vīra* Śaivism, Siddha Siddhānta and Śiva Advaita. Śaiva Siddhānta first distinguished itself in the second century BCE through the masterful treatise of a Himalayan pilgrim to South India, Rishi Tirumular. It is Śaivism’s most widespread and influential school. Pāśupata Śaivism emerged in the Himalayan hills over 25 centuries ago. Ancient writings chronicle it as a Śaiva ascetic *yoga* path whose most renowned *guru* was Lakulisa. Kashmir Śaivism, a strongly monistic lineage, arose from the revelatory aphorisms of Sri Vasugupta in the tenth century. *Vīra* Śaivism took shape in India’s Karnataka



state in the 12th-century under the inspiration of Sri Basavanna. It is a dynamic, reformist sect, rejecting religious complexity and stressing each devotee's personal relationship with God. Siddha Siddhānta, also known as Gorakshanātha Śaivism, takes its name from the writings of the powerful 10th-century *yogī*, Sri Gorakshanātha, whose techniques for Śiva identity attracted a large monastic and householder following in North India and Nepal. Śiva Advaita is a Śaivite interpretation of the Vedānta Sūtras, based on the writings of Srikantha, a 12th-century scholar who sought to reconcile the *Upanishads* with the *Āgamas*. See: *individual school entries*.

**Śaivite (Śaiva):** शैव Of or relating to Śaivism or its adherents, of whom there are about 400 million in the world today. See: *Hinduism, Śaivism*.

**śākāhāra:** शाकाहार "Vegetarian diet." From *śāka*, "vegetable;" and *āhāra*, "eating; taking food." See: *meat-eater, vegetarian, yama-niyama*.

**sakala avasthā:** सकल अवस्था "Stage of embodied being" (Tamil: *avasthai*.) In Śaiva Siddhānta, the second of three stages of the soul's evolution, when it is engaged in the world through the senses as it first develops a mental, then emotional and astral body, and finally a physical body, entering the cycles of birth, death and rebirth under the veiling powers of *karma* and *māyā*. Progress through *sakala avasthā* is measured in three stages: 1) *irul*, "darkness;" when the impetus is toward *pāśa*, knowledge and experience of the world (*pāśa-jñāna*); 2) *marul*, "confusion;" caught between the world and God, the soul begins to turn within for knowledge of its own nature (*paśu-jñāna*); and 3) *arul*, "grace," when the soul seeks to know God (*Pati-jñāna*); and receive His grace. See: *avasthā, evolution of the soul, kevala avasthā, śuddha avasthā*.

**sakhā mārga:** सखामार्ग "Friend's path." See: *attainment, pāda*.

**śākshin:** साक्षिन् "Eye witness." Awareness, the witness consciousness of the soul. Known as *nef* in the mystical Nātha language of Shūm. See: *awareness, chit, consciousness (individual), Shūm, soul*.

**Śākta:** शक्त Of or relating to *Śāktism*. See: *Hinduism, Śāktism, tantrism*.

**Śākta Tantrism:** शाक्ततन्त्र See: *Śāktism, tantrism*.

**Śakti:** शक्ति "Power, energy." The active power or manifest energy of Śiva that pervades all of existence. Its most refined aspect is Parāśakti, or Satchidānanda, the pure consciousness and primal substratum of all form. This pristine, divine energy unfolds as *içṇā śakti* (the power of desire, will, love), *kriyā śakti* (the power of action) and *jñāna śakti* (the power of wisdom, knowing), represented as the three prongs of Śiva's *triśūla*, or trident. From these arise the five powers of revelation, concealment, dissolution, preservation and creation.

In Śaiva Siddhānta, Śiva is All, and His divine energy, Śakti, is inseparable from Him. This unity is symbolized in the image of Ardhanārīśvara, "half-female God." In popular, village Hinduism, the unity

of Śiva and Śakti is replaced with the concept of Śiva and Śakti as separate entities. Śakti is represented as female, and Śiva as male. In Hindu temples, art and mythology, they are everywhere seen as the divine couple. This depiction has its source in the folk-narrative sections of the *Purāṇas*, where it is given elaborate expression. Śakti is personified in many forms as the consorts of the Gods. For example, the Goddesses Pārvatī, Lakshmi and Sarasvatī are the respective mythological consorts of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Philosophically, however, the caution is always made that God and God's energy are One, and the metaphor of the inseparable divine couple serves only to illustrate this Oneness.

Within the Śākta religion, the worship of the Goddess is paramount, in Her many fierce and benign forms. Śakti is the Divine Mother of manifest creation, visualized as a female form, and Śiva is specifically the Unmanifest Absolute. The fierce or black (*asita*) forms of the Goddess include Kālī, Durgā, Chaṇḍī, Chamuṇḍī, Bhadrakālī and Bhairavi. The benign or white (*sita*) forms include Umā, Gaurī, Ambikā, Pārvatī, Maheśvari, Lalitā and Annapūrṇā. As Rājārājeśvari (divine "Queen of kings") She is the presiding Deity of the Śrī Chakra *yantra*. She is also worshiped as the ten Mahāvīdyās, manifestations of the highest knowledge—Kālī, Tārā, Shoḍaśī, Bhuvanēśvari, Chinnamastā, Bhairavi, Dhūmāvati, Bagatā, Mātāṅgi and Kamalā. While some Śāktas view these as individual beings, most revere them as manifestations of the singular Devī. There are also numerous minor Goddess forms, in the category of Grāmadevatā ("village Deity"). These include Piṭāri, "Snake-catcher" (usually represented by a simple stone), and Mariyamman, "Smallpox Goddess."

In the *yoga* mysticism of all traditions, divine energy, *śakti*, is experienced within the human body in three aspects: 1) the feminine force, *iḍā śakti*, 2) the masculine force, *piṅgalā śakti*, and 3) the pure androgynous force, *kuṇḍalinī śakti*, that flows through the *sushumṇā nāḍī*.

Śakti is most easily experienced by devotees as the sublime, bliss-inspiring energy that emanates from a holy person or sanctified Hindu temple. See: *Amman, Ardhanārīśvara, Goddess, Parāśakti, Śāktism*.

**śaktinipāta:** शक्तिनिपात "Descent of grace," occurring during the advanced stage of the soul's evolution called *arul*, at the end of the *sakala avasthā*. *Śaktinipāta* is twofold: the internal descent is recognized as a tremendous yearning for Śiva; the outer descent of grace is the appearance of a *satguru*. At this stage, the devotee increasingly wants to devote himself to all that is spiritual and holy. Same as *śaktipāta*. See: *arul, grace, sakala avasthā, śaktipāta*.

**śaktipāta:** शक्तिपात "Descent of grace." *Guru dīkshā*, initiation from the preceptor; particularly the first initiation, which awakens the *kuṇḍalinī* and launches the process of spiritual unfoldment. See: *anugraha śakti, dīkshā, grace, kuṇḍalinī*.

**Śāktism (Śākta):** शक्त “Doctrine of power.” The religion followed by those who worship the Supreme as the Divine Mother—Śakti or Devī—in Her many forms, both gentle and fierce. Śāktism is one of the four primary sects of Hinduism. Śāktism’s first historical signs are thousands of female statuettes dated ca 5500 BCE recovered at the Mehrgarh village in India. In philosophy and practice, Śāktism greatly resembles Śaivism, both faiths promulgating, for example, the same ultimate goals of *advaitic* union with Śiva and *moksha*. But Śāktas worship Śakti as the Supreme Being exclusively, as the dynamic aspect of Divinity, while Śiva is considered solely transcendent and is not worshiped. There are many forms of Śāktism, with endless varieties of practices which seek to capture divine energy or power for spiritual transformation. Geographically, Śāktism has two main forms, the Śrīkula “family of the Goddess Śrī (or Lakshmi),” which respects the *brāhminical* tradition (a mainstream Hindu tradition which respects caste and purity rules) and is strongest in South India; and the Kālikula, “family of Kālī,” which rejects *brāhminical* tradition and prevails in Northern and Eastern India. Four major expressions of Śāktism are evident today: folk-shamanism, *yoga*, devotionalism and universalism. Among the eminent *mantras* of Śāktism is: *Aum Hṛim Chaṇḍīkāyāi Namaḥ*, “I bow to Her who tears apart all dualities.” There are many varieties of folk Śāktism gravitating around various forms of the Goddess, such as Kālī, Durgā and a number of forms of Amman. Such worship often involves animal sacrifice and fire-walking, though the former is tending to disappear. See: *Amman, Goddess, Iṣṭa Devatā, Kālī, Śakti, tantrism*.

**Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita:** शक्तिविशिष्टद्वैत The philosophy of Vira Śaivism. See: *Vira Śaivism*.

**śāktopāya:** शाक्तोपाय “Way of power.” See: *upāya*.

**Śākya:** शाक्य Name of the Śaivite noble clan into which Buddha, also called Śākyamuni, was born (in what is now Nepal). See: *Buddha*.

**samādhi:** समाधि “Enstasy,” which means “standing within one’s Self.” “Sameness; contemplation; union, wholeness; completion, accomplishment.” *Samādhi* is the state of true *yoga*, in which the meditator and the object of meditation are one. *Samādhi* is of two levels. The first is *savikalpa samādhi* (“enstasy with form” or “seed”), identification or oneness with the essence of an object. Its highest form is the realization of the primal substratum or pure consciousness, Satchidānanda. The second is *nirvikalpa samādhi* (“enstasy without form” or “seed”), identification with the Self, in which all modes of consciousness are transcended and Absolute Reality, Paraśiva, beyond time, form and space, is experienced. This brings in its aftermath a complete transformation of consciousness. In Classical Yoga, *nirvikalpa samādhi* is known as *asamprajñāta samādhi*, “supraconscious enstasy”—*samādhi*, or beingness, without thought or cognition, *prajñā*. *Savikalpa samādhi* is also called *samprajñāta samādhi*,

“conscious enstasy.” (Note that *samādhi* differs from *samyama*—the continuous meditation on a subject or mystic key [such as a *chakra*] to gain revelation on that subject or area of consciousness. As explained by Patanjali, *samyama* consists of *dhāranā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.) See: *enstasy, kuṇḍalinī, Paraśiva, rāja yoga, samarasa, Satchidānanda, Self Realization, trance*.

**samarasa:** समरस “Even essence” or “same taste.” In Siddha Siddhānta, a term describing the state attained by a *yogī* in which he consciously experiences the world and daily life while never losing his perspective of the essential unity of God, soul and world. Similar in concept to *sāyujya samādhi*. See: *jñāna, kaivalya, samādhi, Siddha Siddhānta, Śivasāyujya*.

**samāvartana:** समावर्तन “Returning home.” The ceremony marking a youth’s completion of Vedic studies. See: *samśkāras*.

**Sāma Veda:** सामवेद “Song of wisdom.” Third of the four *Vedas*. Ninety percent of its 1,875 stanzas are derived from the *Ṛig Veda*. It is a collection of hymns specially arranged and notated for chanting with a distinctive melody and cadence by the Udgātā priests during *yajña*, fire ceremony, together with stanzas from the *Yajur Veda*. This *Veda* represents the oldest known form of Indian music. See: *Śruti, Vedas*.

**Samayacharya:** समयशास्त्री “Religious teacher.” See: *Alvar, Nalvar*.

**Sambandar:** சம்பந்தர் Child saint of the 7th-century Śaivite renaissance. Composed many *Devaram* hymns in praise of Śiva, reconverted at least one Tamil king who had embraced Jainism, and vehemently sought to counter the incursion of Buddhism, bringing the Tamil people back to Śaivism. See: *Nalvar, Nayanar, Tirumurai*.

**Sāmbhavopāya:** शाम्भवोपाय “Way of Śambhu” (Śiva). See: *upāya*.

**samhāra:** संहार “Dissolution; destruction.” See: *mahā-pralaya, Naṭarāja*.

**samhitā:** संहिता “Collection.” 1) Any methodically arranged collection of texts or verses. 2) The hymn collection of each of the four *Vedas*. 3) A common alternate term for Vaishṇava *Āgamas*. See: *Vedas*.

**sampradāya:** संप्रदाय “Tradition,” “transmission;” a philosophical or religious doctrine or lineage. A living stream of tradition or theology within Hinduism, passed on by oral training and initiation. The term derives from the verb *sampradā*, meaning “to give out,” “render,” grant, bestow or confer; to hand down by tradition; to bequeath. *Sampradāya* is thus a philosophy borne down through history by verbal transmission. It is more inclusive than the related term *paramparā* which names a living lineage of ordained *gurus* who embody and carry forth a *sampradāya*. Each *sampradāya* is often represented by many *paramparās*. See: *paramparā*.

**samsāra:** संसार “Flow.” The phenomenal world. Transmigratory existence, fraught with impermanence and change. The cycle of birth, death and rebirth; the total pattern of successive earthly lives experienced by

a soul. A term similar to *punarjanma* (reincarnation), but with broader connotations. See: *evolution of the soul, karma, punarjanma, reincarnation*.

**samsāri:** संसारी “One in *samsāra*,” “wanderer.” A soul during transmigration, immersed in or attached to mundane existence, hence not striving for liberation (*moksha*). A *samsāri* is someone who is not “on the path.” See: *materialism, samsāra, San Mārga, worldly*.  
**samskāra:** संस्कार “Impression, activator; sanctification, preparation.” 1) The imprints left on the subconscious mind by experience (from this or previous lives), which then color all of life, one’s nature, responses, states of mind, etc. 2) A sacrament or rite done to mark a significant transition of life. These make deep and positive impressions on the mind of the recipient, inform the family and community of changes in the lives of its members and secure inner-world blessings. The numerous *samskāras* are outlined in the *Grīhya Śāstras*. Most are accompanied by specific *mantras* from the *Vedas*. See: *mind (five states), sacrament*.

**samskāras of birth:** From the rite of conception to the blessings of the new-born child. —**garbhādhāna:** “Womb-placing.” Rite anticipating conception, where physical union is consecrated with the intent of bringing into physical birth an advanced soul. —**punsavana:** “Male rite; bringing forth a male.” A rite performed during the third month of pregnancy consisting of prayers for a son and for the well-being of mother and child. A custom, found in all societies, based on the need for men to defend the country, run the family business and support the parents in old age. The need for male children in such societies is also based on the fact that women outlive men and leave the family to join their husband’s family. —**simantonnayana:** “Hair-parting.” A ceremony held between the fourth and seventh months in which the husband combs his wife’s hair and expresses his love and support. —**jātakarma:** “Rite of birth.” The father welcomes and blesses the newborn child and feeds it a taste of *ghee* and honey. See: *samskāra*.

**samskāras of childhood:** From naming to education. —**nāmakaraṇa:** “Name-giving” and formal entry into one or another sect of Hinduism, performed 11 to 41 days after birth. The name is chosen according to astrology, preferably the name of a God or Goddess. At this time, guardian *devas* are assigned to see the child through life. One who converts to or adopts Hinduism later in life would receive this same sacrament. —**annaprāsana:** “Feeding.” The ceremony marking the first taking of solid food, held at about six months. (Breast-feeding generally continues). —**karnavedha:** “Ear-piercing.” The piercing of both ears, for boys and girls, and the inserting of gold earrings, held during the first, third or fifth year. See: *ear-rings*. —**chūḍākaraṇa:** “Head-shaving.” The shaving of the head, for boys and girls, between the 31st day and the fourth year. —**vidyārambha:** Marks the beginning of formal education. The boy or girl ceremoniously writes his/her first letter of the alphabet in a

tray of uncooked rice. —**upanayana:** Given to boys at about 12 years of age, marks the beginning of the period of *brahmacharya* and formal study of scripture and sacred lore, usually with an *āchārya* or *guru*. —**samāvartana:** Marks the end of formal religious study. See: *samskāra*.

**samskāras of adulthood:** From coming-of-age to marriage. —**ritu kāla:** “Fit (or proper) season.” Time of menses. A home blessing marking the coming of age for girls. —**keśānta:** Marking a boy’s first beard-shaving, at about 16 years. Both of the above are home ceremonies in which the young ones are reminded of their *brahmacharya*, given new clothes and jewelry and joyously admitted into the adult community as young adults. —**nīśchitārtha** “Declaration of intention. Also called *vāgdāna*, “word-giving.” A formal engagement or betrothal ceremony in which a couple pledge themselves to one another, exchanging rings and other gifts. —**vivāha:** Marriage.” An elaborate and joyous ceremony performed in presence of God and Gods, in which the *homa* fire is central. To conclude the ceremony, the couple take seven steps to the Northeast as the groom recites: “One step for vigor, two steps for vitality, three steps for prosperity, four steps for happiness, five steps for cattle, six steps for seasons, seven steps for friendship. To me be devoted (*Hiranyakeśi Grīhya Sūtras* 1.6.21.2 VE).” See: *samskāra*.  
**samskāras of later life:** —**vānaprastha āśrama:** Age 48 marks the entrance into the elder advisor stage, celebrated in some communities by special ceremony. —**sannyāsa āśrama vrata:** The advent of withdrawal from social duties and responsibilities at age 72 is sometimes ritually acknowledged (different from *sannyāsa dikshā*). See: *sannyāsa dharma*. —**antyeshti:** The various funeral rites performed to guide the soul in its transition to inner worlds, including preparation of the body, cremation, bone-gathering, dispersal of ashes, and home purification. See: *bone-gathering, cremation, death, piṇḍa, samskāra, shashtyabda pūrti, śrāddha, transition*.

**Sanātana Dharma:** सनातनधर्म “Eternal religion” or “Everlasting path.” It is a traditional designation for the Hindu religion. See: *Hinduism*.

**Sanatkumāra:** सनत्कुमार “Ever-youthful,” perpetual virgin boy. A name of God Murugan. Also one of the eight disciples of Maharishi Nandinatha. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā, Kārttikeya*.

**sañchita karma:** सञ्चितकर्म “Accumulated action.” The accumulated consequence of an individual’s actions in this and past lives. See: *karma*.

**sanctify:** To make holy.

**sanctum sanctorum:** “Holy of holies.” *Garbhagriha*. The most sacred part of a temple, usually a cave-like stone chamber, in which the main icon is installed. See: *darśana, garbhagriha, temple*.

**sandalwood:** *Chandana*. The Asian evergreen tree *Santalum album*. Its sweetly fragrant heartwood is ground into the fine, tan-colored paste distributed as *prasāda* in Śaivite temples and used for sacred marks

on the forehead, *tilaka*. Sandalwood is also prized for incense, carving and fine cabinetry.

**sandhyā upāsana:** सन्ध्या उपासना “Worship at time’s junctures.” Drawing near to God at the changes of time—worship and *sādhana* performed in the home at dawn, noon and dusk. See: *sādhana*.

**Śaṅḍīlya Upanishad:** शाण्डिल्य उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Atharva Veda*. Discusses eight forms of *yoga*, restraints, observances, breath control, meditation and the nature of Truth.

**saṅgama:** संगम “Association; fellowship.” (Tamil: *saṅgam*) Coming together in a group, especially for religious purposes. Also a town in Karnataka, South India, where the *Krishṇa* and *Malaprabhā* rivers meet; an ancient center of Kālāmukha Śaivism where the Vīra Śaivite preceptor Basavanna lived and studied as a youth. See: *congregational worship*.

**saṅkalpa:** संकल्प “Will; purpose; determination.” A solemn vow or declaration of purpose to perform any ritual observance. Most commonly, *saṅkalpa* names the mental and verbal preparation made by a temple priest as he begins rites of worship. During the *saṅkalpa*, he proclaims to the three worlds what he is about to do. He intones the name of the Deity, the type of ritual he is about to perform and the present time and place according to precise astrological notations. Once the *saṅkalpa* is made, he is bound to complete the ceremony. See: *pūjā*.

**Sankara (Śaṅkara):** शङ्कर “Conferring happiness;” “propitious.” A name of Śiva. Also one of Hinduism’s most extraordinary monks, Adi Sankara (788–820), preeminent *guru* of the Smārta Sampradāya, noted for his monistic philosophy (Advaita Vedānta), his many scriptural commentaries, and his formalizing of ten orders of *sannyāsins* with pontifical headquarters at strategic points across India. He lived only 32 years, but traveled throughout India and transformed the Hindu world of that time. See: *Daśanāmī*, *Śaṅkarāchārya pīṭha*, *śaṅmata sthāpanāchārya*, *Smārta Sampradāya*, *Vedānta*.

**Śaṅkarāchārya pīṭha:** शङ्कराचार्यपीठ Advaita monasteries established by Sankara (ca 788–820) as centers of Smārta authority in India, each with a distinct *guru paramparā* and a reigning pontiff entitled Śaṅkarāchārya, and one of the four Upanishadic *mahāvākyas* as a *mantra*. East coast: Govardhana Maṭha, in Puri (center of the Āraṇya and Vāna orders). Himalayas: Jyotiḥ Maṭha, near Badrinath (Giri, Pārvata and Sāgara orders). West coast: Śārada Maṭha, in Dvāraka (Tirtha and Āsrama orders). South: Śringeri Maṭha (Bhārati, Pūrī and Sarasvatī orders). A fifth prominent *pīṭha*, associated with Śringeri Maṭha, is in Kanchipuram, also in the South. See: *Daśanāmī*, *Smārta*, *Sankara*.

**Sāṅkhya:** सांख्य “Enumeration, reckoning.” See: *prakṛiti*, *puruṣa*, *śaḍ darśana*, *tattva*.

**San Mārga:** सन्मार्ग “True path.” The straight, spiritual path leading to the ultimate goal, Self Realization, without detouring into unnecessary psychic exploration or pointless development of *siddhis*. A *San Mārgī*

is a person “on the path,” as opposed to a *saṁsārī*, one engrossed in worldliness. *San Mārga* also names the *jñāna pāda*. See: *pāda*, *sādhana mārga*, *saṁsārī*.

**San Marga Sanctuary:** A meditation *tirtha* at the foot of the extinct volcano, Mount Waialeale, on Hawaii’s Garden Island, Kauai. Here pilgrims follow the ½-mile path, San Mārga, to a natural Śivaliṅga, walk the path of the Tamil Nayanars around picturesque lotus lakes and ponds and visit the six shrines of the Kailāsa Paramparā on the banks of Śaravaṇabhāva Lake in Rishi Valley. Paths lead visitors to the sacred Wailua River, then up stone stairs to the Chola-style white-granite Iraivan Temple, hand-carved in Bangalore, India. In the sanctum sanctorum, the Supreme God, Śiva (Parameśvara-Parāśakti-Parāśiva), will be enshrined as a massive 700-pound, single-pointed Earth-keeper quartz crystal. San Marga Sanctuary, founded in 1970, is among many public services of Saiva Siddhanta Church, one of America’s senior Hindu religious institutions. See: *Subramuniyaswami*.

**sannidhāna:** सन्निधान “Nearness; proximity; provost; taking charge of.” A title of heads of monasteries: Guru Mahāsannidhāna. See: *sānnidhya*.

**sānnidhya:** सान्निध्य “(Divine) presence; nearness, indwelling.” The radiance and blessed presence of *śakti* within and around a temple or a holy person.

**sannyāsa:** संन्यास “Renunciation.” “Throwing down or abandoning.” *Sannyāsa* is the repudiation of the *dharma*, including the obligations and duties, of the householder and the acceptance of the even more demanding *dharma* of the renunciate. The ancient *śāstras* recognize four justifiable motivations for entering into *sannyāsa*: *vidvat*, *vividishā*, *mārkaṭa* and *ātura*. *Vidvat* (“knowing; wise”) *sannyāsa* is the spontaneous withdrawal from the world in search for Self Realization which results from *karma* and tendencies developed in a previous life. *Vividishā* (“discriminating”) *sannyāsa* is renunciation to satisfy a yearning for the Self developed through scriptural study and practice. *Mārkaṭa sannyāsa* is taking refuge in *sannyāsa* as a result of great sorrow, disappointment or misfortune in worldly pursuits. (*Mārkaṭa* means “monkey-like,” perhaps implying the analogy of a monkey clinging to its mother.) *Ātura* (“suffering or sick”) *sannyāsa* is entering into *sannyāsa* upon one’s deathbed, realizing that there is no longer hope in life. See: *sannyāsa dharma*, *sannyāsa dīkshā*, *videhamukti*.

**sannyāsa āsrama:** संन्यास आश्रम “Renunciate stage.” The period of life after age 72. See: *āsrama*.

**sannyāsa dharma:** संन्यासधर्म “Renunciate virtue.” The life, way and traditions of those who have irrevocably renounced prerogatives and obligations of the householder, including personal property, wealth, ambitions, social position and family ties, in favor of the full-time monastic quest for divine awakening, Self Realization and spiritual upliftment of humanity. Traditionally, this *dharma* is available to those under age 25 who meet strict qualifications. Alternately, the householder may embrace *sannyāsa dharma* after age

72 through the customary initiatory rites given by a *sannyāsin* and then diligently pursuing his spiritual *sādhana* in a state of genuine renunciation and not in the midst of his family. These two forms of *sannyāsa* are not to be confused with simply entering the *sannyāsa āśrama*, the last stage of life. See: *sannyāsa*, *sannyāsa dīkshā*, *sannyāsin*, *videhamukti*.

**sannyāsa dīkshā:** संन्यासदीक्षा “Renunciate initiation.”

This *dīkshā* is a formal rite, or less often an informal blessing, entering the devotee into renunciate monasticism, binding him for life to certain vows which include chastity, poverty and obedience, and directing him on the path to Self Realization. Strictest tradition requires that lifetime renunciates be single men and that they enter training in their order before age 25. However, there are certain orders which accept men into *sannyāsa* after age 25, provided they have been in college and not in the world after that time. Others will accept widowers; and a few initiate women. Such rules and qualifications apply primarily to cenobites, that is, to those who will live and serve together in an *āśrama* or monastery. The rules pertaining to homeless anchorites are, for obvious reasons, more lenient. See: *sannyāsa dharma*, *videhamukti*.

**Sannyāsa Upanishad:** संन्यास उपनिषद् An *Upanishad* of the *Atharva Veda*. It deals with the transition to the *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa āśramas*.

**sannyāsin:** संन्यासिन “Renouncer.” One who has taken *sannyāsa dīkshā*. A Hindu monk, *swāmī*, and one of a world brotherhood (or holy order) of *sannyāsins*. Some are wanderers and others live in monasteries. The seasoned *sannyāsin* is truly the liberated man, the spiritual exemplar, the disciplined *yogī* and ultimately the knower of Truth, freed to commune with the Divine and bound to uplift humanity through the sharing of his wisdom, his peace, his devotion and his illumination, however great or small. The *sannyāsin* is the guardian of his religion, immersed in it constantly, freed from worldliness, freed from distraction, able to offer his work and his worship in unbroken continuity and one-pointed effectiveness. He undertakes certain disciplines including the purification of body, mind and emotion. He restrains and controls the mind through his *sādhana*, *tapas* and meditative regimen. He unfolds from within himself a profound love of God and the Gods. His practice of *upāsana*, worship, is predominantly internal, seeking God Śiva within. See: *sannyāsa*, *sannyāsa dharma*, *sannyāsa dīkshā*, *swāmī*.

**Sanskrit (Saṃskṛita):** संस्कृत “Well-made,” “refined,” “perfected.” The classical sacerdotal language of ancient India, considered a pure vehicle for communication with the celestial worlds. It is the primary language in which Hindu scriptures are written, including the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. Employed today as a liturgical, literary and scholarly language, but no longer as a spoken vernacular.

**sant:** सन्त “Saint.” A Hindi or vernacular word derived from the Sanskrit *sat*, meaning “true; real; virtuous.”

**santoshā:** सन्तोष “Contentment.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**śaraṇa:** शरण “Refuge.” See: *Śivaśaraṇa*, *Vira Śaivism*.

**Sarasvatī:** सरस्वती “The flowing one.” Śakti, the Universal Mother; Goddess of the arts and learning, mythological consort of the God Brahmā. Sarasvatī, the river Goddess, is usually depicted wearing a white *sārī* and holding a *vīna*, sitting upon a swan or lotus flower. Prayers are offered to her for refinements of art, culture and learning. *Sarasvatī* also names one of seven sacred rivers (Sapta Sindhu) mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. Parts of the Indus Valley civilization thrived along the river until it dried up in 1900BCE. Its course was lost and thought a myth by some until recently discovered in images taken by a French satellite. In addition, one of the ten *Daśanāmī swāmī* orders is the *Sarasvatī*. See: *Goddess*, *Śakti*.

**Śaravaṇa:** शरवण “Thicket of reeds.” Mythologically, a sacred Himalayan pond where Lord Kārttikeya was nurtured; esoterically understood as the lake of divine essence, or primal consciousness. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**sārī:** (Hindi, साड़ी) The traditional outer garment of a Hindu woman, consisting of a long, unstitched piece of cloth, usually colorful cotton or silk, wrapped around the body, forming an ankle-length skirt, and around the bosom and over the shoulder.

**śārīra:** शरीर “Body; husk.” Three bodies of the soul: 1) *sthūla śārīra*, “gross or physical body” (also called *annamaya kośa*), the odic body; 2) *sūkshma śārīra*, “subtle body” (also called *liṅga śārīra*, it includes the *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya kośas*); 3) *kāraṇa śārīra*, “causal body” (also called *ānanda-maya kośa*), the actinic causal body. Another term for body is *deha*. See: *kośa*, *subtle body*.

**sarvabhadrā:** सर्वभद्र “All is auspicious; the goodness of all.” *Bhadra* indicates that which is “blessed, auspicious, dear, excellent.” *Sarva* (“all”) *bhadra* thus denotes the cognition that everything in the universe is a manifestation of Divinity, that it is holy, good and purposeful. See: *auspiciousness*, *grace*, *Śivamaya*, *world*.

**Sarvajñānottara Āgama:** सर्वज्ञानोत्तर आगम This text is not among the traditional list of *Āgamas* and subsidiary scriptures. But it is thought to be a second version of *Kalajñānam*, a subsidiary text of *Vātula Āgama*. The extant sections deal with right knowledge.

**śāstra:** शास्त्र “Sacred text; teaching.” 1) Any religious or philosophical treatise, or body of writings. 2) A department of knowledge, a science; e.g., the *Dharma Śāstras* on religious law, *Artha Śāstras* on politics.

**śāstri:** शास्त्री One who is knowledgeable in *śāstra*, or scriptures.

**sat:** सत् “True, existing, real, good; reality, existence, truth.” See: *Sachidānanda*.

**Satan:** The devil; evil personified. A being who in Christian and other Semitic religions opposes God’s will and tempts souls into wickedness. In Hinduism, all is seen as the manifestation of God, and there is no Satan. See: *asura*, *hell*, *Naraka*.

**Satapatha Brāhmaṇa:** शतपथब्राह्मण “Sacerdotal treatise of 100 paths.” A priestly manual of the *Śukla Yajur*

- Veda*, dealing with theology, philosophy and modes of worship.
- Satchidānanda (Sachchidānanda):** सच्चिदानन्द “Existence-consciousness-bliss.” A synonym for *Parāśakti*. Lord Śiva’s Divine Mind and simultaneously the pure superconscious mind of each individual soul. Satchidānanda is perfect love and omniscient, omnipotent consciousness, the fountainhead of all existence, yet containing and permeating all existence. Also called pure consciousness, pure form, substratum of existence, and more. One of the goals of the meditator or *yogī* is to experience the natural state of the mind, Satchidānanda, holding back the *vṛittis* through *yogic* practices. In Advaita Vedānta, Satchidānanda is considered a description of the Absolute (Brahman). Whereas in monistic, or *śuddha*, Śaiva Siddhānta it is understood as divine form—pure, amorphous matter or energy—not as an equivalent of the Absolute, formless, “*atattva*,” Paraśiva. In this latter school, Paraśiva is radically transcendent, and Satchidānanda is known as the primal and most perfectly divine form to emerge from the formless Paraśiva. See: *atattva*, *Parāśakti*, *tattva*.
- satguru (sadguru):** सद्गुरु “True weighty one.” A spiritual preceptor of the highest attainment and authority—one who has realized the ultimate Truth, Paraśiva, through *nirvikalpa samādhi*—a *jīvanmukta* able to lead others securely along the spiritual path. He is always a *sannyāsin*, an unmarried renunciate. All Hindu denominations teach that the grace and guidance of a living *satguru* is a necessity for Self Realization. He is recognized and revered as the embodiment of God, Sadāśiva, the source of grace and liberation. See: *guru*, *guru bhakti*, *guru-śishya relationship*, *pādapūjā*.
- satgurunātha:** सद्गुरुनाथ “Lord and true *guru*.” A highly respectful and honorific term for one’s preceptor. See: *satguru*.
- satva guṇa:** सत्वगुण “Perfection of Being.” The quality of goodness or purity. See: *guṇa*.
- satya:** सत्य “Truthfulness.” See: *yama-niyama*.
- Satyaloka:** सत्यलोक “Plane of reality, truth.” Also called Brahmaloka; the realm of *sahasrāra chakra*, it is the highest of the seven upper worlds. See: *loka*.
- śauca:** शौच “Purity.” See: *purity-impurity*, *yama-niyama*.
- saumanasya:** सौमनस्य “Benevolence, causing gladness or cheerfulness of mind, right understanding (related to the term *soma*).” See: *chakra*.
- savikalpa samādhi:** सविकल्पसमाधि “Enstasy with form (or seed).” See: *enstasy*, *rāja yoga*, *samādhi*.
- sāyujya:** सायुज्य “Intimate union.” Perpetual God Consciousness. See: *Śivasāyujya*, *viśvagrāsa*.
- scarlet:** The color red with orange tint.
- scepter:** *Rājadaṇḍa*. The staff and insignia of royal or imperial authority and power held by spiritual monarchs or kings. Traditionally, the scepters of Indian kings are prepared and empowered by respected heads of traditional Hindu religious orders through esoteric means. See: *daṇḍa*.
- scripture (scriptural):** “A writing.” Sacred text(s) or holy book(s) having authority for a given sect or religion. See: *śāstra*, *smṛiti*, *śruti*.
- secluded (seclusion):** Isolated; hidden. Kept apart from others. See: *muni*.
- Second World:** The astral or subtle plane. See: *loka*.
- seed karma:** Dormant or *anārabdha karma*. All past actions which have not yet sprouted. See: *karma*.
- seer:** Visionary; *ṛishi*. A wise being or mystic who sees beyond the limits of ordinary perception. See: *ākāśa*, *clairvoyance*, *muni*, *ṛishi*, *shamanism*.
- Self (Self God):** God Śiva’s perfection of Absolute Reality, Paraśiva—That which abides at the core of every soul. See: *atattva*, *Paramātman*, *Paraśiva*.
- self-assertive:** Dominant. Demanding recognition.
- self-conceit:** Too high an opinion of oneself; vanity, vain pride.
- self-luminous:** Producing its own light; radiating light.
- Self Realization:** Direct knowing of the Self God, Paraśiva. Self Realization is known in Sanskrit as *nirvikalpa samādhi*; “enstasy without form or seed;” the ultimate spiritual attainment (also called *asamprajñata samādhi*). Esoterically, this state is attained when the mystic *kuṇḍalīni* force pierces through the *sahasrāra chakra* at the crown of the head. This transcendence of all modes of human consciousness brings the realization or “nonexperience” of That which exists beyond the mind, beyond time, form and space. But even to assign a name to Paraśiva, or to its realization is to name that which cannot be named. In fact, it is “experienced” only in its aftermath as a change in perspective, a permanent transformation, and as an intuitive familiarity with the Truth that surpasses understanding. See: *enstasy*, *God Realization*, *kuṇḍalīni*, *liberation*, *Paraśiva*, *rāja yoga*, *samādhi*.
- self-reflection:** Observation of, or meditation upon, oneself, one’s mind, emotions, thinking. Introspection. Playing back memories and impressions locked within the subconscious, endeavoring to deal with them. It is anticipating one’s future and how the past will react upon it, enhance or detract from it. See: *spiritual unfolding*.
- servitude:** Condition of bondage (slavery) in subjection to a master.
- sevā:** सेवा “Service,” *karma yoga*, an integral part of the spiritual path, doing selfless, useful work for others, such as volunteer work at a temple, without preference or thought of reward or personal gain. *Sevā*, or Sivathondu in Tamil, is the central practice of the *charyā pāda*. See: *yoga*.
- seval:** ്സേവൽ The large, red, fighting rooster (*kukkuṭa* in Sanskrit) that adorns Lord Muruga’s flag, heralding the dawn of wisdom and the conquest of the forces of ignorance. See: *Kārttikeya*.
- sexuality:** Hinduism has a healthy, unrepressed outlook on human sexuality, and sexual pleasure is part of *kāma*, one of the four legitimate goals of life. On matters such as birth control, sterilization, masturbation, homosexuality, bisexuality, petting and polygamy, Hindu scripture is tolerantly silent, neither

calling them sins nor encouraging their practice, neither condemning nor condoning. The two important exceptions to this understanding view of sexual experience are adultery and abortion, both of which are considered to carry heavy *karmic* implications for this and future births. See: *abortion, bisexuality, homosexuality*.

**śaḍ darśana:** षड् दर्शन “Six views,” “six insights.” Six classical philosophies distinguished among the hundreds of Hindu *darśanas* known through history: Nyāya, Vaiśeṣhika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. Each was tersely formulated in *sūtra* form by its “founder,” and elaborated in extensive commentaries by other writers. They are understood as varied attempts at describing Truth and the path to it. Elements of each form part of the Hindu fabric today. —**Nyāya:** “System, rule; logic.” A system of logical realism, founded sometime around 300 BCE by Gautama, known for its systems of logic and epistemology and concerned with the means of acquiring right knowledge. Its tools of enquiry and rules for argumentation were adopted by all schools of Hinduism. —**Vaiśeṣhika:** “Differentiation,” from *viśeṣha*, “differences.” Philosophy founded by Kanada (ca 300 BCE) teaching that liberation is to be attained through understanding the nature of existence, which is classified in nine basic realities (*dravyas*): earth, water, light, air, ether, time, space, soul and mind. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣhika are viewed as a complementary pair, with Nyāya emphasizing logic, and Vaiśeṣhika analyzing the nature of the world. —**Sāṅkhya:** “Enumeration, reckoning.” A philosophy founded by the sage Kapila (ca 500 BCE), author of the *Sāṅkhya Sūtras*. Sāṅkhya is primarily concerned with “categories of existence,” *tattvas*, which it understands as 25 in number. The first two are the unmanifest Puruṣha and the manifest primal nature, Prakṛiti—the male-female polarity, viewed as the foundation of all existence. Prakṛiti, out of which all things evolve, is the unity of the three *guṇas*: *sat-tva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Sāṅkhya and Yoga are considered an inseparable pair whose principles permeate all of Hinduism. See: *prakṛiti, puruṣha*. —**Yoga:** “Yoking; joining.” Ancient tradition of philosophy and practice codified by Patanjali (ca 200 BCE) in the *Yoga Sūtras*. It is also known as *rāja yoga*, “king of *yogas*,” or *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, “eight-limbed *yoga*.” Its object is to achieve, at will, the cessation of all fluctuations of consciousness, and the attainment of Self Realization. Yoga is wholly dedicated to putting the high philosophy of Hinduism into practice, to achieve personal transformation through transcendental experience, *samādhi*. See: *yoga*. —**Mīmāṃsā:** “Inquiry” (or Pūrva, “early,” Mīmāṃsā). Founded by Jaimini (ca 200 BCE), author of the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*, who taught the correct performance of Vedic rites as the means to salvation. —**Vedānta** (or Uttara “later” Mīmāṃsā): “End (or culmination) of the *Vedas*.” For Vedānta, the main basis is the *Upanishads* and *Āraṇyakas* (the “end,” *anta*, of the *Vedas*), rather than the hymns and ritual

portions of the *Vedas*. The teaching of Vedānta is that there is one Absolute Reality, Brahman. Man is one with Brahman, and the object of life is to realize that truth through right knowledge, intuition and personal experience. The *Vedānta Sūtras* (or *Brahma Sūtras*) were composed by Rishi Badarayana (ca 400 BCE). See: *Brahma Sūtra, padārtha, tattva, Vedānta, yoga*.

**shamanism (shamanic):** From a Siberian tribal word, akin to the Sanskrit *śramaṇa*, “ascetic,” akin to *śram*, meaning “to exert.” The religion of certain indigenous peoples of Northeast Asia, based on the belief in good and evil spirits who can be contacted and influenced by priests, or shamans, generally during a state of altered consciousness or trance. Also descriptive of many of the world’s native, tribal faiths, and of various groups that today carry forward the practices and traditions of shamanism to maximize human abilities of mind and spirit for healing and problem-solving. See: *folk-shamanic, mysticism, pagan, Śaktism*.

**śaṅmata sthāpanāchārya:** षण्मत्स्थापनाचार्य “Founding teacher of the sixfold system.” A title conferred upon Adi Sankara while he was living. It refers to his attempt to consolidate the six main sects of Hinduism in nonsectarian unity, as represented by its altar of five (or six) Deities. See: *pañchāyatana pūjā, Sankara, Smārtism*.

**Shanmukha:** षण्मुख “Six-faced.” (Tamil: *Shanmuga*.) A name for Lord Murugan or Kārttikeya, denoting the multiplicity of His divine functions. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**Shanmukha Gāyatri:** षण्मुखगायत्री A Vedic Gāyatri chant, the Sāvitrī Gāyatrī modified to address Lord Kārttikeya as Shanmukha “He of six faces.”

**śaṣṭhyabda pūrti:** षष्ट्यब्दपूर्ति “Sixtieth birthday celebration.” Done for the couple on the husband’s birthday, usually with many family and friends attending. It consists in a *homa*, renewal of marriage vows and retying the wedding pendant.

**śaṭkoṇa:** षट्कोण “Six-pointed star,” formed by two interlocking triangles, the upper one representing Śiva’s transcendent Being, and the lower one Śiva’s manifest energy, Śakti. The *śaṭkoṇa* is part of Lord Kārttikeya’s *yantra*. A similar emblem in Judaism is of independent origin and signification. See: *Ardhanārīśvara, Kārttikeya*.

**śaṣṭsthalā:** षट्स्थल “Six stages.” Vīra Śaivism’s six stages to union with Śiva. See: *Vīra Śaivism*.

**shatter:** To break into many pieces suddenly, as if struck. **sheath:** A covering or receptacle, such as the husk surrounding a grain of rice. In Sanskrit, it is *kośa*, philosophically the bodily envelopes of the soul. See: *kośa, soul, subtle body*.

**Shūm-Tyēif:** A Nātha mystical language of meditation (also simply known as Shūm) revealed in Switzerland in 1968 by Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. Its primary alphabet looks like this:

ॠ ॡ ॢ ॣ । ॥ ० १ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९

**shuttle:** An instrument that carries a spool of thread in the weaving of cloth.

**siddha:** सिद्ध A “perfected one” or accomplished *yogī*, a person of great spiritual attainment or powers. See: *siddha yoga*, *siddha yogī*, *siddhi*.

**Siddha Mārga:** सिद्धमार्ग Another term for *Siddha Siddhānta*. See: *Siddha Siddhānta*, *siddha yoga*.

**siddhānta:** सिद्धान्त “Final attainments;” “final conclusions.” *Siddhānta* refers to ultimate understanding arrived at in any given field of knowledge.

**siddhānta śravaṇa (or śrāvāṇa):** सिद्धान्तश्रवण “Scriptural listening.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**Siddha Siddhānta:** सिद्धसिद्धान्त *Siddha Siddhānta*, also called *Gorakshanātha Śaivism*, is generally considered to have evolved in the lineage of the earlier ascetic orders of India. Its most well-known preceptor was *Gorakshanātha* (ca 1000) a disciple of *Matsyendra-nātha*, patron saint of Nepal, revered by certain esoteric Buddhist schools as well as by Hindus. The school systematized and developed the practice of *haṭha yoga* to a remarkable degree. Indeed, nearly all of what is today taught about *haṭha yoga* comes from this school. Among its central texts are *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* by *Svatmarama*, *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā*, *Śiva Saṁhitā* and *Jñānāmṛta*. *Siddha Siddhānta* theology embraces both transcendent Śiva (being) and immanent Śiva (becoming). Śiva is both the efficient and material cause of the universe. Devotion is expressed through temple worship and pilgrimage, with the central focus on internal worship and *kuṇḍalīni yoga*, with the goal of realizing *Parāsamvid*, the supreme transcendent state of Śiva. Today there are perhaps 750,000 adherents of *Siddha Siddhānta Śaivism*, who are often understood as Śāktas or *advaita tantrics*. The school fans out through India, but is most prominent in North India and Nepal. Devotees are called *yogīs*, and stress is placed on world renunciation—even for householders. This sect is most commonly known as *Nātha*, the *Gorakshapantha* and *Siddha Yogī Sampradāya*. Other names include *Ādinātha Sampradāya*, *Nāthamātha* and *Siddhamārga*. See: *Gorakshanātha Śaivism*.

**Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati:** सिद्धसिद्धान्तपद्धति “Tracks on the doctrines of the adepts.” A text of 353 mystical verses, ascribed to *Gorakshanātha*, dealing with the esoteric nature of the inner bodies and the soul’s union with Supreme Reality. See: *Gorakshanātha, Siddha Siddhānta*.

**siddha yoga:** सिद्धयोग “*Yoga* of perfected attainment,” or supernatural powers. 1) A term used in the *Tirumantiram* and other Śaiva scriptures to describe the *yoga* which is the way of life of adepts after attaining *Parāśiva*. *Siddha yoga* involves the development of magical or mystical powers, or *siddhis*, such as the eight classical powers. It is a highly advanced *yoga* which seeks profound transformation of body, mind and emotions and the ability to live in a flawless state of God Consciousness. 2) The highly accomplished practices of certain alchemists. See: *siddha yogī*, *siddhi*.

**siddha yogi:** सिद्धयोगी “*Yogī* of perfection.” A perfected one, adept, a realized being who is the embodiment

of the most profound *yogic* states and has attained magical or mystical powers. See: *siddha yoga*, *siddhi*.

**Siddha Yogī Sampradāya:** सिद्धयोगीसंप्रदाय Another term for *Siddha Siddhānta*. See: *Siddha Siddhānta*.

**siddhi:** सिद्धि “Power, accomplishment; perfection.” Extraordinary powers of the soul, developed through consistent meditation and deliberate, often uncomfortable and grueling *tapas*, or awakened naturally through spiritual maturity and *yogic sādhana*. Through the repeated experience of Self Realization, *siddhis* naturally unfold according to the needs of the individual. Before Self Realization, the use or development of *siddhis* is among the greatest obstacles on the path because it cultivates *ahamkāra*, “I-ness” (egoity), and militates against the attainment of *prapatti*, complete submission to the will of God, Gods and *guru*. Six *siddhis* in particular are considered primary obstacles to *samādhi*: clairvoyance (*ādarśa siddhi* or *divya siddhi*), clairaudience (*śravaṇa siddhi* or *divyaśravaṇa*), divination (*pratibhā siddhi*), super-feeling (*vedana siddhi*) and super-taste (*āsvādana siddhi*), super-smell (*vārtā siddhi*). The eight classical *siddhis* are: 1) *animā*: diminution; being as small as an atom; 2) *mahimā*: enlargement; becoming infinitely large; 3) *laghimā*: super-lightness, levitation; 4) *prāpti*: pervasiveness, extension, ability to be anywhere at will; 5) *prakāmya*: fulfillment of desires; 6) *vashitva*: control of natural forces; 7) *iśītva*: supremacy over nature; 8) *kāma-avasayitva*: complete satisfaction. The supreme *siddhi* (*parasiddhi*) is realization of the Self, *Parāśiva*. See: *ahamkāra*, *prapatti*, *siddha yoga*.

**sikhara:** शिखर “Summit; pinnacle; crest.” The towering superstructure above the *garbhagriha* in North Indian style temples. In Southern temples, *sikhara* refers to the top stone of the superstructure, or *vimāna*.

**Sikh:** “Disciple.” Religion of nine million members founded in India about 500 years ago by the saint *Guru Nanak*. A reformist faith, Sikhism rejects idolatry and the caste system, its holy book is the *Ādi Granth*, and main center is the Golden Temple of *Amritsar*. Sikhs honor a line of ten gurus: *Guru Nanak* (*Nanāk*), *Guru Angad*, *Guru Amardas*, *Guru Ram Das* (*Rām Dās*), *Guru Arjun*, *Guru Har Govind*, *Guru Har Rai*, *Guru Har Krishnan* (*Krishṇan*), *Guru Tegh Bahadur* and *Guru Govind Singh*. See: *Ādi Granth*.

**Śikshā Vedāṅga:** शिक्षावेदाङ्ग Auxiliary Vedic tracts on Sanskrit phonetics, among four linguistic skills taught for mastery of the *Vedas* and rites of *yajña*. *Śikshā* literally means “rules of instruction; learning; method of study.” See: *Vedāṅga*.

**Silpa Śāstra:** शिल्पशास्त्र “Art or craft manual.” 1) A particular class of works which formed the primary teachings on any of the fine arts or sacred sciences, such as architecture, dance, painting, jewelry-making, pottery, weaving, and basketry, garlandry, metalworking, acting, cooking and horsemanship. The earliest *Silpa Śāstras* are thought to date to 200 BCE. Many were written between the 5th and 14th centuries. See: *kalā*–64, *Sthāpatyaveda*.



**simantonnyana:** सीमन्तोन्नयन “Hair-parting rite.” See: *samskāras of birth*.

**simile:** A figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another.

**sin:** Intentional transgression of divine law. Akin to the Latin *sons*, “guilty.” Hinduism does not view sin as a crime against God, but as an act against *dharma*—moral order—and one’s own self. It is thought natural, if unfortunate, that young souls act wrongly, for they are living in nescience, *avidya*, the darkness of ignorance. Sin is an *adharmic* course of action which automatically brings negative consequences. The term *sin* carries a double meaning, as do its Sanskrit equivalents: 1) a wrongful act, 2) the negative consequences resulting from a wrongful act. In Sanskrit the wrongful act is known by several terms, including *pātaka* (from *pat*, “to fall”), *pāpa*, *enas*, *kilbisha*, *adharmā*, *anṛita* and *ṛiṇa* (transgression, in the sense of omission). The residue of sin is called *pāpa*, sometimes conceived of as a sticky, astral substance which can be dissolved through penance (*prāyaścitta*), austerity (*tapas*) and good deeds (*sukṛityā*). This astral substance can be psychically seen within the inner, subconscious aura of the individual. Note that *pāpa* is also accrued through unknowing or unintentional transgressions of *dharma*, as in the term *aparādha* (offense, fault, mistake). —**inherent (or original) sin:** A doctrine of Semitic faiths whereby each soul is born in sin as a result of Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Sometimes mistakenly compared to the Śaiva Siddhānta concept of the three *malas*, especially *ānava*. See: *pāśa*. —**mortal sin:** According to some theologies, sins so grave that they can hardly be expiated and which cause the soul to be condemned to suffer eternally in hell. In Hinduism, there are no such concepts as *inherent* or *mortal sin*. See: *aura*, *evil*, *karma*, *pāpa*.

**śishya:** शिष्य “A pupil or disciple,” especially one who has proven himself and been accepted by a *guru*.

**Śiva:** शिव The “Auspicious,” “Gracious,” or “Kindly one.” Supreme Being of the Śaivite religion. God Śiva is All and in all, simultaneously the creator and the creation, both immanent and transcendent. As personal Deity, He is Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. He is a one Being, perhaps best understood in three perfections: Parameśvara (Primal Soul), Parāśakti (Pure Consciousness) and Paraśiva (Absolute Reality). See: *Parameśvara*, *Parāśakti*, *Paraśiva*, *Naṭarāja*, *prapatti*, *Sadāśiva*, *Śaivism*, *Satchidānanda*.

**Śiva Advaita:** शिवद्वैत Also called Śiva Viśiṣṭādvaita, or Śaivite “qualified nondualism,” Śiva Advaita is the philosophy of Srikantha (ca 1050) as expounded in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras* (ca 500-200 BCE). Patterned after the Vaiṣṇavite Viśiṣṭādvaita of Ramanuja, this philosophy was later amplified by Appaya Dikshita. Brahman, or Śiva, is transcendent and the efficient and material cause of the world and souls. Souls are not identical with Him and never merge in Him, even after liberation. As a school, Śiva Advaita

remained exclusively intellectual, never enjoying a following of practitioners. Purification, devotion and meditation upon Śiva as the Self—the *ākāśa* within the heart—define the path. Meditation is directed to the Self, Śiva, the One Existence that evolved into all form. Liberation depends on grace, not deeds. See: *Appaya Dikshita*, *Śaivism*, *Srikantha*.

**Śivachaitanya:** शिवचैतन्य “God consciousness.” See: *Śiva consciousness*.

**Śivāchāra:** शिवाचार “Treating all as God.” See: *Vīra Śaivism*.

**Śivāchārya:** शिवाचार्य The hereditary priests of the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition. The title of Ādiśaiva Brāhmins. An Ādiśaiva priest who has received the necessary training and *dikshās* to perform public Śiva temple rites known as Āgamic *nitya parārtha pūjā*. A fully qualified Śivāchārya is also known as *archaka*. *Śivāchārya*, too, names the family clan of this priest tradition. See: *Ādiśaiva*, *brāhmin*.

**Śiva consciousness:** Śivachaitanya. A broad term naming the experience or state of being conscious of Śiva in a multitude of ways, such as in the five expressed in the following meditation. **Vital Breath:** *prāṇa*. Experience the inbreath and outbreath as Śiva’s will within your body. Become attuned to the ever-present pulse of the universe, knowing that nothing moves but by His divine will. **All-Pervasive Energy:** *śakti*. Become conscious of the flow of life within your body. Realize that it is the same universal energy within every living thing. Practice seeing the life energy within another’s eyes. **Manifest Sacred Form:** *darśana*. Hold in your mind a sacred form, such as Naṭarāja, Śivaliṅga or your *satguru*—who is Sadāśiva—and think of nothing else. See every form as a form of our God Śiva. **Inner Light:** *jyoti*. Observe the light that illumines your thoughts. Concentrate only on that light, as you might practice being more aware of the light on a TV screen than of its changing pictures. **Sacred Sound:** *nāda*. Listen to the constant high-pitched *ee* sounding in your head. It is like the tone of an electrical transformer, a hundred *tamburas* distantly playing or a humming swarm of bees.

These five constitute the “Śivachaitanya Pañchantānta,” five simple experiences that bring the Divine into the reach of each individual. Śivachaitanya, of course, applies to deeper states of meditation and contemplation as well. See: *jñāna*, *mind (five states)*, *Śivasāyujya*.

**Śiva Driṣṭi:** शिवदृष्टि A scripture of Kashmir Śaivism, now lost, written by Somananda, a disciple of Vasugupta. See: *Kashmīr Śaivism*.

**Śivajñānabodham:** शिवज्ञानबोधम् “Memorandum on Śiva Realization.” A digest authored (or, some believe, a portion of the *Raurava Āgama* translated into Tamil) by Meykandar, ca 1300, consisting of 12 *sūtras* describing the relationship between God, soul and world. The Meykandar Sampradāya revere it as their primary philosophical text and consider it a pluralistic exposition. Others view it as monistic in character,

- with a pluralistic interpretation introduced by later commentators. Connected with this important text is an acute commentary on each of the 12 *sūtras*. See: *Meykandar Śāstras*.
- Śivakarṇāmṛita:** शिवकर्णामृत A text by Appaya Dikshita (1554–1626) written to reestablish the superiority of God Śiva in the face of widespread conversion to Vaiṣṇavism. See: *Appaya Dikshita*.
- Śivalaya:** शिवालय The holy Śiva temple. “Śiva’s residence or dwelling” (*ālaya*). See: *temple*.
- Śivaliṅga:** शिवलिङ्ग “Mark,” “Token” or “Sign of Śiva.” The most prevalent emblem of Śiva, found in virtually all Śiva temples. A rounded, elliptical, aniconic image, usually set on a circular base, or *pīṭha*, the Śivaliṅga is the simplest and most ancient symbol of Śiva, especially of Paraśiva, God beyond all forms and qualities. The *pīṭha* represents Paraśakti, the manifesting power of God. Liṅgas are usually of stone (carved or naturally existing, *svayambhū*, such as shaped by a swift-flowing river), but may also be of metal, precious gems, crystal, wood, earth or transitory materials such as ice. According to the *Kāraṇa Āgama* (verse 6), a transitory Śivaliṅga may be made of 12 different materials: sand, rice, cooked food, river clay, cow dung, butter, *rudrāksha* seeds, ashes, sandalwood, *dharba* grass, a flower garland or molasses. See: *mūrti*, *Śaivism*, *svayambhū Liṅga*.
- Śivaloka:** शिवलोक “Realm of Śiva.” See: *loka*.
- Śivamaya:** शिवमय “Formed, made, consisting of” or “full of Śiva.” A part of the Śaivite affirmation of faith, denoting that all of existence—all worlds, all beings, all of manifestation, that which undergoes creation, preservation and destruction, all dualities and paradoxes—consists of and is pervaded by Śiva. An important concept of monistic Śaivism. See: *māyā*, *sarvabhādra*, *tattva*, *world*.
- Śivamayakośa:** शिवमयकोश “Sheath composed of Śiva.” The Primal Soul form, *Parameśvara*—the body of God Śiva—into which the individual soul merges as the fulfillment of its evolution. See: *Parameśvara*, *viśvagrāsa*.
- Śivanadiyar:** சிவனடியார் “Servitor of Śiva.” Conveys a mystic relationship between the devotee and Śiva in which all spiritual, mental and physical actions are perceived as fulfilling the will and design of Śiva. See: *karma yoga*.
- Śivānanda:** शिवानन्द “Bliss of Śiva.”
- Śivananda, Swami (Śivānanda):** स्वामीशिवानन्द One of Hinduism’s most influential modern-day saints (1887–1963). He was born in South India, practiced medicine in Malaysia, published a medical journal, became administrator of a hospital and later renounced the world. Initiated by Swami Visvananda Sarasvati at Rishikesh in 1924, he founded the Divine Life Society in 1939, which has branches in many countries today. He has been a powerful force in spreading Hindu teachings in India and abroad through his many books and the travels of his numerous *swāmīs*. Emphasized *haṭha* and *rāja yoga* and a broad, universal form of Hinduism.
- Śivaness:** शिवानेस Quality of being Śiva or like Śiva, especially sharing in His divine state of consciousness. See: *samarasa*, *Śiva consciousness*, *Śivasāyujya*.
- Śivānubhava Maṇḍapa:** शिवानुभवमण्डप The “Hall of Śiva experience,” where the Vīra Śaivites gathered to develop the basic doctrines of the movement in the 12th century.
- Śiva Purāna:** शिवपुराण “Ancient [lore] of Śiva.” 1) A collection of six major scriptures sacred to Śaivites. 2) The name of the oldest of these six texts, though some consider it a version of the *Vāyu Purāna*.
- Śiva Rakshāmaṇi Dipika:** शिवरक्षामणिदीपिका A purely nondual commentary and interpretation by Appaya Dikshita (1554–1626) on the writings of Srikantha. See: *Śaivism*.
- Śivarātri:** शिवरात्रि “Night of Śiva.” See: *Mahāśivarātri*.
- Śiva-Śakti:** शिवशक्ति Father-Mother God, both immanent and transcendent. A name for God Śiva encompassing His unmanifest Being and manifest energy. See: *Ardhanārīśvara*, *Parameśvara*, *Paraśiva*, *Śiva*.
- Śiva Saṁhitā:** शिवसंहिता Text from the Gorakshanātha school of Śaivism, ca 1700. In 212 *sūtras* it discusses anatomy, *āsana*s, energy, breathing and philosophy. It is available in various languages and widely studied as a valuable overview of *yoga* practice.
- Śivaśaraṇa:** शिवशरण “One surrendered in God.” See: *Vīra Śaivism*.
- Śivasāyujya:** शिवसायुज्य “Intimate union with Śiva.” Becoming one with God. The state of perpetual Śiva consciousness; simultaneous perception of the inner and the outer. A permanent state of oneness with Śiva, even in the midst of ordinary activities, the aftermath or plateau which comes after repeated Self Realization experiences. Rishi Tirumular says: “*Sāyujya* is the state of *jaḡrātita*—the ‘Beyond Consciousness.’ *Sāyujya* is to abide forever in *upaśanta*, the peace that knows no understanding. *Sāyujya* is to become Śiva Himself. *Sāyujya* is to experience the infinite power of inward bliss forever and ever (*Tirumantiram* 1513).” In many Hindu schools of thought it is the highest attainment. It dwains when the *kuṇḍalini* resides coiled in the *sahasrāra chakra*. See: *jīvanmukti*, *kaivalya*, *kuṇḍalini*, *moksha*.
- Śiva’s five faces:** See: *Sadāśiva*.
- Śiva Sūtra(s):** शिवसूत्र The seminal or seed scripture of Kashmir Śaivism, 77 aphorisms revealed to Sage Vasugupta (ca 800). See: *Vasugupta*.
- Śivathondan:** சிவதொண்டன் “Servant of Śiva.” Conveys the same mystic meaning as *Sivanadiyar*, denoting a devotee who regularly performs actions dedicated to God Śiva; selfless work in service to others. See: *karma yoga*.
- Śivathodu:** சிவதொண்டு “Service to Śiva.” Akin to the concept of *karma yoga*. See: *karma yoga*.
- Śivāya Namaḥ:** शिवाय नमः “Adoration to Śiva.” Alternate form of *Namaḥ Śivāya*. See: *Namaḥ Śivāya*.
- Śivayogamuni (Śivayogamuni):** शिवयोगमुनि One of the eight disciples of Maharishi Nandinatha. See:

*Kailāsa Paramparā.*

**Śivena saha Nartanam:** शिवेन सह नर्तनम् “Dancing with Śiva.”

**Skanda:** स्कन्द “Quicksilver;” “leaping one.” One of Lord Kārttikeya’s oldest names, and His form as scarlet-hued warrior God. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**Skanda Shashthi:** स्कन्दषष्ठी A six-day festival in October–November celebrating Lord Kārttikeya’s, or Skanda’s, victory over the forces of darkness.

**śloka:** श्लोक A verse, phrase, proverb or hymn of praise, usually composed in a specified meter. Especially a verse of two lines, each of sixteen syllables. *Śloka* is the primary verse form of the Sanskrit epics, *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. See: *bhāshya*, *sūtra*.

**Smārta:** स्मार्त “Of or related to *smṛiti*,” the secondary Hindu scriptures. See: *Smārtism*, *smṛiti*.

**Smārta Sampradāya:** स्मार्तसंप्रदाय The teaching tradition of Hinduism’s Smārta sect, formalized by Adi Sankara in the 9th century. See: *Smārtism*.

**Smārtism:** स्मार्त Sect based on the secondary scriptures (*smṛiti*). The most liberal of the four major Hindu denominations, an ancient Vedic *brāhminical* tradition (ca 700 BCE) which from the 9th century onward was guided and deeply influenced by the Advaita Vedānta teachings of the reformist Adi Sankara. Its adherents rely mainly on the classical *smṛiti* literature, especially the *Itihāsas* (*Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, the latter of which includes the *Bhagavad Gītā*), *Purāṇas* and *Dharma Śāstras*. These are regarded as complementary to and a means to understanding the *Vedas*. Smārtas adhere to Sankara’s view that all Gods are but various representations of Saṅuṇa Brahman. Thus, Smārtas are avowedly eclectic, worshipping all the Gods and discouraging sectarianism. The Smārta system of worship, called *pañchāyatana pūjā*, reinforces this outlook by including the major Deity of each primary Hindu sect of ancient days: Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti. To encompass a sixth important lineage, Sankara recommended the addition of a sixth Deity, Kumāra. Thus he was proclaimed *shaṅmata sthapanāchārya*, founder of the sixfold system. One among the six is generally chosen as the devotee’s preferred Deity, *Ishta Devatā*. For spiritual authority, Smārtas look to the regional monasteries established across India by Sankara, and to their pontiffs. These are the headquarters of ten orders of renunciate monks who spread the Advaita Vedānta teachings far and wide. Within Smārtism three primary religious approaches are distinguished: ritualistic, devotional and philosophical. See: *Daśanāmī*, *pañchāyatana pūjā*, *Sankara*.

**smṛiti:** स्मृति That which is “remembered;” the tradition. Hinduism’s nonrevealed, secondary but deeply revered scriptures, derived from man’s insight and experience. *Smṛiti* speaks of secular matters—science, law, history, agriculture, etc.—as well as spiritual lore, ranging from day-to-day rules and regulations to superconscious outpourings. 1) The term *smṛiti* refers to certain collections of ancient Sanskrit texts:

the six or more *Vedāṅgas*, the four *Upavedas*, the two *Itihāsas*, and the 18 major *Purāṇas*. Among the *Vedāṅgas*, the *Kalpa Vedāṅga* defines codes of ritual in the *Śrauta* and *Sulba Śāstras*, and domestic-civil laws in the *Gṛihya* and *Dharma Śāstras*. Also included as classical *smṛiti* are the founding *sūtras* of six ancient philosophies called *śaḍ darśana* (Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣhika, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta). 2) In a general sense, *smṛiti* may refer to any text other than *śruti* (revealed scripture) that is revered as scripture within a particular sect. From the vast body of sacred literature, *śāstra*, each sect and school claims its own preferred texts as secondary scripture, e.g., the *Rāmāyana* of Vaiṣṇavism and Smārtism, or the *Tirumurai* of Śaiva Siddhānta. Thus, the selection of *smṛiti* varies widely from one sect and lineage to another. See: *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana*, *Tirumurai*.

**snare:** A trap for catching unawares, especially animals.

**social dharma:** (varṇa dharma). See: *dharma*.

**solace:** A comforting of distress, pain or sorrow.

**solemn:** Observed or performed according to ritual or tradition. Formal, serious, inspiring feelings of awe.

—**solemnize:** To consecrate with formal ceremony. See: *sacrament*, *saṁskāra*.

**soliloquy:** An act of speaking to oneself.

**solitary (solitaire):** A hermit. One who lives alone and away from all human company.

**Somananda (Somānanda):** सोमानन्द Disciple of Vasugupta and author of *Śiva Dṛiṣṭi* (ca 850–900), which was said to be a highly influential explanation and defense of the Kashmir Śaiva philosophy. See: *Kashmīr Śaivism*.

**Somanath Temple:** सोमनाथ Ancient center of Pāsupata Śaivism located in modern Gujarat state and mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. The first recorded temple was built there before 100. In 1026 the then fabulously wealthy temple was sacked by Muslim invaders, the Śivaliṅga smashed and 50,000 *brāhmins* slaughtered. The temple was rebuilt several times and finally demolished by the Moghul emperor Aurangzeb (ca 1700). Sardar Patel, deputy prime minister of India, spearheaded its reconstruction in 1947.

**soul:** The real being of man, as distinguished from body, mind and emotions. The soul—known as *ātman* or *purusha*—is the sum of its two aspects, the form or body of the soul and the essence of the soul (though many texts use the word *soul* to refer to the essence only). —**essence or nucleus of the soul:** Man’s innermost and unchanging being—Pure Consciousness (*Parāśakti* or *Satchidānanda*) and Absolute Reality (*Paraśiva*). This essence was never created, does not change or evolve and is eternally identical with God Śiva’s perfections of *Parāśakti* and *Paraśiva*. —**soul body:** *ānandamaya kośa* (“sheath of bliss”), also referred to as the “causal body” (*kāraṇa śarīra*), “innermost sheath” and “body of light.” *Body of the soul*, or *soul body*, names the soul’s manifest nature as an individual being—an effulgent, human-like form composed of light (quanta). It is the emanational

- creation of God Śiva, destined to one day merge back into Him. During its evolution, the soul functions through four types of outer sheaths that envelop the soul form—mental, instinctive-intellectual, vital and physical—and employs the mental faculties of *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahamkāra*, as well as the five agents of perception (*jñānendriyas*), and five agents of action (*karmendriyas*). The “soul body” is not a body in sense of a case, a vessel, vehicle or enclosure for something else. The soul body is the soul itself—a radiant, self-effulgent, human-like, super-intelligent being. Its very composition is Satchidānanda in various subtle levels of manifestation. It is the finest of subatomic forms, on the quantum level. The soul form evolves as its consciousness evolves, becoming more and more refined until finally it is the same intensity or refinement as the Primal Soul, Parameśvara. The experiences of life, in all the various planes of consciousness, are “food for the soul,” reaping lessons that actually raise the level of intelligence and divine love. Thus, very refined souls, whether embodied or in the disembodied, *ajīva*, state, are like walking intelligences with inventive creativeness and powers of preservation, beaming with love and luminosity in their self-effulgent bodies of quantum light particles. See: *ātman*, *evolution of the soul*, *indriya*, *kośa*, *Parāśakti*, *Paraśiva*, *puruṣa*, *quantum*, *Satchidānanda*, *spiritual unfoldment*.
- sound:** *Śabda*. As the *darśana*, or “seeing,” of the Divine is a central article of faith for Hindus, similarly, *hearing* the Divine is spiritually indispensable. The ears are a center of many *nāḍis* connected to inner organs of perception. *Gurus* may when imparting initiation whisper in the ear of disciples to stimulate these centers and give a greater effect to their instructions. During temple *pūjā*, bells ring loudly, drums resound, conches and woodwinds blare to awaken worshippers from routine states of consciousness. Meditation on inner sound, called *nāda anusandhāna*, is an essential *yoga* practice. Listening to the *Vedas* or other scripture is a mystical process. Traditional music is revered as the nectar of the Divine. See: *Aum*, *nāda*, *Śiva consciousness*.
- Soundless Sound:** *Paranāda*. See: *nāda*.
- sovereign:** Above or superior to all others. Supreme in rank or authority.
- sow:** To scatter or plant, as seeds for cultivation; disseminate; propagate.
- span:** To stretch across or over, as a bridge spans a river. To cover or take in the whole of something.
- Spanda Kārikā:** स्पन्दकारिका A commentary of 52 verses by Vasugupta on the *Śiva Sūtras*. Also called the *Spanda Sūtras*. See: *Vasugupta*, *Kashmīr Saivism*.
- spark:** A small burning piece of matter, usually thrown off by a fire. A tiny beginning. To stir or activate.
- spectrum:** A series of colored bands which blend one into the other so as to include the entire range of colors, as a rainbow. The entire range of variations of anything, as in the spectrum of all possible emotions.
- speculate (speculation):** To conjecture, reflect, think or meditate on a subject without, or with incomplete, evidence. See: *meditation*, *self-reflection*.
- sphaṭika:** स्फटिक “Quartz crystal.” From *sphaṭ*, “to expand; blossom; to burst open or into view.” See: *sphaṭika Śivaliṅga*.
- sphaṭika Śivaliṅga:** स्फटिकशिवलिङ्ग “Crystal mark of God.” A quartz-crystal Śivaliṅga. See: *San Marga Sanctuary*, *Śivaliṅga*, *Svayambhū Liṅga*.
- sphere:** A world. The area, place; the extent or range or action, experience or influence. See: *loka*, *world*.
- Spinoza, Baruch:** Dutch philosopher (1632-1677) who taught a monistic pantheism of one infinite substance, God or nature.
- spiritual evolution:** *Adhyātma prasāra*. See: *adhyātma prasāra*, *evolution of the soul*.
- spiritual unfoldment:** *Adhyātma vikāśa*. The unfolding of the spirit, the inherent, divine soul of man. The very gradual expansion of consciousness as *kuṇḍalinī śakti* slowly rises through the *sushumṇā*. The term *spiritual unfoldment* indicates this slow, imperceptible process, likened to a lotus flower’s emerging from bud to effulgent beauty. Contrasted with *development*, which implies intellectual study; or *growth*, which implies character building and *sādhana*. Sound intellect and good character are the foundation for spiritual unfoldment, but they are not the unfoldment itself. When philosophical training and *sādhana* is complete, the *kuṇḍalinī* rises safely and imperceptibly, without jerks, twitches, tears or hot flashes. Brings greater willpower, compassion and perceptive qualities. See: *adhyātma vikāśa*, *kuṇḍalinī*, *liberation*, *pāda*, *sādhana*, *sādhana mārga*, *San Marga*, *tapas*.
- splendor (splendid):** Great brightness, magnificent in richness, beauty or character. Grandeur.
- spouse:** A partner in a marriage; a husband or wife.
- śraddhā:** श्रद्धा “Faith; belief.” See: *pañcha śraddhā*.
- śraddhā:** श्रद्धा Relating to commemorative ceremonies for the deceased, held one week, one month after death, and annually thereafter, according to tradition. See: *bone-gathering*, *death*, *piṇḍa*, *saṁskāras of later life*.
- śraddhā dhāraṇā:** श्रद्धाधारणा “Distillation of faith or belief.” A term used in *Dancing with Śiva* for *creed*, a concise synopsis of religious doctrine. See: *creed*, *faith*.
- śrauta:** श्रौत “Related to hearing; audible.” That which is prescribed by or conforms with the *Vedas*.
- Śrauta Śāstra:** श्रौतशस्त्र “Texts on the revelation.” 1) Refers to scriptures or teachings that are in agreement with the *Vedas*. 2) A certain group of texts of the *Kalpa Vedāṅga*, and part of the essential study for Vedic priests. The *Śrauta Śāstras* offer explanation of the *yajña* rituals. See: *Vedāṅga*.
- śrī:** श्री “Radiant,” “excellent;” “honorable,” “eminent.” An honorific title prefixed to the names of Deities (e.g., Śrī Gaṇeśa); to the names of scriptural works (meaning holy, sacred), or eminent persons (Sir, Mr.). The feminine equivalent is *śrīmātī*.
- Śrī Chakra:** श्रीचक्र See: *yantra*.
- Srikantha (Śrikanṭha):** श्रीकण्ठ A saint and philosopher (ca 1050) who promoted a Śaivite theology which em-

braced monism and dualism. Founder of the Śaiva school called Śiva Advaita, or Śiva Viśiṣṭādvaita, teaching a “Śaivite qualified nondualism,” resembling Ramanuja’s Vaishṇavite Viśiṣṭādvaita. He was also known as Nilakantha Sivacharya (Nilakaṇṭha Śivāchārya). See: *Śiva Advaita*.

**Srikumara (Śrikumāra):** श्रीकुमार Monistic Śaiva Siddhānta philosopher (ca 1050) who refuted the Sankaran Vedānta doctrine of *māyā* as illusion and expounded that Śiva is both material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*) and efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*).

**Śrila:** श्रील “Excellency,” Eminence,” “Most Venerable.” Honorific title for distinguished religious prelates.

**Sri Lanka (Śri Lanṅā):** श्रीलङ्का प्रुी लङ्का “Venerable lion.” Island state off the southeast tip of India, formerly called Ceylon, 80% Buddhist, home to several million Tamil Śaivites who live mostly in the arid north. It was a British colony until independence in 1948 as a member of the Commonwealth. Sri Lanka became a republic in 1972. Area: 25,000 square miles; 19 million population.

**Srinagar (Śrinagara):** श्रीनगर The summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir.

**Srinatha (Śrinātha):** श्रीनाथ A Kashmīr Śaivite teacher of monistic theism. See: *Durvasas*.

**śrī pādūkā:** श्रीपादुका The *guru*’s venerable sandals. See: *holy feet, pādūkā*.

**Śrī Rudram:** श्रीरुद्रम् “(Hymn) to the wielder of awesome powers.” Preeminent Vedic hymn to Lord Śiva as the God of dissolution, chanted daily in Śiva temples throughout India. It is in this long prayer, located in the *Yajur Veda, Taittirīya Samhitā*, in the middle of the first three *Vedas*, that the Śaivite *mantra Namah Śivāya* first appears.

**śrīṣṭi:** सृष्टि “Creation.” See: *Natarāja*.

**śruti:** श्रुति That which is “heard.” Hinduism’s revealed scriptures, of supreme theological authority and spiritual value. They are timeless teachings transmitted to *rishis*, or seers, directly by God thousands of years ago. *Śruti* is thus said to be *apauruṣeya*, “supra-human.” *Śruti* consists of the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas*, preserved through oral tradition and eventually written down in Sanskrit. Among the many sacred books of the Hindus, these two bodies of knowledge are held in the highest esteem. For countless centuries *śruti* has been the basis of philosophical discussion, study and commentary, and this attention has given rise to countless schools of thought. It is also the subject of deep study and meditation, to realize the wisdom of the ancients within oneself. Most *mantras* are drawn from *śruti*, used for rites of worship, both public and domestic, as well as personal prayer and *japa*. It is a remarkable tribute to Hindu culture that so much of *śruti* was preserved without alteration by means of oral instruction from *guru* to *śishya*, generation after generation for thousands of years. In the *Veda* tradition this was accomplished by requiring the student to learn each verse in eleven different ways, including backwards. Traditionally *śruti* is not read, but chant-

ed according to extremely precise rules of grammar, pitch, intonation and rhythm. This brings forth its greatest power. In the sacred language of *śruti*, word and meaning are so closely aligned that hearing these holy scriptures properly chanted is magical in its effect upon the soul of the listener. See: *Āgamas, smṛiti, Vedas*.

**stave off:** Push back, impede, prevent from happening.  
**steadfast:** Constant. Firm, established, secure. Not wavering or changeable.

**sthapati:** स्थपति From *stha*, “building or place,” and *pati*, “lord or father.” A master architect of Āgamic temples. A *sthapati* must be well versed in the *Śilpa Śāstras*, experienced in all aspects of temple construction, pious, mystically trained, and a good administrator, for he has a team of *śilpīs* working under him, stone cutters, carvers, sculptors, wood workers, etc. See: *Śilpa Śāstras, Stāpatyaveda*.

**Sthāpatyaveda:** स्थापत्यवेद “Science of architecture.” A class of writings on architecture, sometimes classed as one of the *Upavedas*. It embodies such works as the *Mānasāra*, the *Vāstu Śāstras* and the architectural *Śilpa Śāstra*. See: *Upaveda*.

**sthiti:** स्थिति “Preservation.” See: *Natarāja*.

**sthūla śarīra:** स्थूलशरीर “Gross or physical body.” The odic body. See: *actinic, actinodic, kośa, odic, subtle body*.

**stingy (stinginess):** Miserly. Unwilling or reluctant to give or spend.

**Stoics:** Ancient Greek philosophers who held that all things are governed by natural laws and that the wise follow virtue and remain aloof from the external world and its passions.

**straits:** A narrow waterway; a difficult, dangerous experience or passage in life.

**stranglehold:** Any measure that suppresses freedom or thwarts or cuts of life.

**stratification:** “Making layers.” The process of organizing or arranging in layers or levels.

**stri dharmā:** स्त्रीधर्म “Womanly conduct.” See: *dharmā*.  
**Subāla Upanishad:** सुबाल उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Śukla Yajur Veda*. A dialog between sage Subala (Subāla) and Brahmā about the Supreme Being as Nārāyaṇa.

**subatomic:** Of the inner parts of atoms; anything smaller than an atom.

**subconscious mind:** *Samskāra chitta*. See: *aura, conscience, mind (five states)*.

**subha muhūrta:** शुभमुहूर्त “Auspicious time.” A range of time when specified activities are most likely to thrive and succeed. See: *muhūrta*.

**subjective:** Personal. Of or colored by the personality, state of mind etc., of the observer (subject). Opposite of objective. Cf: *objective*.

**sublime:** Exalted, grand. Inspiring awe or reverence.

**subliminal:** Below the threshold of consciousness or apprehension, such as an attitude of which one is not aware. Subconscious. See: *mind (five states)*.

**Subrahmaṇya:** सुब्रह्मण्य “Very pious; dear to holy men.” A Name of Lord Kārttikeya. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**Subramuniyaswami:** சுப்பிரமணியசுவாமி Author of this book, 162nd *satguru* (1927–2001) of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā. He was ordained Sivaya Subramuniyaswami by Sage Yogaswami on the full-moon day of May 12, 1949, in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, at 6:21 P.M. This was just days after he had attained *nirvikalpa samādhi* in the caves of Jalani. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami is recognized worldwide as one of foremost Hindu ministers of our times, contributing to the revival of Hinduism in immeasurable abundance. He was simultaneously a staunch defender of traditions, as the tried and proven ways of the past, and a fearless innovator, setting new patterns of life for contemporary humanity. For a brief biography of this remarkable seer and renaissance *guru*, see *About the Author* on page 923.

Gurudeva teaches the traditional Śaivite Hindu path to enlightenment, a path that leads the soul from simple service to worshipful devotion to God, from the disciplines of meditation and *yoga* to the direct knowing of Divinity within. His insights into the nature of consciousness provide a key for quieting the external mind and revealing to aspirants their deeper states of being, which are eternally perfect, full of light, love, serenity and wisdom. He urges all seekers to live a life of *ahimsā*, harmlessness towards nature, people and creatures, an ethic which includes vegetarianism.

The name *Subramuniya* is a Tamil spelling of the Sanskrit *Subhramunya* (not to be confused with *Subrahmanya*). It is formed from *śubhra* meaning “light; intuition,” and *muni*, “silent sage.” *Ya* means “restraint; religious meditation.” Thus, *Subramuniya* means a self-restrained soul who remains silent or, when he speaks, speaks out from intuition.

**subside:** To become less active or less intense. To abate.

**substance:** Essence; real nature.

**stratum:** “Layer underneath.” In geology, the layer of rock or other matter forming the foundation of a landscape and acting as its support. In philosophy, that which is “underneath,” not visible but the support for all of existence, the substance or underlying force which is the foundation of any and all manifestation: Satchidānanda. See: *Parāśakti*, *Satchidānanda*, *tattva*.

**sub-subconscious mind:** *Vāsanā chitta*. See: *mind* (five states).

**subsuperconscious mind:** *Anukāraṇa chitta*. See: *kalā*, *mind*, *tattvas*.

**subtle body:** *Sūkshma śarīra*, the nonphysical, astral body or vehicle in which the soul encases itself to function in the Antarloka, or subtle world. The subtle body includes the *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya kośas* if the soul is physically embodied. It consists of only *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya* after death, when *prāṇamaya kośa* disintegrates. And it consists of only *vijñānamaya kośa* when *manomaya kośa* is dropped off just before rebirth or when higher evolutionary planes are entered. Also part of the subtle body are the *antaḥkaraṇa* (mental faculty: intellect, instinct and ego—*buddhi*, *manas* and *ahankāra*),

the five *jñānendriyas* (agents of perception: hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell); and the five *karmendriyas* (agents of action: speech, grasping, movement, excretion and generation). See: *astral body*, *indriya*, *jīva*, *kośa*, *reincarnation*.

**subtle plane:** See: *loka*, *three worlds*.

**successor:** A person who follows another, in office or title, as the successor to a *satguru* or king. —**succession:** A number of persons or things coming one after another in order; e.g., a spiritual succession. See: *guru paramparā*.

**sūchi:** सूची “Needle; sharp point.” An index: that which reveals a book.

**śuddha avasthā:** शुद्ध अवस्था “Stage of purity.” (Tamil: *avasthai*.) In Śaiva Siddhānta, the last of three stages of evolution, in which the soul is immersed in Śiva. Self Realization having been attained, the mental body is purified and thus reflects the divine soul nature, Śiva's nature, more than in the *kevala* or *sakala* state. Now the soul continues to unfold through the stages of realization, and ultimately merges back into its source, the Primal Soul. See: *avasthā*, *evolution of the soul*, *kevala avasthā*, *sakala avasthā*, *viśvagrāsa*.

**Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta:** शुद्धशैवसिद्धान्त “Pure Śaiva Siddhānta,” a term first used by Tirumular in the *Tirumantiram* to describe his monistic Śaiva Siddhānta and distinguish it from pluralistic Siddhānta and other forms of Siddhānta that do not encompass the ultimate monism of Vedānta.

**śuddhavidyā:** शुद्धविद्या “Pure Knowledge.” The fifth *tattva* in the Śaiva Siddhānta system. See: *tattva*.

**śūdra:** शूद्र “Worker, servant.” The social class of skilled artisans, workers and laborers. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**suicide:** “Self-killing.” In Sanskrit, *prāṇatyāga*, “abandoning life force.” Intentionally ending one's own life through poisoning, drowning, burning, jumping, shooting, etc. Suicide has traditionally been condemned in Hindu scripture because, being an abrupt escape from life, it creates unseemly *karma* to face in the future. However, in cases of terminal disease or great disability, religious self-willed death through fasting—*prāyopaveśa*—is permitted. The person making such a decision declares it publicly, which allows for community regulation and distinguishes the act from suicide performed privately in traumatic emotional states of anguish and despair. Ancient lawgivers cite various stipulations: 1) inability to perform normal bodily purification; 2) death appears imminent or the condition is so bad that life's pleasures are nil; 3) the action must be done under community regulation. The gradual nature of *prāyopaveśa* is a key factor distinguishing it from sudden suicide, *svadehaghata* (“murdering one's body”), for it allows time for the individual to settle all differences with others, to ponder life and draw close to God, as well as for loved ones to oversee the person's gradual exit from the physical world. In the ideal, highly ritualized practice, one begins by obtaining forgiveness and giving forgiveness. Next a formal vow, *mahāvratamarana*,

“great vow of death,” is given to one’s *guru*, following a full discussion of all *karmas* of this life, especially fully and openly confessing one’s wrongdoings. Thereafter, attention is to be focused on scripture and the *guru*’s noble teachings. Meditation on the innermost, immortal Self becomes the full focus as one gradually abstains from food. At the very end, as the soul releases itself from the body, the sacred *mantra* is repeated as instructed by the preceptor. See: *death, penance, prāyopaveśa, reīncarnation, soul.*

**Sukla Yajur Veda:** सुक्लयजुर्वेद See: *Yajur Veda.*

**sūkshma śarīra:** सूक्ष्मशरीर “Subtle body,” or astral body. See: *actinic, actinodic, kośa, odic, soul, subtle body.*

**Śulba Śāstra(s):** सुल्बशास्त्र Practical manuals giving the measurements and procedures for constructing the sites of Vedic *yajña* rites. A division of the *Kalpa Vedāṅga* (*Veda* limb on rituals), these *sūtras* employ sophisticated geometry and are India’s earliest extant mathematical texts. *Śulba* means “string or cord,” denoting the use of string for measuring. See: *Vedāṅga.*

**sully (sullied):** To make dirty, or impure. See: *purity-impurity.*

**Sundaranatha:** சுந்தரநாதா The original name of Nātha Siddha Tirumular before he trekked to South India from the Himalayas. See: *Tirumular.*

**Sundarar:** சுந்தரர் One of the four Tamil Samayāchāryas (ca 800), and composer of devotional hymns to God Śiva, which form the seventh book of the *Tirumurai*. In these, he pleads forthrightly to Śiva for material as well as spiritual abundance. See: *Nalvar, Nayanar, Tirumurai.*

**Śūnya Sampādane:** शून्यसंपादने “Gaining of Nothingness.” A primary text of Vīra Śaivism (ca 1550) consisting of debates and writings of the Śiva Śaraṇas. *Śūnya:* “the void, the distinctionless absolute;” *sampādana:* “attainment, realization, enlightenment.”

**superconscious mind:** Kāraṇa chitta. See: *kalā, mind (five states), mind (three phases), Satchidānanda, tattva.*

**supernatural:** Beyond or transcending the natural laws of the physical cosmos. Of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible universe, referring to events, agencies or knowledge superseding or mystically explaining the laws of nature. See: *mysticism, shamanism.*

**supplicate (supplication):** To ask for humbly. To pray for earnestly.

**Suprabheda Āgama:** सुप्रभेद आगम One of the 28 Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas, this scripture discusses temple worship, especially personal devotions, festivals, practices and initiations for each stage of life. A total of 4,666 verses have been preserved from the original scripture.

**supreme:** Highest in rank, power, authority.

**Supreme God:** Highest God, the source or creator of all other Gods, beings and all manifestation. See: *Natarāja, perfections, Śiva.*

**Surdas (Surdās):** सूरदास Blind North-Indian Vaiṣṇava poet (ca 1550), famous for his devotional hymns to Lord Kṛishṇa. His massive writing *Sūrsagar*, “Sur’s

Ocean,” is widely read.

**surpass:** To excel; to be superior to.

**surrender:** Giving up or yielding. Surrender to the Divine is called *prapatti*, a complete giving over of oneself to God’s will in total trust and abandonment. See: *bhakti, prapatti, sacrifice.*

**Sūrya:** सूर्य “Sun.” One of the principal Divinities of the *Vedas*, also prominent in the epics and *Purānas*. Śaivites revere Sūrya, the Sun God each morning as Śiva Sūrya. Smārtas and Vaiṣṇavas revere the golden orb as Sūrya Nārāyaṇa. As the source of light, the sun is the most readily apparent image of Divinity available to man. As the giver of life, Sūrya is worshiped during harvest festivals everywhere. Esoterically, the sun represents the point where the manifest and unmanifest worlds meet or unite. In *yoga*, the sun represents the masculine force, *piṅgalā*. Sūrya also signifies the Self within. In the Vedic description of the course of souls after death, the “path of the sun” leads liberated souls to the realm of Brahman; while the path of the moon leads back to physical birth.

**sushumṇā nāḍī:** सुषुम्णानाडी “Most gracious channel.” Central psychic nerve current within the spinal column. See: *kuṇḍalīnī, nāḍī, samādhi.*

**sustainable:** Maintainable; able to be kept up or continued consistently over a period of time.

**sustenance (to sustain):** Support. That which preserves life, or gives strength. Nourishment.

**sutala:** सुतल “Great abyss.” Region of obsessive jealousy and retaliation. The third *chakra* below the *mūlād-hāra*, centered in the knees. Corresponds to the third astral netherworld beneath the Earth’s surface, called Saṁhāta (“abandoned”) or Sutala. See: *chakra, loka, Naraka.*

**Sūta Samhitā:** सूतसंहिता A chapter of the *Skānda Purāna* dealing in part with philosophy.

**sūtra:** सूत्र “Thread.” An aphoristic verse; the literary style consisting of such maxims. From 500 BCE, this style was widely adopted by Indian philosophical systems and eventually employed in works on law, grammar, medicine, poetry, crafts, etc. Each *sūtra* is often accompanied by a commentary called *bhāshya* and sometimes subcommentary called *tika, vyakhyana* or *tippāni*. Through the media of short, concise, easily memorized *sūtras*, vast amounts of knowledge were preserved. Reciting relevant *sūtra* texts from memory is a daily *sādhana* in various Hindu arts and sciences. *Sūtra* also names the wife’s wedding pendant (*maṅgala sūtra*). See: *bhāshya, wedding pendant.*

**svadharmā:** स्वधर्म “One’s own way.” See: *dharma.*

**svādhishṭhāna:** स्वाधिष्ठान “One’s own base.” See: *chakra.*

**svādhyaia:** स्वाध्याय “Self-reflection; personal scriptural study.” See: *yama-niyama.*

**svarga:** स्वर्ग “Abode of light.” An intermediate realm of the Antarloka; a term essentially synonymous with *Svarloka*. See: *loka.*

**Svarloka:** स्वर्लोक “Celestial (or bright) plane.” The third of the seven upper worlds, the mid-astral region (equated in some texts with Svarga), realm of

*maṇipūra chakra*. See: *loka*.

**Svatmarāma (Svātmārāma):** स्वात्माराम See: *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*.

**svayambhū Liṅga:** स्वयम्भूलिङ्ग “Self-existent mark or sign of God.” Names a Śivaliṅga discovered in nature and not carved or crafted by human hands; often a smooth cylindrical stone, called *bānaliṅga*, such as found in India’s Narmada River. See: *Śivaliṅga*.

**Svāyambhuva Āgama:** स्वायम्भुव आगम One of the 28 Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas. See: *Śaiva Āgama*.

**Svāyambhuva Sūtra(s):** स्वायम्भुवसूत्र A subsidiary text of the Śaiva Āgamas.

**Śvetāśvatara Upanishad:** श्वेताश्वतर उपनिषद् An *Upanishad* of the *Yajur Veda* that emphasizes theism—personal God and devotion—and at the same time monism—the unity of God, soul and world. It is valued as a major *Upanishad*, among the greatest pantheist writings, especially precious to Śaivite schools.

**swāmī:** स्वामी “Lord; owner; self-possessed.” He who knows or is master of himself. A respectful title for a Hindu monk, usually a *sannyāsīn*, an initiated, orange-robed renunciate, dedicated wholly to religious life. As a sign of respect, the term *swāmī* is sometimes applied more broadly to include non-monastics dedicated to spiritual work. See: *monk*, *sannyāsa dharma*, *sannyāsīn*.

**swāmīnī:** स्वामिनी The feminine form of *swāmī*. See: *monastic*, *nun*, *sannyāsa*, *swāmī*.

**swastika:** स्वस्तिक “Sign of auspiciousness.” From *su*, “wellness,” “auspiciousness” and *astu*, “be it so.” The ancient Hindu symbol of auspiciousness and good fortune, representing the sun and often associated with Gaṇeśa. The right-angled arms of the *swastika* denote the indirect way in which Divinity is reached: through intuition and not by intellect. It has been a prominent symbol in many cultures. See: *mūrti*.

**swirl:** To move in a whirling, circular motion, like a whirlpool.

**symbolism:** The representation of one thing by something else. E.g., the *damaru*, Śiva’s drum, is a symbol of creation.

**syncretism:** A combination of various beliefs and practices, often of opposing views formed into a one creed or system of belief, typically marked by inconsistencies. See: *universalist*.

**synonymous:** Having the same or similar meaning. Quality of two words or phrases whose meanings are identical.

**synthesis:** A combining of various parts to make a whole.



**Tagore, Rabindranath:** One of India’s most highly acclaimed writers and poets (1861–1941), son of Devendranath Tagore. He wrote in Bengali and in English. His most famous poetic religious work is *Gītāñjali*, which centers around dialogs between the soul and God Viṣṇu. He received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913.

**tainted:** Sullied, spoiled or stained. Morally corrupt or depraved.

**Tai Pongal:** தைப்பொங்கல் A four-day home festival held in the Tamil month of Tai (January–February), celebrating the season’s first harvest. Sūrya, the Sun God, is honored at this time as the giver of all good fortune and as the visible Divine One. Newly harvested rice is ceremoniously cooked outdoors over an open fire in a giant pot (hence *pongāl*, from *pongu*, “to cook”). The direction of the overflow of boiling milk is an augury for the coming year.

**Tai Pusam:** தைப்பூசம் A festival held on the Pushya *nakshatra* near the full-moon day of January–February to worship Lords Śiva or Kārttikeya, depending on the locality. It is an important holiday, especially dear to the Tamil people, celebrated with great pomp, fervor and intensity in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Fiji, South Africa and Réunion, often marked by the carrying of *kavadi*. In Mauritius and Singapore it is a national holiday. See: *Kārttikeya*, *kavadi*.

**Taittiriya Āraṇyaka:** तैत्तिरीय आरण्यक A forest treatise of *Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda*. See: *Veda*.

**Taittiriya Samhitā:** तैत्तिरीयसंहिता See: *Yajur Veda*.

**Taittiriya Upanishad:** तैत्तिरीय उपनिषद् Belongs to the *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa* of the *Yajur Veda* and is divided into three sections called *valli(s)*. The first deals with phonetics and pronunciation, the second and third with Brahman and the attainment of bliss.

**tala:** तल “Plane or world; level; base, bottom, abyss.” Root of the name of the seven realms of lower consciousness centered in the seven *chakras* below the *mūlādhāra*. See: *chakra*, *hell*, *loka*, *Naraka*, *purgatory*.

**talātala chakra:** तलातल “Lower region.” The fourth *chakra* below the *mūlādhāra*, centered in the calves. Region of chronic mental confusion and unreasonable stubbornness. Corresponds to the fourth astral netherworld beneath the Earth’s surface, called *Tāmisra* (“darkness”) or *Talātala*. This state of consciousness is born of the sole motivation of self-preservation. See: *chakra*, *loka*, *Naraka*.

**tamas(ic):** तमस् “Force of inertia.” See: *guṇa*.

**Tamil:** தமிழ் The ancient Dravidian language of the Tamils, a Caucasoid people of South India and Northern Sri Lanka who have now migrated throughout the world. The official language of the state of Tamil Nadu, India, spoken by 60 million people. See: *race*.

**Tamil Nadu:** தமிழ் நாடு State in South India, 50,000 square miles, population 62 million. Land of countless holy scriptures, saints, sages and over 40,000 magnificent temples, including Chidambaram, Madurai, Palani Hills and Rameshwaram.

**tāṇḍava:** ताण्डव “Violent dance.” Any vigorous dance sequence performed by a male dancer. There are many forms of *tāṇḍava*. Its prototype is Śiva’s dance of bliss, *ānanda tāṇḍava*. The much softer feminine dance is called *lāsya*, from *lasa*, “lively.” Dance in general is *nartana*. See: *Naṭarāja*.

**tantra:** तन्त्र “Loom, methodology.” 1) Most generally, a synonym for *śāstra*, “scripture.” 2) A synonym for



the Āgamic texts, especially those of the Śākta faith, a class of Hindu scripture providing detailed instruction on all aspects of religion, mystic knowledge and science. The *tantras* are also associated with the Śaiva tradition. 3) A specific method, technique or spiritual practice within the Śaiva and Śākta traditions. For example, *prāṇāyāma* is a *tantra*. *Tantra* generally involves a reversal of the normal flow of energies. Its perspective is that the inner self is most important, and outer life is secondary. *Tantra* causes the life force to flow up through the *sushumṇā*. Many are the methods for overcoming the unsurmountable. Fallen into the hands of the unscrupulous, these techniques become black magic (*abhichāra*). 4) Disciplines and techniques with a strong emphasis on worship of the feminine force, often involving sexual encounters, with the purported goal of transformation and union with the Divine.

**Tantrāloka:** तन्त्रालोक One of the most comprehensive and authoritative expositions of Kashmir Śaivism, written by Abhinavagupta. See: *Abhinavagupta, Kashmir Śaivism*.

**tantric (tāntrika):** तान्त्रिक 1) Adjectival to qualify practices prescribed in the Tantra traditions. 2) Referring to the methods of directing the subtle masculine/feminine, aggressive/passive energies that flow between men and women. 3) Also names a practitioner of any of the Tantra traditions. 4) *Tantra* has today come to commonly refer to sex-based spiritual practices developed in Hinduism (known as “left-handed *tantra*”) and in other faiths, including Bon, Tibetan Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Judaism and the New Age. See: *kuṇḍalīnī, rāja yoga, Śāktism, tantra*.

**tantrism:** The enlightenment path outlined in the *Tantra* scriptures. 1) Tantrism is sometimes considered a parallel stream of history and tradition in Hinduism, running alongside and gradually interweaving with the Vedic *brāhminical* tradition. 2) Tantrism refers to traditions, mainly within Śaivism and Śāktism, that focus on the arousal of the *kuṇḍalīnī* force, and which view the human body as a vehicle of the Divine and an instrument for liberation. Tantrism’s ultimate aim is a channeling of the *kuṇḍalīnī* life force through the *sushumṇā*, the gracious channel, upwards into the *sahasrāra chakra* and beyond, through the door of Brahman (Brahmarandhra) into Paraśiva, either before or at the time of death. The stress is on the transformation of all spheres of consciousness, spiritual, psychic, emotional and material. It is a path of *sādhana*. 3) —**Śākta Tantrism:** Brings a strong emphasis on the worship of the feminine force. Depending on the school, this may be symbolic or literal in rites involving sexual intercourse, etc. Śākta Tantrism’s main principle is the use of the material to gain the spiritual. In certain schools, historically, this implies embracing that which is normally forbidden and manipulating the forces to attain transcendent consciousness rather than lower consciousness. There are three main streams: 1) the right-hand path (*dakṣiṇa*

*mārga* or *dakṣiṇāchāra*) of conservative Hindu practice, 2) the left-hand path (*vāma mārga* or *vāmāchāra*) involving the use of things normally forbidden such as taking intoxicants, meat, ritual sex, etc., and 3) the *yogic* path of the Kaula sect. Gorakṣanātha followers are sometimes grouped with the latter. See: *kuṇḍalīnī, rāja yoga, Śāktism, tantra*.

**Tao:** “The way.” The central concept of the Chinese religion called Taoism. Though traditionally considered impossible to translate, *Tao* is often rendered as “cosmic order,” akin to the Sanskrit *ṛita*. See: *dharmā*.

**tapas:** तपस् “Heat, fire; ardor.” 1) Purificatory spiritual disciplines, severe austerity, penance and sacrifice. The endurance of pain, suffering, through the performance of extreme penance, religious austerity and mortification. By comparison, *sādhana* is austerity of a simple, sustained kind, while *tapas* is austerity of a severe, psyche-transforming nature. *Tapas* is extreme bodily mortification, long term *sādhana*s, such as meditating under a tree in one place for 12 years, taking a lifetime vow of silence and never speaking or writing, or standing on one leg for a prescribed number of years. Scriptures generally warn against extreme asceticism which would bring harm to the body. 2) On a deeper level, *tapas* is the intense inner state of *kuṇḍalīnī* “fire” which stimulates mental anguish and separates the individual from society. Life does not go on as usual when this condition occurs. The association with a *satguru*, Sadāśiva, brings the devotee into *tapas*, and it brings him out of it. The fire of *tapas* burns on the dross of *sañchita karmas*. This is the source of heat, dismay, depression and striving until the advent of final and total surrender, *prapatti*. The individual can *mollify* this heated condition by continuing his regular *sādhana* as outlined by the *guru*. The fires of self-transformation may be stimulated by the practice of *tapas*, or come unbidden. One can “do” *tapas*, but the true *tapas* is a condition of being and consciousness which is a state of grace, bringing positive change, transformation and purification of one’s nature. *Guru bhakti* is the only force that can cool the fires of *tapas*. See: *kuṇḍalīnī, penance, sādhana*.

**tapasvin:** तपस्विन् One who performs *tapas* or is in the state of *tapas*. See: *tapas*.

**Tapoloka:** तपोलोक “Plane of austerity.” The second highest of the seven upper worlds, realm of *ājñā chakra*. See: *loka*.

**tarnished:** Dulled, sullied, spoiled, lacking luster.

**Tat:** तत् “That;” the indescribable Absolute; Supreme.

**Tatparyadīpikā:** तत्पर्यदीपिका A commentary by Srikrumara (ca 1100) on the *Tattvapraśāsa* of Sri Bhojadeva Paramara (1018–1060), a philosopher-king in Central India who expounded Śaiva Siddhānta. Srikrumara upheld the monistic basis of Bhojadeva’s work, while later commentator Aghorasiva reinterpreted it in dualistic terms. See: *Aghorasiva, Śaiva Siddhānta*.

**Tat Sat:** तत् सत् “That (is) Truth.” A terse phrase pointing to the inexpressible truth of which nothing more can be said.

**tattva:** तत्त्व “That-ness” or “essential nature.” *Tattvas* are the primary principles, elements, states or categories of existence, the building blocks of the universe. Lord Śiva constantly creates, sustains the form of and absorbs back into Himself His creations. *Rishis* describe this emanational process as the unfoldment of *tattvas*, stages or evolutes of manifestation, descending from subtle to gross. At *mahāpralaya*, cosmic dissolution, they enfold into their respective sources, with only the first two *tattvas* surviving the great dissolution. The first and subtlest form—the pure consciousness and source of all other evolutes of manifestation—is called Śiva *tattva*, or Parāśakti-*nāda*. But beyond Śiva *tattva* lies Parāśiva—the utterly transcendent, Absolute Reality, called *attava*. That is Śiva’s first perfection. The Sāṅkhya system discusses 25 *tattvas*. Śaivism recognizes these same 25 plus 11 beyond them, making 36 *tattvas* in all. These are divided into three groups: 1) First are the five *śuddha* (pure) *tattvas*. These constitute the realm of *śuddha māyā* 2) Next are the seven *śuddha-aśuddha* (pure-impure) *tattvas*. These constitute the realm of *śuddhāśuddha māyā*. 3) The third group comprises the 24 *aśuddha* (impure) *tattvas*. These constitute the realm of *aśuddha māyā*.

—THE ŚUDDHA TATTVAS: **Actinic or spiritual energy.** This is the superconscious realm, also known as *śuddha* (pure) *māyā* or *mahāmāyā*. *Bindu*, transcendent light, is the “material” cause of this pure sphere. This is the Śivaloka, the region of the 330 million Gods, the myriad *rishis* and other beings who have attained freedom from the triple bondage.

1) **Śiva tattva:** “auspiciousness,” of two parts: the higher is Parāśakti, “Supreme Energy,” from which emerges primal sound, *nāda* (more precisely Parānāda, soundless sound). Though most often referred to as sound, *nāda* is more mystically known as movement, the first impulse arising from perfect quietude, the first “thing” out of the motionless Self. This is Śiva’s second perfection, Parāśakti, superconsciousness, the mind of God. The Śiva *tattva* pervades all other 35 categories and possesses the powers of will, knowledge and action (*içchā*, *jñāna*, *kriyā*).

2) **Śakti tattva:** energy, corresponds to *bindu*, light, the cause of form (more precisely Parābindu, primal nucleus). This is the *tattva* of Parameśvara, the Primal Soul, father-mother God, Śiva’s third perfection, who after *mahāpralaya* remains transfixed in deep *samādhi*, until He again emanates the universe through His Cosmic Dance.

3) **Sadāśiva tattva:** the power of revealing grace. In this realm the energies of knowledge and action are in perfect equilibrium. This is the realm of the *ānandamaya kośa*.

4) **Īśvara tattva:** the energy of concealment, concealing grace. The energy of action prevails over that of knowledge in order to arouse cosmic activity in its subtle form.

5) **śuddhavidyā tattva:** pure knowledge, *dharma*. This is a level of manifestation in which the energy

of action is in abeyance and the energy of knowledge prevails. *Śuddhavidyā tattva* includes Śiva’s other three powers or aspects: Rudra (destruction), Viṣṇu (preservation) and Brahmā (creation).

—THE ŚUDDHĀŚUDDHA TATTVAS: **Actinodic, or spiritual-magnetic, energy.** The seven *tattvas* from *māyā* to *puruṣa* make up the *śuddhāśuddha* (pure-impure) realm.

6) **māyā tattva:** mirific energy, the “material” cause of the “impure sphere.” The category of *māyā* brings into being as its immediate aids the following five *tattvas*, known as the “five sheaths,” *pañcha kañchuka*, of the individual soul, *puruṣa*. Collectively they make up the *vijñānamaya kośa*, or mental body.

7) **kālā tattva:** the phenomenon of time, which divides all experience into past, present and future.

8) **niyati tattva:** *karmic* destiny; necessity; order; law of cause and effect; restraint.

9) **kalā tattva:** creativity, aptitude, the power which draws the soul toward spiritual knowledge. Its energy partially removes the veil of *āṇava* which clouds the inherent powers of the soul.

10) **vidyā tattva:** limited knowledge, the power which gives the soul practical knowledge in accord with its present life experiences.

11) **rāga tattva:** attachment, the arousal of desire, without which no experience of the objective world is possible.

12) **puruṣa tattva:** soul identity; soul connected with subjectivity. Through identification with the five above “sheaths,” the soul, *ātman*, becomes a *puruṣa*, or bound soul, capable of experiencing the higher Antarloka as a limited individual. This fivefold sheath is called the *pañcha kañchuka*, or *vijñānamaya kośa* (mental body).

—THE AŚUDDHA TATTVAS: **Odic, or magnetic, energy.** These 24 categories make up the “world” of *aśuddha* (impure) *māyā*. This is the realm of the astral and physical planes, in which souls function through the *manomaya*, *prāṇamaya* and *annamaya kośas*, depending on their level of embodiment.

13) **prakṛiti tattva:** primal nature, the gross energy of which all lower *tattvas* are formed. *Prakṛiti*, also called *pradhāna*, is expressed as three *guṇas* (qualities)—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These manifest as light, activity and inertia, respectively; and on the subtle level as pleasure, sorrow and delusion. These *guṇas* dominate the soul’s powers of knowledge, action and desire (*jñāna*, *kriyā* and *içchā*), and form the *guṇa* body, *manomaya kośa*.

—*antaḥkaraṇa*: the mental faculty. 14) **buddhi tattva:** judgment, intellect, the faculty of discrimination.

15) **ahamkāra tattva:** egoism, sense of I-ness in the external form. It is the fundamental principle of individuality. 16) **manas tattva:** the instinctive mind, the receiving and directing link between the outer senses and the inner faculties.

—*jñānendriya*: the five cognitive senses, of the nature of *sattva guṇa*. Each has a subtle and physical

aspect. 17) *śrotra tattva*: hearing (ears). 18) *tvak tattva*: touching (skin). 19) *chakshu tattva*: seeing (eyes). 20) *rasanā tattva*: tasting (tongue). 21) *ghrāna tattva*: smelling (nose).

—*karmendriya*: the five organs of action, of the nature of *raja*guṇa. Each has a subtle and physical aspect. 22) *vāk tattva*: speech (voice). 23) *pāṇi tattva*: grasping (hands). 24) *pāda tattva*: walking (feet). 25) *pāyu tattva*: excretion (anus). 26) *upastha tattva*: procreation (genitals).

—*tanmatra*: the five subtle elements, of the nature of *tama*guṇa. 27) *śabda tattva*: sound. 28) *sparsā tattva*: feel. 29) *rūpa tattva*: form. 30) *rasa tattva*: taste. 31) *gandha tattva*: odor. These are the subtle characteristics of the five gross elements, *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *tejas*, *āpas* and *pṛithivī*, respectively.

—*pañchabhūta*: the five gross elements. 32) *ākāśa tattva*: ether or space. 33) *vāyu tattva*: air. 34) *tejas tattva*: fire. 35) *āpas tattva* (or *jāla*): water. 36) *pṛithivī tattva*: earth. See: *antaḥkaraṇa*, *atattva*, *guṇa*, *kośa*, *Śiva* (also, charts at end of lexicon).

**Tattvaparakāśa**: तत्त्वप्रकाश “Illumination of the categories.” Text of 76 verses by the philosopher-king Bhoja Paramara which systematized and consolidated monistic Śaiva Siddhānta in the 11th century.

**tattvatrayī**: तत्त्वत्रयी “Essential triad.” Names the primary categories of Śaiva and Śakta schools, Pati (God), *paśu* (soul) and *pāśa* (world, or bonds). See: *padārtha*, *Pati-paśu-pāśa*.

**Tayumanavar**: தாயுமானவர் A Tamil Śaivayogī, devotional mystic and poet saint (ca 17th century) whose writings are a harmonious blend of philosophy and devotion. In his poem “Chinmayānanda Guru,” Tayumanavar places himself in the lineage of Rishi Tirumular. See: *Tirumular*.

**temper**: To reduce in intensity or moderate by the addition of other qualities. Also, the quality of anger, or the propensity to become angry. See: *chakra*.

**temple**: A place consecrated for, and dedicated to, the worship of God or Gods. Hindus revere their temples as sacred, magical places in which the three worlds most consciously commune—structures especially built and consecrated to channel the subtle spiritual energies of inner-world beings. The temple’s psychic atmosphere is maintained through regular worship ceremonies (*pūjā*) invoking the Deity, who uses His installed image (*mūrti*) as a temporary body to bless those living on the Earth plane. In Hinduism, the temple is the hub of virtually all aspects of social and religious life. It may be referred to by the Sanskrit terms *mandira*, *devālaya* (or *Śivālaya*, a Śiva temple), as well as by vernacular terms such as *koyil* (Tamil). See: *darśana*, *garbhagrīha*, *maṇḍapa*, *pradakṣiṇa*, *sound*, *teradi*, *tīrthayātrā*.

**temporal**: Referring to time; subject to time. Passing, existing only for a time.

**teradi**: தேரடி “Chariot shed.” Tamil term for the “garage” shelter that houses the temple cart or chariot (*ter*) in which the parade Deity, *utsava mūrti*, is taken

in procession on festival days.

**terminable**: Which can be ended. Not lasting forever.

**terminal**: Concluding, ending, final.

**terminal illness**: Incurable disease, ending in death. See: *death*, *suicide*.

**That**: When capitalized, this simple demonstrative refers uniquely to the Ultimate, Indescribable or Nameless Absolute. The Self God, Paraśiva. It is the English equivalent of *Tat*, as in, *Tat tvam asi*, “You are That!”

**theism**: Belief that God exists as a real, conscious, personal Supreme Being, creator and ruler of the universe. May also include belief in the Gods.

**theology**: The study of religious doctrines, specifically of the nature of God, soul and world. —**theologians**: Those who study, are expert in or formulate theology. Cf: *metaphysics*.

**Third World**: Śivaloka, “realm of Śiva,” or Kāraṇaloka. The spiritual realm or causal plane of existence wherein Mahādevas and highly evolved souls live in their own self-effulgent forms. See: *loka*, *Śivaloka*, *three worlds*.

**thither**: Toward that place; there. Farther.

**thou/thy**: Poetic or solemn older English pronouns for *you/your*. *Thy* is the possessive form of *thou*. Often used in religious writing or translation of devotional scripture as an expression of respect and veneration not conveyed in the ordinary pronouns *you* and *your*.

**three worlds**: The three worlds of existence, *triloka*, are the primary hierarchical divisions of the cosmos. 1) Bhūloka: “Earth world,” the physical plane. 2) Antarloka: “Inner or in-between world,” the subtle or astral plane. 3) Śivaloka: “World of Śiva,” and of the Gods and highly evolved souls; the causal plane, also called Kāraṇaloka.

The three-world cosmology is readily found in Hindu scriptures. In the major *Upanishads* of the *Vedas* we find numerous instances, with interesting variations. Verse 1.5.17 of the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* states, “Now, there are, verily, three worlds, the world of men (Manushyaloka), the world of the fathers (Pitṛiloka) and the world of the Gods (Devaloka)...” Later, verse 6.2.15 refers to the two higher worlds as the Devaloka and the Brahmaloaka. The *Katha Upanishad*, verse 2.3.8, omitting the world of men, lists the Pitṛiloka, the Gandharvaloka (world of genies or elementals) and the Brahmaloaka (world of God). Another perspective of three worlds is offered in the *Praśna Upanishad* 3.8, which lists the world of good (Puṇyaloka), the world of evil (Pāpaloka) and the world of men (Manushyaloka).

Scriptures offer several other cosmological perspectives, most importantly seven upper worlds (*sapta urdhvaloka*) and seven lower worlds (*sapta adholoka*), which correspond to the 14 *chakras* and make up the “world-egg of God,” the universe, called *Brahmāṇḍa*. The seven upper worlds are Bhūloka, Bhuvarloka, Svarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka. The second, third and fourth comprise the subtle plane. The highest three comprise the causal plane.

The seven lower worlds, collectively known as Naraka or Pātāla, are (from highest to lowest) Put, Avichi, Saṁhāta, Tāmisra, Ṛijisha, Kuḍmala and Kākola.

From the Śaiva Āgamic perspective of the 36 *tattvas*, the pure sphere, *śuddha māyā*—the first five *tattvas*—is subdivided into 33 planes of existence. The “pure-impure” realm, *śuddhāśuddha māyā*—the seven *tattvas* from *māyā tattva* to *puruṣa*—contains 27 planes of existence. The *aśuddha* (“impure”) realm—of 24 *tattvas*—has 56 planes of existence. See: *chakra*, *loka*, *Naraka*, *tattva* (also: *individual loka entries*).

**thwart:** To hinder, obstruct or frustrate.

**thy:** See: *thou/thy*.

**tilaka:** तिलक Marks made on the forehead or the brow with clay, ashes or sandalwood paste as an indication of sectarian affiliation. Vaishṇavas wear a vertical v-shaped *tilaka* made from clay. The Śaivite *tilaka*, called *tripuṇḍra*, consists of three horizontal strips of holy ash with a dot near the middle, or between the eyebrows. Wearing the *tilaka* is an expression of religious affiliation and pride in one’s beliefs, not unlike the Christian’s cross or the Jew’s *yarmulke*. Elaborate *tilakas* are worn by Hindus today mainly at religious events and when on pilgrimage, though many Hindus wear the simple dot (*bindu*) on the forehead, indicating that they are Hindu, even when moving in the general public. See: *bindu*, *Hinduism*, *tripuṇḍra*.

**timeless:** Outside the condition of time, or not measurable in terms of time.

**tirobhāva:** तिरोभाव “Concealment,” same as *tirodhāna*. See: *Naṭarāja*, *tirodhāna śakti*.

**tirodhāna śakti:** तिरोधानशक्ति “Concealing power.” Veiling grace, or God’s power to obscure the soul’s divine nature. *Tirodhāna śakti* is the particular energy of Śiva that binds the three bonds of *āṇava*, *karma*, *māyā* to the soul. It is a purposeful limiting of consciousness to give the opportunity to the soul to grow and mature through experience of the world. See: *evolution of the soul*, *grace*.

**tīrthayātrā:** तीर्थयात्रा “Journeying to a holy place.” Pilgrimage. One of the five sacred duties (*pañcha nitya karmas*) of the Hindu is to journey periodically to one of the innumerable holy spots in India or other countries. Preceded by fasting and continence, it is a time of austerity and purification, when all worldly concerns are set aside and God becomes one’s singular focus. Streams of devout pilgrims are received daily at the many ancient holy sites (*tīrthas*) in India, and tens of thousands at festival times. See: *pañcha nitya karma*, *pañcha śraddhā*.

**tiru:** திரு “Sacred; holy.” The exact Tamil equivalent of *śrī*. Feminine is *tirumati*. See: *śrī*.

**Tirukural:** திருக்குறள் “Holy couplets.” A treasury of Hindu ethical insight and a literary masterpiece of the Tamil language, written by Śaiva Saint Tiruvalluvar (ca 200 BCE) near present-day Chennai. Its nonsectarian wisdom has been adopted by Christians, Muslims, Jains and even atheists. The text focuses primarily on the first three goals of life—*artha*

(wealth), *dharma* (conduct) and *kāma* (desire)—but also includes 13 chapters on renunciate *dharma*, relating to life’s fourth goal, *moksha* (liberation). In an extraordinarily compact verse form of 14 syllables, the poet presents 133 subjects of ten verses each on relationships, human strengths and foibles, statecraft and more. One of the world’s earliest ethical texts, the *Tirukural* could well be considered a bible on virtue for the human race. In fact, it is sworn on in South Indian courts of law. See: *Tiruvalluvar*.

**Tirumantiram:** திருமந்திரம் “Holy incantation.” The Nandinātha Sampradāya’s oldest Tamil scripture; written ca 200 BCE by Rishi Tirumular. It is the earliest of the *Tirumurai* texts, and a vast storehouse of esoteric *yogic* and *tantric* knowledge. It contains the mystical essence of *rāja yoga* and *siddha yoga*, and the fundamental doctrines of the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas*, which are the heritage of the ancient pre-historic traditions of Śaivism. As the *Āgamas* themselves are now partially lost, the *Tirumantiram* is a rare source of the complete *Āgamanta* (collection of Āgamic lore). Its 3,047 verses were, as legend has it, composed in a rather extraordinary way. Before writing each verse, Tirumular would meditate for an entire year, then summarize his meditation in a four-line Tamil verse. He did this for 3,000 years! The allegory is said to mean that 3,000 years of knowledge is compacted in this one book. The text is organized in nine parts, called *tantras*, summarized as follows: 1) basic rules of religious morality; 2) allegorical explanations of Śaiva mythological stories; five powers of Śiva, three classifications of souls; 3) a complete treatise on *rāja yoga*; 4) *mantras* and *tantras*; 5) the essential features of the Śaiva religion; the four forms of Śaivism, four stages, unorthodox paths, conduct to be avoided; 6) the Śivaguru, grace, renunciation, sin, penance, *jñāna*, worthy and unworthy persons; 7) *siddha yoga*, more on grace, *mudrās*, control of *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, worlds reached by different classes of *yogīs* after death, refinements of *yoga*, the *satguru*; 8) essential theology: five sheaths, eleven states, three *padārthas* (Pati-pāṣu-pāṣa), 36 *tattvas*, four states of consciousness, three *malas*, three *guṇas*, ten *kāraṇas*, etc.; 9) the fruits of realization, liberation, *jñāna*, Śiva’s dances, meeting of the *guru*. See: *Tirumular*, *Tirumurai*.

**Tirumular:** திருமுலர் An illustrious *siddha yogī* and *rishi* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā who came from the Himalayas (ca 200 BCE) to Tamil Nadu to compose the *Tirumantiram*. In this scripture he recorded the tenets of Śaivism in concise and precise verse form, based upon his own realizations and the supreme authority of the *Śaiva Āgamas* and the *Vedas*. Tirumular was a disciple of Maharishi Nandinātha. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*, *Tirumantiram*, *Vedānta*.

**Tirumurai:** திருமுறை “Holy book.” A twelve-book collection of hymns and writings of South Indian Śaivite saints, compiled by Saint Nambiyandar Nambi (ca 1000). Of these, books 1-3 are the hymns of Saint

Tirujñāna Sambandar (ca 600). Books 4-6 are the hymns of Saint Tirunavakarasu (Appar), a contemporary of Sambandar. Book 7 contains the hymns of Saint Sundaramurti (Sundaramūrti) (ca 800). Book 8 contains the two works of Saint Manikkavasagar (9th century)—*Tiruvasaḡam* and *Tirukovaiyar*. Book 9 is the *Tiruvisaippa* and *Tiruppallandu*, which together comprise the works of nine saints. Book 10 is the *Tirumantiram* of Saint Tirumular (ca 200 BCE). Book 11 contains the hymns of ten saints, including Nakkirar and Nambiyandar Nambi, the compiler. Book 12 is the *Periyapurānam* by Saint Sekkilar (11th century), narrating the life of the 63 Śaiva Nayanar saints. The first seven books are known as *Devarams*.

**tiruvadi:** திருவடி “Holy sandals.” See: *pādukā*.

**Tiruvalluvar:** திருவள்ளுவர் “Holy weaver.” Tamil weaver and householder saint (ca 200 BCE) who wrote the classic Śaivite ethical scripture *Tirukural*. He lived with his wife Vasuki, famed for her remarkable loyalty and virtues, near modern-day Chennai. There a memorial park, the Valluvar Kottam, enshrines his extraordinary verses in marble. See: *Tirukural*.

**Tiruvasaḡam:** திருவாசகம் “Holy Utterances.” The lyrical Tamil scripture by Saint Manikkavasagar (ca 850). Considered one of the most profound and beautiful devotional works in the Tamil language, it discusses every phase of the spiritual path from doubt and anguish to perfect faith in God Śiva, from earthly experience to the *guru-disciple* relationship and freedom from rebirth. The work is partly autobiographical, describing how Manikkavasagar, the prime minister to the Pandyan King, renounced the world after experiencing an extraordinary vision of Śiva seated beneath a tree. The 658 hymns of *Tiruvasaḡam* together with the 400 hymns of *Tirukovaiyar* by the same author make up the eighth *Tirumurai* of Śaiva Siddhānta scripture. See: *Manikkavasagar, Tirumurai*.

**tithe (tithing):** The spiritual discipline, often a *vrata*, of giving one tenth of one’s gainful and gifted income to a religious organization of one’s choice, thus sustaining spiritual education and upliftment on Earth. The Sanskrit equivalent is *daśamāṃśa*, called *makimāi* in the Tamil tradition. Tithing is given not as an offering, but as “God’s money.” In olden days it was a portion of one’s crops, such as one coconut out of ten. Immediately setting aside the tithe as soon as income is received sanctifies the remaining portion and reaps the greatest *punya*. It is an acknowledgement by faithful Hindus of God’s providential care, bringing a greater awareness of God’s power in the world. Because tithers are thus uplifted to a purer, spiritual consciousness, abundance naturally floods into their lives. Additional offerings should be given after this minimal obligation is paid. See: *daśamāṃśa*.

**tithi:** திதி A lunar day, approximately one-thirtieth of the time it takes the moon to orbit the Earth. Because of their means of calculation (based on the difference of the longitudinal angle between the position of sun and the moon), *tithis* may vary in length. There are

15 *tithis* in each fortnight (half month). The names of the *tithis* are Prathamā (new moon), Dvitiyā, Tritiyā, Chaturthī, Pañcamī, Shashthī, Saptamī, Aṣṭamī, Navamī, Daśamī, Ekādaśī, Dvādaśī, Trayodaśī, Chaturdaśī, and lastly either Pūrṇimā (full moon) or Amāvasyā (new moon). These are sometimes prefixed to indicate either the dark (*krishṇa*) fortnight—when the moon is waning—or the light (*śukla*) fortnight—when the moon is waxing—e.g., Śukla-Navamī. Most Hindu festivals are calculated according to the *tithis*.

**touchstone:** A test or criterion for determining value or authenticity.

**trait:** A quality or distinguishing characteristic.

**trance:** In general, a condition of altered consciousness, accompanied by a lack of awareness to physical surroundings, neither a state of wakefulness nor sleep. In a religious sense it is a state of intense concentration, introspection or meditation. In such a state, called *samādhi*, body consciousness is completely lost as the energies are drawn up the spine into the *sahasrāra chakra* at the crown of the head. Great prophets have gone into trance and spoken out predictions of the future and in their waking state later had no memory of what they had said. In spiritualism, trance describes the phenomenon in which an individual leaves the physical body, and a disincarnate being enters or takes control of the body, often giving forth verbal messages to others in attendance, as in a seance. Trance can be either voluntary or involuntary. See: *mediumship, samādhi*.

**tranquil:** Quiet, peaceful.

**transcend:** To go beyond one’s limitations, e.g., “to transcend one’s ego.” Philosophically, to go beyond the limits of this world, or more profoundly, beyond time, form and space into the Absolute, the Self God.

**transcendent:** Surpassing the limits of experience or manifest form. In Śaiva Siddhānta, a quality of God Śiva as Absolute Reality, Paraśiva, the Self. Distinguished from immanent. See: *atattva, Paraśiva*.

**transfix:** To render motionless. Literally, “to pierce through,” “to fasten.”

**transgress:** To overstep or break a law or principle.

**transient:** That which is temporary, fleeting. Passing, not permanent.

**transition:** Passing from one condition or place to another. A synonym of *death* which implies, more correctly, continuity of the individual rather than his annihilation. See: *death*.

**traverse:** To move across or extend over.

**treacherous:** Dangerous, unreliable. Giving a false sense of safety.

**tread:** To walk on or across.

**treatise:** An article or book which systematically discusses a subject.

**trepidation:** Anxiety; fearful uncertainty. Trembling.

**tribal:** Relating to, or having the character of a tribe, a group, clan or village often related by ancestry, race or allegiance to a common leader or lineage. A term often used in derogation to refer to so-called primi-

tive peoples, but more accurately seen as the natural human social structure into which all villages and communities, ancient or modern, naturally organize. A term often used in reference to indigenous peoples, mostly shamanic in conviction, found worldwide from ancient times. See: *pagan*.

**trickery:** Deception, fraud. Creating illusion, such as by magic.

**trident:** Three-pronged spear. See: *triśūla*.

**Trikaśāstra:** त्रिकशासन “Three teachings.” Also, Trikaśāstra. A name for Kashmir Śaivism based on its various philosophical triads including: Śiva, Śakti and Nara (bound soul); Pati, *paśu* and *pāśa*; three energies: highest (*parā*), lowest (*aparā*), and in-between (*parāparā*); and three sets of scriptures. See: *Kashmir Śaivism*.

**trikona:** त्रिकोण A triangle; symbol of God Śiva as Absolute Reality. Also represents the element fire.

**triloka:** त्रिलोक “Three worlds.” The physical, astral and causal planes (Bhūloka, Antarloka and Śivaloka). See: *loka, world*.

**Trimūrti:** त्रिमूर्ति A classic representation of God as the threefold Deity image—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. See: *Brahmā*.

**triple bondage:** See: *mala, pāśa*.

**tripuṇḍra:** त्रिपुण्ड्र “Three marks.” The Śaivite sectarian mark, consisting of three horizontal lines of *vibhūti* (holy ash) on the brow, often with a dot (*bindu*) at the third eye. The three lines represent the soul’s three bonds: *ānava*, *karma* and *māyā*. Holy ash, made of burnt cow dung, is a reminder of the temporary nature of the physical body and the urgency to strive for spiritual attainment and closeness to God. See: *bindu, tilaka, vibhūti*.

**triśūla:** त्रिशूल A three-pronged spear or trident wielded by Lord Śiva and certain Śaivite ascetics. Symbolizes God’s three fundamental *śaktis* or powers—*içchā* (desire, will, love), *kriyā* (action) and *jñāna* (wisdom).

**Truth:** When capitalized, ultimate knowing which is unchanging. Lower case (truth): honesty, integrity; virtue.

**Tryambaka:** त्र्यम्बक “Three-eyed one.” A name of Rudra-Śiva, one of the Ekādaśa (“eleven”) Rudras. His emblems include a water pot, *chakra*, drum, bow, goad, snake and trident. The grace of Tryambaka is beseeched in the famous Mṛitunījāya Mantra, or Śiva Gāyatrī. Also the name of a disciple of Durvasas who disseminated *advaita*. See: *Durvasas, Gāyatrī Mantra*.

**Tukaram (Tukārām):** तुकाराम One of the most beloved and widely-read Maharashtran Sant poets (1598–1649) who wrote passionate songs urging devotees to seek the grace of Lord Viṣṇu.

**Tulsidas (Tulasidāsa):** तुलसीदास Vaishṇava *sannyāsin* poet (ca 1532–1623) whose *Śrī Rāmācharitamānasa*, a Hindi rendering of Valmiki’s Sanskrit epic, *Rāmāyaṇa*, is acclaimed one of the world’s greatest literary works. See: *Rāmāyaṇa*.

**tumult:** Noise, uproar, disturbance; agitation.

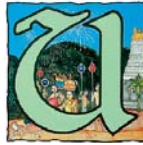
**turbulent:** Violently agitated. Marked by turmoil or

wildly irregular motions.

**turmeric:** A plant of India, *Curcuma longa*, of the ginger family whose powdered rhizome is a prized seasoning and yellow dye. It has rich *āyurvedic* properties, is used in holy ritual and serves also to make *kuṅkuma*.

**tyāga:** त्याग “Letting go, detachment, renunciation.” Described in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as the basic principle of *karma yoga*, detachment from the fruits of one’s actions. See: *sacrifice, sannyāsa, vairāgya*.

**Tyēif:** A special script, like bamboo sticks, used for writing prayers to be conveyed to the inner worlds through the sacred fire. See: *lekhaprārtha havana*.



**uchhāraṇa vyākhyā:** उच्चारणव्याख्या “Pronunciation explanation.”

**uçchishṭa:** उच्छिष्ट “Leavings; remainder.” Religiously, the precious leavings from the *guru*’s food plate or the waters from the bathing of his feet or sandals which are ingested by devotees as *prasāda* (blessed offerings). Partaking of the *satguru*’s *uçchishṭa* is an important means of receiving his vibration and thus creating a psychic connection and harmony with him, being in touch with his grace in a physical way. See: *pādapūjā, prasāda, satguru*.

**Ujjain:** उज्जैन A city on the Sipra River, one of the seven sacred Hindu cities; a traditional holy place of Śaivism. See: *Rudrasambhu*.

**ultimate:** Final, last. —**Ultimate Reality:** Final, highest Truth. God Śiva’s Absolute Reality, Paraśiva.

**Umā:** उमा “O do not.” A name for Śakti said to derive from the exclamation addressed to Pārvatī by her mother in the *Śiva Purāṇa*, beseeching her to desist from practicing austerities. Many connect it with the word *ammā*, “mother.”

**unconnectedness:** The quality of being separate, unrelated to or uninvolved.

**uncreated:** Not created, without origin. An attribute of God.

**undecaying:** Not decaying or deteriorating.

**undifferentiated:** Uniform. Same. Not having distinct or different elements.

**unerring:** Not making an error, sure. Exacting.

**unevolutionary perfection:** A term describing God Śiva as eternally complete and flawless and therefore not changing or developing.

**unfold:** To open gradually, especially in stages. See: *spiritual unfoldment*.

**unharness:** To take a harness off, to loosen restraints and make free.

**unhindered:** Free of obstacles. Not restrained.

**universal dharmā:** Cosmic order, *ṛita*. See: *dharmā*.

**universal dissolution:** The final stage in the recurring cosmic cycles of creation in which all manifestation is reabsorbed into God. See: *mahāpralaya*.

**universalist:** Applicable to all; including everyone or all groups. Any doctrine that emphasizes principles, beliefs or theologies that are or could be acceptable

to many or all people, especially as contrasted with sectarian, denominational perspectives. Such schools are often syncretic in nature, but firmly based around a core of the original faith of the founder, and usually viewed by adherents as enlightened substitutes to traditional, established faiths. See: *neo-Indian religion, syncretism*.

**unleash:** To release, as by removing a tether or rope.

**unmanifest:** Not evident or perceivable. Philosophically, akin to *transcendent*. God Śiva is unmanifest in His formless perfection, Paraśiva. See: *formless*.

**unoriginated:** Never begun or created. God Śiva is unoriginated as He has no beginning. See: *atattva, Paraśiva, Primal Soul*.

**unpretentiousness:** Modesty, humility. Not having false pride about oneself.

**unrepressed:** Open and honest, not burdened by thoughts or feelings that are hidden or held back. Not repressed, pushed back or controlled to excess. Free of subconscious impulses, compulsions and inhibitions.

**unshrouded:** Uncovered. Made visible or knowable.

**unwind:** To undo something wound, as to unwind the thread from a spool.

**upa:** उप A common prefix conveying the meanings: “towards, near to (as opposed to *apa*, away), by the side of, with, below.”

**upadeśa:** उपदेश “Advice; religious instruction.” Often given in question-and-answer form from *guru* to disciple. The *satguru*’s spiritual discourses.

**upadeśī:** उपदेशी A liberated soul who chooses to teach and actively help others to reach the goal of liberation. Contrasted with *nirvāṇī*. See: *nirvāṇī and upadeśī, satguru*.

**Upāgama:** उपागम Secondary Āgama. A large body of texts and similar in character to the principle Āgamas. Each of the 28 Siddhānta Śaiva Āgamas has as many as 16 *Upāgamas* associated with it, giving more specific or elaborate information on the basic text; their total number is given as 207 or 208.

**upagrantha:** उपग्रन्थ “Secondary text.” Appendices or additional resources of a book. See: *Grantha*.

**upanayana:** उपनयन “Bringing near.” A youth’s formal initiation into Vedic study under a *guru*, traditionally as a resident of his *āśrama*, and the investiture of the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta* or *upavīta*), signifying entrance into one of the three upper castes. The *upanayana* is among twelve *saṃskāras* prescribed in the *Dharma Śāstras* and explained in the *Gṛihya Sūtras*. It is prescribed between ages 8-16 for *brāhmins* (who received a white thread), 11-22 for *kshatriyas* (red thread), and 12-24 for *vaiśyas* (yellow thread). At present the color white for the sacred thread has been adopted universally. The *upanayana* is regarded as a second or spiritual birth, and one so initiated is known as *dvija*, “twice-born.” Until about the beginning of the common era, the *upanayana* was also afforded to girls. Great value was placed on their learning the *Vedas* in preparation for the duties of married life. See: *saṃskāras of childhood*.

**Upanishad:** उपनिषद् “Sitting near devotedly.” The fourth and final portion of the *Vedas*, expounding the secret, philosophical meaning of the Vedic hymns. The *Upanishads* are a collection of profound texts which are the source of Vedānta and have dominated Indian thought for thousands of years. They are philosophical chronicles of *ṛishis* expounding the nature of God, soul and cosmos, exquisite renderings of the deepest Hindu thought. Traditionally, the number of *Upanishads* is given as 108. Ten to 16 are classified as “major” or “principle” *Upanishads*, being those which philosophers have commented on through the centuries. The *Upanishads* are generally dated later than the *Saṃhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*, though some are actually portions of the *Brāhmaṇas*. It is generally thought that the earliest were written down in Sanskrit between 1500 and 600 BCE. In content, these popular and approachable texts revolve around the identity of the soul and God, and the doctrines of reincarnation, of *karma* and of liberation through renunciation and meditation. They are widely available in many languages. Along with the *Bhagavad Gītā* (“Song of God”) they were the primary scripture to awaken the Western world to the wealth of Hindu wisdom. See: *śruti, Vedānta, Vedas*.

**upāsana:** उपासना “Sitting near.” Worship or contemplation of God. One of the *pañcha nitya karmas*. “five constant duties.” See: *sandhyā upāsana*.

**upasarga:** उपसर्ग “Trouble, obstacle.” Difficulties, challenges or distractions which retard one’s progress on the spiritual path. Numerous lists are given in scripture under the Sanskrit terms *upasarga, dosha* (defect; blemish), *klesha, vighna* and *antarāya*. The *Yogatattva Upanishad* lists twenty *doshas* including hunger, thirst, excitement, grief, anger and greed; as well as five *vighnas*: sloth, boastfulness, bad company, cultivation of *mantras* for wrong reasons and longing for women. Patanjali names nine *antarāyas* to success in *yoga*, including sickness, doubt, sloth, nonattainment and instability. Spiritually, all these obstacles unless overcome lead to a dead end of unhappiness and despair, often affording steps which can only be retraced through reincarnating again. See: *purity-impurity*.

**Upaveda:** उपवेद “Subsidiary Vedas.” A class of texts on sacred sciences, composed by *ṛishis* over the course of time to amplify and apply the Vedic knowledge. The four prominent *Upavedas* (each encompassing numerous texts) are: *Arthaveda* (statecraft), *Āyurveda* (health), *Dhanurveda* (military science) and *Gāndharvaveda* (music and the arts). Also sometimes classed as *Upavedas* are the *Sthāpatyaveda* (on architecture) and the *Kāma Śāstras* (texts on erotic love). See: *Arthaveda, Āyurveda, Dhanurveda, Gāndharvaveda, Kāma Sūtra, purushārtha, Stāpatyaveda*.

**upāya:** उपाय “Means.” A term used in Kashmir Śaivism to describe the means to move from individual into universal consciousness. —**ānavopāya:** “Individual, or limited means.” Also called *kriyopāya*, the way of ritual worship, *haṭha yoga*, concentration and *yogic*

breathing. —**sāktopāya**: “Way of power.” Active inquiry through mental effort, emphasizing control of awareness, *japa* and meditation. —**śāmbhavopāya**: “Way of Śambhu (Śiva).” Also called *iççhopāya*, “Way of will.” Seeing Śiva everywhere; surrender in God. —**anupāya**: “No-means.” Not really a means, but the goal of the first three *upāyas*—the transcendent condition of Śiva Consciousness. The spontaneous realization of the Self without effort. Also called *pratyabhijñā upāya*, “way of recognition.” See: *Kashmīr Śaivism*.

**Utpaladeva**: उत्पलदेव Disciple (ca 900-950) of Somananda and author of *Pratyabhijñā Sūtras* (also called *Pratyabhijñā Darśana*) and other works. See: *Kashmīr Śaivism*.

**utsava**: उत्सव “Festival.” Religious celebrations or holy days and their observance in the home and temple. *Utsava* is one of the five constant duties, *pañcha nitya karmas*. See: *festival*.

**utsavaka**: उत्सवक “Festival maker.” A person who coordinates arrangements for religious festivals.



**Vachana**: वचन “Utterance.” Short, insightful devotional poems written by the early Vira Śaiva *śaraṇa* saints. Full of wit and brilliant philosophy, they are the basis for Līṅgāyat philosophy and practice.

**vāgdāna**: वाग्दान “Word-giving.” Marriage engagement ceremony. See: *samskāras of adulthood*.

**vāhana**: वाहन “Bearing, carrying or conveying.” Each Hindu God is depicted as riding an animal or bird *vāhana*, which is symbolic of a function of the God. For example, Śiva rides the bull, a symbol of strength and potency. Kārttikeya rides the peacock, *mayūra*, emblem of beauty and regality.

**vaidya**: वैद्य “Versed in science; learned; a doctor.” See: *āyurveda vaidya*.

**Vaikāsi Viśākhā**: வைகாசி விசாகம் A festival held on Viśākhā *nakshatra*, near the full moon day of the Tamil month of Vaikāsi, May-June, to celebrate the creation, or “birth,” of Lord Kārttikeya. It is a time of gift-giving to *paṇḍitas* and great souls, weddings, feedings for the poor, caring for trees, spiritual initiation and conclaves of holy men.

**Vaikunṭha**: वैकुण्ठ “Vishṇu’s heaven.” See: *Vaiṣṇavism*.

**vairāgi**: वैरागी “Dispassionate one.” An ascetic who lives by the principle of *vairāgya*. Also names a particular class of mendicants, generally Vaiṣṇavas, of North India who have freed themselves from worldly desires. See: *monk, sanṅyāsa, tyāga*.

**vairāgya**: वैराग्य “Dispassion; aversion.” Freedom from passion. Distaste or disgust for worldliness because of spiritual awakening. Also, the constant renunciation of obstacles on the path to liberation. Ascetic or monastic life.

**Vaiśeshika**: वैशेषिक “Distinctionism;” “differentiation.” A philosophical school (ca 600 BCE) that focuses on the categories of existence. See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**Vaiṣṇava**: वैष्णव Of or relating to Vishṇu; same as Vaiṣṇavite. A follower of Lord Vishṇu or His incarnations. See: *Vaiṣṇavism, Viṣṇu*.

**Vaiṣṇavism (Vaiṣṇava)**: वैष्णव One of the four major religions, or denominations of Hinduism, representing roughly half of the world’s one billion Hindus. It gravitates around the worship of Lord Vishṇu as Personal God, His incarnations and their consorts. The doctrine of *avatāra* (He who descends), especially important to Vaiṣṇavism, teaches that whenever *adharmā* gains ascendancy in the world, God takes a human birth to reestablish “the way.” There are either 10, 22 or 34 *avatāras* of Vishṇu, according to various scriptures. The most renowned *avatāras* were Rāma and Kṛishṇa. The last to come will be Kalki, the harbinger of a golden age on Earth. Vaiṣṇavism stresses the personal aspect of God over the impersonal, and *bhakti* (devotion) as the true path to salvation. The goal of Vaiṣṇavism is the attainment of *mukti*, defined as blissful union with God’s body, the loving recognition that the soul is a part of Him, and eternal nearness to Him in Vaikuṅṭha, heaven. Foremost among Vaiṣṇava scriptures are the *Vaiṣṇava Āgamas, Bhagavad Gītā* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Among the earliest schools were the Pañcharātras and the Bhāgavatas. The five major contemporary schools (founded between 1000 and 1500) are those of Ramanuja (Śrī Vaiṣṇavism), Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya. Philosophically they range from Madhva’s pure dualism to Vallabha’s lofty monistic vision.

**Vaiṣṇavite**: Of or relating to Vishṇu; same as Vaiṣṇava. A follower of Vishṇu or His incarnations. See: *Vaiṣṇavism, Viṣṇu*.

**vaiśya**: वैश्य “Landowner; merchant.” The social class of bankers, businessmen, industrialists; employers. Merchant class, originally those whose business was trade as well as agriculture. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**vāk**: वाक् “Speech.” Theologically, it is through the supreme Vāk (or Paravāk), the “Primal Word” of the *Vedas*, and its various aspects, that creation issues forth.

**valipadu**: வழிபாடு “Ritual worship; revering, following.” The acts of adoration of the Divine, expressed in many practices and ways.

**Vallabhacharya (Vallabhāchārya)**: वल्लभाचार्य “Beloved teacher.” Vaiṣṇava saint (ca 1475-1530) whose panentheistic Śuddha Advaita (pure nondualism) philosophy became the essential teaching of the nonascetic Vaiṣṇava sect that bears his name. He composed 17 works, most importantly commentaries on the *Vedānta* and *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The stories of his 84 disciples are often repeated on festive occasions by followers. The sect is strongest in Gujarat. See: *Vedānta*.

**vāma**: वाम 1) “Pleasant; beautiful; benignant; striving after”—as in Vāmadeva, a name of Śiva. 2) “Left; crooked; acting in the opposite way”—as in *vāma mārga*, the left-handed *tantric* path.” See: *left-handed, tantrism*.

**vānaprastha āśrama**: वानप्रस्थ आश्रम “Forest-dweller



stage." See: *āśrama dharma*, *shashṭyābda pūrti*.

**vanquish:** To defeat or conquer in conflict or competition. See: *victors and vanquished*.

**Varanasi (Vārāṇasī):** वाराणसी Also known as Kasi (Kāśī) or Banaras (Banāras). One of the most holy of Śaivite cities, and among the oldest cities in the world. Located in North India on the Ganges River. Hindus consider it highly sanctifying to die in Kasi, revering it as a gateway to *moksha*.

**varṇa:** वर्ण "External appearance," covering; type, species, kind, color; caste. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**varṇa dharma:** वर्णधर्म "The way of one's kind." The hereditary social class system, generally referred to as *caste*, established in India in ancient times. Within *varṇa dharma* are the many religious and moral codes which define human virtue. *Varṇa dharma* is social duty, in keeping with the principles of good conduct, according to one's community, which is generally based on the craft or occupation of the family. Strictly speaking it encompasses two interrelated social hierarchies: 1) *varṇa*, which refers to the four classes: *brāhmin*, *kshatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*; and 2) *jāti*, the myriad occupational subgroups, or guilds, which in India number over 3,000. Hence this *dharma* is sometimes called *jāti dharma*. The class-caste system is still very much a part of Indian life today. Many modern Hindus propose that social status is now (and was originally) more properly determined by a person's skills and accomplishments than by birth. Mobility between *jātis*, or castes, within Hindu communities worldwide is limited but not impossible, and is accomplished through marrying into a new *jāti*, or changing professions through persistence, skill and education. *Śāstris* say that once a person breaks out of his *varṇa* or *jāti* of birth and changes "caste," it takes three generations for his family to become fully established in that new stratum of society, provided the continuity is unbroken.

—**varṇa:** The four *varṇas* are as follows. —**brāhmin (brāhmaṇa):** "Mature, evolved soul." Scholarly, pious souls of exceptional learning. Hindu scriptures traditionally invest the *brāhmin* class with the responsibility of religious leadership, including teaching and priestly duties. —**kshatriya:** "Governing; endowed with sovereignty." Lawmakers and law enforcers and military, also known as *rājanya*. —**vaiśya:** "Landowner, merchant." Businessmen, financiers, industrialists; employers. Those engaged in business, commerce and agriculture. —**śūdra:** "Worker, servant." Skilled artisans and laborers. It is in keeping with *varṇa dharma* that sons are expected to follow the occupation of their father, as that is the occupation that was chosen prior to birth.

—**jāti:** "Birth; position assigned by birth; rank, caste, family, race, lineage." *Jāti*, more than *varṇa*, is the specific determinant of one's social community. Traditionally, because of rules of purity each *jāti* is excluded from social interaction with the others, especially from interdining and intermarriage. In

modern times there is also a large group (one-seventh of India's population in 1981) outside the four *varṇas*. These are called scheduled classes, untouchables, *jātilīta* ("outcaste"), *chandalas* (specifically those who handle corpses) and *harijan*, a name given by Mahatma Gandhi (Mahātma Gāndhi), meaning "children of God." "Untouchable" *jātis* included the *nishāda* (hunter), *kaivarta* (fisherman) and *kārāvāra* (leather worker).

The *varṇa dharma* system—despite its widespread discrimination against *harijans*, and the abuse of social status by higher castes—ensures a high standard of craftsmanship, a sense of community belonging, family integrity and religio-cultural continuity. Caste is not unique to Hinduism and India. By other names it is found in every society. The four *varṇas*, or classes, and myriad *jātis*, occupational castes, or guilds, form the basic elements of human interaction. See: *dharma*, *Dharma Śāstras*, *jāti*.

**varṇāśrama dharma:** वर्णाश्रमधर्म "The way of one's caste and stage of life." Names the social structure of four classes (*varṇa*), hundreds of castes (*jāti*) and four stages of life (*āśramas*). It is the combined principles of *varṇa dharma* and *āśrama dharma*. See: *āśrama dharma*, *dharma*, *varṇa dharma*.

**vāsanā:** वासना "Abode." Subconscious inclinations. From *vās*, "dwelling, residue, remainder." The subliminal inclinations and habit patterns which, as driving forces, color and motivate one's attitudes and future actions. *Vāsanās* are the conglomerate results of subconscious impressions (*saṃskāras*) created through experience. *Saṃskāras*, experiential impressions, combine in the subconscious to form *vāsanās*, which thereafter contribute to mental fluctuations, called *vṛitti*. The most complex and emotionally charged *vāsanās* are found in the dimension of mind called the sub-subconscious, or *vāsanā chitta*. See: *mind (five states)* *saṃskāra*, *vāsanā dāha tantra*, *vṛitti*. **vāsanā dāha tantra:** वासनादहतन्त्र "Subconscious purification by fire." *Dāha* means to burn, a *tantra* is a method, and *vāsanās* are deep-seated subconscious traits or tendencies that shape one's attitudes and motivations. *Vāsanās* can be either positive or negative. One of the best methods for resolving difficulties in life, of dissolving troublesome *vāsanās*, the *vāsanā dāha tantra* is the practice of burning confessions, or even long letters to loved ones or acquaintances, describing pains, expressing confusions and registering complaints and long-held hurts. Writing down problems and burning them in any ordinary fire brings them from the subconscious into the external mind, releasing the suppressed emotion as the fire consumes the paper. This is a magical healing process. See: *lekhaprārtha havana*, *vāsanā*.

**Vasishtha (Vasishtha):** वसिष्ठ Disciple of Maharishi Nandikesvara (Nandinatha) (ca 250 BCE) along with Patanjali and Vyaghrapada (as recorded in Panini's book of grammar). Also the name of several other famous sages, including the *rishi* attributed with

composing the hymns of the *Rig Veda's* seventh maṇḍala, another who plays a central role in the epics and certain *Purāṇas* and *Upanishads*, and a third who expounds the ancient *yogic* wisdom to Lord Rāma in the 29,000-verse *Yoga Vāsishtḥa*.

**Vasugupta:** वसुगुप्त Celebrated preceptor (ca 800) whose finding of the *Śiva Sūtras* catalyzed the reemergence of the ancient Kashmir Śaiva tradition. It is said that he discovered the 77 *sūtras* carved in a rock on Mahādeva mountain after a visionary dream in which Lord Śiva told him of their location. The sacred rock, named Śaṅkarpal, is revered to this day. See: *Kashmir Śaivism, Śiva Sūtras*.

**vaṭa:** वट The banyan tree, *Ficus indica*, sacred to Śiva. Thought to derive from *vaṭ*, “to surround, encompass”—also called *nyagrodha*, “growing downwards.” Ancient symbol of the Sanātana Dharma. Its relative, the *aśvattha*, or *pīpal* tree, is given in the *Upanishads* as a metaphor for creation, with the “roots above and the branches below.”

**vāta:** वात “Fluctuation.” *Vāyu*, “wind, air-ether.” One of the three bodily humors, called *dosha*, *vāta* is known as the air humor. Principle of circulation in the body. *Vāta dosha* governs such functions as breathing and movement of the muscles and tissues. See: *āyurveda, dosha*.

**vault:** An arched roof, ceiling or chamber.

**Veda:** वेद “Wisdom.” Sagely revelations which comprise Hinduism’s most authoritative scripture. They, along with the *Āgamas*, are *śruti*, that which is “heard.” The *Vedas* are a body of dozens of holy texts known collectively as the *Veda*, or as the four *Vedas*: *Ṛig*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*. In all they include over 100,000 verses, as well as additional prose. The knowledge imparted by the *Vedas* ranges from earthy devotion to high philosophy. Each *Veda* has four sections: *Saṁhitās* (hymn collections), *Brāhmaṇas* (priestly manuals), *Āraṇyakas* (forest treatises) and *Upanishads* (enlightened discourses). The *Saṁhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* (together known as the *karmakāṇḍa*, “ritual section”) affirm a transcendent-immanent Supreme-Being cosmology and a system of worship through fire ceremony and chanting devotional hymns to establish communication with the Gods. The *Āraṇyakas* and *Upanishads* (the *jñānakāṇḍa*, “knowledge section”) outline the soul’s evolutionary journey, providing *yogic*-philosophic training and propounding a lofty, nondual realization as the destiny of all souls. The oldest portions of the *Vedas* are thought by some to date back as far as 6,000 BCE, written down in Sanskrit in the last few millennia, making them the world’s most ancient scriptures. See: *Āraṇyaka, Brāhmaṇa, śruti, Upanishad, Vedāṅga*.

**Vedāṅga:** वेदाङ्ग “*Veda-limb*.” Six branches of post-Vedic studies revered as auxiliary to the *Vedas*. Four *Vedāṅgas* govern correct chanting of the *Vedas*: 1) *Śikshā* (phonetics), 2) *Chandas* (meter), 3) *Nirukta* (etymology), 4) *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar). The two other *Vedāṅgas* are 5) *Jyotiṣa Vedāṅga* (astronomy-astrology) and

6) *Kalpa Vedāṅga* (procedural canon) which includes the *Śrauta* and *Sulba Śāstras* (ritual codes), *Dharma Śāstras* (social law) and *Grihya Śāstras* (domestic codes). See: *Kalpa Vedāṅga* and respective entries.

**Vedānta:** वेदान्त “Ultimate wisdom” or “final conclusions of the *Vedas*.” Vedānta is the system of thought embodied in the *Upanishads* (ca 1500-600 BCE), which give forth the ultimate conclusions of the *Vedas*. Through history there developed numerous Vedānta schools, ranging from pure dualism to absolute monism. The Vedānta perspective elucidated in *Dancing with Śiva* is Advaita Īśvaravāda, “monistic theism” or panentheism, exemplified in the Vedānta-Siddhānta of Rishi Tirumular (ca 250 BCE) of the Nandinātha Sampradāya in his *Tirumantiram*, which is a perfect summation of both the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas*. This is a dipolar reconciliation of monism and dualism which, as philosopher-statesman Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) declared, best describes the philosophy of the *Upanishads*. After ca 700 CE, many other schools evolved, each establishing itself through written commentaries on the major *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Brahma Sūtras*. The latter text, by Badarayana (ca 400 BCE), is the earliest known systematization of Vedānta, but its extremely terse aphorisms are philosophically cryptic without commentary. During the “scholastic era” (700–1700), three main variations of the original Vedānta were developed: 1) Advaita Vedānta, or pure nondualism, exemplified by Sankara (788–820); 2) Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, or qualified nondualism, most fully expressed by Ramanuja (1017–1137); and 3) Dvaita Vedānta, expounded by Madhva (1197–1278).

Panentheism is embodied in those qualified nondual Vedānta schools that accept the ultimate identity of the soul and God. Examples are the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Bhaskara (ca 950), the Śuddha Advaita, “pure nondualism,” of Vallabha (ca 1475–1530) and, to a lesser degree, the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Ramanuja.

In summary: Madhva, the dualist, conceives Brahman to be the Personal God. In his philosophy, the universe, souls and God are all separate from one another and real. Ramanuja, the qualified nondualist, also conceives Brahman to be the Personal God. In his philosophy, God must not be considered apart from the world and souls, for the three together form a one whole. The world and souls are real as the body of God, and the individual soul feels himself to be part of God. Sankara, the strict *advaitist*, conceives Brahman to be the Impersonal God, the Absolute. Sankara does not deny the existence of the Personal God, known as Īśvara, but declares Īśvara to be equally as unreal as the universe and the individuality of the soul. In truth, the only Reality is the Absolute, and man *is* that Absolute. To Rishi Tirumular, the panentheist, there is an eternal oneness of God and man at the level of their inner Being, but a difference is acknowledged during the evolution of the soul. Ultimately even this difference merges in identity. Thus, there is perfectly

beginningless oneness and a temporary difference which resolves itself in perfect identity.

*Vedānta* is one of the six classical philosophies (*śaḍ darśanas*) along with Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Mīmāṃsā. Vedānta is also called Uttara Mīmāṃsā, “upper or later examination,” as distinguished from Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, which concerned itself solely with the earlier portions of the *Veda*. Other important schools of Vedānta include the Dvaitādvaita, “dual-nondualism,” of Nimbarka (ca 1150), and the Achintya Bhedābheda, “unthinkable difference-nondifference,” of Chaitanya (1485–1534). See: *acosmic pantheism, Advaita Īśvaravāda, dvaita-advaita, Madhva, monistic theism, panentheism, Ramanuja, Tirumantiram, Vallabha*.

**Vedic-Āgamic:** Simultaneously drawing from and complying with both of Hinduism’s revealed scriptures (*śruti*), *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, which represent two complementary, intertwining streams of history and tradition. The difference between Siddhānta and Vedānta is traditionally described in the way that while the *Vedas* depict man looking for God, the *Āgamas* hold the perspective of God looking to help man. This is reflected in the fact that while the *Vedas* are voiced by *ṛishis*, God or the Goddess is the bestower of truth in the *Āgama* texts. See: *grace, śruti*.

**vegetarian:** *Śakāhāra*. Of a diet which excludes meat, fish, fowl and eggs. Vegetarianism is a principle of health and environmental ethics that has been a keystone of Indian life for thousands of years. Vegetarian foods include grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes and dairy products. Natural, fresh foods, locally grown, without insecticides or chemical fertilizers, are preferred. The following foods are minimized: frozen and canned foods, highly processed foods, such as white rice, white sugar and white flour; and “junk” foods and beverages (those with abundant chemical additives, such as artificial sweeteners, colorings, flavorings and preservatives). One observing a vegetarian diet is called a *śakāhāri*. See: *guṇa, mānsāhāri, yama-niyama*.

**veil:** A piece of cloth used to conceal. To cover or hide.

**veiling grace:** *Tirobhāva śakti*. The divine power that limits the soul’s perception by binding or attaching the soul to the bonds of *āṇava*, *karma*, and *māyā*—enabling it to grow and evolve as an individual being. See: *grace*.

**vel:** வேல் “Spear, lance.” The symbol of Lord Kārttikeya’s divine authority as Lord of *yoga* and commander of the *devas*. (Known as *śūla* in Sanskrit.) See: *Kārttikeya*.

**Vellore:** வேலூர் See: *Chinna Bomman*.

**venerate:** To love or consider with respect and admiration; to revere. From the Latin *veneratus*, worshiped, revered.

**vengeful:** Desiring or seeking to return injury for injury. Bent on revenge.

**venture:** To risk. To express in words at the risk of criticism.

**veracity:** Honesty, truthfulness; accuracy.

**vermillion:** Bright red.

**vernacular:** Language or dialect commonly spoken in a given country or region.

**veshti:** வேஷ்டி. A long, unstitched cloth like a sarong, wound about the waist and reaching below the ankles. Traditional Hindu apparel for men. It can be wrapped in many different styles. A Tamil word derived from the Sanskrit *veshṭana*, “encircling.” Also called *vetti* (Tamil) or *dhoti* (Hindi).

**vestments:** The clothing, especially official robes or other garb, worn by religious persons, often as a sign of their spiritual position or ordination.

**vibhūti:** विभूति “Resplendent, powerful.” Holy ash, prepared by burning cow dung along with other precious substances, milk, *ghee*, honey, etc. It symbolizes purity and is one of the main sacraments given at *pūjā* in all Śaivite temples and shrines. Śaivites wear three stripes on the brow as a distinct sectarian mark, as do many Smārtas. *Vibhūti* is also a synonym for *siddhi*, supernatural powers developed through *yoga* practice. It is the title of the third chapter of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sūtras*, which discusses *siddhis*. See: *tilaka, tripundra*.

**vice:** Fault or failing, from the Latin *vitium*. Corrupt habits; depravity. Related to the Sanskrit *vishu*, meaning, “adverse; in opposite directions.”

**victors and vanquished:** Those who triumph and those who are defeated in war, debate or any competition. A concept or attitude about winning and losing derived from dualistic beliefs, which can lead to *adharma*, *himsā*, etc.

**vid:** विद् “To know.” Verbal root of *Veda* and *vidyā*, “knowledge.”

**videhamukti:** विदेहमुक्ति “Disembodied liberation.” Release from reincarnation through *nirvikalpa samādhi*—the realization of the Self, Paraśiva—at the point of death. Blessed are those who are aware that departure, *mahāsamādhi*, is drawing near. They settle all affairs, make amends and intensify personal *sādhanā*. They seek the silver channel of *sushumṇā* which guides *kuṇḍalīnī* through the door of Brahman into the beyond of the beyond. They seek total renunciation as the day of transition looms strongly in their consciousness. Those who know that Lord Yama is ready to receive them seek to merge with Śiva. They seek *nirvikalpa samādhi* as the body and earthly life fall away. Those who succeed are the *videhamuktas*, honored as among those who will never be reborn. Hindu tradition allows for vows of renunciation, called *ātura sannyāsa dīkshā*, to be taken and the orange robe donned by the worthy *sādhaka* or householder in the days prior to death. See: *jīvanmukti, kaivalya, moksha, Paraśiva, Self Realization*.

**vidyā:** विद्या “Knowledge, learning, science.” The power of understanding gained through study and meditation. Contrasted with *avidyā*, ignorance.

**vidyārambha:** विद्यारम्भ “Commencement of learning.” See: *samskāras of childhood*.

**Vighneśvara:** विघ्नेश्वर “Lord of Obstacles.” A name for

- Lord Gaṇeśa describing His power to both remove and create obstacles to guide souls along the right path. See: *Gaṇeśa*.
- Vijayanagara:** विजयनगर “City of Victory.” Opulent city and last Indian empire, centered in present-day Karnataka state, which extended as far as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. It flourished from 1336 to 1565, at which time it began to disintegrate following defeat at the hand of Muslim armies. However, its existence and strength did serve to prevent Muslim expansion into South India. Awed visitors recounted its fabulously rich culture and great wealth. Site of extensive recent archeological restoration.
- vijñānamaya kośa:** विज्ञानमयकोश “Sheath of cognition.” The soul’s mental or cognitive-intuitive sheath, also called the actinodic sheath. See: *kośa*, *mental body*, *soul*.
- Vināyaka:** विनायक “Remover.” A name of Lord Gaṇeśa, meaning the remover of obstacles (sometimes preceded by *vighna*, “obstacle”). See: *Gaṇeśa*.
- Vināyaka Ahaval:** விநாயகர் அகவல் “Ode to Vināyaka.” Famous Tamil poem in praise of Gaṇeśa by the 8th-century woman saint, Auaiyar.
- Vināyaka Vratam:** விநாயகவிரதம் A 21-day festival to Lord Gaṇeśa beginning on the full-moon day of November–December. An important festival in Tamil Nadu and in Tamil communities worldwide, when special *pūjās* are conducted in Gaṇeśa temples, and devotees make a vow (*vrata*), such as to attend the daily *pūjā*, or to fast by taking only one meal a day.
- Vira Śaivism (Śaiva):** वीरशैव “Heroic Śaivism.” Made prominent by Basavanna in the 12th century. Also called Liṅgāyat Śaivism. Followers, called Liṅgāyats, Liṅgavantas or Śivaśaraṇas, always wear a Sivaliṅga on their person. Vira Śaivites are proudly egalitarian and emphasize the personal relationship with Śiva, rather than temple worship. Vira Śaiva priests, *jaṅgamas*, conduct marriages and other domestic rites and also act as *gurus* or teachers. Among the most central texts are Basavanna’s *Vachanas*, Allama Prabhu’s *Mantragopya*, Chennabasavanna’s *Kāraṇa Hasuge*, and the collected work called *Sūnya Sampādane*. The monistic-theistic doctrine of Vira Śaivism is called Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita—a version of qualified nondualism which accepts both difference and non-difference between soul and God, like rays are to the sun. In brief, Śiva and the cosmic force or existence are one (“Śiva are you; you shall return to Śiva.”). Yet, Śiva is beyond His creation, which is real, not illusory. God is both efficient and material cause. In Vira Śaivism, Śiva divides from His Absolute state into Liṅga (Supreme Lord) and *āṅga*, individual soul, the two eventually reuniting in undifferentiated oneness. There are three aspects of Sivaliṅga. 1) Isṭaliṅga, personal form of Śiva, in which He fulfills desires and removes afflictions—God as bliss or joy; 2) Bhāvaliṅga, Śiva beyond space and time, the highest divine principle, knowable through intuition; 3) Prāṇaliṅga, the reality of God which can be apprehended by the mind. The soul merges with Śiva by a progressive, six-stage path called *śaṭsthala*, consisting of *bhakti* (devotion), *maheśa* (charity and selfless service), *prasāda* (seeking Śiva’s grace), Prāṇaliṅga (experience of all as Śiva), *śaraṇa* (egoless refuge in Śiva) and *aikya* (oneness with Śiva). Today Vira Śaivism is a vibrant faith, particularly strong in its religious homeland of Karnataka, South Central India. Roughly 40 million people live here, of which perhaps 25% are members of the Vira Śaiva religion. Early on, they rejected *brāhminical* authority, and along with it the entire caste system and the *Vedas*. By rejecting the *Vedas*, they continue to stand outside mainstream Hinduism, but in their profound love of Śiva and acceptance of certain *Śaiva Āgamas*, as well as the main truths of the Vedic wisdom, they have identified themselves as a unique Śaiva sect. Though they have established their faith as a distinct and independent religion in Indian courts of law, they are still widely embraced as devout brothers and sisters of the Hindu *dharma*. See: *Liṅgavanta*, *Śaivism*.
- virginal:** Characteristic of a virgin. Pure. —**virginal God:** Reference to Lord Kārttikeya, the perpetual bachelor, descriptive of His inherent purity.
- visarjana:** विसर्जन “Departure.” See: *Gaṇeśa Chaturthī*.
- Vishṇu:** विष्णु “All-pervasive.” Supreme Deity of the Vaiṣṇavite religion. God as personal Lord and Creator, the All-Loving Divine Personality, who periodically incarnates and lives a fully human life to reestablish *dharma* whenever necessary. In Śaivism, Vishṇu is Śiva’s aspect as Preserver. See: *Vaiṣṇavism*.
- visionary:** Characteristic of one who has visions; a prophet, evolved seer.
- Viśiṣṭādvaita:** विशिष्टद्वैत “Qualified nondualism.” Best known as the term used by Ramanuja (ca 1017–1137) to name his Vaiṣṇava Vedānta philosophy, which is nondualistic in that the ultimate truth or reality is one, not two, and souls are in fact part of God. And it is “qualified” in that souls are *fully* one with God, but not identical. Thus there is a full union which is somewhat shy of total merger. *Śiva Viśiṣṭādvaita* was the term chosen by Bhaskara (ca 950) to name his philosophy. See: *Śiva Advaita*, *Vedānta*.
- visualize (visualization):** To imagine, create mental images. Exercising the power of thought to plan for and shape the future.
- viśuddha chakra:** विशुद्धचक्र “Wheel of purity.” The fifth *chakra*. Center of divine love. See: *chakra*.
- viśvagrāsa:** विश्वग्रास “Total absorption.” The final merger of the soul in Śiva at the fulfillment of its evolution. It is the ultimate union of the individual soul body with the body of Śiva—Parameśvara—within the Sivaloka, from whence the soul was first emanated. This occurs at the end of the soul’s evolution, after the four outer sheaths—*annamaya kośa*, *prāṇamaya kośa*, *manomaya kośa* and *vijñānamaya kośa*—have been discarded. Finally, *ānandamaya kośa*, the soul form itself, merges in the Primal Soul. Individuality is lost as the soul becomes Śiva, the Creator, Preserver, Destroyer, Veiler and Revealer. Individual identity expands into

universality. Having previously merged in Paraśiva and Parāśakti in states of *samādhi*, the soul now fully merges into Parameśvara and is one with all three of Śiva's perfections. *Jiva* has totally become Śiva—not a new and independent Śiva, as might be construed, for there is and can only be one Supreme God Śiva. This fulfilled merger can happen at the moment the physical body is dropped off, or after eons of time following further unfoldment of the higher *chakras* in the inner worlds—all depending on the maturity, ripeness and intentions of the soul, by which is meant the advanced soul's choice to be either an *upadeśī* or a *nirvāṇī*. See: *ātman, evolution of the soul, nirvāṇī and upadeśī, samādhi, soul*.

**vitala:** वितल “Region of negation.” Region of raging anger and viciousness. The second *chakra* below the *mūlādhāra*, centered in the thighs. Corresponds to the second astral netherworld beneath the Earth's surface, called Avīchi (“joyless”) or Vitala. See: *chakra, loka, Naraka*.

**vivāha:** विवाह “Marriage.” See: *saṁskāras*.

**Viveka Chūdāmani:** विवेकचूडामणि “Crest jewel of discrimination.” A famous work by Sankara (788-820) on discipline and discrimination between the real and the unreal as the way to God.

**Viveka Mārtaṇḍa:** विवेकमार्तण्ड A philosophic treatise of the Siddha Siddhānta school of Śaivism ascribed to Gorakshanātha (ca 900).

**Vivekananda, Swami (Vivekānanda):** विवेकानन्द [1863-1902] Disciple of Sri Ramakrishna who was overtaken by an ardent love of Hinduism and a missionary zeal that drove him onward. He attained *mahāsamādhi* at age 39. Most notable among his achievements was a trip around the world on which he gave brilliant lectures, especially in Europe and America, that created much respect for Hinduism. In India he founded the Ramakrishna Mission which thrives today internationally with over 100 centers and nearly 1,000 *sannyāsins*. He is credited, along with Tagore, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and others, with sparking the modern Hindu revival. See: *jñāna yoga, Ramakrishna*.

**vivify:** To give life to, or make more active, influential.

**void:** An empty space. Philosophically, emptiness itself. The absence of time, form and space. God Śiva in His perfection as Paraśiva, as a sacred void, but not “like the emptiness inside of an empty box....[It] is the fullness of everything.” See: *Paraśiva*.

**votary:** A person committed by a vow. A devotee; a monk or nun.

**vrata:** व्रत “Vow, religious oath.” Often a vow to perform certain disciplines over a period of time, such as penance, fasting, specific *mantra* repetitions, worship or meditation. *Vratas* extend from the simplest personal promise to irrevocable vows made before God, Gods, *guru* and community. See: *marriage covenant, sannyāsa dīkshā, Vināyaka Vratam*.

**vṛtti:** वृत्ति “Whirlpool, vortex.” In *yoga* psychology, the fluctuations of consciousness, the waves of mental activity (*chitta vṛtti*) of thought and perception. A

statement from Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras* (1.2) reads, “*Yoga* is the restraint (*nirodha*) of mental activity (*chitta vṛtti*).” In general use, *vṛtti* means: 1) course of action, mode of life; conduct, behavior; way in which something is done; 2) mode of being, nature, kind, character. See: *mind (individual), rāja yoga, upasarga, vāsana*.

**Vyaghrapada (Vyāghrapāda):** व्याघ्रपाद “Tiger feet.” Famous Nandinātha Sampradāya *siddha* (ca 200 BCE), trained under Maharishi Nandinātha, was a brother disciple of *rishis* Tirumular and Patanjali. He pilgrimaged south from Kashmir, settling at Tamil Nadu's Chidambaram Śiva Temple to practice *yoga*. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**Vyākaraṇa Vedāṅga:** व्याकरणवेदाङ्ग Auxiliary Vedic texts on Sanskrit grammar. *Vyākaraṇa* is among four linguistic skills taught for mastery of the *Vedas* and the rites of *yajña*. The term literally means “separation, analysis or explication.” The most celebrated *Vyākaraṇa* work is Panini's 4,000-*sūtra* *Ashṭādhyāyī*, which set the linguistic standards for classical Sanskrit (ca 400 BCE). See: *Vedāṅga*.



**wane:** To decrease. “On the wane.” in the process of decreasing or disappearing.

**warp and woof:** In the art of weaving, *warp* names the lengthwise threads that give structure to the cloth; *woof* denotes the crossing threads that give design and color. Taken together, the expression “warp and woof” means the very fiber or essence of a thing.

**waver:** To vacillate, showing doubt or indecision. Characteristic of not being firm-minded. To be unsure of oneself. See: *conversion to Hinduism*.

**wealth:** *Artha*. Abundance; financial stability. See: *purushārtha*.

**wedding pendant:** A gold ornament worn by the Hindu wife around the neck representing her vows of matrimony. Known as *maṅgala sūtra* in Sanskrit, and *tali* in Tamil. She reveres it as an image of her husband and ritually worships it during her morning devotions.

**whence:** From where. Whence does it come? Where does it come from?

**whirling:** To move rapidly in a circular motion.

**wield:** To hold and use with skill and power.

**wisdom:** The timely application of knowledge. The power of judging the best course of action, based on understanding, knowledge and experience.

**withholding:** To refrain from giving. Not granting.

**woeful:** Sad, pitiful, full of sorrow. —**woeful birth:** An unfavorable birth; a life of difficulties resulting from negative *karman* accrued in previous lives.

**wondrous:** Inspiring awe, extraordinary, mirific.

**woodwind:** A wind instrument such as the flute or the Indian *nāgasvara*.

**woof:** See: *warp and woof*.

**Words of Our Master:** A collection of sayings and statements of Sage Yogaswami of Sri Lanka—compiled

from notes and recollections of devotees.

**world:** In Hindu theology, *world* refers to 1) **loka:** a particular region of consciousness or plane of existence. 2) **māyā:** The whole of manifest existence; the phenomenal universe, or cosmos. In this sense it transcends the limitations of physical reality, and can include emotional, mental and spiritual, physical realms of existence, depending on its use. Also denoted by the terms *prakṛiti* and *Brahmāṇḍa*. 3) **pāśa:** In Śaivism, the term *world* is often used to translate the term *pāśa* in the Āgamic triad of fundamentals—Pati, *paśu*, *pāśa*, “God, soul, world.” It is thus defined as the “fetter” (*pāśa*) that binds the soul, veiling its true nature and enabling it to grow and evolve through experience as an individual being. In this sense, the world, or *pāśa*, is threefold, comprising *āṇava* (the force of individuation), *karma* (the principle of cause and effect) and *māyā* (manifestation, the principle of matter, Śiva’s mirific energy, the sixth *tattva*). See: *Brahmāṇḍa*, *microcosm-macrocosm*, *sarvabhadra*, *Śivamaya*, *tattva*.

**worldly:** Materialistic, unspiritual. Devoted to or concerned with the affairs or pleasures of the world, especially excessive concern to the exclusion of religious thought and life. Connoting ways born of the lower *chakras*: jealousy, greed, selfishness, anger, guile, etc. —**worldliness:** The state or quality of being worldly. —**worldly wise:** Knowledgeable in the ways of the world. Street wise. Sophisticated. See: *materialism*, *samsāri*.

**wrath:** Intense anger. Rage.

**written prayers:** See: *lekhaprārtha havana*.

**wrought:** Formed, fashioned, crafted, built.



**yajña:** यज्ञ “Worship; sacrifice.”

One of the most central Hindu concepts—sacrifice and surrender through acts of worship, inner and outer. 1) A form of ritual worship especially prevalent in Vedic times, in which oblations—*ghee*, grains, spices and exotic woods—are offered into a fire according to scriptural injunctions while special *mantras* are chanted. The element fire, *Agni*, is revered as the divine messenger who carries offerings and prayers to the Gods. The ancient *Veda Brāhmaṇas* and the *Śrauta Śāstras* describe various types of *yajña* rites, some so elaborate as to require hundreds of priests, whose powerful chanting resounds for miles. These major *yajñas* are performed in large, open-air structures called *yāgasālā*. Domestic *yajñas*, prescribed in the *Grihya Śāstras*, are performed in the family compound or courtyard. *Yajña* requires four components, none of which may be omitted: *dravya*, sacrificial substances; *tyāga*, the spirit of sacrificing all to God; *devatā*, the celestial beings who receive the sacrifice; and *mantra*, the empowering word or chant.

While *pūjā* (worship in temples with water, lights and flowers) has largely replaced the *yajña*, this an-

cient rite still continues, and its specialized priestly training is carried on in schools in India. *Yajñas* on a grand scale are performed for special occasions, beseeching the Gods for rain during drought, or for peace during bloody civil war. Even in temples, *yajña* has its Āgamic equivalent in the *agnikāraka*, the *homa* or *havana* ceremony, held in a fire pit (*homakuṇḍa*) in an outer *maṇḍapa* of a temple as part of elaborate *pūjā* rites.

2) Personal acts of worship or sacrifice. Life itself is a *jīvayajña*. The *Upanishads* suggest that one can make “inner *yajñas*” by offering up bits of the little self into the fires of *sādhana* and *tapas* until the greater Self shines forth. The five daily *yajñas*, **pañcha mahāyajña**, of the householder (outlined in the *Dharma Śāstras*) ensure offerings to *rishis*, ancestors, Gods, creatures and men. They are as follows. —**brahma yajña:** (also called *Veda yajña* or *rishi yajña*) “Homage to the seers.” Accomplished through studying and teaching the *Vedas*. —**deva yajña:** “Homage to Gods and elementals.” Recognizing the debt due to those who guide nature, and the feeding of them by pouring into the fire. This is the *homa* sacrifice. —**pitri yajña:** “Homage to ancestors.” Offering of cakes (*piṇḍa*) and water to the family line and the progenitors of mankind. —**bhūta yajña:** “Homage to beings.” Placing food-offerings, *bali*, on the ground, intended for animals, birds, insects, wandering outcastes and beings of the invisible worlds. (“Let him gently place on the ground [food] for dogs, outcastes, *svapachas*, those diseased from sins, crows and insects” *Manu Dharma Śāstras* 3.92). —**manushya yajña:** “Homage to men.” Feeding guests and the poor, the homeless and the student. *Manushya yajña* includes all acts of philanthropy, such as tithing and charity. The Vedic study is performed in the morning. The other four *yajñas* are performed just before taking one’s noon meal. *Manu Dharma Śāstras* (3.80) states, “Let him worship, according to the rule, the *rishis* with *Veda* study, the *devas* with *homa*, the *pitṛis* with *śrāddha*, men with food, and the *bhūtas* with *bali*.” Mystics warn that all offerings must be tempered in the fires of *kuṇḍalinī* through the power of inner *yajña* to be true and valuable, just as the fire of awareness is needed to indelibly imprint ideas and concepts on one’s own *ākāśic* window. See: *dharma*, *havana*, *homa*, *pūjā*, *sacrifice*.

**Yajnavalkya (Yajñavalkya):** याज्ञवल्क्य See: *Bṛihad-āraṇyaka Upanishad*, *Pañgala Upanishad*, *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti*, *Yājñavalkya Upanishad*.

**Yājñavalkya Smṛiti:** याज्ञवल्क्यस्मृति A Hindu code of law, one of the *Dharma Śāstras*, regarded second in authority only to the earlier *Manu Dharma Śāstras*. See: *Dharma Śāstra*, *smṛiti*.

**Yājñavalkya Upanishad:** याज्ञवल्क्य उपनिषद् A metrical rendering of the *Jābāla Upanishad*, which expounds on *sannyāsa*, renunciation of worldly life in the quest for liberation.

**yajñopavīta:** यज्ञोपवीत The “sacred thread” received by

a youth at the *upanayana saṁskāra*. See: *upanayana*.  
**Yajur Veda:** यजुर्वेद “Wisdom of sacrificial formulas.” One of the four bodies of revelatory texts called *Vedas* (*Rīg*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*). When used alone, the term *Yajur Veda* generally refers to this *Veda*’s central and oldest portion—the *Samhitā*, “hymn collection.” Of this there are two recensions: 1) the *Krishṇa* (“black”) *Yajur Veda* (so-called because the commentary, *Brāhmaṇa*, material is mixed with the hymns); and 2) the *Śukla* (“white or clear”) *Yajur Veda* (with no commentary among the hymns). The contents of these two recensions are also presented in different order. The *Yajur Veda Samhitā* is divided into 40 chapters and contains 1,975 stanzas. About 30 percent of the stanzas are drawn from the *Rīg Veda Samhitā* (particularly from chapters eight and nine). This *Veda* is a special collection of hymns to be chanted during *yajña*. The *Krishṇa Yajur Veda Samhitā* exists today in various recensions, most importantly the *Taittirīya Samhitā* and the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*. The *Śukla Yajur Veda Samhitā* is preserved most prominently as the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*. See: *Vedas*.

**Yama:** यम “The restrainer.” Hindu God of death; oversees the processes of death transition, guiding the soul out of its present physical body. See: *death*.

**yama-niyama:** यम नियम The first two of the eight limbs of *rāja yoga*, constituting Hinduism’s fundamental ethical codes, the *yamas* and *niyamas* are the essential foundation for all spiritual progress. They are codified in numerous scriptures including the *Sāṅḍilya* and *Varuḥa Upanishads*, *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* by Gorakshanātha, the *Tirumantiram* of Tirumular and the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali. All the above texts list ten *yamas* and ten *niyamas*, with the exception of Patanjali’s classic work, which lists only five of each. The *yamas* are the ethical restraints; the *niyamas* are the religious practices. Because it is brief, the entire code can be easily memorized and reviewed daily by the spiritual aspirant. Here are the ten traditional *yamas* and ten *niyamas*. —**yamas:** 1) **ahimsā:** “Noninjury.” Not harming others by thought, word, or deed. 2) **satya:** “Truthfulness.” Refraining from lying and betraying promises. 3) **asteya:** “Nonstealing.” Neither stealing, nor coveting nor entering into debt. 4) **brahmacharya:** “Divine conduct.” Controlling lust by remaining celibate when single, leading to faithfulness in marriage. 5) **kshamā:** “Patience.” Restraining intolerance with people and impatience with circumstances. 6) **dhrīti:** “Steadfastness.” Overcoming nonperseverance, fear, indecision and changeableness. 7) **dayā:** “Compassion.” Conquering callous, cruel and insensitive feelings toward all beings. 8) **ārjava:** “Honesty, straightforwardness.” Renouncing deception and wrongdoing. 9) **mitāhāra:** “Moderate appetite.” Neither eating too much nor consuming meat, fish, fowl or eggs. 10) **śauca:** “Purity.” Avoiding impurity in body, mind and speech. —**niyamas:** 1) **hri:** “Remorse.” Being modest and showing shame for misdeeds. 2) **santoshā:** “Contentment.” Seeking

joy and serenity in life. 3) **dāna:** “Giving.” Tithing and giving generously without thought of reward. 4) **āstikya:** “Faith.” Believing firmly in God, Gods, *guru* and the path to enlightenment. 5) **Īśvarapūjana:** “Worship of the Lord.” The cultivation of devotion through daily worship and meditation. 6) **siddhānta śravaṇa:** “Scriptural audition.” Studying the teachings and listening to the wise of one’s lineage. 7) **mati:** “Cognition.” Developing a spiritual will and intellect with the *guru*’s guidance. 8) **vrata:** “Sacred vows.” Fulfilling religious vows, rules and observances faithfully. 9) **japa:** “Recitation.” Chanting *mantras* daily. 10) **tapas:** “Austerity.” Performing *sādhana*, penance, *tapas* and sacrifice. Patanjali lists the *yamas* as: *ahimsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha* (noncovetousness); and the *niyamas* as: *śauca*, *santoshā*, *tapas*, *svādhyāya* (self-reflection, private scriptural study) and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* (worship). See: *rāja yoga*.

**yantra:** यन्त्र “Vessel; container.” A mystic diagram composed of geometric and alphabetic figures—usually etched on small plates of gold, silver or copper. Sometimes rendered in three dimensions in stone or metal. The purpose of a *yantra* is to focus spiritual and mental energies according to computer-like *yantric* pattern, be it for health, wealth, childbearing or the invoking of one God or another. It is usually installed near or under the temple Deity. Psychically seen, the temple *yantra* is a magnificent three-dimensional edifice of light and sound in which the *devas* work. On the astral plane, it is much larger than the temple itself. —**Śrī Chakra:** The most well known *yantra* and a central image in Śākta worship. Consisting of nine interlocking triangles, it is the design of Śiva-Sakti’s multidimensional manifestations. *Yantras* are also used for meditation and *sādhana*, especially in the Śākta tradition. Installing them beneath Deities is a fairly modern practice, while the *Āgamas* prescribe the placement of precious gems. For Śaivites the Tiruambala Chakra, representing Lord Nāṭarāja, is most sacred. See: *mūrti*.

**yea:** Yes, indeed, truly.

**yield:** To produce as a result of cultivation, such as fruit. To profit or give.

**yoga:** योग “Union.” From *yuj*, “to yoke, harness, unite.” The philosophy, process, disciplines and practices whose purpose is the yoking of individual consciousness with transcendent or divine consciousness. One of the six *darśanas*, or systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy. *Yoga* was codified by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sūtras* (ca 200 BCE) as the eight limbs (*ashtāṅga*) of *rāja yoga*. It is essentially a one system but, historically, parts of *rāja yoga* have been developed and emphasized as *yogas* in themselves. Prominent among the many forms of *yoga* are *haṭha yoga* (emphasizing bodily perfection in preparation for meditation), *kriyā yoga* (emphasizing breath control), as well as *karma yoga* (selfless service) and *bhakti yoga* (devotional practices) which could be regarded as an expression of *rāja yoga*’s first two limbs (*yama* and *niyama*). See:

*austerity, bhakti yoga, daṇḍa, haṭha yoga, jivanmukta, rāja yoga, śhaḍ darśana, siddha yoga, siddhi.*

**yoga pāda:** योगपाद The third of the successive stages in spiritual unfoldment in Śaiva Siddhānta, wherein the goal is Self Realization. See: *pāda, yoga.*

**Yoga Sampradāya:** योगसंप्रदाय A term for Siddha Siddhānta. See: *Saivism.*

**Yogaswami (Yogaswāmī):** யோகசுவாமி “Master of yoga.” Sri Lanka’s most renowned contemporary spiritual master (1872–1964), a Sivajñāni and Nātha *śiddhar* revered by both Hindus and Buddhists. He was trained in and practiced *kuṇḍalinī yoga* under the guidance of Satguru Chellappaswami, from whom he received *guru dikshā*. Sage Yogaswami was in turn the *satguru* of Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. Yogaswami conveyed his teachings in hundreds of songs, called *Natchintanai*, “good thoughts,” urging seekers to follow *dharma* and realize God within. Four great sayings capsule his message: *Thanai ari*, “Know thy Self by thyself;” *Sarvam Sivam Ceyal*, “Siva is doing it all;” *Sarvam Sivamaya*, “All is Śiva;” and *Summa Iru*, “Be still.” See: *Kailāsa Paramparā.*

**yoga tapas:** योगतपस् “Fiery union.” Relentless, sustained *yoga* practice that awakens the fiery *kuṇḍalinī*, bringing the transforming heat of *tapas* and ultimately the repeated experience of the Self God, leading to *jñāna*, the wisdom state. See: *Advaita Siddhānta, austerity, daṇḍa, jivanmukta, jñāna, Kadaiiswami, karma, penance, puṇya, siddhi, tapas, yama, yoga.*

**Yogatattva Upanishad:** योगतत्त्व उपनिषद् Scripture of 142 verses based on Advaita Vedānta and *yoga* practices, ca 1400.

**Yoga Vāsishṭha:** योगवासिष्ठ Poetic work of over 29,000 verses attributed to Vālmiki. It is a dialog between Prince Rāma and his teacher, Sage Vasishṭha, in the form of 50 intriguing stories which present *advaita* and the concepts and ideals of *yoga* in elegant Sanskrit. (Variously dated between 500 and 1000 CE.)

**yogi:** योगी One who practices *yoga*, especially *kuṇḍalinī* or *rāja yoga*.

**yoginī:** योगिनी Feminine counterpart of *yogi*.

**yon:** That or those (at a distance).

**yonī:** योनि “Source, origin; female genitals, womb.” In some *tantric* sects the Śivaliṅga is depicted as a phallic symbol, and the base as a vulva, or *yonī*. While the *liṅga* represents the unmanifest or static Absolute, the *yonī* represents the dynamic, creative energy of God, the womb of the universe.

**yore:** Of yore: a long time ago, in a distant past.

**young soul:** A soul who has gone through only a few births, and is thus inexperienced or immature. See: *evolution of the soul, soul.*

**yuga:** युग “Eon,” “age.” One of four ages which chart the duration of the world according to Hindu thought. They are: Satya (or Kṛita), Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. In the first period, *dharma* reigns supreme, but as the ages revolve, virtue diminishes and ignorance and injustice increases. At the end of the Kali Yuga, in which we are now, the cycle begins again with a new Satya

Yuga. It is said in the *Mahābhārata* that during the Satya Yuga all are *brāhmins*, and the color of this *yuga* is white. In the Tretā Yuga, righteousness decreases by one-fourth and men seek reward for their rites and gifts; the color is red and the consciousness of the *kshatriya*, sovereignty, prevails. In the Dvāpara Yuga, the four *varṇas* come fully into existence. The color is yellow. In the Kali Yuga, the color is black. Righteousness is one-tenth that of the Satya Yuga. True worship and sacrifice cease, and base, or *śūdra*, consciousness is prominent. Calamities, disease, fatigue and faults such as anger and fear prevail. People decline and their motives grow weak. See: *cosmic cycle, mahā-pralaya, pralaya.*



**zenith:** Highest point; apex.

**Zoroastrianism:** Of or related to Zoroastrianism, a religion founded in Persia by Spenta Zarathustra (ca 600 BCE). It has roughly 150,000 adherents today, mostly near Mumbai, where they are called Parsis. The faith stresses monotheism while recognizing a universal struggle between the force of good (led by Ahura Mazda) and evil (led by Ahriman). The sacred fire, always kept burning in the home, is considered the only worshipful symbol. Scripture is the *Zend Avesta*.





# Sanskrit Pronunciation

## Saṃskṛita Ucchāraṇam

### संस्कृत उच्चारणम्

#### VOWELS

Vowels marked like ā are sounded twice as long as the short vowels. The four diphthongs, e, ai, o, au, are always sounded long, but never marked as such.

अ	a	as in about
आ	ā	...tar, father
इ	i	...fill, lily
ई	ī	...machine
उ	u	...full, bush
ऊ	ū	...allude
ऋ	ṛi	...merrily
ॠ	ṛī	...marine
ऌ	ḷi	...revelry
ॡ	ḷī	...prey
ऐ	ai	...aisle
ओ	o	...go, stone
औ	au	...Haus

#### GUTTURAL CONSONANTS

Sounded in the throat.

क्	k	...kite, seek
ख	kh	...inkhorn
ग	g	...gamble
घ	gh	...loghouse
ङ	ṅ	...sing

#### PALATAL CONSONANTS

Sounded at the roof of the mouth.

च	ch	...church
छ	çh	...much harm
ज	j	...jump
झ	jh	...hedghegog
ञ	ñ	...hinge

#### CEREBRAL CONSONANTS

Pronounced with the tongue turned up and back against the roof of the mouth. These are also known as retroflex.

ट्	ṭ	...true
ठ्	ṭh	...nuthook
ड्	ḍ	...drum
ढ्	ḍh	...redhaired
ण	ṇ	...none

#### DENTAL CONSONANTS

Sounded with the tip of the tongue at the back of the upper front teeth.

त्	t	...tub
थ्	th	...anthill
द	d	...dot
ध	dh	...adhere
न	n	...not

#### LABIAL CONSONANTS

Sounded at the lips.

प्	p	...pot
फ्	ph	...path
ब	b	...bear
भ	bh	...abhor
म	m	...map

#### SEMIVOWELS

य	y	...yet (palatal)
र	r	...road (cereb.)
ल्	l	...lull (dental)
व	v	...voice (labial), but more like w when follow- ing a consonant, as in the word <i>swāmī</i> .
ह	h	...hear (guttural)

#### SIBILANTS

श्	ś	...sure (palatal)
ष	ṣh	...shut (cerebral)
स्	s	...saint (dental)

#### ANUSVĀRA

The dot over Devanāgarī letters represents the nasal of the type of letter it precedes; e.g.: अंग = *aṅga*. It is transliterated as ṁ or as the actual nasal (ṁ, ṅ, ṇ, ṁ, m). At the end of words it is sometimes म् (m).

#### VISĀRGA (:) ḥ

Pronounced like *huh* (with a short, stopping sound), or *hih*, after i, ī and e.

#### ASPIRATES

The *h* following a consonant indicates aspiration, the addition of air, as in *nātha* or *bhakti*. Thus, *th* should not be confused with *th* in the word *then*.

#### SPECIAL CHARACTERS

ञ्	jñ	...a nasalized sound, like <i>gya</i> or <i>jya</i> .
क्ष	kṣ	= क्+ ष kṣh

#### CONVENTIONS

1. As a rule, the root forms of Sanskrit words are used (without case endings).
2. च्छ is transliterated as çh, and च्च as cch.
3. Geographical and personal names (e.g., *Hardwar*), are generally marked with diacriticals only as main lexicon entries.
4. Diacritical marks are not used for Tamil words.



# Index

## Anukramaṇikā

## अनुक्रमणिका



- Aadheenam:** def., 753; home of guru, 343. See also *Monasteries*
- Ābhāsa:** creation, 506; def., 753
- Abhaya:** *mudrā*, 159, 800, 753, 802
- Abhinavagupta:** influence and works, 753; Kashmir Śaiva guru, 506; lifetime, 669. See also *Kashmīr Śaivism*
- Abhisheka:** aftermath, 333; def., 753. See also *Mūrti; Offerings; Pūjā; Worship*
- Abhisheki, Janaki:** origins of word 'Hindu,' 782
- Abjuration:** at age seventy-two, 277; def., 753
- Abortion:** discussion, 753; prohibited, 217. See also *Medical ethics; Pregnancy; Reincarnation; Soul*
- Abraham:** founder of Judaism, 601
- Abrahamic (Semitic) religions:** compared, 643-644; monotheism in, 643; questioning discouraged, 562; Satan, 824. See also *Christianity; Islam; Judaism; Western religions*
- Absolute:** def., 753; through *śuddha avasthā*, 525. See also *Absolute Being; Self Realization*
- Absolute Being, Absolute Reality:** See *Atattva; Paraśiva*
- Absolution:** def., 753; of sin, 153; *tantras* for, 255. See *Penance; Sin; Tapas*
- Absorption:** def., 753. See *Mahāpralaya; Viśvagrāsa*
- Abyss:** def., 754. See *Naraka*
- Acceptance:** and *ahimsā*, 197; dancing with Śiva, 9
- Āchārya:** def., 754; described, 361
- Acorn:** analogy for evolution of soul, 81, 775
- Acosmic pantheism:** def., 754; Sankara, 417
- Adept:** def., 754; Nātha, 447. See also *Siddha*
- Adharma:** against divine law, 167; def., 754, 772; and evil, 775; God, 139; sin, 828. See also *Dharma; Sin*
- Adhyātma:** def., 754. See *Atman*
- Adhyātma prasāra:** def., 754. See *Evolution of soul*
- Adhyātma vikāśa:** def., 754. See *Spiritual unfoldment*
- Adi Brahma Samaj:** Western-influenced, 677
- Adi Granth:** compiled, 674; concepts of, 754; Sikh scripture, 377, 586. See also *Sikhism*
- Ādinātha:** identified, 754. See *Ādinātha Sampradāya*
- Ādinātha Sampradāya:** Gorakshanātha, 447, 494, 778; Nandinātha compared, 520; of Nātha Sampradāya, 447, 803. See also *Ādinātha; Nātha Sampradāya*
- Ādiśaiva:** def., 754; hereditary Śaiva priests, 319
- Adoption:** of children, 239; def., 754; of spouse's religion, 227. See also *Conversion to Hinduism*
- Adriṣṭa:** def., 754; *karma*, 790. See *Destiny; Karma*
- Adultery:** avoiding thought of, 219; def., 754; scripture prohibits, 217. See also *Dharma; Marriage; Sexuality*
- Adulthood:** nurturing children until, 239. See also *Āśrama dharma; Marriage; Path-choosing; Saṁskāras*
- Advaita:** Appaya Dikshita, 509-510, 672; def., 754; *dvaita-advaita*, 774; philosophy, 417, 508, 671; pluralists redefine, 548, 568; Śaivism, 21, 33, 819; Siddha Siddhānta, 512. See *Dvaita-advaita; Śivamaya*
- Advaita Īśvaravāda:** def., 754-755. See *Monistic theism*
- Advaita Siddhānta:** See *Suddha Śaiva Siddhānta*
- Advaita tantrics:** Gorakshanātha Śaivism, 512
- Advaita Vedānta:** *māyā* as illusion, 534; monistic schools, 755; Śaivism and, xviii; Vedānta, 845
- Advayatāraka Upanishad:** on *ākāśa*, 756; on *guru*, 780
- Adversity:** dancing with Śiva, 9; obstacle on path, 255
- Affectionate detachment:** from world, 145
- Affirmation:** def., 755. See also *Affirmation of faith*
- Affirmation of faith:** described, 407, 409, 755; in English, 757; in French, 773; in Sanskrit, 757, 812; in Tamil, 757. See also *Affirmation*
- Afghanistan:** US attacks Taliban/Al Qaeda, 690
- Afterlife:** See *Antarloka; Reincarnation*
- Āgamas (contents):** brief overview, 379-381; five aspects of Śiva, 55; *homa*, 782; initiation, 492; *malas*, 492; monism and dualism, 537, 492; Namaḥ Śivāya, 401; *pādas*, 379, 492; *paddhatis*, 493; Paramesvara, 55; Pati-paśu-pāśa, 492; philosophy, 379, 492; *pūjā*, 493; *śaktis*, 492; Satguru, 492; Śiva, 43, 492, 550; soul, 379, 550; *tantra*, 379; *tattvas*, 492; temple construction, 301, 493; theism, 425; worship, 313, 373, 379, 493; Yoga, 379, 492. See also *Āgamas (general)*
- Āgamas (general):** *advaitic* excerpts, 550; authority, 379, 550, 755; contents, see *Āgamas (contents)*; discussion, 379, 381; Hindu scriptures, 576; inaccessibility, 492; influence, 381; Nātha canon, 526; *olai* leaves, 492; Osborne's citation, 550; Śaivism expressed in, 492; secondary, see *Upāgamas*; sectarian, 381; significance, 381; *śruti*, 373, 755, 832; structure, 379; *Tirumantiram* on, 381. See *Gaṇeśa Āgamas; Jain Āgamas; Śaiva Āgamas; Śākta Āgamas; Vaishṇava Āgamas*. See also *Āgamas (contents); Āgama Sāstra; Śruti; Vedic-Āgamic perspective*
- Āgama Sāstra:** Kashmir Śaivism, 506
- Agastya:** dating, 662; profile, 755; *siddha*, 495
- Agattiyam:** date composed, 662
- Age:** fidelity until old, 215; for marriage, 225; marriage compatibility, 229; old age, death through, 101; periods of life, 173; priest training, 319; profession of father taught when young, 245; sacraments, 271-277; *sannyāsa* taken while young, 87, 349. See also *Elders*
- Aghora:** aspect of Śiva, 755. See *Sadāśiva*
- Aghorasiva:** pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta, 496; preserv-

- ing Āgamic ritual, 496; profile, 755; Tirumular comparison, 431. See also *Dvaita Siddhānta*
- Aghoraśiva Paddhatis:** pluralistic theism, 431
- Aghori:** ascetic order, 755
- Agni:** created by Śiva, 63; identified, 755. See also *Gods Agni (fire)*: def., 755. See *Fire*
- Agnihotra:** def., 755; *Vedas* on, 322. See also *Fire*; *Yajña*
- Agnikāraka:** def., 755; *yajña*, 849
- Agnosticism:** Śaivism endures, 533; Confucius, 593
- Agreement:** marriage contract, 211, 225; Siddhānta's two schools, 431
- Agriculture, early:** first signs, 657; maize in Mexico, 659; Persian wheel, 674; in *Purānas*, 391; rice in India, China, 658. See also *Horses*
- Aham Brahmāsmi:** meaning, 755; *Vedas*, 425
- Ahamkāra:** def., 755; ego, 11. See *Āṇava*; *Ego Ahamkāra tattva*: def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Ahimsā (noninjury, nonviolence):** def., 755, 805; discussion, 193-203; guideline, 187; ideal tested after Godhra massacre, 690; Jain view of, 583; and Pāśupata, 497; in parenting, see *Parenting*; Plotinus taught, 665; *sannyāsa* vow, 351; scriptures on, 204-205; source, 197; vegetarianism, 201; *yama*, 850. See also *Dayā*; *Vegetarianism*; *Violence*; *Yama-niyama*
- AIDS:** disease identified, 684
- Aikya:** def., 755. See also *Vira Śaivism*; *Viśvagrāsa*
- Aitareya Brāhmaṇa:** contents, 755. See *Brāhmaṇas*
- Aitareya Upanishad:** contents, 756. See *Upanishads*
- Ajanta Buddhist Caves:** beginnings, 664; frescoes, 666
- Ajatasatru:** reign, 663
- Ajisaka:** invasion of Java, 665
- Ajita:** life and teachings, 663
- Ajita Āgama:** contents, 756. See *Śaiva Āgamas*
- Ajivika sect:** dates, 662
- Ājñā chakra:** causal plane and, 129; Charts Resource, 740-743, 746-747; def., 756, 766; divine sight, 743; faith and, 776. See also *Chakras*; *Divine sight*
- Ākāśa:** def., 756; Namaḥ Śivāya *mantra*, 401; in Śiva Advaita, 508. See also *Ākāśa tattva*; *Universal mind*
- Ākāśa tattva:** def., 838. See also *Ākāśa*; *Tattvas*
- Akbar:** captures Ranthambor, 674; death, 674; tolerant reign, 673-674
- Akrodha:** in *sādhāraṇa dharma*, absence of anger, 772
- Akshata:** def., 756. See also *Offerings*; *Pūjā*; *Worship*
- Allahabad:** seventy million at *kumbha mela*, 689
- Ala-ud-din:** Khilji dynasty, 671
- Alexander of Macedonia:** conquers North India, 663
- Alien influences:** protecting children from, 261
- Al Qaeda:** US retaliation against, 690
- Allama Prabhu:** Vira Śaivism, 502; works, 756
- Allegory:** def., 756; epics, myths, 391
- All-pervasive energy:** śakti, 828. See *Parāśakti*
- All-pervasive God:** cognizing through *japa*, 403; Hindu belief, 197. See also *Parāśakti*; *Śakti*
- Aloof:** def., 756; sages, 359
- Altar:** See *Home shrine*; *Mūrti*; *Temple*; *Worship*
- Alvar saints:** hymns, 393; distinguished from Nalvar, 756; lives and works, 756. See also *Nalvar saints*
- Amardaka:** and dualistic Śaivism, 505; Durvasas' "mind-born son," 756
- Amardaka Tirthanatha:** Āmardaka order, 495, 756
- Amar Jyoti, Swami:** life and works, 690
- Ambikā:** form of Goddess, 756; Śāktism, 23. See *Śakti*
- Ambitiousness:** obstacle, 255
- Amends:** before death, 101; def., 756. See *Penance*
- America:** Deepak Chopra popularizes Hindu sciences, 688; first Hindu temple of, xxxiii; *Guide to Indo-American Parenting*, 687. See also *United States*
- Ammaiyar, Saint:** See *Karaikkal Ammaiyar*
- Amman:** form of Goddess, 756. See *Śakti*; *Śāktism*
- Amorphous:** formlessness vs., 777; soul according to pluralists, 435. See *Form*; *Formlessness*
- Amṛita:** def., 756; elixir, 774. See also *Sahasrāra chakra*
- Amritanandamayi, Mata, Saint:** Hindu of the Year, 686
- Amṛitātman:** def., 756. See *Ātman*; *Jīva*; *Soul*
- Amṛitsar:** Golden Temple completed, 674; massacre, 681; rebellion crushed, 685; Sikh defeat by Brits, 678
- Anāhata chakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742-743, 746-747; def., 756, 766; direct cognition, 743; heart *chakra*, 781. See also *Chakras*; *Mati*
- Analects:** Confucian scripture, 592
- Analogy (Analogies):** acorn and soul, 81, 775; cat and grace, 779; coconut and ego, 730; def., 756; fire/sparks and emanation, 419, 433, 774; fragrance and flower (pluralism), 548; *ghee* and affirmation of faith, 407; monkey and grace, 779; mountain and spiritual path, 421, 565; ocean/waves and creation/merger, 123, 433, 543-545; playground and *māyā*, 137; potter/clay and creation, 419, 433, 543, 765; rice and *karma*, 790; river/water returning to sea, merger, 81, 435, 504, 549; salt in water (pluralistic "advaita"), 435, 535, 537, 548; snare and desire, 139; telephone and *mūrti*, 317; wheel/spokes and monism, 275, 377
- Analytical thinking:** intellect, 141
- Ānanda:** def., 756. See also *Ānanda tāṇḍava*
- Ananda Marga:** banned in Russia, 689
- Ānandamaya kośa:** def., 757, 792. See *Soul body*
- Anandamayi Ma, Saint:** life, 680
- Ānanda Samucchaya:** written, 671
- Ānanda tāṇḍava:** def., 757. See *Naṭarāja*; *Tāṇḍava*
- Āṇava:** Āgamas, 492; apparent suffering, 137; def., 757; discussion of removal, 557-559; individuating veil of duality, 85; *kalā tattva*, 837; Nātha beliefs, 522; pluralists on, 433, 437; at *pralayas*, 439, 558-559; removed, 544-545; student's ignorance, 525; *tripuṇḍra* and, 724. See also *Avidyā*; *Concealing grace*; *Ego*; *Jīva*; *Kevala avasthā*; *Malas*
- Ānava marga:** precedes *charyā pāda*, 106. See *Ānava*; *Mārgas*; *Pādas*
- Āṇavopāya:** def., 757, 843; Kashmir Śaivism, 507
- Anbe Sivamayam Satyame Parasivam:** affirmation of faith, in Tamil, 757. See *Affirmation of faith*
- Ancestors:** remembrance, *pinḍa*, 810; Pitṛiloka, 810; *pitri yajña*, 849; *Vedas*, 181
- Anchorite:** def., 757; monk, 343, 799. See also *Monastic*; *Sādhu*
- Andal, Saint:** life and work, 669; mystic poet, 393; profile, 757. See *Alvar saints*

- Andhra Pradesh:** Āmardaka order, 495; location, 757  
**Anekavāda:** def., 757. See *Pluralism*  
**Anekavādin:** def., 757; Siddhānta, 431  
**Āṅga:** def., 757. See also *Jiva*; *Soul*  
**Anger:** forbidden in *guru*'s presence, 363; instinct, 141; no *japa*, 403; lower nature, 141; maturing out of, 7; Naraka, 155; obstacle, 255; refraining from, 183; violence, 199. See *Rage*; *Vitala chakra*. See also *Ahimsā*  
**Angkor Wat:** temple completed, 670  
**Anguttara-Nikāya:** Buddhist scripture, 580  
**Aniconic:** def., 757; *mūrti*, 800  
**Animals:** mass extinctions, 688; violence against, 201. See also *Ahimsā*; *Instinctive mind*, *Vegetarianism*  
**Animal sacrifice:** condemned as barbaric, 687; rejected by Vira Śaivites, 501; in Śāktism, 23  
**Animate-inanimate:** created by Śiva, 123; def., 757; manifestations of His grace, *Tirumantiram*, 437; pervaded by Śiva, 53  
**Animism:** def., 757; Shintoism, 596  
**Āṅjali mudrā:** described, 757; *namaskāra*, 802; symbolism, 727; in worship, 305. See *Mudrā*; *Namaskāra*  
**Ankuśa (goad):** def., 757; Gaṇeśa's, 67; symbolism, 726  
**Annamaya kośa:** def., 757, 792. See *Physical body*  
**Annaprāsana:** childhood rite, 271, 717; def., 757, 822. See also *Saṁskāras*  
**Annihilate:** def., 757; ego, 365; *mahāpralaya*, 439  
**Antagonism:** dualism generates, 199; Naraka, 155  
**Antahkaraṇa:** def., 757; mind (individual), 798; *prakṛiti tattva*, 837-838; subtle body, 833  
**Antarloka (astral plane, Second World, subtle plane):** Charts Resource, 740-741; creation, 123; creed belief, 477; death, 770; def., 757, 760, 794; described, 127; realms of, 63, 155, 760; sleep, 794; and soul, 87; subtle plane, 127, 129; three worlds, 123, 838; *vel* and, 71. See *Bhuvarloka*; *Devaloka*; *Naraka*; *Svarloka*. See also *Astral body*; *Lokas*; *Three worlds*  
**Antaryāmin:** conscience, 767  
**Antyeshṭhi:** def., 758; described, 719, 822. See also *Creation*; *Death*; *Funeral rites*; *Saṁskāras*  
**Anubhava:** def., 758. See also *Experience*  
**Anugraha śakti:** See *Revealing grace*  
**Anukāraṇa chitta:** subsuperconscious mind, 798  
**Anupāya:** def., 758, 843; Kashmir Śaivism, 507  
**Anuradhapura:** Mahavihara Buddhist monastery, 666  
**Anxiety:** and affirmation of faith, 407; obstacle, 255  
**Āpad dharma:** described, 772  
**Aparajita:** killed, 669  
**Apasmārapurusha:** def., 758; Ṇaṭarāja and, 41, 803  
**Āpas tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*  
**Āpaurusheya:** *śruti*, impersonal, 832  
**Apex:** of creation, 129, 758, 767  
**Appar:** *bhakti* movement, 494; date, 667; profile, 758  
**Appaya Dikshita, Saint:** contribution, 509, 758; history, 508-510; life and work, 672; Srikantha and, 508  
**Āraṇyaka:** def., 758; *Vedas*, 375, 844. See *Vedas*  
**Āratī:** def., 758; temple, 305. See also *Archana*; *Flame*; *Offerings*; *Pūjā*; *Worship*  
**Arputa Tiru Vantati:** author and date, 758  
**Archana:** def., 758; rite, 315. See *Āratī*; *Pūjā*; *Worship*  
**Archeology:** Boghaz Köy, 660; dating methods, 654; Dholavira, 659, 689; Dwarka, 660; Elamite Susa, 658; Ganweriwala, 659; Gujarat, 655, 659-660; Haranya, 654; Harappa, 658-661; horses in India, 655, 657, 659; India's "sheet anchor" date, 686; Indus-Sarasvati sites, 657-660; Indus Valley sites, 658, 681-682, 689; Kali Bangan, 655; Kish, 658; Kunal, 655; limitations, 657; Mehargarh, 657-658; Mexico, 659, 665, 671-672; misconceptions, 689; Mohenjo-daro, 658-659; Neveli Cori, 656; New Model, 654-655; Peru, 666; Rajasthan, 655, 657, 666, 683; Rakhigari, 659; Sarasvati River, 657, 659, 683; Sumeria, 658; Turkey, 657, 660; Vietnam's Hindu Cham temples, 688. See also *Indus Valley*; *Vedic culture*  
**Architecture:** Āgama, 379; Chola, 670; Gupta period, 666; Pallava influence, 670; in *Purāṇas*, 391; secondary scripture, 389, 391; *Sthāpatyaveda*, 832; temple, 301, 670; Vedic, 657, 689. See also *Vāstuvidyā*  
**Ardhanārī Naṭeśvara Stotram:** identified, 758  
**Ardhanārīśvara:** identified, 758; meaning, 57, 758; Śakti, 743, 820. See also *Parāśakti*; *Pure consciousness*  
**Ārdra Darśanam (ten-day festival):** def., 758; major Deity festival, 283; Ṇaṭarāja, 285. See *Festivals*; *Ṇaṭarāja*  
**Arena:** def., 758; world, 33. See *World*  
**Arguing:** family, 247, 713; and Narakaloka, 155; never with *guru*, 363  
**Aristotle:** dualist, 419; importance, 758  
**Ārjva (honesty, straightforwardness):** def., 759; ethical guideline, 187; good conduct, 181; *yama*, 850. See also *Yama-niyama*  
**Arjuna:** profile, 759. See *Bhagavad Gītā*  
**Armstrong, Neil:** walking on moon, 684  
**Ārogya:** *āyurveda*, diseaselessness, 762  
**Arrogance:** good conduct and, 181; intellect, 141; obstacle, 255  
**Art(s):** boys and girls taught, 245; Gaṇeśa, 65; inner-plane training, 127; *kalā*, 788-789; of *pūjā*, 331; sacred, 39, 261; in scripture, 389, 391; secondary scriptures, 264, 387; *tantras* of life, 255; of worship, 319, 381  
**Artha (wealth):** def., 759, 814, 848; ear piercing, 271; giving, 263; *purushārtha*, 87, 263, 814. See also *Goals*  
**Arthasāstra:** *Arthaveda*, 759; manual on politics, 663  
**Arthaveda:** *smṛiti*, 389; contents, 759; *Upaveda*, 842  
**Artisans:** *dharma*, 171  
**Arul:** def., 759; Pati-jñāna, 810; *śaktinipāta*, 820; stage of *sakala avasthā*, 523, 820. See also *Avasthā*; *Evolution of soul*; *Grace*; *Śaktipāta*  
**Arulnandi:** verse on *mahāpralaya*, 559  
**Arunachalam, M.:** statement on pluralists, 561  
**Arunagirinathar, Saint:** life, 759; life and work, 673  
**Āruṇeya Upanishad:** contents, 759  
**Aryabhata:** astronomer and mathematician, 666  
**Āryabhaṭīya:** astronomy/mathematics text, 667  
**Aryaman:** def., 759; prayer, 229  
**Āryan invasion/racial theory:** de Gobineau, 678; evidence refutes, 654-655, 657, 689-690; Müller, 654, 679; New Model, 655. See *Āryan language*; *Āryans*; Müller  
**Āryan language:** Jones, 676; Müller, 679, 680; parent language, 654. See also *Āryan invasion/racial theory*;

- Āryans; Müller
- Āryans:** early range, 658. See also *Āryan invasion/racial theory*; *Āryan language*; Müller
- Arya Samaj:** reform movement, 677
- Asamprajñāta:** *samādhi*, 821; Self Realization, 825
- Āsana:** def., 759, 815; described, 759; *haṭha yoga*, 781; lotus (*padmāsana*), 794; *rāja yoga*, 815; *Śiva Saṁhītā*, 829; *yoga*, 113. See also *Haṭha yoga*; *Rāja yoga*
- Ascetic, asceticism:** def., 759; described, 361; Pāśupata, 498; renunciation, 345; in *Vedas*, 345. See also *Renunciation*; *Sādhana*; *Sannyāsa*; *Tapas*
- Ash:** holy, 315, 323. See also *Vibhūti*
- Ashes:** bone-gathering, 764; cremation, 277. See *Death*
- Ashtādhyāyī:** composed, 661; Panini, 808; *Vyākaraṇa Vedāṅga*, 848
- Ashtāṅga praṇāma:** aid to faith, 759; def., 811; men's prostration, 305. See also *Pañcāṅga praṇāma*
- Ashtāṅga yoga:** See *Rāja yoga*
- Ashtāvāraṇa:** def., 759; shields of Vira Śaivism, 504
- Asian protocol:** harmony, 261
- Asoka:** life and work, 664; promoting Buddhism, 531
- Associates:** See *Companions*; *Friends*; *Good company*
- Āśrama (gurukula):** *ahimsā* within, 562; def., 759, 780; home of *guru*, 343; world as, 145
- Āśrama dharma (human dharma):** def., 759, 772, 783; described, 173; God's law, 167; and *svadharmā*, 175. See also *Age*; *Brahmacharya āśrama*; *Chaturdharma*; *Elders*; *Gṛihastha āśrama*; *Sannyāsa āśrama*; *Vānaprastha āśrama*; *Varṇāśrama dharma*
- Associates:** See *Companions*; *Friends*; *Good company*
- Asteya (non-stealing, freedom from debt):** def., 759; ethical guideline, 187; *purushārtha*, 814-815; *yama*, 850. See also *Yama-niyama*
- Āstika:** *nāstika* and, 802
- Āstikya (faith):** *Bhagavad Gītā* on, 391; def., 759, 776; ethical guideline, 189; *niyama*, 850; and worship, 329. See also *Affirmation of faith*; *Faith*; *Yama-niyama*
- Astral body:** def., 759. See *Subtle body*
- Astral plane:** def., 758. See *Antarloka*
- Astrological Magazine:** editor's death, 687
- Astrology:** *Āgamas*, 381; def., 760; importance, 259;  *jyotisha*, 255; marriage, 229, 233; personal, 175; scriptures, 389. See also *Astronomy*; *Auspiciousness*; *Birth*; *Jyotisha*; *Nakshatra*
- Astronomy:** ancient Hindu dates, 655, 657-661; Aryabhata's heliocentric, 666; Brahmagupta on gravity, 667; Copernicus' heliocentric, 673; Galileo, 674; Indian features, 654; methods, 654, 658-659; observatories built, 675; Ptolemy teaches solar method, 665. See also *Astrology*
- Aśuddha tattvas:** def., 837-838. See *Tattvas*
- Asuras:** attracted by lower consciousness, 157; def., 760; demonic, 63; immature souls, 155; meat-eaters and, 797; not invoking, 63. See *Naraka*; *Evolution of soul*
- Asvaghosha:** pantheist, 419; profile, 760
- Aśvin(s):** identified, 760; prayer, 35
- Atala chakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742, 744, 746-747; described, 760; fear and lust, 744; location, 766. See also *Chakras*; *Naraka*
- Atattva:** def., 760; formless, 777. See also *Tattvas*
- Atha:** def., 760
- Atharvaśikhā Upanishad:** contents, 760
- Atharva Upaveda:** *āyurveda*, 259. See also *Upaveda*
- Atharva Veda:** contents, 760; described, 375; time reckoning in, 659. See also *Vedas*
- Athavale, Sastri Panduranga:** Templeton award, 687
- Atheism:** Chārvāka, *nāstika*, 417, 802; communism, 626-627; def., 760; existentialism, 627-628; materialism, 624-625; philosophies summarized, 623-630; secular humanism, 629-630. See also *Nāstika*
- Ātma darsana:** enlightenment, 774
- Ātman:** def., 760; finding, 81, 255; *purusha*, 814; scripture speaks on, 14, 29, 58, 88-89, 440; Śiva, 492; soul, 830; in *Vedas*, 58. See also *Jiva*; *Kośa*; *Purusha*; *Soul*
- Ātmārtha pūjā:** def., 760, 813; home worship, 319, 335
- Ātmasvarūpa:** def., 760. See also *Ātman*; *Soul*
- Ātma Upanishad:** on *ātman*, 760
- Atmosphere:** def., 760; "plane of," Bhuvarloka, 763
- Atomic bombs:** dropped on Japan, 682
- Atone(ment):** absolution, 753; def., 760; penance, 810; for sin, 153. See also *Absolution*; *Pāpa*; *Penance*; *Sin*
- Attainment:** def., 760; God grants, *Bhagavad Gītā*, 25; *nirvikalpa samādhi*, 13; sages, 359. See also *Goals*; *Paths of attainment*
- Attila the Hun:** death, 666
- Attire:** elegantly modest, 261; traditional Hindu menswear is stylish, 688. See also *Clothing*
- Attitude(s):** belief and, 197, 199; def., 760; monastic's, 343; toward death, 101; toward sex, 219, 233
- Augustine:** identified, 419, 760
- Aum:** def., 760-761; mystery, 699; Praṇava, 812; Primal Sound, 812; pronunciation, 760; root *mantra*, 723; symbolism, 723; use, 761; *Veda* on, 116, 382; and *yogīs*, 511. See also *Mantra*; *Nāda*; *Praṇava*
- Aura:** def., 761; *puṇya* and *pāpa* seen in, 808, 813, 828. See also *Clairvoyance*; *Subconscious mind*
- Aurangzeb:** discriminatory policies and practices, 675; execution of Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur, 675
- Aurobindo Ghosh:** life and work, 679; pantheist, 419; profile, 761
- Auspicious(ness):** astrology, 259; def., 761; *brāhma muhūrta*, 257; symbol of, 726; *pradosha*, 811; *śubha muhūrta*, 259. See also *Astrology*; *Jyotisha*; *Muhūrta*
- Austerity:** See *Tapas*
- Authority:** in *guru's* presence, 363
- Auvai Kural:** written, 669. See *Auvaiyar*, *Saint*
- Auvaiyar, Saint:** dating for, 664, 669; life and work, 761; mystic poet, 393
- Avantivarman:** reign, 761
- Avarice:** See *Greed*
- Avasthā:** def., 761, 791, 820, 833; three stages of soul existence, 523. See *Kevala avasthā*; *Sakala avasthā*; *Śuddha avasthā*. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Mārga*; *Pāda*
- Avatāra:** def., 761; divine incarnation, 783; Hindu sects' views, 646; Kṛishṇa, 792; Nātha view, 522; Siddhāntins reject doctrine, 534; Vaiṣṇava doctrine, 25, 843
- Avidyā:** def., 761; and evil or sin, 775, 828. See also *Āṇava*; *Saṁsāra*; *Śivamaya*

- Avyakta:** *mūrti*, nonmanifest, 800
- Awareness:** beyond death, 99; consciousness, 768, 820; def., 761; of Divine, *kriyā*, 111; internalizing, *yoga*, 113; limited, 85, 125; *sākshin*, 820; Satchidānanda, 53. See also *Consciousness; I; Individuality; Sākshin; Soul*
- Axioms:** Chellappan's, 453
- Āyodhya:** Babur destroys temple, erects mosque, 673; Babur's mosque demolished, 686; birth of Rāma, 660; new temple begun, 685; site sacred to Hindus and Muslims, 690
- Āyurveda (scripture):** *smṛiti*, 389. See also *Āyurveda (system)*
- Āyurveda (system):** Charaka, 665; Deepak Chopra, 688; def., 762; globally respected, 689; holistic medicine, 762; importance, 255, 259; medical ethics published, 691; Susruta's treatises, 662; US conference, 689; Vagbhata's *Ashtāṅga Saṅgraha*, 667; *vaidya*, def., 762. See also *Āyurveda (scripture); Doshas; Health*
- Ayyappan:** identified, 762; and Śaivism, 491
- Aztecs:** advanced civilization, 672
-  **Baba, Meher:** teachings, 680
- Baba, Neem Karoli:** death, 684
- Baba, Satya Sai:** Hindu of the Year, 687; work, 681
- Baba, Sirdi Sai, Saint:** death, 681
- Babri Masjid:** built, 673; demolished, 686. See also *Ayodhya*
- Babur:** destroys temple at Lord Rāma's birthplace, 673; founds Mogul Empire of North India, 673
- Babylon:** early Hindu contact, 660; Hammurabi, 660; Nebuchadnezzar II, 662
- Backbiting:** instinctive, 141
- Badarayana:** *Brahma Sūtra*, 765; identified, 762; Vedānta, 845. See *Vedānta; Shaḍ darsana*
- Bael:** *bilva*, 763; symbolism, 725
- Baha'i:** beliefs, 613; founding, 676
- Balasarasvati:** death, 685
- Bali:** Buddhist and Śaiva Hindu princes, 673; conference, xxx, 697; Dutch control, 680; offerings in *bhūta yajña*, 849; receives Hinduism, 668
- Balipīṭha:** purpose, 762; temple, 305
- Banabhata:** life and works, 667
- Bangalore:** Iraivan Temple project, 686; Rishi from the Himalayas, 451. See also *Iraivan Temple*
- Bangladesh:** independence, 684; Islam declared state religion, 685; ten million Hindus flee persecution, 688
- Bangkok:** World Council of Religious Leaders, 691
- Banyan tree:** symbolism, 723; *vaṭa*, 845
- Bapu, Morari:** Hindu TV preacher, 690
- Basavanna:** life and work, 501-502, 670, 762; monistic theist, 537; philosophy, 425
- Batara:** Bali, 491; name of Śiva, 762. See *Śiva*
- Bathing:** affirmation said before, 409; before worship, 257, 329; *mantras* for, 261; of Sivaliṅga, 285
- Baudhāyana Dharma Śāstra:** *smṛiti*, 389; contents, 762
- Beads:** chanting, 403; *mālā*, 795; *rudrāksha*, 818
- Beating:** of children, 562. See *Ahimsā; Violence*
- Beattles:** Transcendental Meditation, 684
- Belief:** and attitude, 197, 199; creeds, 463; in God, 33, 191, 565; Hindu, 19. See also *Attitudes; Beliefs; Creed*
- Beliefs:** Buddhism, 582; Christianity, 606; Confucianism, 594; five minimal Hindu, 709-710; Hinduism, xix, 579; Islam, 608-609; Jainism, 585; Judaism, 603; Shintoism, 597; Sikhism, 588; Taoism, 591; Zoroastrianism, 599-600. See also *Belief; Creed*
- Bell:** *ghaṅṭā*, 778; loudly rung, 321; *pūjā*, 281, 813; symbol, 729
- Bengal:** British rule, 676
- Benz, Karl:** internal combustion engine, 679
- Berlin wall:** dismantled, 685
- Bernier, Francois:** on Mogul rule, 675
- Betrothal:** def., 762; and marriage, 229; marriage covenant, 796; *niśchītārtha*, 273, 804; rite, 273. See also *Marriage; Saṁskāras*
- Bhaga:** Ṛig Vedic God, 762; prayer to, 229
- Bhagavad Gītā:** *bhakti*, 393; described, 762; Emerson, 676; *Itihāsa*, 785; *Mahābhārata*, 391; Smārtism, 27, 647; Trinidad's Prime Minister sworn into office, 690
- Bhāgavata:** def., 762; Vaiṣṇava sect, 25, 762
- Bhāgavata Purāṇa:** described, 762; *Itihāsa*, 785; translation, 674; Vaiṣṇava scripture, 763, 843
- Bhairava:** def., 763; Śiva image, 57. See *Śiva; Trīśūla*
- Bhajana(s):** Āgamic philosophy, 493; def., 763; in home shrine, 335. See also *Devaram; Hymns; Singing*
- Bhakta:** def., 763. See also *Bhakti; Bhakti yoga*
- Bhakti:** def., 763; for *guru*, 780; heart softening, 700; *kriyā pāda*, *avasthās*, 524; literature, 393; scripture on, 336-337; in Sikhism, 586; theism and, 565; Vaiṣṇavism, 25, 577-578; Vira Śaivism, 504. See also *Bhakta; Bhakti yoga; Devotion; Guru bhakti; Love of God; Prapatti*
- Bhakti Sūtras:** and Vaiṣṇava renaissance, 665
- Bhakti yoga:** described, 763; *kriyā pāda*, 111; practice of, 257, 763. See also *Bhakta; Bhakti; Devotion; Guru bhakti; Kriyā pāda; Love of God; Prapatti; Worship*
- Bharata:** def., 763; holy land, 704; *Vedas*, 377
- Bharata natyam:** at Chidambaram, 569; temple tradition revived, 684-685. See also *Devadāsīs*
- Bhārata War:** dating, 658, 660; sheet anchor date, 686
- Bharati, Paramananda:** Hindu of the Year, 685
- Bharatiya Janata Sangh (BJP) party:** founded, 683; ruling India, 687
- Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan:** founded, 682
- Bhāshya:** def., 763. See *Commentaries*
- Bhaskara:** contribution, 763; monistic theist, 425
- Bhat, Kris:** *Guide to Indo-American Parenting*, 687
- Bhavabhuti:** life and work, 668
- Bhāvaliṅga:** Paraśiva, 763. See *Attavta; Paraśiva*
- Bhedābheda:** def., 763; Vedānta, 763, 846
- Bhogar Rishi:** life and work, 664, 763; Śaiva Siddhānta, 495; *siddha*, 495
- Bhojadeva Paramara:** Gujarat king, 670; identified, 763; *Tattvapraśāsa* of, 495
- Bhṛityāchāra:** def., 763; *pañchāchāra*, 807
- Bhūloka (First World, gross plane, physical plane):** Charts Resource, 739-741; creed belief, 477; def., 763, 780, 794; described, 125; *mūlādhāra chakra*, 744; Śiva's



- creation, 123; and subtle plane, 127; three worlds, 838. See also *Lokas*; *Physical body*; *Three worlds*
- Bhūrja patra:** *olai*, 805
- Bhūta yajña:** def., 849
- Bhuvanloka:** area of astral plane, 760; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 763; realms of, 760; *svādhishṭhāna chakra*, 744; three worlds, 839. See also *Antarloka*
- Bible:** Christian scripture, 377, 604; Tamil translation, 677. See also *Scriptures*
- Bija mantra:** *chakras* and, 747. See also *Mantra*
- Bijjala:** profile, 763; and Vira Śaivism, 502
- Bilva:** symbolism, 725; use, 763
- Bindu:** def., 763; Śakti *tattva*, 837; significance, 722, 763; *tilaka*, 839; and *tripuṇḍra*, 724, 841; yielded *māyā*, 546
- Birendra (king of Nepal):** murdered, 689
- Birth:** *āyurvedic* perspectives published, 691; and caste, 171; freedom from, 7, 33, 85, 87; marriage, 211, 239; nonhuman, 804; obstacle, 255; purpose, 7; reincarnation, 97, 804; rite, 269, 275; unpleasant, 155; world's, 41. See also *Abortion*; *Birth chart*; *Birth control*; *Child-bearing*; *Reincarnation*; *Samskāras*
- Birth chart:** def., 764; function, 259. See also *Astrology*; *Jyotisha*; *Karma*
- Birth control:** Hindu outlook, 217. See also *Sexuality*
- Bisexuality:** Hindu outlook, 217. See also *Sexuality*
- BJP:** See *Bharatiya Janata Sangh*
- Blavatsky, Madame:** Theosophy Society, 612, 677
- Blessing:** def., 764; *guru's*, 363; temple, 303. See also *Boon*; *Grace*
- Blue Mountain Center:** Sri Eknath Eswaran, 687
- Bochasanwasi Swaminarayan Sanstha Sangh:** Pramukh Swami, 681
- Bodhaka:** def., 764. See also *Guru*; *Satguru*
- Bodhidharma:** life and work, 666
- Bodhinatha Veylanswami, Satguru:** identified, 764; succeeding Gurudeva, 690. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*
- Bodhi tantra:** def., 764
- Bodily humors:** in *āyurveda*, 259; def., 764. See *Doshas*
- Body, Bodies:** See *Kośas*
- Bolshevik Revolution:** communists seize power, 681
- Bondage:** def., 764; and freedom, 151; *mala*, 795; *pāśa*, 735, 809. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Malas*; *Pāśa*
- Bone-gathering:** def., 764. See also *Antyeshṭi*; *Cremation*
- Boon:** def., 764; grace, 779. See also *Blessing*; *Grace*
- Boys:** monastic tendencies, 245; rites for, 273; training, 245, 261, 789. See also *Children*; *Path-choosing*; *Son*
- Brahmā:** aspect of Parameśvara, 808; def., 764; Śiva as Creator, 49, 521, 809; *śuddhavidyā tattva*, 837; *Tirumantiram* on, 546. See also *Brahman*; *Brāhmaṇas*; *Brāhmin*; *Creation*; *Five acts of Śiva*
- Brahmachāri:** as assistant priests, 319; described, 361; spiritual aspirant, 764; student stage, 764. See also *Brahmacharya*
- Brahmachāriṇi:** def., 764; described, 361. See also *Brahmacharya*
- Brahmacharya (celibacy):** def., 766, 850; guideline, 187; Pāśupata, 497; *yama*, 850. See also *Brahmachāri*; *Brahmachāriṇi*; *Brahmacharya āśrama*; *Sexuality*; *Transmutation*; *Virginitiy*; *Yama-niyama*
- Brahmacharya āśrama:** *āśrama dharma*, 759; described, 173. See also *Āśrama dharma*; *Brahmacharya*
- Brahmagupta:** life of, 667
- Brahma Kumaris:** banned in Russia, 689; founded, 680
- Brahmaloka:** See *Satyaloka*
- Brāhma muhūrta:** def., 764; morning worship during, 257. See also *Auspiciousness*; *Muhūrta*
- Brahman:** def., 764; nature, 327; Sankara on, 27; Sat-chidānanda, 825. See also *Brahmā*; *Brāhmin*; *Door of Brahman*; *Nirguṇa Brahman*; *Saguṇa Brahman*
- Brāhmaṇa(s):** dating, 659; def., 764; *Veda*, 375, 817, 845. See also *Brahmā*; *Brahman*; *Brāhmin*
- Brahmananda Sarasvati, Swami:** passing, 686
- Brahmāṇḍa:** def., 764. See *Cosmos*; *World(s)*
- Brahmarandhra:** def., 764. See *Door of Brahman*
- Brahma Samaj:** founding, 677
- Brāhma Sphuṭa Siddhānta:** Hindu astronomy text, 667; translated into Arabic, 668
- Brahma Sūtra:** identified, 765; and Smārtism, 27; *smṛiti*, 830; and Vedānta, 845
- Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya:** Sankara's, 765; Srikantha's, 509, 765
- Brahmavidyā:** *māyā* and, 556
- Brahma yajña:** def., 849
- Brāhmin(s):** caste/class, 497, 765; def., 844; *dharma*, 171; Pāśupata, 497; priesthood not limited to, 690; Śaiva, 319. See also *Brāhmaṇas*; *Varṇa dharma*
- Brāhminical tradition:** def., 765; Smārtism and, 27
- Brahmotsava (ten-day festival):** def., 765; temple festival, 283. See also *Festivals*
- Brain drain:** in Siddhānta, 562
- Breath control:** See *Prāṇāyāma*
- Bride:** arranged marriage, 229; qualities of, 227. See also *Kalā-64*; *Marriage*; *Virginitiy*
- Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad:** on *abhaya* (fearlessness), 753; on emanation, 545; contents, 765; on nonhuman birth, 804; on the three worlds, 838
- Bṛihaspati:** Gaṇeśa, 777; Lord of Prayer, 765
- Bṛihatkuṭumba:** def., 765; extended family, 776
- Britain, British:** Amritsar massacre, 681; bargaining with Ranjit Singh, 676; Bengal rule, 675; capturing Delhi, 676; Committee for Abolition of Slave Trade, 676; conquering Sind, 678; defeating Spanish Armada, 674; opening trading post in India, 674; outlawing Devadāsīs, 569; Warren Hastings impeached, 676. See also *Indentured Indian labor*; *Indian independence*
- British Columbia:** crematorium built for viewing, 688
- British Crown rule:** and East India Company, 674; timeline, 676-680, 682. See also *Britain*
- British East India Company:** opium monopoly, 676
- British Guyana:** Indian laborers, 677
- Brother(s):** care of, 247; monks, 343
- Brunton, Paul:** *A Search in Secret India*, 682
- Bua, Swami:** Hindu of the Year, 687
- Buddha:** Ajanta cave fresco depiction, 666; dates prior to, 656; founder of Buddhism, 580; identified, 765; life and work, 662; Viṣṇu's ninth incarnation, 668. See also *Buddhism*
- Buddhi:** *antaḥkaraṇa*, 757; def., 765; intellect, 11, 798;

mind (individual), 798. See also *Buddhi chitta*; *Buddhi tattva*; *Intellect*; *Manomaya kośa*; *Mind*  
**Buddhi chitta:** def., 765; mind (individual), 799. See also *Buddhi*; *Buddhi tattva*; *Intellect*  
**Buddhism:** acceptance in Japan, 667; adherents, 580; Asoka and, 531; beliefs, 582; *bhakti* revival curtails, 668; def., 765; established in China, 665; founder, founding, 580; goals, 581; path of attainment, scriptures, 580; rejects *Vedas*, 417; sects, 580; *siddhas*, 495, 510; in Sri Lanka, 664; summary, 580-582; Tamils adopting, 567; threat to Śaivism, 494; throne under Gupta, 666; and Vira Śaivism, 502; Zen, 666. See also *Buddha*; *Eastern religions*  
**Buddhist University of Nalanda:** destruction, 671  
**Buddhi tattva:** def., 838. See also *Buddhi chitta*; *Tattvas*  
**Burial:** See *Cremation*; *Death*  
**Burning prayers:** *lekhaprārtha havana*, 793; in sacred fire, 331. See also *Fire*; *Homa*; *Vāsānā daha tantra*  
**Business:** associates as extended family, 231; Dīpāvalī festival, 291; Gaṇeśa, 287; Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava, 807; Śaivite, 39. See also *Businessmen*; *Merchants*  
**Businessmen:** *dharma*, 171. See also *Varṇa dharma*  
**Butcher:** and consumer's desire, 201



658

**Caldwell, Bishop:** coining term Dravidian, 678  
**Calendar, Hindu:** Śaka era begins, 665; Vedic Age, 657-661; Vikrama Sāmvat era begins, 664  
**Calendar, Jewish:** creation of world, 658  
**Calendar, Western:** common era (CE) begins, 665  
**California:** Hindu Sangam Cultural Festival, 689  
**California Association of Ayurvedic Medicine:** organizes milestone conference, 689  
**Cambodia:** Hindu kingdom, 665  
**Camphor:** def., 765; use in worship, 305, 315, 321  
**Canada:** crematorium designed for viewing, 688; strong Hindu communities, 688  
**Canon(s):** def., 765; of Hindu secondary scripture, 387  
**Cape Comorin:** conquered by Muslims, 671  
**Carbon-14 dating:** supports dating by precessional changes, 654  
**Cardiac plexus:** *anāhata chakra*, 743  
**Casket:** Dharmapura gift, 569  
**Caste:** def., 765; discussion, 171, 844; India's Constitution, 683; in *Manu Dharma Śāstra*, 796; Mauryan Empire, 663; Pāśupatas, 499; *varṇa dharma*, 765, 844; in *Vedas*, 177; Vira Śaivites reject, 501, 505. See also *Jāti*; *Varṇa dharma*  
**Catalyst:** *bodhaka*, 764; def., 765; *karma*, 95  
**Catechism:** creed capsulizes, 463-487; *praśnottaram*, 395, 812; Śaivite Hindu, 532; source of, 395. See also *Dancing with Śiva*  
**Categories of existence:** See *Padārtha*; *Tattvas*  
**Catholic Councils:** Constantinople, 667; Ferrara, 666; Lyons, 671. See also *Catholicism*; *Catholics*  
**Catholicism:** doctrine of papal infallibility, 679; Galileo condemned as heretic, 674; pope visits India, 687;

reincarnation denied, 666, 671; rejecting meditation and *yoga*, 685. See also *Catholic Councils*; *Catholics*; *Christianity*

**Catholics:** abusive priests and nuns, 562; conversion efforts, 673; destroying Sri Lanka's temples, 674; dominating Sri Lanka, 453; Goa captured, 673; Kadaitswami's opposition, 677. See also *Catholic Councils*; *Catholicism*  
**Caucasoid:** Dravidians, 678; Indians, 815; Tamils, 835  
**Causal body:** def., 765. See *Soul body*  
**Causal plane:** def., 765. See *Śivaloka*  
**Cause:** def., 765-766; God, 5, 419; three kinds, 419, 765-766. See *Efficient cause*; *Instrumental cause*; *Material cause*. See also *Creation*; *Śiva*; *Śivamāya*  
**Cavernous plexus:** *ājñā chakra*, 743  
**Caves:** Ajanta, 664; Jalani, prehistoric painted, 657; Subramuniyaswami, 455  
**Celibacy:** See *Brahmacharya*  
**Cenobite:** monk, 343, 799. See also *Monastic*; *Sādhu*  
**Central India:** Śaiva Siddhānta in, 495  
**Chaitanya:** and *antaḥkaraṇa*, 757; consciousness, 768; def., 766; Śiva consciousness, 828. See also *Chitta*  
**Chaitanya, Sri:** dualist, 419; life, philosophy, life and works, 673, 766; Vaishṇavism, 25  
**Chakras:** above/within *sahasrāra*, 743, 746; Charts Resource, 739-747; cranial, clear white light, 129; def., 766; and lotus, 725; *pradakṣhiṇa* and, 811; *yoga pāda*, 113. See *Ājñā chakra*; *Anāhata chakra*; *Cranial chakras*; *Maṇipūra chakra*; *Mūlādhāra chakra*; *Sahasrāra chakra*; *Svādhiṣṭhāna chakra*; *Viśuddha chakra*. See also *Chakras below mūlādhāra*; *Evolution of soul*; *Kuṇḍalīnī*; *Śrī Chakra*; *Transmutation*  
**Chakras below mūlādhāra:** Charts Resource, 744-745; hellish, 155; def., 766; Naraka, 802; *tala*, 835. See *Atala chakra*; *Mahātala chakra*; *Pātāla chakra*; *Rasātala chakra*; *Sutala chakra*; *Tālātala chakra*; *Vītala chakra*. See also *Chakras*; *Naraka*  
**Chakshu tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*  
**Chālukya dynasty:** identified, 766; timeline, 667-668  
**Chandana:** sandalwood, 766, 823  
**Chandas Vedāṅga:** contents, 766; *Vedāṅga*, 845. See also *Vedāṅgas*  
**Chandella dynasty:** timeline, 669-670  
**Chandidas, Baru:** writings, 672  
**Chāndogya Upanishad:** contents, 766; on nonhuman birth, 804. See also *Upanishads*  
**Chandra:** def., 766; symbolism, 732  
**Chandragupta II:** birth and reign, 666  
**Chandragupta Maurya, King:** abdication, 664; defeating Greeks, 663  
**Chandrasekharendra, Srila Sri Sankaracharya, Saint:** life, 680; passing, 686  
**Chanting:** See *Japa*; *Mantra*; *Śrī Rudram*  
**Charaka:** *āyurvedic* physician, 665, 762  
**Charaka Samhitā:** early medical manual, 665  
**Charity:** key to good conduct, 183; virtue, 263. See also *Good deeds*  
**Charms:** *Atharva Veda*, 375  
**Charts:** Resource, 737-749

- Charvaka:** life and philosophy, 766
- Chārvāka:** atheism, 417; materialistic school, 797; *nāstika* (rejecting the *Vedas*), 417, 802. See *Nāstika*
- Charyā:** in *Āgamas*, 379, 492; defined, 526; belief, 481; described, 109; *yamas*, 187. See also *Charyā pāda*; *Conscience*; *Dharma*; *Yama-niyama*
- Charyā pāda:** *avasthās*, 524; def., 766; described, 109, 806; emerging from *āṇava mārga*, 107; *Tirumantiram* on, 494; worship in, 327. See also *Charyā*; *Pādas*
- Chastity:** born of God, 63; children taught, 219, 241; *sannyāsa*, 351; vow of, 273. See also *Brahmacharya*
- Chaturāṅga:** forerunner of chess, 666
- Chaturdharma:** described, 771; list, 766. See *Dharma*; *Āśrama dharma*; *Rita*; *Svadharma*; *Varṇa dharma*
- Chela:** def., 766. See *Śishya*
- Chellachiamman, Saint:** death, 682
- Chellappaswami:** axioms, 453; biography, 766; dates, 449, 677; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; at Nallur, 453; and Yogaswami, 455. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*
- Chennabasavanna:** contribution, 504; life, 766
- Chidambaram temple:** enlarged, with gold roof, 669; Hall of Thousand Pillars, 674; location, 766
- Chidananda Saraswati, Swami:** Hindu of the Year, 688
- Child-bearing:** rites, 275, 822. See also *Birth*; *Saṁskāras*
- Childbirth:** See *Birth*; *Child-bearing*
- Children:** conceiving, 239; debt to parents, 243; discipline, 241, 247; five guidelines, 713; five practices, 711-712; five precepts, 709-710; marriage, 211, 239; mixed marriages, 227; need for mother, 213, 215; older caring for younger, 247; parents' debt to, 243; raising, 225, 239-247; rearing without violence, 243, 687; Śaivite Hindu Religion course, xxxiii; *saṁskāras* for, 271; scripture on, 248-249; strictness, 243. See also *Family*; *Kalā-64*; *Parents*; *Schools*
- China:** Müller's "Āryan invasion," 678; Bamboo Curtain, 672; Buddhism, 665-666; Confucius, 662; Great Wall, 664; inventions, 663, 665, 670; Silk Roads, 665; Taoism, 589, 662; translations, 668, 671; zodiac, 661
- Chinmaya Mission:** Swami Chinmayananda, 681
- Chinmayananda, Swami:** founds Chinmaya Mission, 681; Hindu of the Year, 686
- Chinmoy, Sri:** Hindu of the Year, 687; life & work, 682
- Chinna Bomman:** Appaya Dikshita, 509; reign, 766
- Chitta:** *antaḥkaraṇa*, 757; *buddhi*, 765; consciousness, 11, 768; def., 767; *kāraṇa*, 790; *manas*, 796; mind, 798
- Choice:** See *Free will*
- Chola dynasty:** founding, 664; fruit of unity, 567; prominence, timeline, 664; Vijalaya re-establishes, 669
- Cholera:** epidemic, 680
- Chopra, Deepak:** popularizes Hindu sciences, 688
- Christian Councils:** Constantinople, 667; Ferrara, 666; Lyons, 671
- Christianity:** adherents, 604; beliefs, 606; compared with Judaism and Islam, 643-644; founder, 604; genesis, 644; giving way to Paganism, 687; goals, 605; and language, 563; man's obligation to God, 644; missionaries, original sin, 644; path of attainment, 605; proof of God's power, 644; Protestant Reformation, 673; salvation, means to, 644; Satan, 824; scriptures of, 604; sects, 604; Spanish Inquisition, 672; summary, 604-606; "the only true religion", 643. See also *Abrahamic religions*; *Catholicism*; *Christianity in India*; *Christians*; *Conversion*; *Evangelism*; *Jesuits*; *Jesus*; *Western religions*
- Christianity in India:** conversion budget/tactics, 678, 685, 687; Indian vulnerability, 655; influence on Meykandar's commentators, 553; Tamils drawn to, 567; setback, 687. See also *Christianity*; *Christians*
- Christians:** evangelism, 687, 691; opposing yoga and meditation in schools, 690
- Chronological Framework of Indian Protohistory (Roy):** Use in Hindu timeline, dating, 654
- Chūḍākaraṇa:** def., 767; described, 822; enjoined in scripture, 279; rite, 269, 271, 718. See also *Saṁskāras*
- Chulavamśa:** Sri Lankan historical chronicle, 667
- Church:** distributing Hindu catechism, 532. See also *Saiva Siddhanta Church*
- Cinnamon:** export, Middle East, 660
- Circle, square:** inclusive, exclusive, 565
- Circumambulate:** def., 767; scripture speaks on, 309; in temple, 305. See *Pradakṣiṇa*
- Citizens, citizenship:** children, 215; holy *vel* and, 71; Śaivites, 35
- Civil institution:** marriage, 211, 796
- Civilization, Indic:** Harvard University counters misrepresentations, 689
- Civil law:** obeying, 241. See *Varna dharma*
- Clairaudience (divyaśravana):** def., 767; revelation, 373; *siddhi*, 827
- Clairvoyance (divine sight, divyadrīṣṭi):** *ājñā chakra*, 766; def., 767; revelation, 373; *siddhi*, 827. See also *Ājñā chakra*; *Ākāśa*; *Aura*; *Inner planes*; *Siddhis*
- Class (socioeconomic):** caste, 765; and *dharma*, 171; *varṇa dharma*, 844
- Classroom:** *māyā* as, 525
- Clay:** creation analogy, 543
- Clear white light:** See *Inner light*; *Light*
- Clive, Robert:** seizing Arcot, 675
- Clothing:** in home, 713; parents provide, 241; for worship, 329. See also *Attire*
- Cobra:** See *Nāga*
- Coconut:** *archana*, 315; symbolism, 730. See *Offerings*
- Codes:** *Dharma Śāstra*, 772; *guru* protocol, 363; Hippocratic oath, 663; legal and social, in Hindu Malla dynasty, 669
- Cognition:** See *Mati*
- Cognitive body (mental body, vijñānamaya kośa):** def., 767, 792, 798, 847; and Kārttikeya, 69; *māyā tattva*, 837; and soul, 79; *śarīra*, 824; subtle body, 833. See also *Intellect*; *Mental plane*; *Subtle body*
- Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves:** Shinto scripture, 595, 597
- Columbus, Christopher:** landing in San Salvador, 673
- Coming of age:** rites, 273, 822. See also *Saṁskāras*
- Commemorative:** death ceremony, 277; *śrāddha*, 831
- Commencement:** of formal study, rite, 271. See also *Saṁskāras*
- Commentaries:** Appaya Dikshita, 758; *bhāṣhya*, 763; *Bhāskarabhāṣhya*, 763; *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣhya*, 765;

- Jñāneśvarī*, 787; *Pañchārtha Bhāshya*, 807; Sankara, 823; *śaḍ darśana*, 826; Śiva Advaita, 828; *Śivajñāna-bodham*, 552; *Śiva Rakshāmaṇi Dīpikā*, 829; *Spanda Kārikā*, 831; *Tatparyadīpikā*, 837; Vallabhacharya, 843-844; *Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda*, 850
- Commitment**: betrothal, 273; foundation for unfolding, xxxiv; to religious conversion, 768; to spiritual path, 7. See also *Śishya*; *Vrata*
- Communion**: See *Meditation*; *Prayers*; *Pūjā*; *Samādhi*; *Temple worship*
- Communism**: beliefs, 626-627; collapsing in USSR, 685; Lenin seizing power, 681
- Community**: and *dharma*, 171, 173. See also *Āśrama*; *Individuality*; *Nation*; *Society*
- Companions**: supervision by parents, 243. See also *Friends*; *Good company*
- Comparison**: Nātha schools, 520
- Compassion**: See *Dayā*
- Compatibility**: in marriage, 229
- Competitiveness**: fostering violence, 199
- The Comprehensive Oxford Dictionary**: adding 600 Indian terms, 691
- Computer(s)**: See *E-mail*; *Internet*; *Hindu Press International*; *Websites*
- Concealing grace (tirobhāva śakti, tirodhāna śakti, veiling grace)**: *avasthās*, 523; God's compassion, 779; def., 767, 839, 846; Naṭarāja symbolism, 41, 803; Pañchākshara Mantra and, 401, 801. See *Ānava*; *Five acts of Śiva*; *Grace*; *Maheśvara*; *Malas*; *Māyā*; *Obstacles*
- Conceit**: binding the soul, 139
- Concentration**: def., 767; *rāja yoga*, *dhāraṇā*, 816; *yoga*, 113
- Concentration camps**: discovered, 682
- Conception**: apex of creation, 129, 767; def., 767; preparation, 239; rite, 269, 275. See also *Samśkāras*
- Conclusions**: monistic and pluralistic, 567
- Concord (harmony)**: Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava, 287; prayers for, 35, 219, 227, 247, 361
- Confession**: *vāsanā dāha tantra*, 844; in worship, 313
- Confidence**: proceed with, xxxv
- Confidentiality**: def., 767; vow, 351. See also *Secrets*
- Conflict(s)**: belief, 227; peace on earth, 203; so-called righteous, 199
- Conformity**: *dharma*, 167
- Confucianism**: adherents, 592; beliefs, 594; founding, 592; goals, 593; path of attainment, 593; scriptures, 592; sects, 592; summary, 592-594. See also *Confucius*; *Far Eastern religions*
- Confucius**: founder of Confucianism, 592, 662; life, 662
- Confusion**: *ānava mārga*, 107; of good and evil, 421; *japa* relieves, 786; *marul*, 797; Naraka, 155, 802; selfishness creates, 95; *talātala chakra*, 744, 835; *vel* conquers, 71. See also *Talātala chakra*
- Congregational worship**: def., 767; in Hinduism, 307
- Conquest**: of *karma*, 93; light over darkness, 289
- Conscience**: def., 767; good conduct, 185; *sannyāsīn's* obedience to, 351; soul's voice, 157; Western and Eastern beliefs compared, 768. See also *Charyā*; *Consciencelessness*; *Dharma*; *Evolution of soul*
- Consciencelessness**: lower nature, 107; *mahātala chakra*, 745, 766. See also *Conscience*; *Mahātala chakra*
- Conscious mind**: Charts Resource, 739-740; def., 768; one of five states, 798. See also *Five states of mind*
- Consciousness**: channels of, see *Nāḍīs*; def., 768; gradations, 768; hellish states of, 155; limited, 125; in nature, 169; symbolized in Naṭarāja, 41; understanding, 11. See also *Awareness*; *Chaitanya*; *Chakras*; *Chitta*; *Mind*; *Transmutation*; *Sākshīn*; *Śiva consciousness*
- Consecrated temple**: def., 768
- Consent**: to marriage, 229
- Consort**: def., 768. See also *Śakti*
- Contemplation**: def., 768; *samādhi*, *rāja yoga*, 816. See also *Savikalpa samādhi*; *Rāja yoga*
- Contentment**: See *Santoshā*
- Continenence**: def., 768; vow, 351. See also *Brahmacharya*
- Contract**: marriage as, 211
- Conversion**: Christianity in India, 675, 685, 687; of Malaysian Hindus, 691; marriage and, 227; peoples of India vulnerable to, 655; Pope John Paul, 687. See also *Conversion to Hinduism*
- Conversion to Hinduism**: identifying your beliefs, 649; name-giving rite, 768; process, 781; requirements, 768-769. See also *Conversion*; *Nāmakarāṇa*
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda**: life, 679
- Coomaraswamy, Mutu**: life and accomplishments, 677
- Copernicus**: Earth orbits sun, 673
- Cornwallis**: Tipu Sahib defeat, 676
- Corporal punishment**: alternatives, 687; banned in Delhi schools, 689. See also *Parenting*; *Violence*
- Cosmic cycle**: def., 769; described, 131, 439, 769; monistic view, 536; periods of, 751. See also *Creation*; *Kalpa*; *Mahāpralaya*; *Śiva's cosmic dance*; *Śivamaya*; *Three worlds*; *Yuga*
- Cosmic dance**: See *Śiva's cosmic dance*
- Cosmic dissolution**: See *Mahāpralaya*
- Cosmic order**: See *Rīta*
- Cosmic Soul**: def., 769. See *Parameśvara*
- Cosmology**: *Āgamas*, 381; def., 769; kalās, spheres of consciousness, 788; Vedic/Āgamic (Hindu), Charts Resource, 740. See also *Lokas*; *Kalā*; *Tattvas*
- Cosmos (universe)**: creation, 433, 769; described, 131; def., 769;  *jyotisha*, 259; man as part, 259; and Parāśakti, 53; perfection, 437; Śiva's dance, 9, 41, 724; scripture on, 133; three worlds, 839; world, 849. See also *Cosmology*; *Māyā*; *Three worlds*; *World(s)*
- Cosmotheandricism**: and monotheism, 800
- Covenant**: marriage, 225, 233, 796
- Covet (covetousness)**: vs. *asteya* (nonstealing), 187; and *sannyāsīns*, 351
- Cow**: reverence for, 727; symbolism, 727
- Creation**: apex of, 129, 758, 767; cause, 419; def., 543, 769; *dharma*, 167; Eastern-Western views, 635; emanation, 433; God's reasons for, 538; good and purposeful, 539; Kashmir Śaivism, 506; monistic summary, 536; Naṭarāja, 41; Nātha beliefs, 521; pluralism on, 433; pluralistic summary, 537; Śaiva Siddhānta, 433; source, 9; three causes, 543; three worlds and,

123; two views, 535, 546; waves analogy, 543. See also *Brahmā; Cause; Cosmic cycle; Cosmos; Five acts of Śiva*

**Creative arts:** *tantra*, 255. See also *Kalā-64*

**Creator:** def., 769. See also *Creation*

**Creed:** def., 463, 769; need for, 463; Śaivite Hindu, 463-487; *śraddhā dhāraṇā*, 831

**Cremation:** Canada's viewing-style crematorium, 688; def., 769; funeral, 277; method, 769; purpose, 769. See also *Bone-gathering; Death*

**Cringe:** fear of transgression, 55

**Criticism:** family, 247; *guru*, not of, 363; marriage, 233; resisting dancing with Śiva, 9

**Crown *chakra*:** def., 770. See *Sahasrāra chakra*

**Cruelty:** meat-eating, 201; overcoming, 187

**Cultural changes:** adaptation to, 37

**Culture:** *charyā pāda*, 109; common to all Hindus, 19; def., 770; Gaṇeśa festival, 287; girls' training, 245; good conduct, 157; importance, 261; inner-plane training, 127; Śaivism, 39

**Currents:** See *Nāḍīs*

**Customs:** Asian, 261; in matters of sex, 217; noncon-flicting, in marriage, 227

**Cycles:** of birth and death, 87, 536, 567, 577; of the universe, 131. See also *Cosmic cycle; Saṁsāra*



**Dadu, Saint:** life and work, 673

**Da Gama, Vasco:** Cape of Good Hope, 673

**Daily practices:** five minimal, 711-712; in *Āgamas*, 381; of Hindus, 257, 711-712

**Dakṣiṇa mārga:** *tantrism*, right-hand path, 836

**Dakṣiṇāmūrti:** name of Śiva, 57, 770. See *Śiva*

**Dalai Lama:** refuge, North India, 684

**Dampati:** def., 770

**Dams:** hazardous projects opposed, 687

**Dāna (generosity, giving, tithing):** def., 770, 840, 850; Hindu *dharma*, 263; *niyama*, 189; scripture on, 264-265; *tantra*, 255. See also *Daśamāṁśa; Yama-niyama*

**Dance:** meaning, 9; sacredness, 387; scripture speaks on, 15; spiritual experience, 261. See also *Bharata natyam; Śiva's cosmic dance; Devadāsīs; Tāṇḍava*

**Dancing with Śiva:** explanation, 9; learning to, 11

**Dancing with Śiva (catechism):** proclaiming monism, 532; Śaivite Hindu philosophy, xxxiv; scriptural canon, 526. See also *Subramuniyaswami*

**Daṇḍa:** def., 770. See also *Sannyasin; Tāpas*

**Darius I:** invades Indus Valley, 662

**Darśana:** children taught to seek, 712; def., 828; explained, 770; philosophy, 417, 826; Śiva consciousness, 828. See also *Blessings; Grace; Śhaḍ darśana*

**Darshan:** See *Darśana*

**Darwin, Charles:** evolution of the soul, 776; and nonhuman birth, 805; The Origin of Species, 678; theory, 770. See also *Evolution of soul*

**Daśama bhāga vrata:** def., 770; tithing vow, 263. See also *Daśamāṁśa*

**Daśamāṁśa:** def., 770; giving, 263. See also *Dāna; Daśama bhāga vrata*

**Dāsa mārga:** *charyā pāda*, 109, 806; def., 770. See also *Charyā pāda; Mārgas*

**Daśanāmi:** def., 770; monastic orders, 27, 770; Saṅkara, 668; Śaṅkarāchārya *pīṭha*, 823

**Dasaratha:** reign, 660

**Daughters:** in joint family, 231, 787. See *Children; Girls*

**David (Jewish king):** reign, 661

**Dayā (compassion):** def., 770, 850; and evil, 143; God, 55, 157; guideline, 187; and meat-eating, 201; source, 141. See also *Ahimsā; Yama-niyama*

**Dayananda Sarasvati:** founder of Arya Samaj, 677

**Death:** artificial delays, 101; *āyurvedic* perspectives published, 691; consciousness at, 155; cremation, 769; def., 770; life after, 97; *mahāsamādhi*, 795; obstacle, 255; *prāyopaveśa*, 812; preparation, 99, 101, 833-834; rites of, 277; scripture on, 102; in Śiva Advaita, 508; subtle plane, 127; suicide, 833; transition, 277, 840; and Yama, 850. See also *Antarloka; Cremation; Devaloka; Funeral rites; Mahāsamādhi; Moksha; Naraka; Prāyopaveśa; Reincarnation; Saṁskāras; Suicide; Terminal illness; Videhamukti*

**Debate (monism-pluralism):** escalating from village affair, 532; final resolution of, 567-568; religious, 531; two Siddhānta schools, 531. See *Monism-pluralism in Śaiva Siddhānta*

**Debt (freedom from):** See *Asteya*

**Deceit:** def., 770. See *Lying*

**De Goubineau, Joseph:** *The Inequality of Human Races*, 678

**Deha:** def., 771. See *Kośas*

**Deism:** def., 771; *Dharma Śāstra*, 772

**Deities:** def., 771. See *Gods*

**Delhi:** corporal punishment banned in schools, 689; Mughal Sultans, timeline, 673, 674; sacked by Tamerlane, 672

**Delusion:** obstacle, 255

**Demons:** See *Asuras*

**De Nobili, Robert:** arrival in Madurai, 674

**Denomination:** def., 771. See *Monastic orders; Paramparā; Sampradāya; Sects; Śhaḍ darśana*. See also *Hindu solidarity; Sectarianism*

**Depression:** Naraka and, 155

**Desikar, Vedanta:** life and work, 671

**Desire:** control of, 181; deeds, 93, 139; freedom from, 157, 584; in *guru's* presence, 363; for meat, 201; and physical plane, 125; rebirth, 97; scripture on, 352. See also *Icchā śakti*

**Despair:** obstacle, 255

**Destiny:** *adrīṣṭa*, 754; def., 771; *dharma*, 167; fate, 776; free will, 93; Gaṇeśa guides, 65; liberation, 87; merger with God, 81; *niyati tattva*, 837; Paraśiva, 13; pluralistic view, 537, 548; *ṛita*, 169; shaped in the world, 145. See also *Adrīṣṭa; Evolution of soul; Free will; Karma; Moksha; Viśvagrāsa*

**Destruction (act of Śiva):** Natarāja, 41. See *Reabsorption*

**Detachment:** affectionate, 145; *yoga*, 113

**Deva(s):** benevolent, 63; centillion, 333; children are, 195; communion with, 299-233; def., 771; God, 638; guardian, 239; home shrine, 335; invoking, 313;

- nonintervention by, 331; response to prayers, 331; and worship, 63, 333. See also *Devaloka*; *Devonic*; *Mahādevas*
- Devadāsīs:** banned from temples, 569, 681; temple dance revived, 685. See also *Bharata natyam*
- Devaloka (Maharajaloka):** *anāhata chakra*, 743, 747; area of astral plane, 760; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 771, 795; *maṇipūra chakra*, 744; three worlds, 838. See also *Antaraloka*; *Devas*; *Lokas*; *Three worlds*
- Devamandira:** def., 771. See *Temple*
- Devanāgarī:** def., 771; and pronunciation, 853
- Devaram hymns:** Sambandar, 821. See also *Hymns*
- Deva yajña:** def., 849
- Devī:** def., 771; Divine Mother, 23; Śakti, 821. See also *Goddess*; *Śakti*; *Śāktism*; *Śiva-Śakti*
- Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa:** def., 771; *smṛiti*, 830
- Devī Gītā:** role in worship, 771
- Devikālotara Āgama:** *advaita*, 550; contents, 771
- Devī Upanishad:** contents, 771
- Devonic:** army, 69; def., 771. See also *Devas*
- Devotee:** conduct, 181; def., 771; *mantra* initiation, 405; Nandi symbolizes, 725; and *satguru*, 365; and temple, 299, 301. See also *Guru bhakti*; *Śishya*
- Devotion:** cultivation, 183; to *guru*, 117, 363; of holy men and women, 357; and worship, 329. See also *Bhakti*; *Guru-śishya relationship*
- Devotional hymns:** See *Hymns*
- Dhammapada:** Buddhist scripture, 377, 580, 771
- Dhanurveda:** contents, 771; *smṛiti*, 389; *Upaveda*, 843
- Dhāranā:** def., 771; *rāja yoga*, 816; in *yoga*, 113
- Dharma:** belief and, 199; children's, 243; def., 771-772; fourfold, 167-175; Gaṇeśa, guardian of, 65, 723; good conduct and, 181; Hindu; see *Sanātana Dharma*; householders', see *Gṛihastha dharma*; human, see *Āśrama dharma*; husband's, see *Purusha dharma*; lighting the path, 143; in marriage, 211; need to perform, 87; personal, see *Svadharmā*; positive approach, 145; in *Purāṇas*, 391; *purushārtha*, 87, 814-815; and reincarnation, 816; *sannyāsīn's*, see *Sannyāsa dharma*; scripture speaks on, 176-177; sin and, 153; social, see *Varṇa dharma*; and teachers, 688; and temples, 301; universal, see *Rita*; *Vedas*, 375, 377; wife's, see *Strī dharma*. See also *Adharma*; *Chaturdharma*; *Charyā*; *Conscience*; *Duty*; *Ethics*; *Goals*; *Pañcha nitya karmas*; *Sādharmaṇa dharma*; *Sāmānya dharma*; *Sanātana Dharma*; *Varṇāśrama dharma*; *Virtue*; *Yama-niyama*
- Dharmabuddhi:** conscience, 767
- Dharmapura Aadheenam:** conclave, 567; founding, 675; gift of earrings, 569
- Dharma Śāstra:** described, 772; *homa*, 782; *smṛiti*, 389; *Kalpa Vedāṅga*, 789; *Manu Dharma Śāstra*, 796; penance for *pāpa*, 808; *Vedāṅga*, 845
- Dhavamony, Mariasusai:** translations, 554
- Dholavira:** Indus Valley site, 659, 689. See *Archeology*
- Dhoti:** def., 772; at home, 713; in temple, 329; *veshti*, 846
- Dhritarashtra:** reign, 660
- Dhṛiti (steadfastness):** def., 773, 832, 850; guideline, 187. See also *Yama-niyama*
- Dhvaja:** def., 773; symbolism, 695
- Dhvajastambha:** def., 773; prostrating before, 305
- Dhyāna:** def., 773. See *Meditation*
- Diaspora, Hindu:** See *Hindu diaspora*
- Dictionary:** Indian terms added, 691
- Diet:** *mitāhāra*, 799; vegetarian, 201, 259, 351. See also *Ayurveda*; *Food*; *Health*; *Mitāhāra*; *Vegetarianism*
- Dieu Siva est Amour Omniprésent et Réalité Transcendante:** affirmation of faith, in French, 773
- Digambara:** Jain sect, 665
- Dikshā (initiation):** in *Āgamas*, 492; def., 773, 784, 824; neutrality and, 89; *Pañchākshara Mantra*, 405; and *paramparā*, 456; *sannyāsa*, 277, 349, 455, 823; by *satguru*, 349, 365; on Vaikāsi Viśākhā, 289; in *Vīra Saivism*, 504. See also *Grace*; *Linga Dikshā*; *Nāmadikshā*; *Sannyāsa dikshā*; *Śaktipāta*
- Dipastambha:** *kuttuvilaku lamp*, 793
- Dipavali festival:** described, 773; festival of lights, 291
- Dipendra, Prince:** royal family murdered, 689
- Dipolar:** def., 773; monistic theism, 774, 799
- Diptachakra:** aura, 761
- Direct cognition:** See *Mati*
- Disciple:** See *Śishya*
- Discipline:** *ahimsā*, 195; by father, 247; of children, 241, 243; on Mahāśivarātri, 285; peerless path, 7; *sādhana*, 818; spiritual, 11. See also *Sādhana*; *Self-control*; *Willpower*; *Yama-niyama*
- Discourses:** at temple, 307
- Discrimination (racial, religious, etc.):** Fiji's constitution, 687; India's constitution, 683; Malaysia, 691; US racial riots, 681. See also *Persecution*; *Race*; *US immigration policy*
- Discrimination (viveka):** def., 773; *vel* and, 71
- Discussion:** needed in marriage, 233
- Disease:** *āyurveda* and, 259; purposefulness, 540
- Distress:** and affirmation of faith, 407; Kārttikeya, 69
- Divine incarnation:** def., 783. See *Avatāra*
- Divine judgment:** Eastern-Western views, 636
- Divine law:** atoning for transgressions, 153; purpose of *karma*, 95. See also *Dharma*; *Karma*
- Divine Life Society:** Swami Chidananda Saraswati, 688; Swami Sivananda, 679
- Divine love:** Kārttikēya, 69. See also *Love*; *Satchidānanda*; *Viśuddha chakra*
- Divine Mother:** def., 773. See *Goddess*; *Śakti*; *Śāktism*
- Divine presence (sānnidhya):** after worship, 333; around temple or holy person, 823
- Divine sight:** See *Clairvoyance*
- Divinity:** in all, 197; symbols of, 721-735
- Divodasa:** reign, 660
- Divorce:** avoidable, 219. See also *Marriage*
- Divyadrishṭi:** See *Clairvoyance*
- Divyāśravana:** See *Clairaudience*
- Doctrine(s):** and creeds, 463; East-West differences, 637; Hindu, in *Āgamas*, 381
- Doctrine of the Mean:** Confucian scripture, 592
- Domestic violence:** organizations helping victims, 688. See also *Ahimsā*; *Corporal punishment*; *Violence*
- Door of Brahman:** Brahmarandhra, 765; def., 773;

- jñāna, 786; *kuṇḍalinī* and, 793; *tantrism*, 836; *videhamukti*, 846. See *Sahasrāra chakra*; *Self Realization*
- Doshas:** *āyurveda*, 259, 762; def., 773; *japa* harmonizes, 786; *upasarga*, 842. See *Āyurveda*
- Dot (worn on forehead):** symbolism, 722. See *Bindu*
- Drama:** as spiritual experience, 261
- Dravidians:** Āryans and, 655, 658; Caucasians, 678
- Dravya:** *yajña*, sacrificial substances for, 849
- Dreams:** *Śiva Sūtra*, 505; temples founded on, 301. See also *Antarloka*; *Inner-plane schools*; *Sleep*
- Drīdhavāchana:** affirmation, 755
- Drishadvati River:** drying up, 659
- Drug culture:** arising in US, 684; beliefs, 614-615
- Drugs:** avoided when death nears, 101
- Drum:** of creation, 41; Naṭarāja, 803
- Dualism:** definition, 534; in *Āgamas*, 492; antagonism, 199; difference from monism, 419; *dvaita-advaita*, 774; flaws, 421, 423; God and Satan, 540; Madhva's, 25, 794; monistic theism, 421, 423, 799; on God, 419; philosophy, 417-421, 507; proponents, 419; scripture on, 426; Zoroastrianism sets Western tone, 662. See *Dvaita*. See also *Duality*; *Monism*; *Pluralism*
- Duality:** def., 773; world, 151, 525. See also *Dualism*
- Dūrdarsana:** far-seeing, 776
- Durban:** indentured servants, 678
- Durgā:** identified, 774; Śakti, 23, 820. See *Goddess*; *Śakti*
- Durrani, Ahmed Shah:** Afghans annihilate Marāthas, 675
- Durvasas:** profile, 774; reviving Śaivism, 505
- Duty, duties:** *charyā*, 109; *dharma*, 167, 173; essential beliefs & observances, 697; Gaṇeśa's, 67; husband's, 213, 233, 239; neglect of, 181; *pañca nitya karmas*, 185, 711-712; parents', teaching children, 697-715; priest's, 319, 321; *Vedas* guide, 377; wife's, 215, 239. See also *Dharma*
- Dvaita:** philosophy, 417; in Śaivism, 33; in Siddha Siddhānta, 512. See *Dualism*; *Dvaita-advaita*
- Dvaita-advaita:** def., 774. See *Advaita*; *Dvaita*; *Monism-pluralism*; *Monistic theism*; *Śivamaya*
- Dvaita Siddhānta:** def., 774
- Dvaita Vedānta:** Madhva, 845; school founded, 671
- Dvija:** *upanayana*, twice-born, 842
- Dwarka:** submerged stone port city, 660. See *Archeology*
- Dyer, Brigadier:** Amritsar massacre, 681.
- Dying:** See *Death*; *Terminal illness*
- Dynasties:** Chālukya, 667-668, 766; Chandella, 669-670; Chola, 567, 664, 669; Elamite, 661; Gupta, 666-667; Khilji, 671; Kushāna, 665; Licchavi, 666; Malla, 669; Mamluk, 671; Mataramas, 669; Mongol, 671; Pala, 668; Pallava, 665-670; Rashtrakuta, 667-669; Śāhi, 670; Śātavāhana, 665; Śuṅga, 664-665; Yuan, 671. See also *Empires*
- Ear-piercing:** rite, 269, 271, 822. See also *Samskāras*
- Earrings:** Dharmapura gift, 568-569; purpose, 774. See also *Karṇavedha*
- Earth:** biological systems collapsing, 688; cow represents, 727; environmental summit (UNCED), 686; Hindus as guests, 169; man's purpose on, *Vedas*, 373; sacred, 702. See also *Ecology*; *Environment*; *Planets*; *World*
- Eastern religions:** similarities with Western religions, 638; Western views compared, 634-642. See *Buddhism*; *Hinduism*; *Jainism*; *Sikhism*. See also *Far Eastern religions*; *Religions*; *Western religions*
- East India Company:** formation, 674; opium monopoly in Bengal, 676; Surat, 674
- Ecclesiastical hierarchy:** Hinduism's decentralized, 357
- Eckhart, Meister:** birth, 671
- Ecology:** India's problems, 687; philosophy of movement, 617-618. See also *Earth*; *Environment*
- Ecstasy:** def., 774; vs. *enstasy*, 775
- Ecumenical:** def., 774; gatherings, 35
- Ecumenical Council, Fifth:** on reincarnation, 666
- Ecumenism:** def., 774. See also *Hindu solidarity*
- Edison, Thomas Alva:** inventions, 679-680
- Education:** about sex, 241; *brahmacharya āśrama*, 173; in father's profession, 245; Hindu youth lacking, 691; marriage compatibility, 229; parental duty, 241, 243; rite of, 271 (see also *Samskāras*); Śaivism, 37; summer-camp intensives, 689; Tamil Nadu's Sunday classes, 691. See also *Children*; *Kalā-64*; *Schools*; *Youth*
- Efficient cause:** def., 765, 774; in monism and dualism, 419; potter example, 543; in Śaiva Siddhānta, 431, 433. See also *Cause*
- Eggs:** not eating, 187, 201. See *Ahimsā*; *Vegetarianism*
- Ego:** *ahamkāra*, 755; *antaḥkaraṇa*, 757; in *charyā*, 109; coconut analogy, 730; def., 774; Naṭarāja and, 41; purpose, 85; *sannyāsin*, 351; and *satguru*, 365; seeking understanding of, 11; self-perpetuating, 365. See also *Āṇava*; *I*; *Individuality*; *Soul*
- Egypt:** exodus of Jews, 661; first Pyramid, 659; Valley of the Kings, 660
- Einstein, Albert:** universe as Naṭarāja, 683
- Ekanatha, Saint:** life and work, 674
- Elamite dynasty:** dates, 661
- Elders:** advising on sexual matters, 217; caring for, 263; consulting, 185; *dharma* of, 173; guidance in personal *dharma*, 175; have the last word, 247; helping with marriage problems, 233; honored, 277; in joint family and extended family, 231, 247; marriage arranging, 229; respect for, 241. See also *Age*; *Āśrama dharma*
- Eliezer:** death, 675
- Elixir:** *amṛita*, 756, 774; def., 774
- E-mail:** *Hindu Press International*, 689; Hindus communicate worldwide, 689. See also *Internet*; *Websites*
- Emanation:** belief, 494; def., 543, 774; God's creative process, 123, 433; monistic view, 535; scriptures on, 545; soul as, of God, 435. See *Cosmic cycle*; *Creation*; *Monistic theism*
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo:** popularizing *Bhagavad Gītā* and *Upanishads*, 675
- Emigration:** to Fiji, 679; indentured labor, 677-682; to Mauritius, 677; to Netherlands, 684; to Reunion, 677; to South Africa, 679. See also *Indentured Indian labor*; *Indian immigration*; *US immigration*
- Emotion(s):** antagonistic, 155; astral plane, 127; intel-



lect bound in, 153; maturing of, 173; moon, 732; "We are not...," 5, 79

**Empires:** Chola, 664; Kushāṇa, 665; Marātha, 674, 676; Mauryan, 663-664; Mongol, 673; Toltec, 671; Vijayanagara, 609, 672-674, 847. See also *Dynasties*

**Empowerment:** for *japa*, 405; sacraments provide, 269; *vel*, 71

**Emulation:** of *satguru's* awakened qualities, 363

**Encyclopedia of Hinduism:** project begun, 686

**Energy, energies:** balancing masculine and feminine, 347; of physical plane, 125. See also *Iḍā*; *Odic energy*; *Piṅgalā*; *Prāṇa*; *Suṣumṇā*

**Enlightenment:** def., 774; Eastern-Western views, 638; God Realization, 778; path of, 107, 189, 809; terms for, 774; Tirumular, 451; *Vedas* are guide to, 377. See also *Illumination*; *Jivanmukti*; *Jñāna*; *Moksha*; *Nirvāṇi*; *Self Realization*; *Upadeśi*

**Enstasy:** def., 775; *samādhi*, 821

**Environment:** attitudes of *ahimsā*, 195; and subtle plane, 127; TERI warns of India's problems, 687; UNCED summit, 686. See also *Earth*; *Ecology*

**Epic history:** def., 775. See *Itihāsa*

**Epigastric plexus:** *maṅḍīrā chakra*, 744

**Equanimity:** fruit of understanding, 9

**Equilibrium:** of *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, 347, 775

**Equinoxes, precession:** used in dating scriptural references, 654

**Eroticism:** *Kāma Sūtras*, 389

**Essence (nucleus) of soul:** Aham Brahmāsmi, 755; *ātman*, 760; def., 775; discussion, 79-83; emanation of God Śiva, 435; impersonal being, 783; Parāśakti (Satchidānanda) and Paraśiva, 536, 830; Śiva, 83. See also *Ātman*; *Parāśakti*; *Paraśiva*; *Soul*

**Eswaran, Eknath:** life and works, 687

**Ethics, Hindu:** *charyā*, 109; scripture on, 387; summarized, 187-195. See also *Charyā*; *Dharma*; *Medical ethics*; *Yama-niyama*

**Ethymology:** scripture, 389

**Europe:** Pagan renaissance, 687; Hindu communities, 688

**Evangelism:** in Malaysia, 691; Pope in India, 687. See also *Christianity in India*

**Evil:** apparent, 137, 139; def., 775; discussion, 139, 141, 143; dualism, 540; Eastern and Western views, 637; and God, 143, 775; and good conduct, 185; not intrinsic, 453, 525; in monistic theism, 421; *pāpa*, 808; pluralists' views, 539; Śaivite creed belief, 483; Siddhānta views, 431, 437. See *Evolution of soul*; *Sin*

**Evolution of soul:** *adhyātma prasāra*, 754; culmination, 131; and Darwinism, 775; def., 775, 831; *devas* guide, 63; difficult experiences, 139; God Realization, 79, 81; individuality during, 435; in inner worlds, 97; limiting of consciousness, 85; Nātha path, 447; non-human birth, 804-805; process, 137; world is arena, 33. See also *Avasthā*; *Chakras*; *Destiny*; *Karma*; *Old soul*; *Mārga*; *Pādas*; *Reincarnation*; *Samsāra*; *Spiritual unfoldment*; *Viśvagrāsa*; *Young soul*

**Excitement:** obstacle, 255

**Existentialism:** beliefs, 628

**Experience:** *anubhava*, 758; needed, 7. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Karma*; *Reaction*; *Suffering*

**Extended family:** children, 239; def., 776; described, 231; joint family, 787. See *Family*; *Joint family*

**Extinction:** thousands of species, 688. See also *Ecology*



*movements*

**Faith:** See *Āstikya*. See also *Faiths*

**Faiths:** list, 613; sample beliefs, 612-613; shamanism, 612; spiritualism, 612; summarized, 612-613; theosophy, 612; universalism, 612. See also *Philosophies*; *Religions*; *Secular*

**Falsehood:** never before *guru*, 363

**Family:** astrologer, 259; *āyurveda vaidya*, 259; and children, 239; cornerstone of culture, 702; deterioration of, 683; *dharma* of, 171, 173; extended, 231, 239, 776; *grihastha dharma*, 779; harmony, xi, 247; husband's role, 213; joint, 231, 247; *gyotisha sāstrī*, 259; *karma*, 790; large, stability of, 239; limit on size, 239; living within means, 247; marriage problems, 233; monk does not desire, 343; rites of passage, 269; Śaivite ethics, 37; *sannyāsin* separates from, 347; vigil at death, 101. See also *Āśrama dharma*; *Children*; *Domestic violence*; *Extended family*; *Grihastha*; *Grihastha dharma*; *Home*; *Householder*; *Joint family*; *Marriage*; *Saṃskāras*

**Far Eastern religions:** See *Confucianism*; *Shintoism*; *Taoism*. See also *Eastern religions*; *Religions*; *Western religions*

**Fast, Fasting:** def., 776; during festivals, 283; in *kriyā pāda*, 111; *Mahābhārata*, 103; *pradosha vrata*, 811. See also *Asceticism*; *Tapas*; *Prāyopaveśa*

**Fate:** def., 776. See *Adṛiṣṭa*; *Destiny*; *Free will*; *Karma*

**Father:** daughter's marriage, 229; disciplines, 247; duties toward children, 239, 241, 243, 245; head of family, 231. See also *Children*; *Family*; *Householder*; *Husband*; *Men*; *Parents*

**Fear:** *āṇava mārga*, 107; *atala chakra*, 744; and children, 243; child-beating and, 562; of death, 97, 99; of God, never, 159; hellish state, 155, 781; ingested in meat, 201; instinctive, 784; *japa*, 786; lower nature, 107, 199, 201; maturing out of, 7; Naraka, 802; not fearing the world, 145; obstacle, 255; overcoming, 187, 351; release from, 71, 423; of unrighteousness, 141; and violence, 199; of the world, 143. See also *Atala chakra*; *Lower nature*

**Feeding(s):** first, 269; at temple, 307. See also *Saṃskāras*

**Feet of guru (holy feet):** def., 782; *pādapūjā*, 806; *pādukā* worship, 291; symbol, 731; *ucchishṭa*, 841. See also *Guru bhakti*; *Pādapūjā*; *Pādukā*

**Fellowship:** def., 776; devotees in Śaiva Siddhānta, 431. See also *Companions*; *Friends*; *Good company*

**Female:** energies balanced, 347; soul is not, 79

**Ferdinand of Austria, Archduke:** assassinated, 681

**Festivals:** chapter, 283-291; culture, 261; def., 776; *dhwaja* flag, 773; narratives at, 391; scripture on, 292-293; temple, 283, 303, 307. See *Ārdrā Darśanam*; *Brahmot-sava*; *Dīpāvali*; *Gaṇeśa Chaturthī*; *Gaṇeśa Visarjana*; *Guru Jayantī*; *Guru Pūrṇimā*; *Jayantī*; *Kṛittikā Dīpam*;



*Kumbha mela*; *Mahāśivarātri*; *Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava*; *Śivāji*; *Skanda Shashthi*; *Tai Pongal*; *Tai Pusam*; *Vaikāsi Viśākhā*; *Vināyaka Vratam*. See also *Worship*

**Fiji**: Christian coup, 685; Indian indentured laborers, 680-681; opposing racial discrimination, 687

**Financial year**: begins with Dipāvali, 291

**Fire (Agni)**: analogy of creation, 419, 433, 494; *lekhap-rārtha havana*, 793; and *Naṭarāja*, 803; prayers conveyed by, 331; in *shaṭkoṇa*, 728; in *trikoṇa*, 731. See also *Agni*; *Āratī*; *Fire worship*; *Flame*; *Homa*; *Kuṇḍalini*; *Spark*; *Vāsanā dāha tantra*; *Yajña*

**Fire worship**: altar, 729; early signs of, 658; Vedic rites, 373; weddings, 273; *yajña*, 849. See also *Fire*; *Homa*; *Homakuṇḍa*; *Saṁskāras*; *Worship*

**Firefly**: and supernova, 538

**Firewalking**: def., 776; in Śāktism, 23

**First**: beard shaving, 273; first learning rite, 269; *guru*, Kārttikeya, 69

**First World**: def., 776. See *Bhūloka*

**Fish**: not eating, 187, 201. See *Ahimsā*; *Vegetarianism*

**Five acts of Śiva**: def., 777; *Sadāśiva*; 818. See *Creation*; *Preservation*; *Reabsorption*; *Concealing grace*; *Revealing grace*. See also *Naṭarāja*; *Parameśvara*; *Śiva's cosmic dance*; *Śiva*

**Fives**: categories of *Pāsupatas*, 500; elements and *Pañchākshara*, 401; obligations of good conduct, 185; parenting guidelines, 713-714; powers of Śiva, 49, 492, 549; practices, 711-712; precepts, 709-710; sacred syllables, 487; spheres (*kalās*), 739. See also *Five acts of Śiva*; *Five states of mind*

**Five states of mind**: described, 798. See *Conscious mind*; *Subconscious mind*; *Subsubconscious mind*; *Subsuperconscious mind*; *Superconscious mind*. See also *Chitta*; *Evolution of soul*; *Mind*; *Three phases of mind*

**Flag**: *dhvaja*, 305, 733, 773

**Flame**: *āratī*, 758; consciousness, xl, 47; destruction, xxxix, 41; in *pūjā*, 313. See also *Āratī*; *Fire*; *Spark*

**Folk narratives**: in Hinduism, 777; *Purāṇas*, 391

**Food**: first solid, 271; giving to *swāmīs*, 263; *mītāhāra*, 799; offering of, 111; parents provide, 241; *satguru's* leavings, 363; vegetarian, 187, 201. See also *Āyurveda*; *Diet*; *Health*; *Mītāhāra*; *Vegetarianism*

**Forbearance**: humility, 183; def., 777. See *Kshama*

**Force centers**: See *Chakras*

**Ford, Henry**: assembly-line production, 679

**Forests**: destroyed for meat production, 201

**Form**: cosmic cycles of, 131, 439; formless, 441, 777; *māyā*, 797; Śiva creates, sustains and absorbs, 123. See also *Formlessness*; *Māyā*

**Formlessness**: *atattva*, 760, 777, 825; Brahman, 764; mind (universal), 799; pantheism, 808; *Paraśiva*, 825; philosophic meaning, 777; Self God, 49; ultimate goal, 13; unmanifest, 842; *Vedas* speak of, 51. See *Atattva*; *Paraśiva*. See also *Form*; *Satchidānanda*

**Foundation**: for unfolding, xxxiv

**Fowl**: not eating, 187, 201. See *Ahimsā*; *Vegetarianism*

**Fragrance**: and flower, pluralist analogy, 548

**Francis Xavier, Saint**: life of, 673

**Frawley, David**: astronomy/dating, precessional

changes, 654

**Freedom**: bondage and, 151; and children, 243; from re-birth, 7, 815; world cannot give, 151. See also *Free will*

**Free will**: and evil, 143; and *karma*, 93. See also *Destiny*; *Freedom*; *Karma*; *Willpower*

**French**: affirmation of faith in, 407; *Vedas* published in, 377

**French Revolution**: Bastille stormed, 676

**Friday**: holy day, 283

**Friends**: in extended family, 231; keeping good company, 95, 181; and *Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava*, 807; at rites of passage, 269. See also *Companions*; *Fellowship*; *Good company*

**Full moon**: July-August, *guru* festival, 291; May-June, *Vaikāsi Viśākhā*, 843

**Fundamentalism**: beliefs, 619; denominations, 619

**Funeral rites**: *antyeshti*, 277, 822; bone-gathering, 764; cremation, 769; essential *saṁskāras*, 269; *sannyāsa* initiation, 349, 786. See also *Antyeshti*; *Bone-gathering*; *Cremation*; *Death*; *Saṁskāras*



**Gajahasta**: *anugraha*, *mudrā* of, 803

**Gallop poll**: Americans' belief in reincarnation, 690

**Gaṇa(s)**: def., 777; *Gaṇeśa* and, 65

**Gaṇāchāra**: def., 504, 777, 807. See *Vīra Śaivism*

**Gaṇapati**: festivals, 287, 807; *Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava*, 807; in Smārtism, 27. See also *Gaṇeśa*; *Gods*

**Gaṇapati Upanishad**: *Gaṇapati* described, 73; contents, 777

**Gāndharvaveda**: def., 777; *smṛiti*, 389; *Upaveda*, 843

**Gandha tattva**: def., 838. See also *Tattvas*

**Gandhi, Indira**: assassination, 685; becomes Prime Minister, 684

**Gandhi, Maneka**: speaking against animal sacrifice, 687

**Gandhi, Mohandas K. (Mahatma)**: agitates for better working conditions, 681; assassinated, 683; dates, 679; opposed partition, 682; program of noncooperation and nonviolence, 681; protesting indentured servitude, 680. See also *Indian independence*

**Gandhi, Rajiv**: assassinated, 685; succeeds Indira, 685

**Gaṇeśa**: *anikuśa*, 726; Aum, 723; coconut, 730; described, 65, 67, 723, 777; festivals, xi, 287; *mankolam*, 727; Milk Miracle, 686; monthly holy days, 283, 287; and mouse, 728; and personal *dharma*, 175; Śaivite creed belief, 471; *śaktis*, five, 287; and Śiva, 63; symbol, 723; worship of, 305, 321. See also *Gaṇapati*; *Gods*; *Loving Gaṇeśa*

**Gaṇeśa Chaturthi (ten-day festival)**: described, 777; *Gaṇeśa*, 287; major Deity festival, 283. See *Festivals*

**Gaṇeśa Visarjana festival**: Bal Gangadhar Tilak, 680; culminates *Gaṇeśa Chaturthi*, 777; described, 777

**Ganges (Gaṅgā)**: described, 777-778; *Padma Purāṇa* on, 279; *Varanasi*, 844. See also *Kumbha melas*

**Gangetic Plain**: described, 778. See also *Ganges*

**Garbhādhāna**: def., 778, 822; prenatal rite, 275. See also *Conception*; *Pregnancy*; *Saṁskāras*

**Garbhagriha**: circumambulating, 305; def., 778

- Gargya, Sage:** identified, 778; life and work, 659
- Gautama, Rishi:** identified, 776; Nyāya Darśana, 826; philosophy, 393. See *Nyāya Darśana*; *Shaḍ darśana*
- Gautama, Siddhartha:** birth, 662; Buddhism, 580; contribution, 778. See *Buddha*; *Buddhism*
- Gautamananda:** citation on *ahirṃsā*, 562
- Gāyatri Mantra:** alternate translation, 336; chanted at *pūjā*, 335; described, 778; Tryambaka, 841
- Genetic research:** Wells' and Villems, 657
- Genghis Khan:** death of, 671
- Gentleness:** *ahirṃsā* and, 195. See *Ahirṃsā*; *Dayā*
- Geography:** Hindu sects, 647
- German:** *Veda* translations, 377
- Gestures:** Gaṇeśa's, 73; greeting (*namaskāra/añjali*), 727, 757, 802; *mudrās*, 800; Śiva Naṭarāja's, 41, 159, 803
- Ghaṇṭā:** def., 776; symbolism, 729
- Ghee:** analogy, 407; def., 778; offering in fire, 201; *yajña*, 849. See *Offerings*; *Worship*; *Yajña*
- Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā:** contents, 778; Siddha Siddhānta, 512; *yoga* classic, 393, 675
- Ghosh, Sri Aurobindo:** pantheist, 419; philosophy, 679
- Ghṛāṇa tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Ghṛīta:** *ghee*, 778
- Girls:** household arts and culture, training, 245; *kalā*-64 taught to, 245, 261, 789; rite of passage, 273 (see *Saṃskāras*). See also *Children*; *Daughters*
- Giving:** See *Dāna*
- Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders for Human Survival:** First, 685; Second, 685; Third, 686
- Go:** cow, symbolism, 727
- Goa:** Portuguese Catholics, 673
- Goat (aṅkuśa):** Gaṇeśa's, 67; symbolism, 726, 757
- Goals:** Buddhist, 581; Christian, 605; Confucian, 593; four legitimate human, see *Purushārtha*; Hindu sects', 577-578; Islamic, 608; Jain, 584; Judaic, 602; life, 13, 87; Shinto, 596; Sikh, 587; Taoist, 590; Zoroastrian, 599. See also *Attainment*; *Destiny*; *Objective*
- God:** def., 778; Eastern-Western views, 635-636; Mahādeva, 794. See *Śiva*. See also *Goddess*; *Gods*; *Monism*; *Monistic theism*; *Monotheism*; *Pluralism*
- Goddess:** def., 778; neither male nor female, 63; worship of, 657-658, 664. See also *Devī*; *Śakti*
- Godhra:** Hindus retaliate after massacre, 690
- God Realization:** def., 778. See *Samādhi*
- Gods (Deities, Mahadevas):** belief, 469; bells invoke, 729; causal plane, 129; creation of, 132; def., 771, 778, 794; discussion, 63-71; distinguished from God, 778; invoked in *Vedas*, 373; Mahādevas, 778, 795; Nāthas and 330 million, 521; neither male nor female, 63; Pagan, worshiped anew, 687; and rites of passage, 269; scriptures on, 72-73; three hundred thirty-three million (all created by Śiva), 63; worshipping through fire, 729. See *Gaṇeśa*; *Murugan*. See also *God*; *Goddess*; *Mūrti*; *Sivaloka*; *Worship*
- Golden Temple:** construction, 674
- Good:** and evil, dualism, 540; monistic theism, 421; source, 141. See also *Good deeds*; *Goodness*
- Good company:** and *karma*, 95; need for, 181. See also *Companions*; *Fellowship*; *Friends*
- Good conduct:** discussion, 181-185; four keys, 183; *pañcha nitya karmas*, 185; parental guideline, 713; scripture on, 190-191; views on, 639; *yamas* and *niyamas*, 189. See also *Dharma*; *Pañcha nitya karmas*; *Yama-niyama*
- Good deeds:** and sin, 153. See *Charity*; *Karma yoga*; *Sevā*. See also *Good*; *Goodness*
- Goodness:** scripture on, 146-147; of soul and world, 137, 483. See also *Good*; *Good deeds*; *Virtue*
- Gopura:** def., 778; temple entrance, 305; symbol, 729
- Gorakshanatha:** Ādinātha Sampradāya, 447, 494; identified, 778; Kānpaṭi order, 789; life and work, 669-670; monistic theist, 425; *samādhi*, 512. See also *Siddha Siddhānta*
- Gorakshanātha Śaivism:** See *Siddha Siddhānta*
- Gorakshapantha:** def., 779. See *Siddha Siddhānta*
- Gorakshaśataka:** contents, 779
- Goraksha Upanishad:** written, 672
- Goswami, Indira Bettiji ("Jiji"):** Sri Nathji temple, Manjalpur Mandir, 688
- Gotra:** *archana* credentials, 315; def., 779
- Grace:** *advaita*, 510; all is, 437; exonerated, 153; of holy ones, 357; home supplication, 335; *mahāpralaya*, 131; and penance, 153; Realization and *satguru*, 113; release from *āṇava*, 558; Śaktism, 23; Śiva Advaita, 508; temple, 299; Va, 401; Vaishṇavism, 25, 577-578. See *Arul*; *Concealing grace*; *Darśana*; *Revealing grace*; *Śaktipāta*; *Śivamaya*. See also *Guru*; *Prapatti*; *Satguru*
- Graha:** Rāhu, 815
- Grāmadevatā:** Amman, 756
- Great Learning:** Confucian scripture, 592
- Great Wall of China:** date, 664
- Greece:** early iron usage, 661; first Olympic Games, 661; Hellenistic temples destroyed, 666; Hippocrates, 663; Indian influence on Pythagoras, 662; influence on India, 663; monsoon winds utilized, 664; Plotinus, Neo-Platonism, 665; Ptolemy, 665; Pythagoras, 662; Trojan War, 661
- Greed:** instinctive nature, 141; obstacle, 255; scripture on, 264-265. See also *Dāna*
- Greeks:** influences in India, 663
- Grihastha (householder):** def., 779; monastic path vs., 245, 343; saints, 359. See also *Family*; *Grihastha āśrama*; *Grihastha dharma*; *Parents*; *Path-choosing*
- Grihastha āśrama:** described, 173, 779. See also *Āśrama dharma*; *Grihastha*; *Grihastha dharma*
- Grihastha dharma (householder dharma):** children are fulfillment of, 239; def., 779-780; described, 772, 780. See also *Family*; *Grihastha*; *Grihastha āśrama*; *Householder*; *Marriage*; *Path-choosing*
- Griheśvara:** def., 780. See *Husband*
- Grihiṇī:** def., 780. See *Wife*
- Grihya Sūtras:** contents, 780; *homa*, 782; *Kalpa Vedāṅga*, 789; *smṛiti*, 389; *Vedāṅga*, 845
- Groom:** evaluating, 229. See also *Virginity*
- Gross plane:** def., 780. See *Bhūloka*
- Groups:** See *Āśrama*; *Community*; *Good company*; *Nation*; *Society*. See also *Individuality*; *Varṇa dharma*

- Guardian devas:** at birth, 239
- Guénon, René:** adopting Vedānta, 679
- Guests:** treated as God, 263
- Guha:** name of Kārttikeya, 780. See *Kārttikeya*
- Guhavasi Siddha:** contribution, 780
- Gueśvara:** name of Śiva, 780. See *Śiva*
- Guide to Indo-American Parenting:** nonviolent child-rearing, 687
- Guidelines:** See *Yama-niyama*. See also *Charyā*; *Con-science*; *Dharma*; *Ethics*; *Pañcha nitya karmas*; *Virtue*
- Gujarat:** Bhojadeva, 670; earthquake kills twenty thousand, 689; Hindus retaliate after Godhra massacre, 690; location, 780; Śakas, 665. See also *Archeology*
- Guṇas:** def., 780; and *doshas*, 773; *prakṛiti tattva*, 837; and *triśīla*, 733. See also *Āyurveda*; *Prakṛiti*; *Tattva*
- Gupta dynasty:** crushed, 667; decline, 666; religious tolerance, 666
- Gurkhā:** Nepalese Rajputs, 780
- Guru:** and *avasthās*, 524; def., 780, 793; described, 361; extended family, 231; festivals, 291; grace of, 89; guidance, 175, 524, 703; Kārttikeya as supreme, 69; Kashmir Śaivism, 506; lineages, 19, 449; and *mantra* initiation, 405; personal *dharma*, 175; prefixes, 780; protocol, xii, 363; *sādhanas* from, 11; Śaiva Siddhānta, 431; Śaivism, 21, 37; scripture on, 352, 367, 456-457; Smārtism, 578; teachings, 11; Vira Śaivism, 503-504; water from foot-washing, 293; importance of, 524. See also *Bodhaka*; *Grace*; *Gurudeva*; *Guru Jayantī*; *Guru Pūrṇimā*; *Guru-śishya system*; *Pādapūjā*; *Paramparā*; *Sampradāya*; *Satguru*
- Guru bhakti:** def., 780; *tapas*, 836. See *Bhakti*; *Feet of guru*; *Guru*; *Guru Gītā*; *Guru-śishya system*; *Kulārṇava Tantra*
- Gurudeva:** def., 780. See *Guru*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Guru dikshā:** *śaktipāta*, 820. See also *Guru*; *Dikshā*
- Guru-disciple:** See *Guru-śishya system*
- Guru Gītā:** contents, 780; *guru* protocol, 363. See also *Kulārṇava Tantra*
- Guru Jayantī:** festival, 291, 780. See also *Guru*; *Festivals*
- Gurukula:** def., 780. See *Āśrama*
- Guru paramparā:** See *Paramparā*
- Guru Pūrṇimā:** def., 780; festival honoring *guru*, 291
- Guru-śishya system:** def., 780; throughout Hinduism, 19; in Nātha Sampradāya, 447; relationships within, 781; Vira Śaivism, 503. See also *Guru*; *Śishya*. See also *Guru bhakti*; *Guru Gītā*; *Kulārṇava Tantra*; *Satguru*
- Gyanendra:** Nepal's new king, 689
- Gypsies:** migration to Europe, 666
- Habits:** creating new, xxxvi
- Hair-parting:** rite, 269, 275, 828. See also *Samskāras*
- Hammurabi:** king of Babylon, 660
- Hamsa:** meanings, 781; symbol, 735
- Hand gestures:** *mudrā*, 781, 800
- Happiness:** good conduct, 157; and the world, 151
- Hara:** Meykandar on, 554
- Harappa:** excavations, 658. See *Archeology*
- Haridwar:** sacked by Tamerlane, 672
- Hari-Hara:** identified, 781; worshipful icon, 57
- Harmony:** with *guru*, 363; worship and, 331. See also *Groups*
- Harshavardhana:** reign, 667
- Harvard University:** course, "Common Misconceptions in the Study of Indic Civilization," 689
- Harvest:** Tai Pongal, 291
- Hastings, Warren:** impeached, 676
- Hate:** See *Hatred*
- Haṭha yoga:** def. and purpose, 704, 781; daily, 257; Gorakshanātha Śaivism, 510. See also *Āsana*; *Rāja yoga*; *Yoga*
- Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā:** contents, 781; date, 672; importance, 513; *yoga* text, 393, 512
- Hatred:** instinctive nature, 141; and violence, 199
- Havana:** def., 781, 793. See *Homa*
- Hawaii:** Iraivan Temple, 686-687
- Hazrat Inayat Khan:** bringing Islamic mysticism to West, 679
- Head-shaving:** See *Chūḍākaraṇa*
- Health:** *āyurveda*, 259, 689, 762; mind's healing powers, 259; parents protect child's, 241; scriptures on, 389. See also *Āyurveda*; *Diet*; *Healing powers*; *Medicine*; *Mitāhāra*; *Physical body*; *Prāṇa*
- Heart chakra:** See *Anāhata chakra*
- Heaven:** causal plane, 129; def., 781; Gaṇeśa oversees, 65; and hell, 199; *Vedas* on, 169, 203, 211, 283, 321, 327, 333, 361. See *Śivaloka*
- Hedgewar, K.V.:** founds Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), 681
- Heisenberg:** deep and shallow truth, 564
- Heliocentric system:** Aryabhata, 667; Copernicus, 673
- Hell:** def., 781. See *Naraka*
- Hephthalites:** invading North India, 666; expelled, 667
- Hereditary:** Āgamic knowledge, 381; class and caste, 171; Śivāchārya priests, 319, 828; *sthapati*, 301
- HHE:** See *Hindu Heritage Endowment*
- High soul:** physical birth of, 275. See *Old soul*
- Himalayan Academy:** founded, 683; identified, 781. See also *Saiva Siddhanta Church*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Himalayas:** identified, 781
- Himsā:** def., 781; scripture on, 205
- Hindu:** def., 781. See *Hinduism*
- Hindu anti-defamation groups:** protesting insults, 687. See also *Hinduism*
- Hindu Cham temples (Vietnam):** World Heritage Site, UNESCO, 688
- Hindu diaspora:** first wave flourishing, 690; *Guide to Indo-American Parenting*, 687; *havana* fire worship, 690; and Hindu renaissance, 568; Sri Lankan Tamils, 686; strong communities worldwide, 688; youth losing heritage, 690-691. See also *Hinduism*
- Hindu Heritage Endowment:** founding, 686. See also *Hinduism*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Hinduism:** adherents, 576; attire, 261; banyan symbolizes, 723; beliefs, 579, 781-782 (see also *Creed*); class and caste, 171; comparative summary, 573, 577-579; conversion requirements, 768-769; daily practices, 257; decentralized, 357; def., 782, 793; flourishing



**Habits:** creating new, xxxvi

**Hair-parting:** rite, 269, 275, 828. See also *Samskāras*

**Hammurabi:** king of Babylon, 660

**Hamsa:** meanings, 781; symbol, 735

**Hand gestures:** *mudrā*, 781, 800

**Happiness:** good conduct, 157; and the world, 151

**Hara:** Meykandar on, 554

**Harappa:** excavations, 658. See *Archeology*

**Haridwar:** sacked by Tamerlane, 672

- worldwide, 690; greeting, 727; heritage for children, 241; Malla dynasty, codes introduced in Nepal, 669; media exposure increases, 690; megatrends, 691; in the movies, 689; Müller's motives, 653; Nātha tradition, 447; one Supreme Being, 781; perfection of art or craft, 261; precursor faith, 526; rites of passage, 269 (See also *Saṁskāras*); sacredness, 195; sects, see *Hindu sects*; *Vedas*, 377; websites proliferate, 689; Westerners deny antiquity, 653. See also *Eastern religions*; other 'Hindu' entries
- HINDUISM TODAY:** establishes Hindu Renaissance Award, 685; founding of, 684; identified, 782; "Medical Ethics" article, 691; online with *Hindu Press International*, 689. See also *Himalayan Academy*; *Hinduism*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Hindu New Year:** festival, 291; dates, 804. See *Festivals*
- Hindu of the Year (Hindu Renaissance Award):** recipients, 685-690; Mata Amritanandamayi, 686; Sri Chinmoy, 687; Ma Yoga Shakti, 687; Paramananda Bharati, 685; Sri Pramukh Swami Maharaj, 686; Sambamurthy Sivachariar, 689; Sri Satya Sai Baba, 687; Sri Swami Bua Maharaj, 687; Sri Swami Chidananda Saraswati, 688; Sri Swami Chinmayananda, 686; Sri Swami Satchidananda, 686; J.P. Vaswani, 690
- Hindu Press International (HPI):** news via e-mail, 689. See also *Hinduism*; *Hinduism Today*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Hindu renaissance:** present-day, 690; Siddhāntin, 568. See also *Hindu diaspora*; *Hinduism*; *Hindu Renaissance Award*
- Hindu Renaissance Award:** established by HINDUISM TODAY, 685. See *Hindu of the Year*
- Hindus:** ancient inventions, 653; Ayodhya conflict, see *Ayodhya*; caught in anti-Muslim backlash, 690; early astronomy, see *Astronomy*; early history, 657; early kingdoms, 665-666; Godhra massacre, 690; *kumbha mela* clash, 676; mathematics, see *Mathematics*; in Netherlands, 684; North American crematorium, 688; populations, xxii-xxiv, 19, 685, 686; Romani (Gypsies), 666; targeted for conversion, 685, 687. See also *Conversion*; *Dynasties*; *Empires*; *Hindu diaspora*; *Hinduism*; *Hindu of the Year*; *Kumbha melas*; *Persecution*
- Hindu Sangam Cultural Festival (California):** fifteen thousand attend, 689
- Hindu scriptures (contents):** abortion, 217, 735; adultery, 217; *ahimsā*, 204-205; *ātman*, 14, 29, 88-89, 440; Aum, 410; *bhakti*, 336-337; children, 248-249; circumambulation, 309; death, 97-103; desire, 352; *dharma*, 176-177, 375, 377; dualism, 426-427; emanation, 545; fasting, 103; festivals, 292-293; generosity, 264-265; God and Gods, 14, 58, 72-73, 373; good conduct, 190-191; goodness, 146-147; greed, 264-265; *guru*, 366-367, 456-457; *himsā*, 204-205; holy men & women, 366-367; *homa*, 782; husband, 220-221; *japa*, 410-411; liberation, 105, 116-117; Liṅga, 308-309; *mantra*, 410-411; marriage, 220-221, 234-235; *māyā*, 146-147, 440-441; meat-eating, 205; monasticism, 352-353; monism, 426-427; Murugan, 70, 73; noninjury, 204-205; Pañchākshara Mantra, 401, 411; *paramparā*, 456-457; *pralaya*, 441; Primal Soul, 58-59; *pūjā*, 322-323; reincarnation, 102-103, 249; *ṛita dharma*, 176; sacraments, 278-279; Śakti, 29; *saṁskāras*, 278-279; San Mārga, 117; *sannyāsins*, 353; the Self, 14-15; sin, 146-147, 160-161; Śiva, 15, 42-43, 58-59; Śivaliṅga, 322-323, 336-337; Śiva's cosmic dance, 15; Skanda, 70; soul, 88-89; *śruti*, 382-383; suffering, 160-161; *tattvas*, 133; temples, 308-309; temple worship, 322-323; three worlds, 132-133; universe, 132-133; vegetarianism, 205; Vināyaka, 73; wife, 220-221, 234-235; wisdom's ways, 264-265; *yama-niyama*, 191; *yoga*, 353. See also *Hindu scriptures (general)*
- Hindu scriptures (general):** daily study, 257; death (reading before), 101; discussion, 371-383; Kāshmīr Śaiva, 506; key to marriage problems, 233; learning in *kriyā pāda*, 111; legend and, 387; listening to, see *Siddhānta śravaṇa*; myth and, 387; of Nandinātha Sampradāya, 526; revealed, see *Śruti*; Śaiva Siddhānta's roots, 563-564; *sampradāya*-specific, 387; secondary, 385-397; sectarian, 373, 647; studying, 283; US popularity, 677; Vaishṇava, 25. See also *Āgamas*; *Hindu scriptures (contents)*; *Itihāsa*; *Purāṇas*; *Sacred literature*; *Smṛiti*; *Śruti*; *Upāngamas*; *Upanishads*; *Upaveda*; *Vedāngas*; *Vedas*
- Hindu sects:** *Āgamas*, 381; *avatāra* doctrine, 646; common beliefs, 645, 647, 649; compared, 576-578; comparisons, 645, 647, 649; distinct religions, 782; goals, 577-578; Hindu solidarity, 782; introduction, 19-27; major scriptures, 647; marrying within same, 227; nature of Śakti, 646; personal God, 646; regions, 647; religious practice, 647; soul and God, 647. See also *Ecumenism*; *Hinduism*; *Hindu solidarity*; *Śaivism*; *Śāktism*; *Smārtism*; *Vaiṣṇavism*
- Hindu solidarity:** def., 782; Dīpāvali festival, 291, 773; promotion of, 684. See also *Denomination*; *Hindu sects*
- Hindu Students Council:** gaining strength in US, 689
- Hippocrates:** medical ethics, 663
- Hiram, King:** trade with India, 661
- Hitler, Adolf:** "Āryan race," 678; *Mein Kampf*, 682
- Holland:** Hindu youth losing heritage, 690. See also *Hindu Diaspora*
- Holy ash:** See *Vibhūti*
- Holy day:** and good conduct, 185; weekly, 283. See also *Festivals*
- Holy feet:** def., 782. See *Feet of guru*
- Holy men and women:** esteem for, 357; respectful terms for, 361; scripture speaks on, 367; Vaikāsi Viśākhā conclave, 289
- Holy orders:** def., 782; *sannyāsa dīkshā*, 824; vows of *sannyāsa*, 351. See also *Sannyāsa dīkshā*; *Vrata*
- Homa (Havana):** def., 781, 782, 793; popular in diaspora, 690; symbol, 729; *yajña* and, 849. See also *Burning prayers*; *Fire*; *Homakunda*; *Rites*; *Yajña*
- Homakunda:** symbol, 729; *yajña*, fire pit, 849. See also *Fire worship*; *Homa*
- Home:** dying at, 101; division of labor, 213, 215; festivals, 283; industry and wife, 215; purification after

death, 277; religious pictures in, 261; sanctuary, 39, 195, 215, 247; stopping war in, 688; wife's domain, 213; worship, xxiv, 319, 335, 576, 713. See also *Family*; *Home shrine*; *Household arts*

**Home shrine:** children taught in, 711; daily *pūjā*, 313, 333; described, 261, 335; *dharma svagriha*, 713. See also *Altar*; *Image (of Divinity)*; *Pūjā*; *Worship*

**Homosexuality:** Hindu outlook, 217; loyalty and community pressure, 245; and marriage, 245. See also *Sex*; *Sexuality*

**Honesty:** See *Ārjaya*

**Honey:** and new-born child, 275

**Horses:** Gaṅgā basin, 657; Gujarat, 655; S. India, 659

**Hospitality:** Hindu tradition, 263

**Household arts:** for girls, 245

**Householder:** See *Gṛihastha*

**HPI:** See *Hindu Press International*

**Hri (remorse):** def., 783, 817, 850; guideline, 189; *ni-yama*, 850. See also *Yama-niyama*

**Hsüen Tsang:** identified, 783; Pāśupatas, 499; recording travels in India, 667; Silk Roads, 665

**Human aura:** See *Aura*

**Human dharma:** def., 781. See *Āśrama dharma*

**Humanitarianism:** belief, 613

**Humankind:** origin of genus, 657

**Humility:** cultivation, 183; and good conduct, 181; *sannyāsa* vow, 351; temple, approaching, 303

**Humors (bodily):** def., 781. See *Doshas*

**Hunger:** obstacle, 255

**Huns:** invading Europe, 666; invading North India, 666

**Hurt:** See *Violence*. See also *Ahimsā*

**Husband:** conversion before marriage, 227; duty to children, 239; *grihastha āśrama*, 173; household chores, 213; leadership, 233; masculinity, 233; needs from wife, 211; qualities, 213; rites, 275; scripture on, 220-221; sexual union, 217; wife, treatment of, 233. See also *Family*; *Men*; *Marriage*; *Parents*; *Purusha dharma*

**Huyler, Stephen:** "Meeting God" exhibit, 690

**Hymns:** anthologized in *Tirumurai*, 670; devotional, 393; in scripture, 387; singing at temple, 305. See also *Bhajana*; *Devaram*; *Kirtana*; *Singing*



**I, I-ness:** *ahamkāra*, 755; def., 784; quieted during meditation, 690. See also *Ahamkāra*; *Āṇava*; *Awareness*; *Ego*; *Individuality*; *Self*; *Soul*

**I am God:** in *Vedas*, 425

**Içchā:** gives rise to *māyā*, 546; power of the soul, 544

**Içchā śakti:** *Āgamas*, 492; aspect of Śakti, 820; def., 781; *prakṛiti tattva*, 838; *triśūla*, 841. See *Desire*; *Śakti*; *Will*

**Icon:** def., 783; *mūrti*, 800. See also *Image*; *Mūrti*

**Iconoclastic:** def., 783; Śaivism, 493

**Iconography:** *Āgamas*, 379

**Iḍā nāḍī (iḍā śakti):** def., 783; and moon, 732; oḍic, 805; and *triśūla*, 733. See also *Energy*; *Kuṇḍalini*; *Piṅgalā nāḍī*; *Suṣumṇā*

**Idol:** See *Icon*; *Image*; *Mūrti*

**Ignorance:** conquest of, 9, 71; evil arising from, 141; revealed by Pañchākshara Mantra, 401; source of, 153

**Ilangovadikal:** writes on music and dance, 665

**Illumination:** *anugraha śakti*, 758; grace, 779; *rāja yoga*, 815; *vel*, 289. See also *Destiny*; *Erlightenment*; *Jñāna*; *Revealing grace*; *Sahasrāra chakra*

**Illusion:** cosmic dissolution, 439; def., 783; *māyā*, 797; world, 131. See *Avidyā*; *Māyā*; *Samsāra*; *World*

**Image (of Divinity):** aniconic, 757; *darśana*, 770; icon, 783; indwelt by Deity, 784; *Iṣṭa Devatā*, 785; in *kriyā pāda*, 111; *pūjā* worship, 321; souls, 55, 81, 137, 522; *Sūrya*, 834; telephone analogy, 317; in the temple, 301, 308; traditional forms, 57; *Trimūrti*, 841. See also *Mūrti*; *Symbol*; *Worship*; *Yantra*

**Immanent, immanence (of God):** def., 783; love at core of soul, 83; Plotinus taught, 665; *Vedas*, 425. See also *Perfections*; *Parāśakti*

**Immigration:** See *Emigration*; *Indentured Indian labor*; *US immigration*

**Imperfection:** world's, pluralism, 539

**Impersonal God:** def., 783. See *Satchidānanda*; *Paraśiva*

**Incarnation(s):** balancing *karma*, 197; def., 783. See also *Avatāra*; *Birth*; *Reincarnation*

**Incense:** def., 783; temple rites, 315, 321. See *Offerings*

**Indentured Indian labor:** abolished, 680-682; to Britain, 677; Britain halts, 681; British Guyana, 677; Durban, South Africa, 678; Fiji, 680, 682; Gandhi's opposition, 681-682; indentured servants, 677-682; Mauritius, 677-678; Reunion, 677; Trinidad, 679, 682

**India:** colonial conquest, 673; Constitution, on discrimination and untouchability, 683; declaring secular republic, 683; early stone artifacts, 657; environmental degradation, 687; first Christian community, 665; government reorganized, 683; Harvard counters misrepresentations, 689; Hindu religious television, 690; history, sheet anchor date (Bhārata War), 655, 686; holy land, 704; influence on Greece, 662-663; Jewish colonies, 661; nationalism, Śivaji festival, 680; pope's visit, 687; railroad, 678; sea route to, 673; second urbanization phase, 660; Tiruvalluvar statue, 688; Toynbee's predictions, 691; trade, early, 658. See also *Indian independence*

**Indian immigration:** beginning in US, 676; South Africa's prohibition, 681; US exclusion, 681; US racial riots, 681. See also *Indentured Indian labor*; *Indian naturalization*; *US immigration*

**Indian independence:** demanded of Britain, 680; gained, 682; Gandhi, 679, 681, 682. See also *India*

**Indian National Congress:** founded, 679

**Indian naturalization:** US exclusion, 684. See also *Indian immigration*

**Individuality:** def., 783; and return to Śiva, 131. See also *Ahamkāra*; *Āṇava*; *Ego*; *Groups*; *I*; *Self*; *Soul*

**Individual soul:** def., 783. See *Jīva*; *Soul*

**Indra:** created by Śiva, 63; identified, 784; in Turkey, 660

**Indriya:** def., 784; *jñānendriyas* and *karmendriyas*, 838

**Indus-Sarasvati Valley:** See *Archeology*; *Indus Valley*

**Indus Valley:** civilization, 21, 655-659, 674, 819; de-

- scribed, 784; Muslim conquest, 669; outcome of unity, 567; Paśupati, 809; Persian invasion, 662; Śaivism in, xviii, 491, 819; Sarasvatī river, 824; timeline, 657-660. See also *Archaeology*; *Vedic culture*
- Indwell:** def., 784. See also *Temporary body*
- Inequality of Human Races (de Goubineau):** Āryan class doctrine, 678
- Initiation:** def., 784. See *Dikṣhā*
- Injury:** never intend, 195. See *Violence*. See also *Ahimsā*
- Inner:** advancement, 11, 784 (see also *Spiritual unfoldment*); def., 784; discovery, 113, 784; form, 363, 784; law, 331, 784; life, 146, 784; mind, 784; sky, 69, 784; truth, 590, 784; unfoldment, 405, 784; universes, 784. See also *Inner light*; *Inner planes*; *Innersearch*; *Inner self*; *Microcosm-macrocosm*; *Subtle bodies*
- Inner bodies:** See *Subtle bodies*
- Inner light:** def., 784, 794; moon-like, 257, 794; morning meditation, 257; Praṇava and, 812; Śiva consciousness, 828; *tantras*, 255. See also *Inner*; *Light*
- Inner-plane beings:** See *Asuras*; *Devas*; *Mahādevas*. See also *Inner planes*; *Prayer*; *Pūjā*; *Temple*; *Tyēf*
- Inner planes (inner worlds):** between lifetimes, 97, 804; def., 784. See *Antarloka*; *Śivaloka*. See also *Clairvoyance*; *Cosmology*; *Dreams*; *Inner*; *Inner-plane beings*; *Inner-plane schools*; *Kośas*; *Lokas*; *Microcosm-macrocosm*; *Three worlds*
- Inner-plane schools:** attending, 127. See also *Inner planes*
- Innersearch:** Gurudeva's travel-study programs, xxxv, 689. See also *Inner*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Inner self:** def., 784; search for, 446. See also *Soul*; *Self*
- Inner worlds:** See *Inner planes*
- Insight:** soul quality, 141
- Instinct(ive):** def., 784, 798; *mūlādhāra chakra*, 744. See also *Instinctive mind*; *Subconscious mind*
- Instinctive-intellectual body (sheath):** See *Manomaya kośa*
- Instinctive mind/nature:** causal plane and, 129; *charyā pāda*, 109; def., 784; evil, source, 143; good and evil, 139, 141; *kriyā pāda*, overcome, 111; *manas*, 796; *manomaya kośa*, 796; mind, 798; Namaḥ Śivāya quells, 401, 403; purpose, 143; restraining, 187; *sādhana*, 11; *sannyāsa*, 351; seeking understanding of, 11; sexuality, 217; violence, 199; younging souls, 115. See also *Instinct*; *Intellectual mind*; *Manas chitta*; *Manomaya kośa*; *Subconscious mind*; *Three phases of mind*
- Instruction:** at temple, 307. See also *Education*; *Kalā-64*
- Instrumental cause:** def., 765, 784; monism vs. dualism, 419; 543; in Śaiva Siddhānta, 419, 431, 433. See also *Cause*
- Integral Yoga Institute:** Swami Satchidananda, 681
- Intellect:** *buddhi*, 11, 765; def., 784; emotion and, 153; and good and evil, 141; instinctive nature and, 141; intuition and, 255; Namaḥ Śivāya and, 401; *sādhana*, 11; seeking understanding of, 11; shattered by *yoga*, 115; softened in *kriyā pāda*, 111; and sun, 732. See *Buddhi*; *Intellectual mind*; *Piṅgalā*; *Reason*
- Intellectual mind:** adolescent souls, 115; def., 785, 798. See also *Instinctive mind*; *Intellect*; *Manomaya kośa*; *Three phases of mind*
- Internalized worship:** def., 785. See *Meditation*; *Yoga*
- International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON):** banned in Russia, 689; founding, 680
- Internet:** Hindu websites proliferate, 689. See also *E-mail*; *Hindu Press International*; *Websites*
- Intimacy:** physical, 217, 219; with God, 55
- Intrinsic:** def., 785. See also *Intrinsic evil*
- Intrinsic evil:** there is none, 525. See also *Intrinsic*
- Intuition:** def., 785; guiding intellect, 255; *jñāna*, 115. See also *Cognition*; *Intuitive*; *Subsuperconscious mind*
- Intuitive:** knowledge, in Namaḥ Śivāya, 401; woman's nature, 215. See also *Intuition*
- Inventions:** assembly-line production, 679; baked pottery, 658; by Hindus, 653; cast iron, 663; compass, 670; computer, 684; cotton gin, 676; Edison's thousand-plus, 6879-680; gunpowder, 670; Gutenberg's printing press, 672; incandescent lamp, 679; and inner-plane training, 127; iron tools, 661; measuring rainfall, 663; moveable type, 670; paper, 665; Persian wheel, 674; spoked-wheel chariot, 660; telephone, 679; telescope, 674; transistor, 684; wearable time-piece, 668; woven baskets, 659. See also *Astronomy*; *Mathematics*
- Invocation:** *charyā*, 107; conceiving child, 275; def., 785; of peace, 203; *pūjā*, 813. See also *Image*; *Pūjā*
- Iraivan:** def., 785; *Tirumantiram* quotation, 379. See also *Iraivan Temple*
- Iraivan Temple:** foundation poured, 687; San Mārga Sanctuary, 823; West's first all-stone Āgamic temple, 686. See also *Iraivan*; *Kauai Aadheenam*; *San Marga Sanctuary*; *Sthapati*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Iran (Persia):** Vedic peoples in, 660
- Iron:** early use, 660, 663; Greece, 661; India, 661
- Irrigation:** Chola Empire, 664; development, 663
- Irul:** def., 785; *pāśa-jñāna*, 809; stage of *sakala avasthā*, 523, 820. See also *Avasthā*; *Evolution of soul*
- Iruvinai oppu:** def., 785. See *Sakala avasthā*
- Īśa:** name of Śiva, 785
- Isanya Guru:** and Basavanna, 501; identified, 785
- Īśa Upanishad:** identified, 785
- Ishta Devatā:** def. and forms, 785; *pañchāyatana pūjā*, 807; in Smārtism, 27. See also *Mahādevas*; *Worship*
- Ishtalinga:** def., 785; Vira Śaivism, 501
- ISKCON:** See *International Society for Krishna Consciousness*
- Islam:** adherents, 607; beliefs, 608-609; comparison with Christianity and Judaism, 643-644; def., 785; founder, founding, 607, 667; genesis, 644; goals, 608; impact on Śaiva Siddhānta, 496, 507, 511; in India, see *Muslims*; man's obligation to God, 644; original sin, 644; path of attainment, 608; proof of God's power, 644; salvation, means to, 644; scripture of, 607; sects, 607; summary, 607-609; "the only true religion", 643. See *Abrahamic religions*; *Koran*; *Mohammed*; *Muslims*; *Western religions*
- Īśvara:** def., 785. See also *Īśvarapūjana*; *Īśvara tattva*
- Īśvarapūjana:** def., 785, 850; guideline, 189; *niyama*, 850. See also *Īśvara*; *Pūjā*; *Worship*; *Yama-niyama*

**Īśvara tattva:** Charts Resource, 741, 748; def., 837. See also *Īśvara; Tattvas*

**Ītihāsa:** def., 785; epic history, 387, 391, 785; *smṛiti*, 830. See also *Mahābhārata; Rāmāyaṇa; Smṛiti*



**Jābāla Upanishad:** contents, 786

**Jaffna:** Catholic control, 674; debates on Siddhānta, 532; Kailāsa Paramparā, 453

**Jagadāchārya:** def. and listing, 786

**Jāgrat chitta:** wakeful consciousness, 798

**Jahan, Shah:** Peacock Throne, 674; Red Fort, 674; Taj Mahal, 674

**Jaimini:** *darśana*, 393; identified, 786; Mīmāṃsā, 826. See *Mīmāṃsā; Shaḍ darśana*

**Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa Upanishad:** contents, 786

**Jaiminiya Sāma Veda:** chanting system taught, 690

**Jain Āgamas:** Jain scripture, 583, 786

**Jainism:** adherents, 583; beliefs, 585; founder, founding, 583; goals, 584; key features, 786; path of attainment, 584; Śaivism, threat to, 494; scriptures of, 583; sects, 583, 665; summary, 583-585; *Vedas* rejected, 417; and Vīra Śaivism, 502. See *Eastern religions; Mahāvira*

**Janabai, Saint:** life and work, 671

**Janaloka:** area of Śivaloka, 740-741; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 786; *loka*, 794; *viśuddha chakra*, 743, 747. See also *Śivaloka*

**Jaṅgama:** def., 786; Vīra Śaivism, 503, 505

**Jaṅgama (monastic order):** identified, 786

**Japa:** anger and, 403; before death, 101; daily practice, 257; def., 786; empowering the mind, 705; guideline, 189; holy days, 283; home shrine, 335; kinds, 786; *kriyā pāda*, 111; necessity, 405; Pañchākshara, 401; performance, 403; purposes, 786; rage (prohibition), 403; scripture on, 410-411; *yama*, 850. See also *Aum; Chanting; Mantra; Yama-niyama*

**Jātakarma:** def., 786; described, 822; rite of passage, 275. See also *Birth; Saṃskāras*

**Jāti:** caste, 171, 765; def., 786, 844. See also *Jāti dharma*

**Jāti dharma:** *varṇa dharma*, 844. See *Jāti; Varṇa dharma*

**Jātihita:** *jāti*, outcaste, 844

**Java:** Muslim invasion, 673; and Śaivism, 491

**Jayantī:** def., 786. See *Guru Jayantī*

**Jealous(y):** God is not, 159; hellish state, 155; instinctive nature, 141; and marriage, 233; *sutala chakra*, 744; and violence, 199. See also *Sutala chakra*

**Jesuits:** conversion tactics, 674. See also *Christians*

**Jesus of Nazareth:** birth, 665; founder of Christianity, 604. See also *Christianity*

**Jewelry:** gift from husband, 275

**Jews:** Cochin community, 665; colonies in India, 661. See also *Judaism*

**Jinnah, Mohammed Ali:** separate Muslim state, 682

**Jiva(s):** as Śiva, 13; becoming Śiva, 439, 494, 522, 535, 544; creation, *Tirumantiram*, 546; def., 786. See also *Āṇava; Ātman; Evolution of soul; Purusha; Soul*

**Jivanmukta:** *avasthās*, 525; def., 786; described, 361;

and *jñāna pāda*, 115; in Smārtism, 577. See *Jñāna*

**Jivanmukti:** def., 786. See also *Jivanmukta*

**Jivātma:** *Jñānakāṇḍa* on, 561

**Jivayajña:** def., 786, 849-850; marriage, 211

**Jñāna:** continued striving, 524; creed belief, 481; def.,

526, 786-787; *japa* leads to, 403; misunderstanding of, 786; Śaivism, 578; *Tirumantiram*, 494; *Vedas* are guide, 377. See also *Enlightenment; Jivanmukta; Jñāna pāda; Jñāna śakti; Sahasrāra chakra*

**Jnanadeva, Saint:** life and work, 671

**Jñānakāṇḍa:** pluralists ignore, 561

**Jñānāmṛita:** def., 787; text of Siddha Siddhānta, 512

**Jñāna pāda:** *Āgama* section, 379, 492; *avasthās*, 524; def., 787, 806; described, 115; worship in, 327. See also *Jñāna; Jñāna yoga; Pādas*

**Jñāna śakti:** in *Āgamas*, 492; aspect of Śakti, 820; def., 787; *prakṛiti tattva*, 838; *triśūla*, 841; and *vel*, 289. See also *Jñāna*

**Jñāna yoga:** def., 787; Smārtism, 578. See also *Jñāna; Jñāna pāda*

**Jñānendriya:** *indriya*, 784

**Jñāneśvari:** def., 787; edited by Ekanatha, 674; written by Jnanadeva, 671; *yoga* text, 393

**Jñāni:** def., 787; Self Realization, 115. See also *Jñāna*

**Joan of Arc:** victory over English, 672

**Joint family:** def., 787; described, 231, 247; extended family, 776, 787; *gṛihastha dharma*, 780. See also *Extended family; Family; Pramukha*

**Jones, William:** postulates root language, 676; Royal Asiatic Society, 676

**Joy:** good conduct and, 181; nature of the soul, 137; live life joyously, 145. See also *Joy and sorrow*

**Joy and sorrow:** dancing with Śiva, 9; fruits of our actions, 95; soul untouched by, 147; stimulus for unfolding, 151; all is God Śiva, 437, 525; each thing and its opposite, 540; exiting cycle of, 567. See also *Karma; Joy; Saṃsāra; World*

**Judaism:** beliefs, 603; comparison with Christianity and Islam, 643-644; early history, 661; founding, 601; genesis, 644; goals, 602; man's obligation to God, 644; original sin, 644; path of attainment, 602; proof of God's power, 644; salvation (means to), 644; scriptures of, 603; summary, 601-603; "the only true religion", 643. See also *Abraham; Abrahamic religions; Jews; Western religions*

**Judgment Day:** Eastern vs. Western views, 636

**Jyoti:** Śiva consciousness, 828

**Jyotisha:** Chinese adapt system, 661; def., 787; importance, 259; *śāstri*, 259, 787; in scripture, 389; *tantra*, 255. See also *Astrology; Auspiciousness; Birth chart; Karma; Nakshatra*

**Jyotisha Vedānga:** auspicious timing, 389; contents, 787; written, 661; *Vedānga*, 845; Vedic astrology, 259. See also *Vedāngas*



**Kabir:** life and work, 672  
**Kadaitswami, Siddha:** of Kailāsa Paramparā, 449, 453; life, 677, 787. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*  
**Kadavul:** name of Śiva, 787. See *Śiva Kailāsa:* def., 787

**Kailāsa Paramparā:** basis of this catechism, 395; Bodhinatha, 764; Chellappaswami, 449, 453, 678, 766; def., 787-788; discussion, 449-455; Kadaitswami, 449-453, 787; Maharishi Nandinatha, 449-451, 664, 802; *The Master Course*, xxxiii; Patanjali, 449; Rishi from the Himalayas, 449, 676; scriptural authority, 526; Subramuniyaswami, 449, 455, 681-682, 833; Tirumular, 449-451, 839; Vyaghrapada, 449; Yogaswami, 449, 455, 679, 680, 851. See *Bodhinatha Veylanswami; Chellappaswami; Kadaitswami; Nandinatha; Nandinātha Sampradāya; Patanjali; Rishi from the Himalayas; Satguru; Subramuniyaswami; Tirumular; Yogaswami*. See also *Nandinātha Sampradāya*  
**Kailāsa temple:** carved from rock hill, 668  
**Kaivalya:** def., 788; liberation, 115. See *Moksha Kaivalya Upanishad:* contents, 788  
**Kalā(s) (cosmology):** Charts Resource, 739-740; def., 788. See also *Cosmology; Kalā-64; Kalā tattva*  
**Kālā (time):** def., 788. See also *Kālā tattva*  
**Kalā-64 (chatuḥ shashṭi kalā):** def., 788; listed, 788; skills taught to boys and girls, 245, 261  
**Kalachakra:** symbol, 734  
**Kalakshetra:** Srimati Rukmini Devi, 682  
**Kālāmukha sect:** described, 789; history, 500-501; Isanya Guru, 785; Kedaresvara Temple, 791  
**Kalāśa:** def., 789; symbol, 730  
**Kalā tattva:** def., 837. See also *Kalās; Tattvas*  
**Kālā tattva:** def., 837. See also *Kālā; Tattvas*  
**Kālī:** described, 789; Śakti, 821; Śāktism, 23, 821  
**Kalidasa:** life and works, 666  
**Kali Yuga:** beginning, 658; in cosmic cycle, 769; def., 789; four yugas, 851. See *Cosmic cycle; Yuga*  
**Kallata:** identified, 506, 789  
**Kalpa:** def., 789. See *Cosmic cycle; Yuga*  
**Kalpa Sūtras:** See *Kalpa Vedānga*  
**Kalpa Vedānga:** contents, 789, 830; contains *Grihya Sūtras*, 780; ritual and religious law, 389; *smṛiti*, 830. See also *Vedāngas*  
**Kalyana:** history, 502; location, 789  
**Kāma:** def., 789, 815; *purushārtha*, 87, 814-815. See also *Goals; Kāma Sūtra; Sexuality*  
**Kamaṇḍalu:** def., 789; symbol, 730  
**Kāma Sūtra(s):** contents, 789; date, 666; *smṛiti*, 389; *Upaveda*, 843. See also *Kāma; Sexuality*  
**Kāmika Āgama:** contents, 789  
**Kanada:** identified, 789; Vaiśeshika Darśana, 393, 789. See *Vaiśeshika Darśana; Shaḍ darśana*  
**Kandar Anubhuti:** contents, 789  
**Kanjamalayam:** identified, 789  
**Kannada:** Vīra Śaiva texts, 503; where spoken, 789  
**Kānpḥaṭī sect:** identified, 789; Muslims joined, 511; *yogi* sect, 511  
**Kant:** dualist, 419

**Kāpālika sect:** described, 789; history, 500  
**Kapha:** def., 789; *dosha*, 773. See *Āyurveda; Dosha*  
**Kapila:** contribution, 662, 789; dualist, 419; Sāṅkhya Darśana, 393, 826. See *Sāṅkhya; Shaḍ darśana*  
**Karaikkal Ammaiyyar, Saint:** life and work, 669; profile, 789; *Arputa Tiru Vantati*, 758  
**Kāraṇa Āgama:** contents, 789  
**Kāraṇa chitta:** def., 790; mind of *ānandamaya kośa*, 792; superconscious mind, 798. See also *Kāraṇa śārīra; Superconscious mind*  
**Kāraṇa Hasuge:** identified, 790; Vīra Śaiva scripture, 504, 847  
**Kāraṇa śārīra:** def., 790. See *Soul body*  
**Kāraṇa Māhātmya:** Pāsupata Śaivism, 809  
**Karma:** Āgamas, 492; and *ahimsā*, 197; aspects, 790; bond of soul, 85; children, 243, 710; conquering, 93; at cosmic dissolution, 439; creation of negative, 157; def., 790, 812, 822; discussion, 93, 95; elimination, 113; and evil, 137, 139, 153; explains inequities, 539; frying seeds of, 13, 790; Gaṇeśa and, 65, 723; harsh, 95, 159; Hindu belief, 19; Jain view, 584; *jñāna pāda*, 115; *kriyamāna*, 792; in movies, 689; neutral principle, 95; *niyati tattva*, 837; personal *dharma* and, 175; physical plane, 125; Plotinus taught, 665; pluralist view, 433, 437, 439; positive approach, 145; *prārabdha*, 812; and reincarnation, 816; resolution, 87, 101, 185, 790; Śaivite creed, 479; *sañchita*, 822; seed, 13, 790, 825; self-determined, 706; Siddhānta views, 439; Śiva Advaita, 509; stars' influence, 259; suicide, 101; "the teacher," 85, 525; three kinds, 93; timing, 67; *tripuṇḍra* and, 31; under control, 523; waning, 343; wife working, 215. See also *Destiny; Evolution of soul; Experience; Free will; Karmaphala; Karma yoga; Malas; Pāpa; Puṇya; Reincarnation; Saṁsāra; Suffering*  
**Karmaphala:** *karma's* fruit, 790; *pāpa*, 808; *punya*, 813. See also *Karma*  
**Karmasāmya:** def., 790. See also *Karma*  
**Karmāsaya:** def., 790. See *Soul body*  
**Karma yoga:** *charyā pāda*, 109; def., 790; *pāda*, 113; and path, 107; practice, 257. See also *Karma; Pādas; Seva*  
**Karmendriya:** def., 838; *indriya*, 784  
**Karnataka:** and Kālāmukhas, 500; location, 790; Vīra Śaivism in, 505  
**Karnatic music:** systematized by Purandardas, 673  
**Karṇavedha:** def., 790; described, 822; rite, 271, 718. See also *Earrings; Saṁskāras*  
**Kārttikeya:** described, 69, 71; *Devikālottara Āgama*, 771; festivals, xi, 289; Nātha worship, 521; and peacock, 724; profile, 790; Śaivite creed, 473; and Śiva, 63; worship of, 283, 289. See also *Gods; Murugan*  
**Kārttikeya Stotram:** identified, 791  
**Kāruṇa Āgama:** identified, 791  
**Karunakara Kadavul:** identified, 791  
**Kāruṇya:** def., 791; Pāsupatas, 497. See *Revealing grace*  
**Kāshāya:** def., 791; *kavi*, 791  
**Kashmir:** Hindus flee Muslim persecution, 685; Hindus routinely massacred, 687; location, 791; and Śaiva Siddhānta, 491, 493; separation from Sikhs, 678  
**Kashmir Śaivism (Northern Śaivism, Trikaśāsana):**



- def., 791, 805, 841; founding, 505-506, 669; goals, Śaivism, 21; *siddha yoga*, 506; summary, 515. See *Śaivism's six schools*
- Kasi:** Varanasi, 844
- Kathā:** def., 791; Hindu stories, 391
- Kathā Upanishad:** contents, 791; three worlds, 838
- Kathirgāma Purāṇa:** contents, 791; *smṛiti*, 830
- Kauai:** Iraivan Temple, 686-687
- Kauai Aadheenam:** bond with Dharmapura, 569; established, 684. See also *Iraivan Temple*; *Saiva Siddhanta Church*; *San Marga Sanctuary*; *Subramuniyaswami*
- Kaundinya:** dating, 665; identified, 791; and Pāsupatas, 498-499
- Kaurusha:** identified, 499, 791
- Kaushitakī Upanishad:** on abortion, 753; contents, 791; on nonhuman birth, 804
- Kautilya:** writings, 663. See also *Arthaśāstra*
- Kavadi:** described, 791; public penance, 810; at Tai Pusam, 289. See *Penance*; *Tapas*
- Kavi:** def., 791; Dharmapura gift, 569; robes of *sannyāsin*, 349
- Kāya siddhi:** process, 791; Siddha Siddhānta, 512
- Kayavarohana:** Lakulisa, 499; location, 791
- Kedaresvara Temple:** inscriptions, 791
- Kena Upanishad:** contents, 791
- Kennedy, John F.:** US president assassinated, 684
- Kerala:** *āyurvedic* clinics and resorts, 689; location, 791; *Vastuvidya Gurukulam*, 689
- Keśānta:** def., 791; described, 822; rite, 273; scripture enjoins, 279. See also *Saṃskāras*
- Kevala avasthā:** pluralistic view of, 535; def., 791. See *Āṇava*; *Avasthā*; *Evolution of soul*
- Khalsa sect:** Sikh sect, 586
- Killing:** and *ahimsā*, 195; for its own sake, 199; meat-eater, 797; vegetarianism, 201. See *Murder*; *Violence*
- Kindergarten:** Vedāntic view of temple worship, 534
- Kindred:** def., 792. See *Family*
- Kings, Indian:** Greek lists, 658
- Kīrtana:** Chaitanya taught, 766; def., 792; Vaishṇavism, 25. See also *Bhajana*; *Hymns*; *Singing*
- Klesha:** *upasarga*, obstacle, 842
- Klostermaier, Klaus K.:** on Müller chronology, 653
- Knowledge:** soul's limited, 85; *guru-śishya system*, 780
- Kojiki:** Shinto scripture, 595
- Kolam(s):** purpose, 722
- Konrai:** def., 792; symbol of Śiva's grace, 728; *Tirumurai* on, 383
- Koran:** Islamic scripture, 377, 607; source, 792
- Kośas (bodies, śarīras; sheaths):** Charts Resource, 739-741; def., 792; enumerated, 792; merger in God, 133; *śarīra*, 792, 824; soul and, 79; and three worlds, 739; we are not, 597. See *Cognitive body*; *Instinctive-intellectual body*; *Physical body*; *Prāṇic body*; *Śivamayakośa*; *Soul body*; *Subtle body*. See also *Reincarnation*; *Soul*
- Koyil:** temple, 838
- Kṛipā:** grace, compassion, 779
- Kṛishṇa:** *Bhagavad Gītā*, 762; dating, 660; importance, 792; incarnation of Viṣṇu, 25; *Iṣṭa Devatā*, 785; in Vaishṇavism, 843
- Kṛishnadevaraya:** ascending throne of Vijayanagara Empire, 673
- Kṛishnamurti, J.:** death, 685
- Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda:** *Yajur Veda*, 850
- Kṛittikā Dipam festival:** def., 792; God Śiva, 285; major Deity festival, 283; *nakshatra*, 289. See also *Festivals*
- Kṛittivasa:** life and work, 672
- Kriyā:** def., 792. See also *Kriyā pāda*; *Kriyā śakti*
- Kriyākramadyotikā:** contents and use, 496, 792
- Kriyamāna karma:** def., 93, 790. See also *Karma*; *Prārabdha karma*; *Sañchita karma*
- Kriyā pāda:** in *Āgamas*, 379, 492; *avasthās*, 524; *bhakti yoga*, 763; def., 792, 806; described, 111, 806; of *Kāmi-ka Āgama*, 789; never outgrown, 327; *niyamas*, 189; of *Raurava Āgama*, 816; in Śaivism, 578; stage on path, 107, 481, 524, 526; *Tirumantram* on, 494. See also *Bhakti yoga*; *Kriyā*; *Kriyā śakti*; *Pādas*; *Worship*
- Kriyā śakti:** aspect of Śakti, 820; def., 792; *prakṛiti tattva*, 838; *trīśūla* symbolizes, 841. See also *Kriyā*; *Kriyā pāda*
- Kshamā (patience):** def., 792, 850; guideline, 187; and humility, 183; *yama*, 850. See also *Yama-niyama*
- Kshatriya:** *Arthaveda*, 759; caste, 765; def., 792, 844; and social *dharma*, 171. See also *Law-enforcers*; *Varṇa dharma*
- Ku:** Aum, 761
- Kudalasangama:** and Basavanna, 502
- Kūḍalasangama:** name of Śiva, 792. See *Śiva*
- Kula:** def., 792; joint family, 787. See also *Kula guru*
- Kula guru:** def., 793. See also *Kula*; *Joint family*
- Kulārṇava Tantra:** contents, 793; *guru* protocol, 363. See also *Guru Gītā*
- Kumāra:** name of Kārttikeya, 793; in Smārtism, 27
- Kumaraguruparar, Saint:** life and work, 674
- Kumbha:** def., 793
- Kumbha melas:** Allahabad, seventy million, 689; humanity's largest gatherings, 291; Hardwar clashes, 675; South Indian counterpart, 684
- Kuṇḍalini:** *adhyātma vikāśa*, 754; *Āgamas* on, 379; caution, 347; def., 793; desires, unharnessed, 257; *dikshā*, 773; fire of consciousness, 113; in *yoga pāda*, 107; *jñāna*, 786; *karma*, frying seeds of, 790; Kārttikeya controls, 69; Kashmir Śaivism, 506; *kriyā*, 792; *mayūra*, 797; monistic insight, 421; *nāga* symbolizes, 733, 801; Naṭarāja, symbolized in, 41; Nātha Sampradāya, 447; Pāsupata Śaivism, 809; Pāsupatas, 498; *śaktipāta*, 820; Śāktism, 23, 820; *sannyāsin*, path, 347; *satguru* safely guides, 365; Self Realization, 825; Siddha Siddhānta, 512; Śivasāyujya, 793, 829; spiritual unfoldment, 831; *tantrism*, 836; *tapas*, 836; truth, to know, 421; *vel* and, 71; *yajña*, 849; *yoga tapas*, 851. See also *Kuṇḍalini śakti*; *Kuṇḍalini yoga*
- Kuṇḍalini śakti:** def., 820. See also *Kuṇḍalini*
- Kuṇḍalini yoga:** *Gorakshaśataka*, 779; Kānpaṭi, 789; Kashmir Śaivism, 791; Nātha practice, 521, 526; Nātha practice, 521, 526; Siddha Siddhānta, 827; Yogaswami, 851. See also *Kuṇḍalini*; *Yoga*
- K'ung-fu-tsu:** Confucius, 592

**Kuñkuma:** *bindu*, 763; def., 793. See also *Turmeric*  
**Kūrma Purāṇa:** contents, 793; *smṛiti*, 830  
**Kurukshetra:** battle of, 391; identified, 793  
**Kushāna Empire:** timeline, 665  
**Kusika:** identified, 793  
**Kuttuvilaku:** description and use, 793; symbol, 730  
**Kuṭumba:** def., 793. See *Extended family*; *Joint family*



**Laborers:** *dharma*, 171. See also *Indentured Indian laborers*  
**Lakshmi:** Śākti, 820. See *Śākti*  
**Lakulisa:** Pāśupata *satguru*, 499; profile, 793; reform, 665; temples, 499

**Lalla of Kashmir:** and Kashmiri language, 671; profile, 793

**Lance:** symbol, 732; *vel*, 846

**Language(s):** ancestry, 655, 676; Purāṇic literature, 391; and religious study, 563; scriptures, 373; vernacular, 661. See *Āryan language*; *Nostratic*; *Sanskrit*; *Shūm-Tyēf*; *Tamil*

**Lao-tzu:** dates, 662; Taoism, 589

**Law:** *Arthaveda*, 759; *dharma* as, 167; *Dharma Śāstra*, 772; *Vedas* on, 63

**Law-enforcers, lawmakers:** *dharma* of, 171, 844. See also *Kshatriya*

**Laxman Joo, Swami:** and Kashmir Śaivism, 507

**Laziness:** obstacle, 255

**Leadership:** holy men and women, 357; *sannyāsin*, 345, 351

**Left-hand:** def., 793; Śākta Tantrism, 836; Śāktism, 23; *vāma*, 844. See also *Śāktism*; *Tantrism*

**Legend:** scripture and, 387. See also *Folk narratives*

**Lekhaprārtha havana:** def., 793. See also *Prayers*

**Lekhraj, Dada:** founds Brahma Kumaris, 680

**LEMURIAN SCROLLS:** scriptural canon, 526. See also *Subramuniyaswami*

**Lenin:** communism in Russia, 681

**Liberal Hinduism:** def., 793; neo-Indian religion, 793, 803; Smārtism, 830. See *Neo-Indian religion*; *Smārtism*

**Liberation from rebirth:** def., 793. See *Moksha*

**Licchavi dynasty:** Hindu rule, 666

**Life:** all-pervasive energy, 828; crucial junctures, 269; four goals, 87; God in all things, 5; harmony of, 143; living joyously, 145; obstacles in, 255; pilgrimage, 195, 269; sacredness, in *Vedas*, 377. See also *Birth*; *Evolution of soul*; *Reincarnation*; *Samsāra*

**Light:** *ārati*, 305, 335; clear white, 101, 794; def., 794; festivals of, 289, 291; from darkness to, 145; inner, see *Inner light*; *jīvanmukta*, 115; quantum particles, 815; Śiva's, 49, 53, 347; soul body, 79, 81; *yoga*, 107. See also *Inner light*; *Śiva consciousness*

**Light of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS):** dedication by Swami Satchidananda, 685

**Lineage(s):** marrying within same, 227; scriptures differ, 387. See also *Denomination*; *Sampradāya*

**Līṅga:** def., 794, 835. See *Sivaliṅga*

**Līṅgāchāra:** among *pañchāchāra*, 807; code, 504, 794

**Līṅga Dikshā:** ceremony, 794; Vīra Śaivism, 504. See

also *Dikshā*; *Sivaliṅga*; *Vīra Śaivism*

**Līṅga Purāṇa:** contents, 794; *smṛiti*, 830

**Līṅga śarīra:** *śarīra*, 824. See *Subtle body*

**Līṅgāshṭakam:** identified, 794

**Līṅgavanta:** def., 794; Vīra Śaivism, 847

**Līṅgāyat sect:** Līṅgavanta, 794; scriptures of, 504; Vīra Śaivism, 501, 847

**Liturgy:** *Āgamas*, 381; *pujārīs* learn, 319; *Vedas*, 377

**Living with Śiva:** Asian protocol, 261; Śaivite Hindu lifestyle, xxxiv; scriptural canon, 526. See also *Subramuniyaswami*

**Lokas (planes of existence):** absorbed at *mahāpralaya*, 795; Charts Resource, 739-746; def., 794, 810; gross, subtle and causal, 477; three worlds, 838; world, 849. See *Antarloka*; *Bhūloka*; *Sivaloka*. See also *Bhuvanloka*; *Devaloka*; *Janaloka*; *Naraka*; *Pitṛiloka*; *Pretaloka*; *Satyaloka*; *Svarloka*; *Tapoloka*. See also *Cosmology*; *Evolution of soul*; *Inner planes*; *Kośas*; *Microcosm-macrocosm*; *Three worlds*

**London:** plague kills seventy thousand, 675

**Lotus:** *āsana*, def., 794; of the heart, 133, 366, 706;

Light of Truth Universal Shrine, 685; symbol, 725.

See also *Padma*; *Haṭha yoga*

**Love:** and devotion, 183, 329; God is, 55, 381, 407, 409; mature in marriage, 225; radiated by soul, 137; sexual expression, 217; Śiva's immanent, 53, 381; in worship, 329. See also *Bhakti*; *Divine love*; *Love of God*

**Love of God:** chapter, 325-337; grace, 779; key to good conduct, 183; in *kriyā pāda*, 111; in monism and pluralism, 534; *prapatti*, 812. See also *Bhakti*; *Divine love*

**Living Ganeśa:** scriptural canon, 526. See also *Subramuniyaswami*

**Lower nature:** def., 781; described, 107; and evil, 141; source of violence, 199, 203. See also *Chakras*; *Evolution of soul*; *Instinctive mind*; *Naraka*; *Young soul*

**Loyalty:** importance in marriage, 219

**Lust:** *atala chakra*, 744, 760, 766; controlling, 187; instinctive, 784; lower nature, 107; *Naraka*, 802; obstacle, 255; *sannyāsin* guards against, 351. See also *Atala chakra*; *Brahmacharya*; *Sexuality*; *Yama-niyama*

**Luther, Martin:** Protestantism, 673

**Lying:** refraining from, *yama*, 187. See also *Deceit*; *Satya*



**Ma caulay:** Minute, 677; Neo-Indian religion, 803

**Macrocosm:** def., 798; *loka*, 794; *piṇḍa*, 810. See *Three worlds*

**Madame Blavatsky:** Theosophical Society, 677, 679

**Madhumateya Order:** def., 794; Śaiva Siddhānta, 495

**Madhva:** Appaya Dikshita on, 509; life and work, 671; and Meykandar's commentators, 553; philosophy, 417, 419, 508; profile, 794; Vaishṇavism, 25; *Vedānta*, 845

**Madurai Tamil Sangam:** at Thiruparankundram, 660

**Magic:** *Atharva Veda*, 760; black, 500; elixir, 774; folk-shamanic, 777; incantation, 783; *kalā*, 788; Purāṇic literature, 391; Śāktism, 23; *tantra*, 836; *Vedas*, 375. See also *Shamanism*

- Magna Carta:** signed, 671
- Mahabalipuram:** great stone monuments, 666
- Mahābhārata:** contents, 794; Hindu epic, 391; *Itihāsa*, 785; revisions, 661; and Śaivism, 491; written, 661. See also *Bhagavad Gītā*; *Bhārata War*
- Maha Bodhi Society:** founded, 680
- Mahādeva(s):** communion with, 299-233; def., 794. See *Gods*
- Mahādeva Mountain:** Vasugupta, 845
- Mahadevi, Saint:** life and work, 671
- Mahākāla:** def., 795; Ṇaṭarāja and, 41; symbol, 726
- Mahākuṭumba:** def., 795; extended family, 776
- Mahāmagham:** festival, 684. See also *Festivals*
- Mahāmaṇḍapa:** approaching, 305; def., 795
- Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad:** identified, 795
- Mahānirvāṇa Tantra:** contents, 795
- Mahāpralaya (cosmic/universal dissolution):** def., 795, 842; discussion, 439; process, 795; Śiva reabsorbs all manifestation, 131, 536; *tattvas* at, 837; two views, 439, 536-537. See also *Cosmic cycle*; *Pralaya*; *Śivama-ya*; *Śiva's cosmic dance*; *Three worlds*; *Viśvagrāsa*
- Mahāprasthāna:** def., 795; positive view of death, 99
- Maharashtra:** location, 795
- Maharoka:** def., 795. See *Devaloka*
- Maharshi Mahesh Yogi:** Transcendental Meditation (TM), 684
- Mahāsākāra-piṇḍa:** def., 795; Siddha Siddhānta, 511
- Mahāsamādhi:** anniversary *pūjā*, 291; death of enlightened soul, 99, 770; def., 795; jivanmukta's, 786; *videhamukti*, 846. See also *Death*; *Moksha*; *Reincarnation*
- Mahāsannidhānam:** insignia of, 569
- Mahāśivarātri festival:** described, 795; holiest day of year, 303; major Deity festival, 283; Śiva's great night, 285. See also *Festivals*
- Mahātala chakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742, 745-747; consciencelessness, 745; def., 795; location, 766. See also *Chakras*; *Naraka*
- Mahāvākya:** Aham Brahmāsmi, 755; creedal sayings, 463; def., 795; Siddhāntins deny, 561; used as *mantra*, Śaṅkarācārya *pīṭha*, 823. See also *Upanishads*
- Mahāvamsa:** written, 667
- Mahavihara:** Buddhist monastery founded, 666
- Mahavira:** founder of Jainism, 583; life and contributions, 662, 795. See *Jainism*
- Mahendra:** work, 664
- Mahēsa:** def., 795; in Vira Śaivism, 504, 847
- Mahēśvara:** aspect of Parameśvara, 795, 808; def., 795; Nātha views, 521; Śiva as obscurer, 49, 809. See also *Concealing grace*; *Five acts of Śiva*; *Parameśvara*
- Maitrāyaṇi Saṁhitā:** *Yajur Veda*, 850
- Maitreya:** identified, 795
- Maitri Upanishad:** contents, 795
- Mālā:** for *japa*, 403, 732; def., 795. See also *Malas*
- Malangam:** identified, 795
- Malaparipakam:** and *anugraha śakti*, 758; *karmic* quiescence brings, 790; maturing/ripening of *malas*, 524, 795. See *Anugraha śakti*; *Malas*; *Marul*; *Tirodhāna śakti*
- Malas (three bonds):** Āgamic doctrine, 492; darkness of, 347; def., 795; liberation, 793; at *mahāpralaya*, *pāśa*, 809; two views, 536-537; Śaivite Creed on, 475; soul's protection, 85; under control, 523; world, 849. See *Āṇava*; *Karma*; *Māyā*. See also *Concealing grace*; *Bondage*; *Evolution of soul*; *Liberation*; *Mālā*; *Pāśa*
- Mālati-Mādhava:** contents, 795; written, 668
- Malaysia:** Hindu kingdom established, 665
- Malaysia Hindu Sangam:** encouraging temples to teach, 691
- Male:** energies balanced, 347; soul is not, 79
- Malice:** def., 795; *pātāla chakra*, 745, 766; Naraka, 802. See also *Pātāla chakra*
- Man (mankind):** from God and back to God, 21; law of being, 167; plight, views compared, 636; ravaging the earth, 688. See *Evolution of soul*. See also *Men*
- Manana:** def., 796; Smārta path of attainment, 578
- Manas chitta (manas tattva):** *antaḥkaraṇa*, 757; def., 796, 838; instinctive mind, 11, 796; lower mind, 798
- Maṇḍala:** def., 796; in *Rig Veda*, 817
- Maṇḍapa:** def., 796; *mahāmaṇḍapa*, 305; *yajña*, place of, 849. See also *Śivānubhava Maṇḍapa*
- Mandira:** def., 796; precept to teach children, 709; temple, 796. See *Temple*
- Māṇḍūkya Upanishad:** on *avasthā*, 761; contents, 796
- Mangalavede:** location, 796
- Manifest Sacred Form:** Śiva consciousness, 828
- Manikkavasagar, Saint:** *bhakti* movement, 494; life and work, 669, 796; *malas'* removal, 558. See *Nalvar*
- Maṇipūra chakra:** Charts Resource, 740-742, 744, 746-747; def., 766, 796; *nāḍis* cross at, 745; seat of Kārttikeya, 69; willpower, 744. See also *Chakras*
- Manjalpur Mandir:** Sri Nathji temple, 688
- Mankolam:** def., 796; symbol, 727
- Manomaya kośa (instinctive-intellectual sheath):** astral body, 769; def., 792, 796; dropped off, 97, 792; *śarīra*, 824; and soul, 79; subtle body, 833. See *Instinctive mind*; *Intellect*. See also *Kośas*; *Subtle body*
- Mānsāhārī:** def., 796; meat-eater, 797
- Mantra:** in *Āgamas*, 379, 381, 492; *āyurveda*, 259; conception, 275; daily acts, 261; def., 796, 807; incantation, 783; *japa*, 401, 411, 786, 802; Namaḥ Śivāya, see *Pañchākshara Mantra*; priest, 319; root, 723; Śaivite Creed, 487; Śāktism, 23, 578; scriptural quotes, 410-411; Vira Śaivism, 504; worship, 321; *yogī's* tool, 51. See also *Aum*; *Bija mantra*; *Chanting*; *Gāyatrī Mantra*; *Japa*; *Pañchākshara Mantra*
- Mantra Gopya:** identified, 504, 796; *smṛiti*, 830.
- Manu:** dating, 657
- Manu Dharma Śāstra:** contents, 796; *Kalpa Vedāṅga*, 789; *smṛiti*, 389, 772; *Vedāṅga*, 845; written, 666
- Manushya yajña:** def., 849
- Maps:** Hindu population, xxii-xxiii; Saiva sects, 514-515
- Marāṭha Empire:** Afghans overcome, 675; founded, 674
- Mārgas (miscellaneous):** See *Dāsa mārga*; *Nivṛitti mārga*; *Pravṛitti mārga*; *San Mārga*; *Sādhana mārga*; *Sakhā mārga*; *Satputra mārga*; *Siddha Mārga*. See also *Mārgas (stages)*
- Mārgas (stages):** def., 796; four progressive stages, 481, 524, 526; and *pādas*, 806. See *Charyā*; *Kriyā*; *Yoga*; *Jñāna*. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Mārgas (miscella-*

- neous); *Pāda*
- Mariyamman:** Amman, 756; def., 796. See *Śāktism*
- Mārjāra:** grace, cat analogy, 779
- Markaṭa:** grace, monkey analogy, 779
- Marriage:** age, 225; appropriateness, 245; arranged, 225, 229; children, 211, 239, 241; covenant, 225, 233, 796; criticism, 233; faithfulness, 187; family union, 229; *grihasṭha dharma*, 779; problem resolution, 225, 233; purpose, 211; reaffirmation at sixty, 277; religiously mixed, 227; rite of passage, 269, 273 (see also *Saṁskāras*); scripture on, 220-221, 234-235; sex, 219, 233; success, 225; *Vedas*, 211. See also *Āśrama dharma*; *Children*; *Family*; *Grihasṭha dharma*; *Householder*; *Husband*; *Parents*; *Path-choosing*; *Wife*
- Martin Luther King Jr:** assassinated, 684
- Marul:** def., 797; *iruvinaṭ oppu*, 785; *malaparipakam*, 795; *paśu-jñāna*, 809; stage of *sakala avasthā*, 523, 820. See also *Avasthā*; *Evolution of soul*
- Maryland (US):** Murugan temple, 687
- The Master Course:** discussion, xxxiii-xxxvi
- Masturbation:** view of, 217. See also *Sexuality*
- Mātāṅga Parameśvara Āgama:** contents, 797
- Mataramas dynasty:** reversion to Śaivism, 669
- Material cause:** def., 765, 797; exploring, 549; monism and dualism, 419, 431, 433; potter analogy, 543
- Materialism:** beliefs, 624-625; def., 797. See *Philosophies*
- Matha:** home of *guru*, 343
- Maṭhavāsi Śāstras:** scriptural canon, 526.
- Mathematics:** Arabs given decimal notation, zero, 668; Aryabhata I, 666; *Āryabhaṭīya*, ground-breaking text, 667; Brahmagupta, 667; decimal notation, 667, 668; pi, 667
- Mathura:** sacked by Mahmud of Ghazni, 670
- Mati (cognition):** def., 767, 797, 850; guideline, 189; intuition, 785; Kārtikkeya, 69. See also *Anāhata chakra*; *Yama-niyama*
- Matsyendranatha:** Gorakshanatha, 510-511; Gorakshanātha Śaivism, 511; life and work, 669; profile, 797
- Mattamayūra Order:** identification, 797; Śaiva Siddhānta, 495
- Mauna:** def., 797; silence, 707; *muni*, 800
- Mauritius:** indentured Indian laborers, 677; youth symposium, 688
- Mauryan Empire:** described, 663; timeline, 663-664
- Maya:** def., 797
- Māyā:** Āgamas, 492; def., 797; bond, 85; cosmic dance, xxxix; God's creation, 131; at *mahāpralaya*, 439, 536; material cause, 797; Meykandar views, 525, 554; monism-pluralism debate, 433, 437, 534-560; Nātha views, 522, 525; origins, 797; playground analogy, 137; potter example, 543; relative reality, 534; scripture on, 147, 440; Sikh view, 588; Śiva's grace, 556; *Tirumantiram* on, 546-547, 560; *tripuṇḍra* and, 724; Vedānta/Siddhānta, 534; world, 849. See also *Concealing grace*; *Form*; *Malas*; *Māyā tattva*; *Saṁsāra*; *Śivamaya*; *World*
- Māyā tattva:** def., 837. See also *Māyā*; *Tattvas*
- Māyāvāda Advaita:** Adi Sankara, 668
- Ma Yoga Shakti:** See *Yoga Shakti*, *Ma*
- Mayil:** symbolism, 724
- Mayūra:** def., 797
- Meat:** consumption of, 187, 201, 797; harmfulness, 201; scripture on, 205. See *Ahimsā*; *Vegetarianism*
- Medical ethics:** artificial life extension, 101; *āyurvedic* perspectives published, 691; Hippocrates, 663. See also *Abortion*; *Death*; *Ethics*, *Hindu*; *Prāyopaveśa*
- Medicine:** *āyurveda* gains global respect, 689; *Charaka Saṁhitā*, 665; Hippocratic oath, 663; Susruta's treatises, 662. See also *Āyurveda*; *Diet*; *Health*; *Medical ethics*; *Physical body*
- Meditation (dhyāna):** in *Āgamas*, 379; cautions, xxxv; conception, prior to, 239; daily practice, 257; def., 816; Deepak Chopra popularizes, 688; def., 797; on God, 14, 85, 159; *haṭha yoga*, 781; holy men and women, 357; home shrine, 335; *mudrā*, 800; neuro-theology, 690; on path, 7; for peace, 203; for perspective, 143; *pradośa*, 811; *rāja yoga*, 815-816; in schools, Christians' opposition, 690; in Śiva Advaita, 508; at temple, 307; in *yoga pāda*, 113, 361. See also *Rāja yoga*
- Meeting God:** Hindu worship, Huyler's exhibit, 690
- Megasthenes:** describing irrigation in India, 663
- Meghadūta:** authorship, 666
- Mehta, Narasinha, Saint:** life and works, 672
- Memory:** death and, 99; Gaṇeśa, 67, 175; intellect, 255. See also *Mūlādhāra chakra*; *Saṁskāras*; *Subconscious mind*; *Vāsanās*
- Men:** choice of spouse, 227; monastic life, 343; settling family disputes, 247; temple priests, 319; and women, natures, 215. See also *Man*; *Path-choosing*
- Menander:** reign, 664
- Mencius:** Confucian scripture, 592; second sage of Confucianism, 592
- Mendicant(s):** described, 343; def., 797; *sādhu*, 361; sages, 359. See also *Sadhū*
- Meng-tzu:** Mencius, 592
- Menses:** def., 797; rite of passage, 273 (see also *Saṁskāras*); and temple, 303
- Mental body (sheath):** def., 798. See *Cognitive body*
- Mental plane:** def., 798. See *Devaloka*
- Merchants:** *dharma* of, 171, 844. See also *Business*
- Merger (of soul with Śiva):** See *Viśvagrāsa*
- Merging with Śiva:** Śaivite Hindu unfoldment, xxxiv; scriptural canon, 526. See also *Subramuniyaswami*
- Merit:** See *Puṇya*
- Mesopotamia:** trade with Indus-Sarasvatī Valley, 660
- Metamorphosis:** def., 798; soul's evolution, 107
- Metaphysics:** def., 798; ontology, 806; in secondary scriptures, 387. See *Cause*; *Creation*; *Reality*; *Saṁsāra*
- Mexico:** Aztec civilization established, 672; Toltec Empire crumbles, 671
- Meykandar, Saint:** contrasted with Tirumular, 552; dualist, 419; life and work, 671; Nātha school, 431; profile, 798; and Śaiva Siddhānta, 496; *Śivajñānabodham* vs. commentaries, 552-555. See *Śivajñānabodham*
- Meykandar Śāstras/Sutras:** authors, 798; compared to *Tirumantiram*, 551; influences on, 553; pluralism, 431; Siddhāntins' emphasis, 561
- Microcosm-macrocosm:** def., 798; *loka*, 794; *piṇḍa*, 810
- Migrations:** prehistory, 657. See also *Hindu diaspora*

- Milk Miracle:** Gaṇeśa icons sip milk, 686
- Millenium:** fears fade, 688
- Millenium Peace Summit:** Gurudeva's address to, 688
- Mimāṃsā:** described, 826; Jaimini, 786; of *śaḍ darśana*, 417. See also *Śaḍ darśana*
- Mimāṃsā Sūtras:** Vallabhacharya's commentaries, 844; written, 664
- Mind:** after Self Realization, 13; bondage and release, 141; cleared by *vel*, 71; cunning, 365; healing powers of, 259; individual (*antaḥkaraṇa*), 757, 798; nature of, 5; peace of, 203; pure and impure, 157; purifying, 257; subliminal traits, 255; transcending, 365. See also *Awareness; Chakras; Chitta; Evolution of soul; Five states of mind; Three phases of mind; Universal mind*
- Ming Di:** See *Ming-Ti*
- Ming-Ti (emperor of China):** Buddhism, 665
- Minutiae:** God's care, 55
- Mirabai, Saint:** life and work, 672; profile, 799
- Miracle:** Gaṇeśa icons sipping milk, 686
- Misery:** purpose of, 540. See *Joy and sorrow*
- Missionaries:** Appaya Dikshita, 509. See *Paśupāḷaka Mitāhāra (moderation)*: def., 799, 850; *niyama*, 187. See also *Diet; Health; Vegetarianism; Yama-niyama*
- Modaka:** def., 799; symbolism, 734
- Moderation:** See *Mitāhāra*
- Modesty:** of attire, 261; good conduct, 181, 183, 189; soul quality, 141; from vanity to, 71; woman's, 215
- Mohammed:** begins prophecies, 667; identified, 799; Islam's founder, 607; life and work, 667. See *Islam*
- Mohammed of Ghur:** conquers Punjab & Lahore, 671
- Mohenjo-daro:** beginnings, 658; described, 659
- Moksha (liberation):** Āgamas, 379; *ahimsā* and, 195; attainment, 87; belief, 479; children taught, 710; def., 799, 815; desire, 102; destiny of all souls, 87; *dharma* and, 167; Eastern-Western views, 638; evolution of the soul, 775; God grants, 159, 285; liberation, 793; Hindu sects' views, 577-579, 645; Jain view, 584-585; liberation, 793; Nātha belief patterns, 522; *purushārtha*, 87, 814-815; reincarnation ceases, 97, 775, 817; Śaivism, 33; scripture on, 105, 116-117; Self Realization and, 13; Sikh view, 587; Śiva's dance, 41; *Tirumantiram* on, 737; in Vaishṇavism, 577-578. See also *Destiny; Enlightenment; Evolution of soul; Goals; Jivanmukti; Kaivalya; Kuṇḍalinī; Nirvikalpa samādhi; Paraśiva; Rāja yoga; Videhamukti*
- Monasteries:** cooperation between, 569. See also *Aadheenam; Monastic*
- Monastic, monasticism:** blessing for family, 245; def., 799; householder path vs., 245, 343; monk, 799; path of, 245, 343-351; *sannyāsa dharma*, 823-824; scripture on, 352; water pot, 730. See also *Anchorite; Brahmacharya; Cenobite; Monastic initiation; Monastic orders; Monastic tradition; Path-choosing; Renunciation; Sādhu; Sannyāsa*
- Monastic initiation:** guidelines for, 349; rites of, 349; *sannyāsa dikshā*, 824; vows of, 351. See also *Dikshā; Monastic*
- Monastic orders:** Daśanāmi, 770; Gorakshanātha, 511; in Śaiva Siddhānta, 495-496; in Śaivism, 21; in Smārtism, 27. See also *Denomination; Monastic*
- Monastic tradition:** described, 343-351; *sannyāsa dharma*, 823-824; scripture on, 352-353; in Vaishṇavism, 25. See also *Monastic*
- Monday:** holy day, 283
- Mongol dynasty:** Sanskrit-Chinese translations, 671
- Monism:** in Āgamas, 492; crucial differences, 535; def., 534, 799; dualism and, 415-433, 565, 774; *dvaita-advaita*, 774; flaws, 423; hymns of saints, 425; Nandinatha, 494; philosophy, 417-425; pluralists acknowledge, 558; Śaiva Siddhānta debate, 531-568; Śaivism, 33; scriptural basis, 564; theism and, 421, 564-567, 799; Vallabha, 25; Vedānta, 845; *yoga-jñāna* conclusions, 565. See also *Dualism; Dvaita-advaita; Monism-pluralism; Monistic Śaiva Siddhānta; Monistic theism; Monists; Pluralism*
- Monism-pluralism in Śaiva Siddhānta:** debate, 531-568; points of agreement, 533. See also *Debate; Dvaita-advaita; Monism; Monistic theism; Pluralism*
- Monistic Śaiva Siddhānta:** Advaita Siddhānta, 755; basis of this catechism, 395; nutshell summary, 536; and pluralism, 431-439; Suddha Śaiva Siddhānta, 833. See also *Monism; Śaiva Siddhānta*
- Monistic theism (Advaita Īśvaravāda, panentheism):** cosmic dissolution, 439; creation, 433; def., 754-755, 799, 808; discussion, 564-567; *dvaita-advaita*, 774; on evil, 437; on God, 435; monism and dualism, 421, 423; mountaintop view, 564; Nātha Sampradāya, 447; panentheism, 33, 808; pluralist comparison, 431; proponents, 561; Śaiva theology, 33; scriptures of, 431; Tirumular, 494; Vedānta, 425, 845; *Vedas*, 425. See *Advaita Īśvaravāda; Dvaita-advaita; Śaiva Siddhānta; Śivamaya; Śiva's cosmic dance*. See also *Monism-pluralism; Monotheism; Pantheism; Theism*
- Monk:** def., 799. See *Monastic*
- Monotheism:** Biblical religions, 643; def., 799; Islam, 608; Judaism, 602-603; Zoroastrianism, 598. See also *Monistic theism*
- Montessori, Maria:** in India, 682
- Moon:** symbol, 732
- Moral law:** and *dharma*, 171
- Morning worship:** *brāhma muhūrta*, 764; *sandhyā upāsanā*, 257, 823
- Mortal sin:** def., 828; Hindu view, 153. See *Penance; Sin*
- Moses:** early dating, 661; founder of Judaism, 603
- Mother:** and children, 213, 215, 243; duties of, 215, 231; rites during pregnancy, 275. See also *Children; Family; Householder; Parents; Saṃskāras; Wife; Women*
- Mountaintop path:** analogy, spiritual path, 421, 565
- Mountaintop perspective:** monistic theism, 564
- Mouse:** and Gaṇeśa, 728
- Movement:** Śiva's dance, 9. See also *Secular movements*
- Mṛigendra Āgama:** contents, 800
- Mṛityu:** natural death, 770
- Mudrā:** def. and list, 800; Naṭarāja, 803; power of, 722; in worship, 305, 321
- Mughal emperors:** Akbar's tolerance, 673; alliance with British, 674; Aurangzeb's intolerance, 675; Babur founds empire, 673; defeat by British, 675;

Shah Jahan's Peacock Throne, 674; Jahangir succeeds Akbar, 674; peasants' plight, 675; sixty thousand temples destroyed, 675

**Muhūrta:** def., 800; importance, 259; lucky, 279; systems, 800. See also *Auspiciousness; Brāhma muhūrta; Śubha muhūrta*

**Mukhalīnga:** *mūrti*, 800. See *Śivalīnga*

**Mukhamanḍapa:** *maṇḍapa*, 796

**Mukhya:** def., 800; head of joint family, 787

**Muktābai, Saint:** life and work, 671

**Muktananda, Swami:** founder, Siddha Yoga Dham, 680; identified, 800

**Mukti:** def., 800. See *Moksha*

**Mukti Upanishad:** contents, 800

**Mūlādhāra chakra:** *chakras* below, 744-745; Charts Resource, 740-742, 744, 746-747; def., 800; Gaṇeśa sits on, 67; location, 766; memory-time-space, 744; Naraka below, 155. See also *Chakras; Memory; Gaṇeśa*

**Mūla mantra:** def., 800. See *Aum; Mantra; Praṇava*

**Müller, Max:** "Āryan invasion" theory, 654; Āryan language, 679, 680; "Āryan race" theory, 679; chronology method, 653; motives, 653; revised stance, 680; *Sacred Books of the East*, 679. See also *Aryan invasion theory*

**Muṇḍaka Upanishad:** contents, 800

**Munī:** def., 800; described, 359, 361

**Munshi, K. M.:** founding Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 682

**Murder:** *pātāla chakra*, 745. See also *Ahimsā; Killing*

**Mūrti:** def., 800; temple image, 317. See also *Image*

**Murugan:** creed belief, 473; def., 800; Nātha worship of, 521; scripture on, 73; temple in Maryland (US), 687; *vel*, 732. See also *Gods; Kārttikeya*

**Mūshika:** def., 800; symbol, 728

**Music, Indian:** CDs, 689; Kalakshetra school, 682; Karnatic golden era, 676; Karnatic systematized, 673; popularized in West, 681; Śaivite (sacred), 39; scriptures on, 387, 389; *Silappathikaram*, classical Tamil treatise, 665; spiritual, 261; websites, 689

**Muslim League:** political party formed, 680

**Muslims:** Akbar, 673-674; Aurangzeb, 675; in Ayodhya, 673, 686, 690; Babur, 673; Buddhist university destroyed, 671; conquests, 667-668; def., 800; destroying Vijayanagara, 673; Godhra massacre, 690; Idi Amin, 684; India-Pakistan partition, 682; Indus Valley conquest, 669; in Java, 673; Kashmir Hindus massacred, 687; in Kashmir Valley, 685, 687; Mahmud of Ghazni, 670; Mamluk Dynasty, 671; in North India, 668, 670-671; oppression/persecution, 672-673, 675, 684-685, 687; in Punjab, 670; Sivaji's opposition, 674; sixty thousand temples destroyed, 675; Somanath Śiva temple plundered (fifty thousand killed), 670; in South India, 671; Tamerlane, 672; World Trade Center, 690. See also *Islam*

**Mystery:** of image worship, 317; soul's two perfections, 83; theology expresses, 417; ultimate reality, 51

**Mysticism:** belief, 613; def., 800. See also *Siddhis*

**Myth, mythology:** def., 801; in Hinduism, 391; scripture and, 387. See also *Folk narratives*



**Nāda:** first *tattva*, 123; from *atattva*, 760; Śiva *tattva*, 837; sound, 59, 828, 831. See also *Nāda anusandhāna; Nāda-nāḍi śakti; Paranāda*

**Nāda anusandhāna:** *nāda*, 801; sound, *yoga*, 831. See also *Nāda*

**Nāda-nāḍi śakti:** def., 801. See also *Nāda*

**Nāḍi(s):** and *chakras*, 743; def., 801; husband-wife, 219; *kuṇḍalinī*, 793; odic, 805; *tantrism*, 836; *trīṣṭūla*, 733. See *Chakras; Idā nāḍi; pīṅgalā nāḍi; Sushumṇā nāḍi*

**Nāga:** def., 801; symbol, 733. See *Kuṇḍalinī*

**Nāgasvara:** woodwind, 849

**Naivedya:** def., 801; *pūjā*, 813. See *Offerings; Prasāda*

**Nakshatra:** credentials for *archana*, 315; def., 801;

Kārttikeya's, 289. See also *Astrology; Auspiciousness; Birth chart; Jyotisha*

**Nalayira Divya Prabandham:** Vaiṣṇava scripture, 667

**Nallur temple:** Chellappan, 453; Sambandar disappears, 668; Yogaswami, 455

**Nalvar saints:** def., 801. See *Samayāchārya saints*

**Namadeva, Saint:** life and work, 671

**Nāmadikshā:** def., 801. See also *Dikshā; Nāmakarāṇa*

**Namaḥ Śivāya:** def., 801. See *Pañchākshara Mantra*

**Nāmakarāṇa (name-giving):** for conversion, 768; def., 802; described, 271, 717, 822; essential, 269; Hindu acceptance rite, 781. See also *Saṁskāras; Vratyastoma*

**Namaskāra:** def., 802. See also *Mūdra*

**Namaste:** def., 802

**Nambi, Nambiandar:** anthologizes *Tirumurai*, 670

**Name-giving:** See *Nāmakarāṇa*

**Names:** women's, guidelines for, 279

**Nammalvar, Saint:** life and work, 669

**Nanak, Guru:** life and work, 672; Sikh *guru*, 588

**Nandi:** symbol, 725; *Tirumantiram*, 309; *vāhana*, 802

**Nandikeśvara:** name of Śiva, 802. See *Śiva*

**Nandikesvara:** identified, 802. See *Nandinātha*

**Nandikesvara Kāśika:** contents, 802; early Śaiva Siddhānta, 494

**Nandinātha (Nandikesvara):** disciples, 664; identified, 802; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; life, 664; monism, 494; Śaiva Siddhānta, 493; in scripture, 457. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā; Nandinātha Sampradāya*

**Nandinātha Sampradāya:** Ādinātha compared, 519-520; beliefs summarized, 521-525; Chellappaswami, 678; discussion, 447-455; on God, 521; Kadaitswami, 676; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449, 787; Maharishi Nandinātha, 664; *The Master Course*, xxxiii; of Nātha Sampradāya, 447, 803; path, 526; Rishi from the Himalayas, 676; on the soul, 522-525; Subramuniyaswami, 681, 683; Tirumular, 494, 839; on world, 525; Yogaswami, 680. See *Kailāsa Paramparā; Nandinātha*. See also *Nātha Sampradāya*

**Napoleon:** retreat from Moscow, 676

**Nārada Parivrājaka:** Upanishad, 802

**Nārada Sūtras:** *bhakti* text, 393; contents, 802

**Naraka (hell):** area of astral plane, 760; *asuras'* abode, 63; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 781, 802; described, 155; Eastern and Western views, 636; Gaṇeśa and, 65; heaven and, 199; Madhva's view, 794; meat-

- eater and, 797; regions of, 127, 155, 802. See also *An-tarloka*; *Asuras*; *Chakras*; *Evolution of soul*; *Satan*; *Sin Narasinha Pūrvatāpaniya*: *Upanishad*, 802
- Narasinhavarman, King**: builds China Pagoda, 667
- Narayan, Shah Prithivi**: Hindu state of Nepal, 676
- Nārāyaṇa**: name of Viṣṇu, 802. See *Viṣṇu*
- Narayanakantha**: identified, 802
- Nāstika**: def., 802; *Vedas* rejected by, 417
- Natarāja**: cosmic dance, 41; described, 802; icon of Primal Soul, 57; invoked on Ārdrā Darśanam, 285; symbolism, xxxix-xl, 724; Tiruambala *chakra*, *yantra*, 850. See also *Five acts of Śiva*; *Image (of Divinity)*; *Parameśvara*; *Primal Soul*; *Śiva*; *Śiva's cosmic dance*; *Tāṇḍava*
- Nachintanai**: and this catechism, 395; contents, 803; scriptural authority, 526; Yogaswami, 455. See also *Yogaswami*
- Nātha(s)**: def., 803; on God, 521; Gorakshanatha, 494, 511; Gorakshanātha Śaivism, 494; and Meykandar school, 431; in scripture, 457; *śiddhas*, 519; on world, 525. See also *Nātha Sampradāya*
- Nātha Matha**: def., 803. See *Siddha Siddhānta*
- Nathamuni, Acharya**: Śrī Vaiṣṇava sect, 669
- Nātha Sampradāya**: Ādinātha & Nādinātha streams, 519-520; def., 803; described, 447; fountainhead, 519; on God, 521; lineages, 803; on the world, 525. See *Ādinātha Sampradāya*; *Nādinātha Sampradāya*. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*; *Nāthas*; *Sampradāya*
- Nation**: and *dharma*, 171; peace in, 203; *varṇa dharma*, 772. See also *Community*; *Individuality*; *Society*; *Varṇa dharma*
- National**: celebrations, 291; *karma*, 93, 790
- Nationalism**: Tamil, 566
- Nature**: Cosmic order, *ṛita dharma*, 167, 169, 771; *prakṛiti*, 125, 811; principles of, *guṇas*, 780; responsibilities to, 169; sacredness, 195; *Vedas*, 375
- Navalar, Arumuga**: life and work, 676
- Navaratnam, K.**: on Tirumular, 547
- Nayanar saints**: on creation, 541; def., 803; hymns, 393; and Nalvar saints, 801; not *pandits*, 563; sixty-three, 803. See also *Alvar saints*; *Nalvar saints*; *Saints*
- Nebuchadnezzar I**: dates, 661
- Nebuchadnezzar II**: Babylon, 662
- Necklace**: betrothal, 229
- Nehru, Jawaharlal**: plan for free India, 682; Prime Minister, 683
- Neo-Indian religion**: described, 803; liberal Hinduism, 793, 803
- Neo-Platonism**: similarities with Hinduism, 665
- Nepal**: democratic Hindu nation, 685; Gorakshanatha, 510; Hindu nation established, 676; Hindu rule, 666; location, 803; Matsyendranatha, 510; Pāśūpatas, 499; royal family murdered, 689; Śaivism, 491, 510
- Nerve plexes**: *chakras* associated with, 743-744. See also *Chakras*
- Netherlands**: influx of Hindus, 684
- Neti neti**: def., 804; inner quest for the Self, 51
- Neuro-theology**: meditation theory, 690
- Neutron star**: def., 804; Self God more solid than, 13
- New Age**: beliefs, 616; def., 804
- Newborn child**: rites, 275; *saṁskāras* of birth, 822. See also *Birth*; *Children*; *Saṁskāras*
- NEWSWEEK magazine**: neuro-theology, meditation, 690
- New Testament**: Christian Bible, 604
- New Year**: def., 804; Dīpāvali and others, 291
- New York City**: Huyler's "Meeting God" exhibit, 690; World Trade Center destroyed, 690
- Nihongi**: Shinto scripture, 595
- Nimbarka**: life and work, 670; profile, 804; Vaiṣṇavism, 25; Vedānta, 846
- Nimitta kāraṇa**: efficient cause, 765, 774
- Nine steps**: Śiva toward devotee, 524
- Nirguṇa Brahman**: Appaya Dikshita on, 510; Brahman, 764; def., 804. See *Parabrahman*; *Paraśiva*
- Nirukta Vedāṅga**: contents, 804; *Vedāṅga*, 845. See also *Vedāṅgas*
- Nirvāna**: Buddhism, 580-581
- Nirvāṇi**: sage, 359; and *upadeśi*, 804. See *Enlightenment*
- Nirvikalpa samādhi**: def., 804; destiny of soul, 13, 81; enlightenment, 774; *jīvanmukta*, 786; *jñāna pāda*, 115; merging into Paraśiva, 51; *samādhi*, 821; *saṁnyāsin*, 347; *saṅguru* needed, 113; Śiva's Absolute Being, 51. See also *Destiny*; *Moksha*; *Paraśiva*; *Rāja yoga*; *Samādhi*; *Savikalpa samādhi*; *Self Realization*; *Viśvagrāsa*
- Niśchītārtha**: betrothal, 273; def., 804; described, 822. See also *Marriage*; *Saṁskāras*
- Nityananda, Swami**: monistic theist, 425; profile, 804
- Nivṛittikalā**: sphere of perdition, *kalā*, 788
- Nivṛitti mārga**: last stages of *āśrama dharma*, 759. See *Āśrama dharma*
- Niyamas**: listed, 850; ten classical observances, 189. See *Yama-niyama*
- Niyati**: def., 804. See *Karma*. See also *Niyati tattva*
- Niyati tattva**: Charts Resource, 741, 748; def., 837. See also *Niyati*; *Tattvas*
- Nondualism**: *dvaita-advaita*, 774; qualified (Ramanuja), 25; in scripture, 427. See also *Monistic theism*
- Non-Hindus**: entering Śaivism, 513
- Noninjury**: See *Ahimsā*
- Nonperseverance**: def., 805; overcoming, 187
- Non-stealing**: See *Asteya*
- Nonviolence**: See *Ahimsā*
- Noose**: Gaṇeśa's, 67; symbol, 735
- Northern Śaivism**: def., 805. See *Kashmīr Śaivism*
- Nostradamus**: life and work, 673
- Nostratic**: parent language, 655
- Novitiate**: def., 805; described, 349
- Nun(s)**: Catholic, beating children, 562; def., 805
- Nutrition**: See *Āyurveda*; *Diet*; *Food*; *Vegetarianism*
- Nyāya**: def., 805; described, 826; of *śaḍ darśana*, 417. See also *Gautama*; *Śaḍ darśana*



**Obedience**: *saṁnyāsa* vow, 351

**Objective**: of monastic life, 345. See also *Goals*

**Oblation**: def., 805; *havana*, 781; *homa*, 782; *yajña*, 849. See also *Offerings*; *Worship*

**Obscuring grace:** See *Concealing grace*  
**Observances:** five minimal Hindu, 711-712; in *kriyā pāda*, 111; *niyamas*, 189, 850. See also *Yama-niyama*  
**Obstacles:** and Gaṇeśa, 65, 723; purpose of, 67; to spiritual progress, 255. See also *Adversity*; *Concealing grace*; *Evolution of soul*  
**Occultism:** belief, 613. See also *Mysticism*  
**Occupation:** caste, 171; in contemporary times, 37. See also *Varṇa dharmā*  
**Ocean:** analogies, see *Analogies*; *bhedābheda*, 763; depositing ashes, 764; Gaṇeśa Visarjana, 777  
**Odic energy:** actinodic and, 754; *aśuddha tattvas*, 837; def., 805; *kośa*, 792; *manomaya kośa*, 796. See also *Idā nāḍī*; *Piṅgalā nāḍī*; *Energy*  
**Offering(s):** temple, 305, 313, 315, 329. See also *Abhisheka*; *Āratī*; *Oblation*; *Worship*  
**Oil lamp:** Dipāvalī, 291; *kuttuvilaku*, 793; symbol, 730  
**Old soul:** quest for Self, 87. See also *Destiny*; *Evolution of soul*; *Young soul*  
**Old Testament:** Christian scripture, 604; Creation date based on, 658; Judaic scripture, 601  
**Olympic Games:** first, 661  
**Om:** def., 806. See *Aum*  
**Omniscience:** def., 806; superconscious, 85  
**Oneness:** of God and soul, 423, 524. See *Monism*  
**Opium:** British East India Company, 676  
**Opposites:** and evil, 437; growth stimulated by, 540; nature of the world, 525; truth beyond, 151  
**Oral teachings:** scripture, 373. See *Siddhānta śravaṇa*  
**Organization:** Hinduism, 357  
**Original sin:** Hindu view, 153, 828. See *Sin*  
**Origin of Species (Darwin):** theory of evolution, 678  
**Orissa:** cyclone kills twenty thousand, 688; timeline, 670-671  
**Orthodox:** def., 806; vs. *nāstika*, 802  
**Osborne:** citation on *Āgamas*, 550



**Pada:** def., 806  
**Pāda(s):** in *Āgamas*, 379, 492; def., 806; path of soul, 107-115; four successive stages, 806. See *Charyā pāda*; *Kriyā pāda*; *Yoga pāda*; *Jñāna pāda*. See also *Avasthā*; *Evolution of soul*;

*Mārga*; *Pāda tattva*; *Paths*  
**Pādapūjā:** ceremony, 806. See also *Guru bhakti*; *Pūjā*  
**Pādārtha:** def., 806; differences among philosophical schools, 806. See also *Paṭi-paśu-pāśa*; *Tattvatrayī*  
**Pāda tattva:** def., 838. See also *Pādas*; *Tattvas*  
**Paddhati(s):** and *Āgamas*, 493; Aghorasiva's, 496; def., 806; *smṛiti*, 389  
**Padma:** def., 806; symbolism, 725. See also *Lotus*  
**Padma Purāṇa:** def., 807; *smṛiti*, 830  
**Padmāsana:** lotus *āsana*, 759. See also *Haṭha yoga*; *Lotus*  
**Pādūkā:** def., 806; symbolism. See *Feet of guru*, *tiruvadi*  
**Pagan(s), Paganism:** attitudes toward, 199; def., 807; renaissance in Europe, 687. See also *Tribalism*  
**Pageantry:** def., 807; sacred literature and, 387  
**Pain:** ingested in meat, 201; not inflicting, 195; selfishness brings, 95. See *Violence*. See also *Ahimsā*

**Paingala Upanishad:** contents, 807  
**Painting:** sacred art honored, 687. See also *Arts*  
**Paisley:** symbol, 727  
**Pakistan:** British conquer, 678; east-west split, 684; Indus-Sarasvati civilization, 658; Muslims conquer, 668; partitioned from India, 682  
**Pāla dynasty:** arises, 668  
**Palani Hills temple:** date, 664  
**Palasuntharam, V.K.:** two books, 567  
**Pallava dynasty:** timeline, 665-669; architectural influence fades, 670  
**Pañchabhūta:** def., 807; five elements, 123  
**Pañchāchāra:** codes of Vīra Śaivism, 504; def., 807  
**Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava (five-day festival):** described, 807; harmony and gift-giving, 287  
**Pañcha kañchuka:** *niyati*, 804; *purusha tattva*, 837  
**Pañchakṛitya:** (five powers of Śiva), absorption, 753  
**Pañcha kriyā:** duties, 711-712  
**Pañchākshara Mantra (Namaḥ Śivāya):** belief, 487; *chakras* and, 747; def., 807; described, 801; initiation, 405, 409; key to awakening, 526; Meykandar on, 554; Naṭarāja symbolism, xxxix; proper chanting, 403; scripture on, 401, 410-411; Śiva's form, 403; *ślokas*, 401-405; in Vīra Śaivism, 504. See also *Japa*; *Mantra*  
**Pañcha kuṭumba sādhanā:** parenting guidelines, 713  
**Pañcha mahāyājñā:** def., 849  
**Pañchamukha Gaṇapati:** identified, 807  
**Pañchāṅga praṇāma:** def., 811; women's prostration, 305. See also *Ashṭāṅga praṇāma*; *Praṇāma*  
**Pañcha nitya karmas:** children taught, 711-712; def., 807; good conduct, 185. See also *Dharma*; *Saṃskāras*; *Tirthayātrā*; *Upāsana*; *Utsava*; *Yama-niyama*  
**Pāñcharātra Āgama(s):** identified, 807  
**Pāñcharātra sect:** and Bhāgavata sect, 762; date, 663; def., 807; Vaishṇavism, 25  
**Pañchārtha Bhāshya:** identified, 807; Kaundinya, 498  
**Pañcha śraddhā:** def., 807. See also *Pañcha nitya karmas*  
**Pañchatantra:** animal stories, 391; background and influences, 807. See *Folk narratives*  
**Pañchāyatana pūjā:** described, 807. See *Smārtism*  
**Pandit (paṇḍita):** def., 807; described, 361; *pundit*, 813  
**Paṇḍya kingdom:** founded, 663  
**Panentheism:** def., 808. See *Monistic theism*  
**Panini:** composes Sanskrit grammar, 661, 663; dating, 664; identified, 808  
**Pāṇi tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*  
**Pantheism:** acosmic, 754, def., 808; proponents, 419. See also *Panentheism*  
**Pāpa:** *adharmā*, 754; creation, 157; def., 808; evil, 775, 808; penance dissolves, 808, 814; sin, 808, 828; unkindness, 95. See also *Aura*; *Karma*; *Punya*; *Sin*  
**Pāpaprishṭi:** and *bindu*, 764  
**Pāpa-duhkha:** def., 808. See *Karma*; *Pāpa*; *Sin*  
**Pāpman:** def., 808; evil, 775  
**Para:** def., 808  
**Parabindu:** *bindu*, 763; Śakti *tattva*, 837  
**Parabrahman:** Brahman, 764; def., 808. See also *Nirguṇa Brahman*; *Paraśiva*  
**Paradox:** def., 808; oneness and twoness, 83



- Parākhyā Āgama:** identified, 808
- Parama:** def., 808
- Paramaguru:** def., 808. See *Guru; Satguru; Yogaswami*
- Paramahansa:** def., 808; symbolism, 735
- Paramātman:** def., 808; in Jainism, 584. See *Paraśiva*
- Parameśvara (Primal Soul):** and *ānandamaya kośa*, 792; Brahṃā, 764; Cosmic Soul, 769; creed belief, 469; def., 808, 812; described, 55; five aspects of, 808; invoked on Ārdrā Darśanam, 285; Mahādeva, 794; Maheśvara, 795; merging with (*viśvagrāsa*), 847-848; Naṭarāja represents, 802; Sadāśiva, 818; Saṃyama Brahman, 764; Śakti *tattva*, 837; scriptures speak on, 58-59; Śivamaya-kośa, 829; soul's difference from, 81; third perfection of Śiva, 49, 810; worship of, 57. See *Brahmā; Maheśvara; Rudra; Sadāśiva; Vishnu*. See also *Evolution of soul; Five acts of Śiva; Naṭarāja; Perfections; Śiva*
- Paramesvara of Malaysia:** conversion to Islam, 672
- Paramparā:** def., 780, 808; meaning, 519; scripture on, 456-457. See also *Denomination; Kailāsa Paramparā; Sampradāya*
- Paranāda:** *chakras* above *sahasrāra*, 743; dot above Aum, 761; *nāda*, 801; seven levels of, Charts Resource, 746; soundless sound, xl, 831; and Śiva *tattva*, 837; and *śrīṣṭī*, 803
- Parārtha pūjā:** def., 808, 813; qualifications, 319
- Parāśakti (Satchidānanda):** Ardhanārīśvara, 758; core of soul, 83; creed belief, 467; def., 809, 825; described, 53; icons, 57; and *jñāna pāda*, 115; Kṛttikā Dīpam, 285; monistic theism, 423; Nātha belief patterns, 521; other names, 809; perpetual immersion in, 524; pure consciousness, 53; realization of, 51, 113; Saṃyama Brahman, 764; Śaiva Siddhānta and Smārta views, 825; second perfection, 810; Śiva *tattva*, 837; soul's oneness with, 83, 137, 435; symbolism, 734; and *viśvagrāsa*, 848; worship, 57, 333. See also *All-pervasive God; Immanent; Perfections; Pure Consciousness; Savikalpa samadhi; Śiva*
- Parāsamvid:** def., 809; Śiva, transcendent, 511
- Paraśiva (Absolute Reality, Nirguṇa Brahman, Paramātman, Parabrahman, Self):** *atattva*, 760; creed belief, 465; def., 753, 764, 808, 809, 825; described, 51; first perfection, 810; goal, 87, 345; highest experience, 522; *jñāna pāda* and, 115; Mahāśivarātri, 285; monistic theism, 423; Nātha belief patterns, 521; Parāśakti and, 53; *samādhi*, 820; Śivaliṅga represents, 57, 734, 748, 828; soul, 79, 83, 435, 830; unmanifest, 51; and *viśvagrāsa*, 848; *yoga pāda*, 113; you are, 751. See also *Ātman; Nirvikalpa samādhi; Perfections; Self; Śiva; Śivaliṅga; Transcendence*
- Parents, parenting:** advising on sexuality, 217; debt to children, 243; duties, 241; five guidelines, 713; five practices, 711-712; five precepts to teach children, 709-710; *Guide to Indo-American Parenting*, 687; nonviolent, 687. See also *Children; Corporal punishment; Family; Father; Householder; Mother*
- Parikshit:** birth, 660
- Parliament of the World's Religions:** centenary, 686; Vivekananda, 680
- Partition, India-Pakistan:** Gandhi's opposition, 682
- Pārvati:** def., 809; Śāktism, 23. See *Goddess; Śakti*
- Pāśa:** creation of, 433; def., 809; and liberation, 793; *māyā*, 797; merging into Śiva, 560; Nātha views, 522; symbol, 735; *Tirumantiram* verse one hundred fifteen, 560; world, 849. See also *Malas; Pati-paśu-pāśa; World*
- Pasam:** See *Pāśa*
- Passion:** obstacle, 255
- Past lives:** and *karma*, 93. See also *Reincarnation*
- Paśu:** def., 809. See *Soul*
- Pāśupāla:** def., 809. See also *Missionaries*
- Pāśupata Śaivism:** described, 809; Lakulisa's reform movement, 665; originally dualist, 417, 499; overview, 497-500; path of, 21, 497; relation to Vedic society, 497-498; scripture of, 499; summary, 515. See *Śaivism's six schools*
- Pāśupata Sūtra(s):** contents, 809. See *Pāśupata Śaivism*
- Paśupati:** def., 809; Indus Valley, earliest date, 659
- Pasupatinatha temple:** identified, 809; Nepal, 499, 803
- Pātāla chakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742, 745-747; def., 809; location, 766; malice and murder, 745; Naraka, 127, 802. See also *Chakras; Naraka*
- Patanjali:** and *ahimsā*, 195; identified, 809; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; life and work, 664, 809; Nandinatha and, 493; *rāja yoga*, 815; *sūtras*, 393; *Tirumantiram* on, 457; *yoga*, 826, 851. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā; Shaḍ darśana; Yoga*
- Patel, Mansukh:** teaching *dharma*, 688
- Path(s):** back to God, 7; def., 809; enlightenment, 809; four stages, 107-115; peerless/highest, 809; personal (*svadharmā*), 809; stages, 11; Truth is one, paths are many, 810; two, 809; of words, 566. See also *Dharma; Mārga; Pāda; Path-choosing; Paths of attainment; Spiritual path*
- Pāthaka:** def., 810. See also *Siddhānta śravaṇa*
- Path-choosing:** *dharma*, 772; marriage or monasticism, 245. See also *Gṛihastha dharma; Householder; Monastic; Sannyāsa dharma*
- Paths of attainment:** Buddhism, 581; Christianity, 605; Confucianism, 593; Hinduism, 578; Islam, 608; Jainism, 584; Judaism, 602; Nandināthas, 526; Shintoism, 596; Sikhism, 587; Taoism, 590; Zoroastrianism, 599. See also *Evolution of soul; Mārga; Pāda; Paths; Sādhana; Spiritual path; Spiritual unfoldment*
- Pati (God):** *Āgamas*, 492; def., 810; monotheism, 800; Pati-paśu-pāśa, 800, 810; God Śiva, 49. See *Pati-paśu-pāśa; Śiva*
- Patience:** See *Kshama*
- Pati-paśu-pāśa:** *Āgamas* on, 492; def., 810; monism-pluralism debate, 529-570; monotheism (cosmotheandris), 800; Śaiva Siddhānta, 492; symbolized in temple, 309; *tattvatrayī*, 838. See *Padārtha; Pati; Paśu; Pāśa; Śivamaya*
- Paushkara Āgama:** contents, 810
- Pāyu tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Peace:** and *ahimsā*, 195; *dharma* brings, 175; on earth, x, 203; found in the One Supreme Being, 35; out of conflict into, 7; prayer for, 315; saints reflect, 359
- Peacock:** and Kārttikeya, 724
- Pelvic plexus:** *mūlādharma chakra*, 744

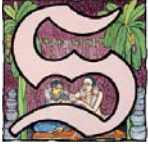
- Penance:** absolution, 753; austerity, 761; def., 810; *Dharma Śāstra*, 772; *kavadi*, 791, 810; *kriyā pāda*, 111; *pāpa*, 808; performance, 189; purity-impurity, 814; release for unvirtuous, 157; for sins, 153, 828; Tai Pusam festival, 289; *tapas*, 189, 810, 836, 850; worship, 313. See also *Absolution*; *Prāyaścitta*; *Sin*; *Tapas*
- Pentagon (US):** crippled by terrorists, 690
- Pentateuch:** revealed Judaic scripture, 643
- People for Animals:** Mysore chapter, 687
- Perfections (Śiva's three):** def., 810; described, 49-55; existing alone at *mahāpralaya*, 131; Nātha belief patterns, 521; realization of, 115, 544; soul shares two, 83; traditional icons, 57. See *Parameśvara*; *Parāśakti*; *Paraśiva*. See also *Śiva*
- Periyapurānam:** identified, 810; Nayanar, 803; written, 670. See *Tirumurai*
- Persecution:** Aurangzeb, 675; Bangladesh, 688; Kashmir Valley, 685, 687; Pakistan, 684; Godhra, 690. See also *Conversion*
- Personal dharma:** See *Svadharmā*
- Personal God:** Hindu sects on, 646-647. See also *Iṣṭa Devatā*; *Parameśvara*
- Perspective:** def., 810; mountaintop, 143
- Peru:** Sun temple built, 666
- Petition:** of God, 67, 307
- Petting:** Hindu outlook, 217. See also *Sexuality*
- Pharyngeal plexus:** *viśuddha chakra*, 743
- Philosophies and religions:** beliefs compared, 573-649. See also *Faiths*; *Religions*; *Secular movements*
- Philosophy, Hindu:** *Āgamas*, 379-381; overview, 417-425; *Purāṇas*, 391; reading and *jñāna*, 115; scripture, 377-381, 387; *śaḍ darśana*, 826; six Śaiva schools, 492-513; Vedānta, 845-846; *Vedas'* focus, 377. See also *Hinduism*; *Monism-pluralism in Śaiva Siddhānta*
- Physical body (annamaya kośa; sthūla śarīra):** def., 757, 792, 832; reincarnation, 816-817; *śarīra*, 824; Self Realization and, 13; and soul, 79, 831. See also *Bhūloka*; *Health*; *Kośas*; *Prāṇa*; *Reincarnation*
- Physical plane:** See *Bhūloka*
- Pilgrim:** mendicant, 343
- Pilgrimage (tīrthayātrā):** children taught, 712; def., 810, 839; good conduct, 185; Hindu culture, 261; and *karma*, 95; *kriyā pāda*, 111; life is, 195, 269; South India (1981), 568. See *Pañcha nitya karma*
- Pillars of Śaivism (three):** temples, scriptures and *satgurus*, 39, 299
- Piṇḍa:** def., 810; in *pitri yajña*, 849; symbolic meaning, 810
- Piṅgalā nāḍī (piṅgalā śakti):** def., 810; *nāḍī*, 801; odic, 805; and sun, 732; *triśūla* and, 733. See also *Energies*; *Iḍā nāḍī*; *Sushumṇā*
- Pir:** def., 810; Muslim holy man, 511
- Piṭha:** def., 810. See also *Aadheenam*; *Āśrama*; *Maṭha*
- Pitri:** ancestors, homage to, 849
- Pitṛiloka:** area of *Bhuvanloka*, 760, 763; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 810; three worlds, 838. See also *Ancestors*; *Antarloka*; *Bhuvanloka*
- Pitri yajña:** def., 849
- Pitta:** def., 810; *dosha*, 773, 810. See *Āyurveda*; *Doshas*
- Pituitary plexus:** *sahasrāra chakra*, 743
- Plague:** Black Death, seventy-five million killed, 672; def., 810; London, seventy thousand killed, 675; of tormenting moods, 155
- Planes of existence:** See *Lokas*
- Planets:** birth chart, 764; influence of, 259; *jyotisha*, 787; Rāhu, 815. See *Astrology*; *Astronomy*; *Earth*; *Worlds*
- Plato:** birth, 663; and Plotinus, 810
- Pleasure:** *purushārtha*, 87, 814-815. See also *Goals*
- Pleiades:** importance, 810; and Kārttikeya, 69
- Plotinus:** pantheist, 419; profile, 810; Hindu practices and teachings, 665
- Pluralism:** argument against creation, 539; *charyā-kriyā* conclusions, 565; crucial differences, 535; def., 534, 811; *dvaita-advaita*, 774; Śaiva Siddhānta debate, 531-568; Siddhānta views, 431-439. See also *Dualism*; *Monism*; *Monistic theism*; *Pluralistic realism*; *Pluralistic Siddhānta*; *Pluralistic theism*
- Pluralistic realism:** def., 811; Meykandar, 431, 496, 538; *Śivajñānabodham*, 555; synopsis, 496. See also *Meykandar*; *Pluralism*; *Śivajñānabodham*
- Pluralistic Siddhānta:** nutshell summary, 537. See also *Pluralism*; *Siddhānta*
- Pluralistic theism:** Aghorasiva, 431, 496; on cosmic dissolution, 439; on creation, 433; on evil, 437; on God, 435; monistic theism, comparison, 431; scriptures, 431. See also *Pluralism*; *Theism*
- Point of conception:** def., 767
- Politics:** *Arthaveda*, 759
- Polo, Marco:** visits India, 671
- Polygamy:** def., 811; Hindu outlook, 217. See also *Sexuality*
- Polynesians:** arrival in New Zealand, 670; Hawaii and Easter Island reached, 666; migration, 660
- Polytheism:** def., 811; monotheism compared, 799
- Pomp:** def., 811; Gaṇeśa, 65
- Pontifical:** def., 811; Śaṅkarāchārya *pītha*, 823; Smārta centers, 27
- Poor:** giving charity, 263; *manushya yajña*, 849
- Pope John Paul II:** antagonizing India, 687
- Portuguese:** Goa captured, 673; in Sri Lanka, 674; Mughal/British opposition, 674
- Positive affirmation:** See *Affirmation*
- Possessiveness:** source of violence, 199
- Potentialities:** def., 811; pluralistic Siddhānta, 439
- Potter (creation analogy):** efficient cause, 765; pluralist analogy, 543; views on creation, 419, 433
- Pottu:** *bindu* (Tamil), 764. See *Bindu*
- Poverty:** in a perfect universe, 540; *sannyāsa* vow, 351
- Powers:** Śiva's and soul's, 549. See also *Siddhis*
- Prabhāmaṇḍala:** aura, 761; Naṭarāja, ring of fire, 803
- Prabhupada, Bhaktivedanta Swami:** International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), 680
- Pradakṣhiṇa:** and *chakras*, 811; circumambulation, 767; def., 811; in *pūjā*, 813. See also *Circumambulate*
- Pradhāna:** *prakṛiti tattva*, 837
- Pradosha:** def., 811; Śiva worship, 285; *vrata*, 811
- Prajāpati:** *Vedas* on, 72, 77, 220
- Prajñā:** cognition and *samādhi*, 821

- Prakara:** temple, 305
- Prākṛiti:** personified as Devī (in Śāktism), 811
- Prākṛiti:** def., 811; depiction, 811; guṇas, 780; primal nature, 125; *puruṣa* and, 814; *śaṭkoṇa*, 728. See also *Prākṛiti tattva*; *Puruṣa*
- Prākṛiti tattva:** def., 837. See also *Guṇas*; *Prākṛiti*; *Tattvas*
- Prākṛits:** language development, 661-662
- Pralaya:** def., 811; scripture on, 440-441; Siddhanta view, 439; types, 811. See also *Mahāpralaya*
- Pramukha:** def., 811. See *Extended family*; *Joint family*
- Pramukh Swami:** birth, 681; Hindu of the Year, 686
- Prāṇa:** def., 811, 828. See also *Prāṇamaya kośa*; *Prāṇic body*
- Prāṇāgnihotra Upanishad:** contents, 811
- Prāṇalīṅga:** def., 811. See *Sivalīṅga*; *Vīra Śaivism*
- Prāṇāma:** def., 811; worshipful prostration, 305. See also *Aṣṭāṅga prāṇāma*; *Pañchāṅga prāṇāma*; *Worship*
- Prāṇāmāñjali:** *añjali mudrā*, 757
- Prāṇamaya kośa:** def., 811. See *Prāṇic body*
- Prāṇatyāga:** def., 811; and suicide, 833. See *Prāyopaveśa*
- Pranava:** def., 812; symbol, 723. See also *Aum*
- Prāṇāyāma:** def., 812; *rāja yoga*, 815; *haṭha yoga*, xxxiv, 781; *yoga pāda*, 113; *yogī's* tool, 51. See also *Prāṇa*
- Prāṇic body (Prāṇamaya kośa):** and astral body, 759; def., 792, 811; and soul, 79; *śarīra*, 824; subtle body, 833. See *Kośas*; *Prāṇa*; *Subtle body*
- Prāṇipāta:** term for *prāṇāma*, 811
- Prapatti:** *bhakti yoga*, 763; def., 812; grace, 779; *tapas* leads to, 836; Viṣṇu, 25, 578. See also *Surrender*
- Prārabdha karma:** def., 93, 790, 812. See also *Karma*; *Kriyamāna karma*; *Sañchita karma*
- Prarthana Samaj:** founded, 678
- Prasāda:** *archana*, 315; def., 812; *pādapūjā*, 806; sacrament, 818; temple, 305; *ucchiṣṭa*, 841; Vīra Śaivism, 504. See also *Offerings*
- Prasna Upanishad:** contents, 812; Three Worlds, 838
- Prāsnottaram:** def., 812; Kailāsa Paramparā, 395
- Pratimā:** *mūrti*, reflected image, 800
- Pratishṭhākalā:** sphere of tranquility, *kalā*, 788
- Pratyabhijñā:** def., 812
- Pratyabhijñā Darśana:** identified, 812; Kashmir Śaivism, 506-507
- Pratyabhijñā Śāstra:** Kashmir Śaivism, 506
- Pratyabhijñā Sūtra:** identified, 812
- Pratyāhāra:** def., 812; *rāja yoga*, 816; *yoga*, 113
- Pravṛitti mārga:** first stages of *āśrama dharma*, 759. See also *Āśrama dharma*
- Prāyaścitta:** def., 812; *pāpa*, 808; penance, 153, 810; purity-impurity, 814. See *Absolution*; *Penance*
- Prayer(s):** conception of child, 239, 275; conveyed during worship, 331; daily acts, 261; holy days, 283; *lekhapārtha havana*, 793; Tyēf, 841; in *Vedas*, 375; written, 331, 793, 841. See also *Burning prayers*
- Prāyopaveśa:** def., 812; *dharmic* suicide, 833-834; fasting to death, 101, 770. See also *Death*; *Fasting*; *Medical ethics*; *Prāṇatyāga*; *Suicide*; *Terminal illness*
- Preceptor:** See *Guru*
- Preferred Deity:** Smārtism, 27
- Pregnancy:** rites, 275; *saṁskāras* of birth, 822. See also *Abortion*; *Saṁskāras*
- Premaiva Śivamaya, Satyam eva Paraśivaḥ:** Affirmation of faith, in Sanskrit, 757. See *Affirmation of faith*
- Preservation:** def., 812; in Naṭarāja's cosmic dance, 41, 803; Sadāśiva, 818. See *Five acts of Śiva*; *Viṣṇu*
- Pretaloka:** area of Bhuvanloka, 760, 763; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 812. See also *Antarloka*; *Bhuvanloka*
- Pride:** removal through *kavadi*, 289; *sannyāsin* guards against, 351
- Priesthood, Hindu:** non-*brāhmins* accepted, 690. See also *Priests*; *Pujārī*; *Varna dharma*
- Priests, Catholic:** beating children, 562
- Priests, temple:** Adīśaiva, 319; Aghorasiva's pluralism, 496; described, 319-321, 361; *dharma* of, 171; invoking God, 313, 321; manuals (*Paddhati*), 389, 493, 806; ministers, 799; non-*brāhmin*, 690; performing *archana*, 315; problems faced worldwide, 689; *pujārīs*, 813; *purohita*, 814; Śivāchārya, 828. See also *Archana*; *Priesthood*; *Pūjā*; *Pujārī*; *Saṁskāras*; *Temple worship*
- Primal Soul:** def., 812. See *Parameśvara*
- Primal Sound:** def., 812; Śiva, 55; symbol of, 723
- Primal Substance:** belief, 467; def., 813; described, 53; Śiva, 49. See also *Parāśakti*; *Perfections*; *Śiva*
- Prithivi tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Procreation:** def., 813; in marriage, 213, 217. See also *Abortion*; *Reincarnation*; *Sex*; *Sexuality*
- Profession:** and personal *dharma*, 175; son follows father's, 245
- Progeny:** def., 813; future monks, 245; *Vedas* give prayers for, 375
- Progress:** inner-plane training, 127; Śiva's will, 524
- Prohibit(ions):** def., 813; *guru* protocol, 363; sexual, 217
- Promiscuity:** def., 813; impact on marriage, 219
- Property:** *artha*, 814; monastics and, 343
- Prophecy:** def., 813; Śāktism, 23
- Prostatic plexus:** *svādhishṭhāna chakra*, 744
- Prostration:** to *guru*, 363; in temple, 305. See *Prāṇāma*
- Protocol:** culture, 261; def., 813; *guru*, 363; temple, 329
- Psychic currents:** husband-wife, 219; def., 813
- Psychism:** See *Antarloka*; *Aura*; *Clairvoyance*; *Siddhis*
- Ptolemy:** and Indian pupils, 665
- Puberty:** rite of passage, 269, 273; studentship, 173. See also *Saṁskāras*
- Pūjā:** *Āgamas*, 493; *ātmārtha*, 760; attending online, 689; and bell, 729; daily practice, 257; def., 813; described, 313, 321, 323, 807; gestures (*mudrās*), 321; God invoked, 321; *kalaśa*, 730; *kriyā pāda*, 111; manual by Appaya Dikshita, 509; *pañchāyatana*, 807; Pāsupata, 497; purpose, 813; Śāktism, 23; scriptures speak on, 322-323; temple activity, 307; times of day, 307. See also *Abhisheka*; *Āratī*; *Archana*; *Homa*; *Home shrine*; *Murti*; *Pādapūjā*; *Pujārī*; *Temple*; *Worship*
- Pujārī:** def., 813; duties, 313, 321, 361; training, 319. See also *Priests*; *Pūjā*; *Temple worship*
- Pulakesin I:** founds Chālukya dynasty, 667
- Punarjanma:** def., 813; reincarnation, 97, 816, 822; *saṁsāra* and, 822. See *Reincarnation*; *Saṁsāra*

- Pundit:** def., 813. See *Pandit*
- Punjab:** early humankind, 657; Gorakshanatha, 511; location, 813
- Punsavana:** def., 813; described, 822; rite, 275. See also *Pregnancy; Samskāras*
- Punya:** consequences of acts, 813-814; def., 813; result of kindness, 95. See also *Aura; Karma; Pāpa*
- Punya Śāstra:** sacred literature, 387
- Purāṇas:** Āgamas reflected in, 492; astrological observations, 658; contents, 387, 391; def., 814; edited, 661; kings, timeline, 658-663; recorded, 667; Śāktism, 23, 647; *smṛiti*, 830; subject matter, 814. See *Bhāgavata Purāṇa; Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa; Kathirgāma Purāṇa; Kārma Purāṇa; Liṅga Purāṇa; Padma Purāṇa; Śiva Purāṇa*. See also *Folk narratives; Smṛiti; Śruti*
- Purandardas, Saint:** life and work, 673
- Pure Consciousness:** Ardhanārīśvara, 758; creed belief, 467; perfection of Śiva, 49, 53. See *Parāśakti*
- Purgatory:** def., 814; hellish emotional states, 155
- Puritans:** def., 814; ignorance, 141
- Purity:** See *Śauca*
- Pūrṇimā:** def., 814. See also *Guru Pūrṇimā*
- Purohita:** def., 814. See also *Priests; Smārtism*
- Purusha (Cosmic Soul):** def., 769, 814; and Prakṛiti, 811; unmanifest reality (Sāṅkhya system), 814. See also *Purusha (soul)*
- Purusha (soul):** def., 814; described, 814; *śaṭkoṇa*, 728; soul, 830. See also *Ātman; Jīva; Purusha (Cosmic Soul); Purusha dharma; Purusha tattva; Soul*
- Purusha dharma (husband's dharma):** def., 814; described, 213, 772. See also *Dharma; Husband; Purusha; Purusha tattva; Strī dharma*
- Purushārtha:** def., 814-815; life's stages and, 173. See *Artha; Dharma; Kāma; Moksha*
- Purusha tattva:** def., 837. See also *Purusha; Purusha dharma; Tattvas*
- Pushya nakshatra:** Tai Pusam, 289
- Pyramid:** first Egyptian, 659
- Pythagoras:** teachings, 662
- Qualified nondualism:** Vedānta, 845; Viśiṣṭādvaita, 815
- Quantum:** def., 815; healing powers, 259; light particles, 129; soul, 831
- Race:** of Hindu populations, 815; US riots, 681. See also *Discrimination*
- Radhakrishnan, Dr. Sarvepalli:** genesis of word *Hindu*, 782; life and work, 680; monist, 561; philosophy, 425
- Rāga tattva:** def., 837. See also *Tattvas*
- Rage:** def., 815; *japa* forbidden, 403; lower nature, 107. See also *Vitala chakra*
- Rāhu:** def., 815; effects, 815; Vedic prayer regarding, 259
- Railroad:** Indian statistics, 678
- Rājanya:** def., 815; *kshatriya*, 844. See *Kshatriya*
- Rajaraja I:** great temple builder, 669; reign, 670
- Rajas:** def., 815; *guṇa*, 780; Śiva as Brahmā, 49; *triśūla*'s symbolism, 733
- Rajasinha:** reign, 668
- Rāja yoga (aṣṭāṅga yoga):** in *Āgamas*, 379; def., 759, 815-816; eight sequential steps, xxxiii, 815-816; Pa-tanjali, 809; prerequisites, xxxiv; Śaivism stresses, 21; *yoga*, 826, 851. See also *Spiritual path; Yoga*
- Rajendra I:** naval expeditions, 670
- Rajneeshism:** belief, 613
- Rāma:** birth, 660; importance, 816; *Rāmāyaṇa*, 816; story of, 391; traditional date, 658; Vaiṣṇavism, 25. See also *Ayodhya; Rāmāyaṇa*
- Rāmācharitamānasa:** Tulsidas, 673, 841
- Ramakantha I, Ramakantha II:** identified, 816
- Ramakrishna, Sri (Saint):** beliefs, 677; monist, 425, 561; monistic theist, 425; profile, 816; and Śāktism, 23
- Ramakrishna Mission:** *ahimsā* in schools, 562; founded, 680; Hindu status (court ruling), 686
- Ramalingaswami, Saint:** life and work, 677
- Raman, B.V.:** great astrology teacher, 687
- Ramana Maharshi, Saint:** life, 679; monist, 561
- Ramanuja:** philosophy, 670; profile, 816; Vaiṣṇavism, 25, 417, 507; Vedānta, 845. See *Viśiṣṭādvaita*
- Ramaraja:** identified, 816
- Rāma Temple:** Ayodhya, contested site, 690
- Rāmāyaṇa:** Bengali translation, 672; contents, 816; Hindi version, 391, 673; *Itihāsa*, 785; revisions, 661; and Śaivism, 491. See *Itihāsa; Rāma*
- Ramdas ("Papa"), Saint:** life and work, 674, 679
- Rameshwaram:** Muslims dominate, 671; Paṇḍyas, 662
- Ramoutar, Paras:** Trinidad's Hindu prime minister, 690
- Ramprasad, Saint:** identified, 393, 816; lifetime, 675
- Ranade, Eknath:** life and work, 678
- Rangoli:** purpose, 722
- Rasanā tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Rasātala chakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742, 745-747; def., 816; location, 766; Naraka, 802; selfishness, 745. See also *Chakras; Naraka*
- Rasa tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Rashtrakuta dynasty:** Kailasa temple, 668; timeline, 667-669
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS):** BJP and, 687; founded, 681
- Rationalism:** giving way to faith, 687
- Rationalize:** def., 816; "righteous" wars, 199
- Raurava Āgama:** contents, 816; Sadyojyoti, 495; soul's merger, 549
- Ravana:** identified, 816
- Razor:** boy's first, 273. See *Keśānta; Samskāras*
- Reabsorption:** Sadāśiva, 818; def., 816. See *Five acts of Śiva; Mahāpralaya; Rudra; Saṁhāra; Viśvagrāsa*
- Reaction:** *karma*, law of, 85, 93, 790; vs. understanding, 183. See also *Karma; Vāsana dāha tantra*
- Reaffirmation:** def., 816; of marriage covenant, 233
- Realism:** pluralistic, see *Pluralistic realism*
- Reality:** Absolute, see *Paraśiva*; Absolute and relative, 521; def., 753, 816, 842; of God Śiva, 49; nature of, 639; one, or more?, 544; relative, 817; Sankara, 27. See also



- Absolute reality; Māyā; Monistic theism; Relative reality; Saṁsāra; Śivamaya; World*
- Realization:** stages and perspectives, 565; *śuddha avasthā*, 524. See also *Attainment; Destiny; God Realization; Self Realization*
- Realized soul (death of):** See *Mahāsamādhi*
- Reason:** *buddhi*, 765; faith transcends, 776; intellect, 255, 785; intuition bypasses, 785. See also *Intellect; Svādhishtāna cakras*
- Rebelliousness:** *charyā* and, 109; def., 816
- Rebirth:** See *Reincarnation*
- Recitation:** *japa*, 786; on *mālā*, 795; religious practice, 189, 850
- Recognition school:** Kashmir Śaivism, 505, 507
- Reese:** emanation defined by, 543
- Reincarnation:** approaching rebirth, 97; Catholics condemn doctrine, 666, 671; Christianity incompatible, 606, 667; and Darwin's theory, 805; def., 816-817; Hindu sects concur, 19; *karma* propels, 79, 97; in movies, 689; and nonhuman birth, 804-805; Plotinus taught, 665; scriptures speak on, 102-103, 249; widespread American belief, 690. See also *Birth; Death; Evolution of soul; Incarnation; Karma; Moksha; Past lives; Saṁsāra; Soul*
- Relative reality:** def., 817; God's creation, 521; God's grace, 556-557; *māyā*, 797; universe, 131. See also *Evolution of soul; Reality; Śivamaya*
- Religion:** def., 532, 817; derivation, 817; education of children, 243; inner intent, 35; and language, 563; law and *dharma*, 171; marrying within one's, 227; neo-Indian, 803; origin of, Eastern-Western views, 637; preservation of, 37; Tamil, 524; Toynbee's predictions, 691. See also *Faiths; Religions*
- Religions (comparisons):** Abrahamic, 643-644; major religions, 573-649; differences honored, 35, 533; Eastern-Western views, 634-642, 649; Hindu sects, 577-579, 644-647; not all the same, 533; Śaivism among, xviii. See also *Religion; Religions (individual)*
- Religions (individual):** Buddhism, 580-582; Christianity, 604-606; Confucianism, 592-594; Hinduism, 573, 577-579; Islam, 607-609; Jainism, 583-585; Judaism, 602-603; Shintoism, 595-597; Sikhism, 586-588; Taoism, 589-591; Zoroastrianism, 598-600. See *Eastern religions; Far Eastern religions; Western religions*. See also *Creeeds; Faiths; Philosophies; Religion; Religions (comparisons); Secular movements*
- Religious leaders:** ecumenical gatherings, 35; extended family, 231; listing of, 357; role in peace, 203; *sannyāsins*, 351. See *Gurus; Priests; Satgurus; Swāmis*
- Religious solitaire:** *āśrama dharma*, 173; fourth stage of life, 277
- Remorse:** See *Hri*
- Renukacharya:** identified, 817
- Renunciate(s):** See *Renunciation; Sannyāsin*
- Renunciation:** def., 817; goal, 345; initiation, 343; Kārtikeya, 69; monastic tradition, 343-351; and Paraśiva, 13; required for highest attainments, 526; sages and *satgurus*, 359; *sannyāsins*, 361; in Siddha Siddhānta, 512-513; time for, 278. See *Asceticism; Monastic; Path-choosing; Sannyāsa; Tyāga*
- Repose:** in one's realization, 817
- Repudiation:** def., 817; of worldly *dharma* by *sannyāsin*, 351
- Resolution:** debate's, 567; Siddhānta controversy, 532
- Respect:** in family, 247
- Responsibilities:** See *Dharma; Duty*
- Restraints:** *charyā pāda*, 247; described, 187. See *Yamas*
- Retirement:** *dharma* of, 173
- Revealing grace (anugraha śakti, kāruṇya):** Āgamas, 55; def., 758; grace, 779; Natarāja symbolism, 41, 801; and Pañchākshara Mantra, 401, 801. See also *Evolution of soul; Five acts of Śiva; Grace; Malas; Sadāśiva*
- Reverence:** approaching temple, 303
- Righteousness:** *purushārtha*, 87, 814-815. See also *Goals*
- Rig Veda:** contents and history, 817; dating, 655, 658; described, 375; earliest eclipse noted in, 658; first English translation, 678; and *Zend Avesta*, 662. See also *Rig Veda Saṁhitā; Śruti; Vedas*
- Rig Veda Saṁhitā:** composition ends, 660; importance, 817. See also *Rig Veda*
- Rinzai Zen sect:** founded by Eisai, 671
- Rishi:** def., 817; described, 361
- Rishi from the Himalayas:** identified, 817; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449-451, 675; life and contribution, 675. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*
- Rīta (universal dharma):** def., 771, 818; described, 169; God's law, 167; scripture on, 176. See *Chaturdharma; Nature*
- Rites:** def., 818; sacrament, 818; scripture on, 279; temple, 313-333. See also *Archana; Pūjā; Ritual; Saṁskāra*
- Ritual:** *Kāraṇa Āgama*, 789; in Purāṇic literature, 391; in *Vedas*, 375; Vira Śaivism, 501. See also *Rites*
- Rītu kāla:** def., 818, 822; described, 273. See also *Saṁskāras*
- River(s):** analogy, see *Analogies*; Ganges (Gaṅgā), 777; Indus Valley, 784; *saṅgama*, 823; Liṅga stones, 835; sacred, 195; Sarasvatī, 824; Ujjain, 841
- Robes:** discolored, 345; saffron, 343; *sannyāsin's*, 351
- Romani:** migration to Europe, 666
- Rope:** apprehended as a snake, 525
- Roy, Dr. S.B.:** *Chronological Framework of Indian Pro-tohistory*, 654; chronology method, 653
- Roy, Ram Mohan:** beliefs, 677
- Royal Asiatic Society:** founded, 676
- RSS:** See *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*
- Rudra:** aspect of Parameśvara, 808; def., 818; facet of Śiva, 521; Śiva as destroyer, 49; *śuddhavidyā tattva*, 837; *Veda* prayers to, xl, 42, 58, 72. See *Five acts of Śiva; Reabsorption*
- Rudrāksha:** def., 818; *mālā* for *japa*, 403; symbol, 732; Vira Śaivism, 504. See also *Japa*
- Rudrasambhu:** identified, 818
- Rudrāmalā Tantra:** identified, 818
- Rukmini Devi Srimati:** life, 682
- Rulers:** empowered by Kārtikeya, 71
- Rumi, Jalaluddin:** mystic quote, 573
- Rūpa tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Russia:** communists seize power, 681; early chariot, 660; minority religions banned as cults, 688



**Śabda kośa:** def., 818. See also *Śabda tattva*

**Śabda tattva:** def., 838. See also *Śabda kośa*; *Tattvas*

**Sacral plexus:** *mūlādhāra chakra*, 744

**Sacraments:** See *Saṁskāras*. See also *Prasāda*

**Sacred Books of the East (Müller):** published, 679

**Sacred literature:** supplementing *śruti*, 387-395. See also *Hindu scriptures*

**Sacredness:** of all things, 197

**Sacred Sound:** Śivachaitanya, 828

**Sacred thread:** initiation into Vedic study, 719; *upanayana*, 842. See *Upanayana*; *Saṁskāras*

**Sacred vows:** See *Holy orders*; *Marriage*; *Vrata*

**Sacrifice:** animal, 23; def., 818; marriage, 211, 225; monastic, 345; as *tapas*, 189; *Vedas* on, 301, 313, 321, 331, 377; and vegetarianism, 201; *yajña*, 818, 849. See also *Offerings*; *Tyāga*; *Yajña*

**Sadāchāra:** chapter, 181-191; def., 818; five duties, 185

**Sadāśiva:** aspect of Parameśvara, 808; def., 818; five faces, 818; Śiva as revealer, 49, 818. See also *Five acts of Śiva*; *Revealing grace*; *Sadāśiva tattva*

**Sadāśiva tattva:** def., 837. See also *Sadāśiva*; *Tattvas*

**Sādhanaka:** def., 818; described, 361

**Sādhanā(s):** absolving sin, 153; affirmation of faith, 409; *brāhma muhūrta*, 764; death as, 99; def., 818; facets defined, 521; festivals, 283; home shrine, 335; importance, 11; and *karma*, 95; Kārttikeya's realm, 69; Kashmir Śaivism, 506-507; *kriyā pāda*, 111; life in world, 145; *Master Course* study, xxxv; monastics', 730; Nātha Sampradāya, 447; path of enlightenment, 107; performance of, 11, 189; Purāṇic literature, 391; *sat-guru* guides, 365; secondary scriptures, 387; Tai Pusam festival, 289; *tantra*, 255; Vaiṣṇavism, 25; of worship, 327; *yoga pāda*, *avasthās*, 524; Yogaswami, 455. See also *Discipline*; *Sādhanā mārga*; *Sahasra lekhana sādhanā*; *Self-control*; *Tapas*; *Unfoldment*; *Willpower*

**Sādhanā mārga:** def., 818; *sannyāsin* is on, 345. See also *Mārga*; *Sādhanā*

**Sādharāṇa dharmā:** described, 772

**Sādhu:** def., 818; described, 343, 361; Gorakshanatha, 510. See also *Mendicant*

**Sādhvī:** def., 818; described, 361

**Sadyojyoti:** spreading of Śaiva Siddhānta, 495

**Safety:** parents' responsibility, 241

**Sage:** described, 359, 361; spiritual leaders, 357

**Saguṇa Brahman:** Appaya Dikshita on, 510; Brahman, 764; def., 818. See also *Parāśakti*; *Parameśvara*

**Sahajanandaswami:** work, 676

**Sahakāri kāraṇa:** cause (instrumental), 765, 784

**Sahasra lekhana sādhanā:** def., 818; example, 409

**Sahasrāra chakra (crown chakra):** causal plane, 129; Charts Resource, 740-743, 745-747; def., 770, 819; exiting body at death, 101; *kuṇḍalīnī* and, 23, 793; location, 766; lotus symbol, 725; illumination, 743; *nāḍīs* meet at, 745; trance, 840. See also *Chakras*; *Crown chakra*; *Door of Brahman*; *Enlightenment*; *Illumination*; *Jñāna*

**Sahib, Tipu:** killed, 676

**Saints, Alvar (Vaiṣṇava):** *bhakti* tradition, 670; songs and poems, 667

**Saints (Christian):** Thomas, 665

**Saints (Hindu):** def., 359; Anandamayi Ma, 680; Andal, 669, 757; Arunagirinathar, 673; Auvaiyar, 664, 669, 761; Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, 680, 682, 686; Chellachiamman, 682; Dadu, 673; Janabai, 671; Jnanadeva, 671; Karaikkal Ammaiyar, 669; Lalla, 793; Mahadevi, 671; Manikkavasagar, 669; Mata Amritanandamayi, 686; Meykandar, 671; Mirabai, 672, 799; Muktabai, 671; Nammalvar, 669; Narasinha Mehta, 672; *Periyapurāṇam*, 670; Purandardas, 673; Ramalingaswami, 677; Ramana Maharshi, 679; Ramdas, 674; Ramprasada, 675; Sambandar, 667-668; *Sant*, 824; Sirdi Sai Baba, 681; Spiritual leaders, 357; Sundarar, 669; Tayumanavar, 675; *Tirumurai*, 670; Tirunavukkarasu, 667; *Tiru Tondattotai*, 669; Tukaram, 674; Vallabhacharya, 673. See also *Alvar saints*; *Nayanar saints*; *Samayāchārya (Nalvar) saints*

**Saism:** belief, 613

**Śaiva:** def., 819. See *Śaivism*

**Śaiva Āgamas:** Advaita Iśvaravāda, 754-755; basis, 395; contents, divisions and names, 819; Durvasas, 774; early dating, 660; Kashmir Śaivism, 506; ninety-two, 379; recorded, 659; Śaiva Siddhānta, 492-493; and Tirumular, 451; *Upāgamas* of, 842. See *Ajita Āgama*; *Devikālottara Āgama*; *Kāmika Āgama*; *Kāraṇa Āgama*; *Kāruṇa Āgama*; *Mātaṅga Parameśvara Āgama*; *Raurava Āgama*; *Śruti*; *Suprabhedha Āgama*; *Svāyambhuva Āgama*. See also *Āgamas*; *Śruti*

**Śaiva Dharma:** See *Sanātana Dharma*

**Śaiva Neri:** def., 819. See *Śaivism*

**Śaiva Samayam:** def., 819. See *Śaivism*

**Śaiva Siddhānta:** Advaita Siddhānta, 395, 755; beliefs described, 819; claiming appellation, 532; direct and simple, 563; history, 531, 664, 819; India, 495-496; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; meaning, relevancy, 533; monism-pluralism debate, 531-568; monistic summary, 536; overview, 493-496; pluralistic summary, 537; points of agreement, 533; roots in scripture, 563; school of Śaivism, 21; *siddha yoga*, 494; summary, 515; Tamil Nadu, 491; term first recorded, 551; Tirumular, 451, 494, 562, 664; today, 497; two schools, 431-439 (see also *Monism-pluralism*); Varanasi monastery, 674. See also *Monism-Pluralism in Śaiva Siddhānta*; *Monistic theism*; *Śaiva Siddhānta Church*; *Śaiva Siddhānta Yoga Order*; *Śaivism*; *Śaivism's six schools*; *Suddha Śaiva Siddhānta*

**Śaiva Siddhānta Church:** founded, 683. See also *Śaiva Siddhānta*; *Subramuniyaswami*

**Śaiva Siddhānta Yoga Order:** monistic theism, 561.

See also *Śaiva Siddhānta*; *Subramuniyaswami*

**Śaiva Śraddhā Dhāraṇā:** creedal summation, 463-487

**Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita:** def., 819. See *Siva Advaita*

**Śaivism:** adaptability, 37; affirmation of faith, 407;

*Āgamas*, 379, 492; all-India, 491; *avatāra* doctrine, 646; beliefs, 465-487; def., 819; described, xviii, 21, 33-41, 791, 809; devotees, 493; festivals, 283; Hindu

- denomination, 19; history, 501-505, 819; in Java, 491; Kashmir, 791; life, 493; monistic theism, 425; Muslim impact, 511; Nātha Sampradāya, 447; Nepal, 491, 510; on the nature of Śakti, 646; origin of, 21; other Hindu sects, 577-578; Pañchākshara Mantra, 401; Pāśupata, 809; path of attainment, 577-578; personal God, 646; principal doctrines, 819; regions of influence, 647; sacredness of life, 39; scriptures of, 647; *siddha yoga*, 21, 506, 510; soul and God, 647; spiritual practice, 647; symbols of, 721-735. See also *Hindu sects*; *Śaivism's six schools*; *Śaivite creed*
- Śaivism's six schools:** background, 492; complementary, 513; described, 819; summaries, 492-513. See *Kashmir Śaivism*; *Pāśupata Śaivism*; *Śaiva Siddhānta*; *Śaivism*; *Siddha Siddhānta*; *Śiva Advaita*; *Vīra Śaivism*
- Śaivite creed:** articles of faith, 463-487; God Śiva as personal lord and creator of all, 469; God Śiva's manifest nature of all-pervading love, 467; God Śiva's unmanifest reality, 465; goodness of all, 483; *karma*, 479; liberation from rebirth, 479; Mahādeva Gaṇeśa, 471; Mahādeva Kārttikeya, 473; *moksha*, 479; Pañchākshara Mantra, 487; planes of existence, 477; *saṁsāra*, 479; soul's creation and identity with God Śiva, 475; stages of inner progress, 481; temple worship, 485. See also *Śaivism*
- Śaivite Hinduism:** See *Śaivism*
- Śākāhāra:** *ahiṁsā*, 201; def., 820; vegetarian, 846
- Śaka Hindu calendar:** beginning, 665
- Sakala avasthā:** def., 820; *iruvinaṁ oppu*, 785. See *Arul*; *Irul*; *Marul*. See also *Avasthā*; *Evolution of soul*
- Sakhā mārga:** def., 820; *yoga pāda*, 806; relationship to God, 113. See *Mārgas*; *Yoga pāda*
- Sākshin:** def., 820. See *Awareness*; *Consciousness*; *Soul*
- Śakta:** def., 820; devotional songs, 675; Gorakshanātha Śaivism, 512. See also *Śakta Āgamas*; *Śakta Tantrism*; *Śaktism*
- Śakta Āgamas:** in Śaktism, 23. See also *Śaktism*
- Śakta Hinduism:** See *Śaktism*
- Śakta Tantrism:** def., 836. See also *Śaktism*; *Tantrism*
- Śakti (uppercase):** def., 820; Divine Mother, 23; Hindu sects' views, 646; instrumental cause, 419, 431; Kashmir Śaivism, 506; Nātha view, 521; scriptures speak on, 29; *shaṭkoṇa*, 728; Siddha Siddhānta, 511; Śiva Advaita, 508; Smārtism, 27. See also *Ambikā*; *Amman*; *Ardhanārīśvara*; *Devī*; *Goddess*; *Parāśakti*; *Perfections*; *Śaktis*; *Śaktism*; *Śakti tattva*; *Śiva-Śakti*
- Śakti(s) (lowercase):** in meditation, 828; temple vibration, 299, 303, 307; *Tirumantiram* on, 547; *vel*, 71; *yoga* mysticism, 820. See also *Anugraha śakti*; *Icchā śakti*; *Iḍā śakti*; *Jñāna śakti*; *Kriyā śakti*; *Kuṇḍalini śakti*; *Nāda-nāḍī śakti*; *Piṅgalā śakti*; *Śakti*; *Tirodhāna śakti*
- Śaktipāta (Śaktinipāta):** def., 820; descent of grace, 524; *dikshā*, 773; from *satguru*, 365; grace, 779. See also *Dikshā*; *Grace*; *Revealing grace*
- Śaktism:** *Āgamas*, 379; *avatāra*, 646; compared with Śaivism, 821; def., 821; described, 23; goals, 577; on God, 646; Hindu denomination, 19; major scriptures of, 647; personal God, 646; regions of influence, 647; on Śakti, 646; soul and God, 647; spiritual practice, 647. See also *Hindu sects*; *Śakta*; *Śakti*; *Tantrism*
- Śakti tattva:** def., 837. See also *Śakti*; *Tattvas*
- Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita:** def., 821. See *Vīra Śaivism*
- Śaktopāya:** def., 821, 843; Kashmir Śaivism, 507
- Śakuntala:** authorship, 666
- Śākya:** Buddha's ancestral clan, 821
- Śālagrāma:** as *Iṣṭa Devatā*, 785. See also *Iṣṭa Devatā*
- Śālokya:** attainment of *charyā*, 760; in *jñāna pāda*, 806
- Salt:** in water, pluralistic analogy, 435, 535, 537, 548
- Salvation:** Eastern and Western views, 637; and God's will, 639. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Grace*; *Moksha*
- Samādhi (God Realization):** attained in *śuddha avasthā*, 524; Buddhist view, 581; def., 778, 821; ecstasy, 775; Gorakshanātha on, 511-512; *rāja yoga*, 816; Rishi from the Himalayas, 451; trance, 840; true *yogic* state, 816. See *Nirvikalpa samādhi*; *Savikalpa samādhi*. See also *Enstasy*; *Evolution of soul*; *God*; *Mahāsamādhi*; *Rāja yoga*; *Samādhi shrine*
- Samādhi shrine:** cremation tomb, 770. See also *Samādhi*
- Sāmānya dharma:** described, 772
- Samarasa:** def., 821; realization, 512. See *Śivasāyujya*
- Samāvartana:** def., 821; descr., 822; Vedic study, 271
- Sāma Veda:** contents, 821; described, 375
- Samayāchārya (Nalvar) saints:** distinguished from Alvars, 756; four Śaiva saints, 801. See also *Appar*; *Manikkavasagar*; *Sambandar*; *Sundarar*; *Saints (Hindu)*
- Sambandar, Saint:** Appar and, 667; *bhakti* movement, 494, 763; life and works, 668; Nalvar, 756, 801; Nayanar, 667, 803, 821; profile, 821; *Tirumurai*, 840
- Śāmbhavopāya:** def., 843; Kashmir Śaivism, 507
- Sāmhāra:** absorption, 753; def., 821; Naṭarāja, 803; *pralaya*, 811. See also *Reabsorption*
- Sāmhīta(s):** def., 821; Vedic hymns, 375, 845. See also *Gheraṇḍa Sāmhīta*; *Rīg Veda Sāmhīta*; *Śiva Sāmhīta*; *Suśruta Sāmhīta*; *Sīta Sāmhīta*; *Taittirīya Sāmhīta*; *Yajur Veda Sāmhīta*
- Sāmīpya:** attainment in *kriyā pāda*, 760
- Sāmjñāna:** conscience, 767
- Sampradāya:** authority, 357; def., 821; *mantra* initiation, 405; meaning, 519. See also *Ādinātha Sampradāya*; *Denomination*; *Lineage*; *Nandinātha Sampradāya*; *Nātha Sampradāya*; *Siddha Yogī Sampradāya*; *Smārta Sampradāya*; *Yoga Sampradāya*
- Samprajñāta:** *samādhi*, 821
- Saṁsāra:** belief, 479; def., 821; Jain view, 584-585; Smārtism, 578; soul and, 97; Vaishṇavism, 578. See *Avidyā*; *Concealing grace*; *Karma*; *Māyā*; *Saṁsāri*; *World*
- Saṁsāri:** *Āgamas* guide, 381; def., 822; San Mārga, 823. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Karma*; *Saṁsāra*
- Saṁskāra chitta:** Charts Resource, 740; subconscious mind, 798. See *Subconscious mind*
- Saṁskāras (impressions):** def., 822; remolding the subconscious, 751; subliminal traits, 255; *vāsanā*, 844. See also *Memory*; *Vāsanās*; *Vāsanā dāha tantra*
- Saṁskāras (rites of passage, sacraments):** of adulthood, 273, 275, 822; all Hindu sects, 19; of birth, 822; blessings, 764; chapter, 269-279; child-bearing,

- 275, 822; childhood, 241, 271, 822; children taught, 712; def., 818, 822; good conduct, 185; illustrated, 717-719; importance, 697; of later life, 822; marriage, 211; *pañcha nitya karma*, 185; purpose, 269; scripture on, 278-279; synopsis/art, 717-719; temple, 305; vital to Hindus, 697. See also *Rites; Ritual*
- Sāmvat calendar:** beginning of, 664
- Samyama:** distinguished from *samādhi*, 821
- Samyutta-Nikāya:** Buddhist scripture, 580
- Sanātana Dharma:** def., 822; Hinduism, 19, 167; perpetuated through giving, 263. See *Hinduism*
- Sanatkumāra:** Murugan, 822; prayer, 69; *śaṭkṣaṇa*, 728
- Sanatkumara:** in Kailāsa Paramparā, 449, 822
- Sāñchita karma:** def., 790, 822; *satguru* and, 365; *tapas* burns, 836. See *Karma*
- Sanctum:** of the heart, 327. See also *Sanctum sanctorum*
- Sanctum sanctorum:** circumambulation, 305; def., 822; *śakti* permeates, 299. See also *Sanctum; Temple*
- Sandals:** of *guru*, 731. See also *Feet of guru; Pādapūjā*
- Sandalwood:** *bindu*, 763; def., 822; *mālā*, 795; *pūjā*, paste offered in, 813; *tilaka*, 839
- Sandhya upāsanā:** daily vigil, 257; def., 823
- Sandilya:** life and work, 665
- Sāñḍilya Upanishad:** contents, 823; *yama-niyama*, 850
- Saṅga (Saṅgam, Saṅgama):** def., 823; fellowship of devotees, 431; importance of, 524
- Saṅkalpa:** def., 823; preparation for worship, 333
- Sankar, Uday:** popularizing Hindu dance, 680
- Sankara, Adi:** Appaya Dikshita and, 509; Daśanāmī, 770; life and work, 668; Meykandar's commentators and, 553; monist, 561; philosophy, 417, 508; profile, 823; Smārtism, 27, 830; Sringeri Math, 689
- Saṅkarāchārya pīṭha:** locations of centers, 823
- Saṅkhyā:** def., 823; and *prakṛiti*, 811; of *śaḍ darśana*, 417. See also *Śaḍ darśana*
- San Mārga:** def., 823; *jñāna pāda*, 806; scripture on, 117; spiritual path, 7, 107, 447. See also *Pāda; San Marga Sanctuary; Spiritual path*
- San Marga Sanctuary:** identified, 823. See also *Iraivan Temple; Kauai Aadheenam; San Mārga; Subramuniyaswami*
- Sānnidhya:** def., 823; after worship, 333
- Sannyāsa:** def., 823; motivations, 823. See also *Holy orders; Monastic; Renunciation; Sannyāsa āśrama; Sannyāsa dharma; Sannyāsa dīkshā; Sannyāsin; Tapas*
- Sannyāsa āśrama:** def., 823; entering, 277; stage of life, 173; *vrata*, 822. See also *Āśrama dharma; Sannyāsa*
- Sannyāsa dharma:** chapter on, 343-351; def., 823-824; described, 772; qualifications, 824. See also *Sannyāsa*
- Sannyāsa dīkshā:** def., 824; guidelines for, 349; requirements, 824; taken at early age, 87; vows, 351; vs. *sannyāsa āśrama*, 277; and women, 349. See also *Dīkshā; Holy orders; Sannyāsa*
- Sannyāsa Upanishad:** contents, 824
- Sannyāsin:** def., 824. See *Swāmī*
- Sanskrit:** affirmation of faith, 407; breakdown of spoken language, 661; Chinese translations, 668; def., 824; Devanāgarī, 771; grammar, 661, 663; Jesuit compiles grammar, 675; language of Ādinātha lin-
- eage, 520; literary revival, 662; scriptural language, 373; studied widely, 690; *Vedas*, 377; Yale chair, 678
- Sant:** def., 824; saints, 359
- Sāntikalā:** sphere of peace, *kalā*, 788
- Santosha (contentment):** def., 824, 850; ethical guideline, 189. See also *Yama-niyama*
- Sāntyatitakalā:** sphere beyond peace, *kalā*, 788
- Sarada Devi, Sri:** dates, 678
- Śaraṇa:** def., 824. See also *Śivaśaraṇa*
- Sarasvati:** def., 824; Śakti, 820. See *Goddess; Śakti*
- Sarasvati, Dayananda:** life and work, 677
- Sarasvati River:** early Vedic culture, 657; and Ganges, 777; research dating, 660, 682; satellite photos, 655
- Saraswati, Chidananda:** Hindu of the Year, 686
- Saravaṇa:** def., 824; Lord Kārttikeya and, 69
- Sārdha Trīṣati Kālottara Āgama:** *Devikālottara Āgama*, 771
- Sārī:** described, 824; girl's first, 273; proper temple garb, 329; traditional home attire, 713
- Śāriraka Sūtras:** See *Brahma Sūtras*
- Śārira(s):** def., 790, 824. See *Kośas*
- Sārūpya:** attainment in *yoga pāda*, 760
- Sarvabhādra:** def., 824. See also *Samarasa; Śivasāyujya*
- Sarva Brahman:** precept to teach children, 709
- Sarvajñānottara Āgama:** *advaitic* viewpoint, 550; contents, 824
- Sarvam Śivamayam:** Yogaswami, 540
- Sarvāṅgāsana:** *āsana*, 759
- Sarva Seva Sangh:** established, 683
- Śashtāṅga pranāma:** same as *aṣṭāṅga pranāma*, 811
- Sāstra:** def., 824. See *Āgama Sāstra; Baudhāyana Dharma Sāstra; Dharma Sāstra; Manu Dharma Sāstra; Pratyabhijñā Sāstra; Puṇya Sāstra; Śilpa Sāstra; Spanda Sāstra*
- Śāstri:** def., 824; described, 361
- Sat:** def., 824; Tat Sat, 837
- Satakarni:** destroys Śaka kingdom, 665
- Satan:** def., 824; dualism, 540; none, 155. See also *Abrahamic religions; Hell*
- Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa:** contents, 825
- Śatavāhana dynasty:** timeline, 665
- Satchidānanda:** See *Parāśakti*
- Satchidananda, Swami:** born, 681; Hindu of the Year, 686; life and works, 690; Light of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS), 685; visiting America, 683
- Satguru:** *Āgamas*, 492; children taught to follow, 710; creed belief, 481; def., 825; described, 359; *dharma saṅga*, 714; grace of, 524; guide in *yoga pāda*, 113; guiding *sannyāsins*, 345; initiation from, 349, 365; need for, 151, 185, 365; spiritual leader, 357; unique function, 365. See also *Bodhinatha Veylanswami; Grace; Guru; Pādapūjā; Subramuniyaswami*
- Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami:** See *Bodhinatha Veylanswami*
- Satputra mārga:** *kriyā pāda*, 111, 806. See *Mārga; Kriyā pāda*
- Sattva:** *guṇa*, 780; Śiva as Vishṇu, 49; and *trīśūla*, 733
- Satya (truthfulness):** def., 825, 850; guideline, 187. See also *Truth; Yama-niyama*



- Satyāgraha:** Gandhi's noncooperation strategy, 681
- Satyaloka (Brahmaloka):** area of Śivaloka, 740-741; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 825; *loka*, 794; *sahasrāra chakra*, 742, 747. See also *Śivaloka*
- Śaucha (purity):** cultivation, 183; def., 825, 850; guideline, 187; importance, 357; and impurity, in Hindu culture, 814; saint, sage and *satguru*, 359. See also *Yama-niyama*
- Savikalpa samādhi:** def., 825; Parāśakti, experience of, 809; Satchidānanda, 113, 577. See also *Nirvikalpa samādhi*; *Parāśakti*; *Rāja yoga*; *Samādhi*; *Sāyujya*;
- Sāyujya:** def., 825; *jñānī* and, 524; Pāśupata, 500; Śivasāyujya, 365, 829; attainment of *jñāna*, union with God, 760. See also *Samādhi*; *Śivasāyujya*
- Scepter:** def., 825; of rulers, Kārttikeya empowers, 71
- School(s):** banning corporal punishment, 687, 689; inner-plane, 127. See also *Education*
- Science(s):** Gaṇeśa, patron of, 65; *kalā*-64, 788-789; in scripture, 387
- Scientology:** belief, 613
- Scriptural references:** dating by precession of equinoxes, 654
- Scriptures:** Buddhist, 580; Christian, 604; Confucian, 592; def., 825; Hindu, see *Hindu scriptures*; Jain, 583; Judaic, 603; Shinto, 595; Sikh, 586; Taoist, 589; Zoroastrian, 598
- Sculpture:** Indian medieval style, 666. See also *Icon*; *Image*; *Mūrthi*
- A Search in Secret India:** Paul Brunton, 682
- Second World** def., 825. See *Antarloka*
- Secrets:** *guru* protocol, 363. See also *Confidentiality*
- Sectarianism:** identity marks, 261; Smārtism discourages, 830; *tilaka*, 839; vs. universalism, 842. See also *Ecumenism*; *Hindu solidarity*; *Sects*
- Sects:** Buddhist, 580; Christian, 604; Confucian, 592; Hindu, see *Hindu sects*. See also *Denomination*; *Sectarianism*
- Secular humanism:** beliefs, 629-630. See also *Secular movements*
- Secular movements:** summaries, 613-630. See *Communism*; *Drug culture*; *Ecology movement*; *Existentialism*; *Materialism*; *New Age*; *Secular humanism*. See also *Faiths*; *Religions*
- Seed karma(s):** def., 825; frying, 13, 790. See also *Karma*
- See God everywhere:** Yogaswami, 540
- Seer(s):** def., 825; lineage of, 395; *ṛishi*, 361, 817
- Sekkilar, Saint:** life and work, 670; *Periyapurāṇam*, 669, 810
- Self (God):** def., 825; attainability, 11; nature of, 13, 51, 83; as reference point, xxxvi; *satguru* leads one to, 365; scripture on, 14; Śiva Advaita, 508; Śiva is, 49; seeking after worship, 307; sought at death, 101; *Yajur Veda*, 88. See also *Absolute Being*; *God*; *I*; *Paraśiva*; *Self Realization*; *Soul*; *Viśvagrāsa*
- Self-control:** and good conduct, 181; needed for peace on earth, 203. See also *Discipline*; *Sādhana*; *Will-power*; *Yama-niyama*
- Selfishness:** confusion created by, 95; lower nature, 107; Naraka, 802; *rasātala chakra*, 745, 766, 816; re-
- moving through *kavadi*, 289. See also *Ego*; *I*; *Self*
- Selflessness:** in marriage, 225; monastic goal, 345; results of, 95. See also *Ego*; *I*; *Self*
- Selfless service:** and path of enlightenment, 107
- Self Realization, God Realization:** *abhaya* is fruit of, 753; in Advaita Siddhānta, 755; *annamaya kośa* needed, 792; *anupāya*, 758; attempting at death, 87; def., 825; enlightenment, 774; evolution after, 81; God Realization (terms compared), 778; grace, 779; *jñāna* is fruit of, 107; Kashmir Śaivism, 791; life's purpose, 7, 13; *nirvāṇī* and *upadeśi*, 804; Paraśiva, 809; *purushārtha*, 814-815; San Mārga leads to, 823; *sannyāsa dīkshā*, 824; *satguru* guides, 363; scripture speaks on, 14-15, 88-89; soul's natural evolution, 775; Śivasāyujya, 829. See also *Destiny*; *Nirvikalpa samādhi*; *Realization*; *Samādhi*; *Savikalpa samādhi*; *Self*; *Viśvagrāsa*
- Self Realization Fellowship:** Paramahansa Yoga-nanda, 680
- Self-reflection:** def., 825; leads to oneness with God, 11
- Sembiyan Ma Devi:** Chola queen, temple builder, 669
- Semitic religions:** See *Abrahamic religions*
- Sen, Keshab Chandra:** founding Brahma Samaj, 677
- Senses (five):** and faith, 776; *indriya*, 784; *manomaya kośa* is seat of, 792; physical plane, 125; *tattvas*, 838. See also *Clairvoyance*; *Māyā*
- Sense withdrawal:** *pratyāhāra*, 816; *yoga*, described, 113
- Sepoy Mutiny:** first Indian Revolution, 678
- September 11:** World Trade Center destroyed, 690
- Serpent power:** See *Kuṇḍalinī*
- Service:** See *Charity*; *Karma yoga*; *Sevā*
- Sevā:** in *charyā pāda*, 109; def., 825. See *Karma yoga*
- Seval:** described, 825; symbol, 731
- Seven steps:** of marriage rite, 273. See also *Saṃskāras*
- Sex:** education for children, 241; Hindu view, 217, 219; *kāma*, 815; in marriage, 219, 233; purity, 187. See also *Brahmacharya*; *Kāma*; *Procreation*; *Sexuality*; *Transmutation*
- Sexuality:** Hindu outlook, 825; purity-impurity, 814. See also *Homosexuality*; *Sex*
- Shaḍ darsana:** descriptions, 826; scriptures of, 393. See *Mīmāṃsā*; *Nyāya*; *Sāṅkhya*; *Vaiśeshika*; *Vedānta*; *Yoga*. See also *Hindu solidarity*; *Sectarianism*
- Shamanism:** def., 826. See also *Faiths*; *Magic*
- Shame:** *niyama (hri)*, 189, 850; obstacle, 255. See also *Yama-niyama*
- Shankar, Ravi:** National Orchestra of India, 681
- Shaṅmata sthāpanāchārya:** def., 826. See *Sankara*
- Shanmuga Desika:** 1981 meeting, 568; 2002 meeting, 567; gift of earrings, 569
- Shaṅmukha:** def., 826. See *Kārttikeya*
- Shaṅmukha Gāyatri:** identified, 826
- Sharma, Arvind:** Harvard course, "Common Misconceptions in the Study of Indic Civilization," 689
- Sharma, B.G.:** sacred paintings published, 687
- Sharma, Indra:** sacred paintings published, 687
- Shashtyābda pūrti:** def., 826; marriage renewal at age sixty, 277
- Shaṅkoṇa:** def., 826; symbol, 728

- Shaṣṭhala:** def., 826; sixfold Vira Śaiva path, 504
- Shaven head:** ascetic, 345; *chūḍākaraṇa*, 718; *sannyāsa* initiation, 349. See *Chūḍākaraṇa*; *Sannyāsa dīkshā*
- Shaving beard:** *keśānta*, 791, 822. See *Keśānta*
- Sheath(s):** def., 826. See *Kośas*
- Sheet anchor:** of Indian history, 655, 686
- Shintoism:** adherents, 595; beliefs, 597; founding, 595; goals, 596; path of attainment, 596; scriptures of, 595; summary, 595-597. See also *Far Eastern religions*
- Shoḍaśa upachāras:** sixteen acts of worship, 493
- Shrine room:** See *Home shrine*
- Shūm-Tyeif:** def., 826
- Shyamalan, M. Night:** movies with Hindu themes, 689
- Siddha(s):** def., 827; described, 361; Gorakshanatha, 495, 511; Kadaitswami, 449, 453, 678; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449, 788; Kashmir Śaivism, 506; perceiving a perfect world, 540; Tirumular, 494-495, 840. See also *Siddha Mārga*; *Siddha Siddhānta*; *Siddha yoga*; *Siddhis*
- Siddha Mārga:** def., 827. See *Siddha Siddhānta*
- Siddhānta:** basis of Vedānta, 555; def., 827, 833; extolled, 395; without Vedānta, 566
- Siddhāntas:** Jain scripture, 583
- Siddhānta śravaṇa:** def., 827, 850; *niyama*, 189. See also *Pāṭhaka*; *Yama-niyama*
- Siddhāntins:** pluralists deny *mahāvākyas*, 561
- Siddha Siddhānta (Gorakshanātha Śaivism, Siddha Mārga, Siddha Yogī Sampradāya):** def., 799, 827; founding, 669; history, philosophy, 510-513; lineage of, 520; Sadyojyoti, 495; school of Śaivism, 21, 819-820; *siddha yogis*, 511; summary, 515. See also *Gorakshanatha*; *Śaivism's six schools*; *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati*; *Viveka Mārtaṇḍa*
- Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati:** Ādinātha scripture, 520; contents, 827; Gorakshanatha, 510, 778; *smṛiti*, 389; written, 670; *yoga* text, 393. See also *Siddha Siddhānta*
- Siddha yoga:** def., 827; Gorakshanatha, 447, 510-512, 779; Gorakshanātha Śaivism, 510-512; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; Kashmir Śaivism, 506, 791; Śaiva sects, 21; Śaiva Siddhānta, 494; *Tirumantīram*, treatise of, 395, 839. See also *Siddhis*
- Siddha Yoga Dham:** Muktananda, 681. See also *Siddha yoga*
- Siddha Yogī Sampradāya:** See *Siddha Siddhānta*
- Siddhi(s):** def., 827; *jīvanmukta*, 786; Kadaitswami's, 453; Nāthas, 519, 803; and San Mārga, 823; Tirumular's, 451. See also *Clairaudience*; *Clairvoyance*; *Powers*; *Siddha*; *Siddha Mārga*; *Siddha yoga*
- Sight, divine:** See *Divine sight*
- Sikhara:** def., 827
- Sikh gurus:** Arjun, 674; Govind Singh assassinated, 675; listed, 827; Nanak, 672; Tegh Bahadur killed by Muslims, 675. See also *Sikhism*
- Sikhism:** adherents, 586; beliefs, 588; def., 827; founder, founding, 586, 827; goals, 587; Golden Temple completed, 674; origins, 672; path of attainment, 587; scripture of, 586; sects, 586; summary, 586-588; *Vedas*, 417. See also *Ādi Granth*; *Eastern religions*; *Sikh gurus*; *Sikh kingdoms*; *Sikhs*
- Sikh kingdoms:** timeline, 672-677
- Sikhs:** bid for homeland, 677; and Indira Gandhi, 685; *kumbha mela* clash, 676; losses to British, 678; North American crematorium, 688. See also *Sikhism*
- Śikshā Vedānga:** described, 828; *Vedānga*, 845. See also *Vedāngas*
- Silappathikaram:** written, 665
- Silence:** See *Mauna*
- Śilpani:** works of art, 264
- Śilpa Śāstra:** manuals, 827
- Śilpi:** scriptures on, 264, 308
- Simantonnayana:** def., 828; described, 822; prenatal rite, 275. See also *Pregnancy*; *Saṁskāras*
- Sin:** def., 828; evil and, 775; Hindu view, 151-159, 828; release from, 71; scripture on, 146-147, 160-161; Semitic concept, 828. See also *Absolution*; *Adharma*; *Evil*; *Evolution of soul*; *Hell*; *Pāpa*
- Sind region:** Muslim conquest, 668
- Singh, Dr. Karan:** life and accomplishments, 682
- Singh, Govind:** assassination, 675
- Singh, Ranjit:** defeated, 677
- Singing:** temple, 307. See also *Bhajana*; *Chanting*; *Hymns*; *Kīrtana*
- Śishya:** def., 828; described, 361; and *satguru*, 365. See also *Devotee*; *Guru-śishya system*
- Sisters:** protecting and caring for, 247
- Śiva (Supreme God):** abides in all, 21, 123, 129; Absolute Being, 51; absolutely real, 131; affirmation of faith, 409; Āgamas on, 43; *ahimsā* belief, 197; is All (and all is Śiva), 521; as friend, 113; as master, 109; as parent, 111; *ātman*, 492; cause in Śaiva Siddhānta, 431; cosmic body, 508, 511; cosmic dissolution, 439; and His creation, 63, 79, 123, 145, 433, 508; creation is His nature, 538; creed beliefs, 465-469; dance, see *Śiva's cosmic dance*; def., 778, 828, 834; described, 49-57; destroyer, 493; and *devas*, 638; and *dharma*, 167; and evil/wrongdoers, 139, 143, 159, 437; festivals, 283, 285; forms, 57; grace, see *Grace*; Hindu perspectives, see *Dualism*; *Monism*; *Hindu sects*; *Monistic theism*; *Pluralism*; immanent, 137; impersonal, 783 (see *Parāśakti*; *Paraśiva*); Indus Valley (early worship), 658-659, 784; invoking, 313; *Ishta Devatā* (twenty-five forms), 785; Kashmir Śaivism, 506; knowers of, 366-367; life energy, 5; as Love, 33, 409, 467; love of, 336-337, 563; Mahādeva, 794; merger in, 13; mind, 53; motivator, 524; *mūrtis*, 57, 317; Namaḥ Śivāya, 403, 405; Nātha Sampradāya views, 447, 521; Pañchākshara Mantra, 401; Pāśupata views, 498-500; Pati, 810; personal, 469 (see *Parameśvara*); pervading His creation, 5, 159, 423, 433, 525; profound conception of, xviii; Rudra, 49, 818; Sadāśiva, 49, 818; *satguru*, 365; scripture speaks on, 14-15, 42, 58-59, 545; Self, 825; *shaṅkoṇa*, 728; Siddha Siddhānta, 511-512; silent sage, 723; soul, 23, 81, 425; soul and, monism vs. pluralism, 435, 536-537; soul's destiny, 7, 13, 535-537; soul's essence, 83, 522; soul's origin, 5; Tryambaka, 841; union or separateness, 535; union with, see *Yoga*; unmanifest, 465 (see *Paraśiva*); Vira Śaivism, 504; visions, 55; worship of, see *Worship*; not wrathful, 159. See also *God*; *Pati-paśu-pāśa*; *Perfec-*

- tions; *Śaivism*; *Self*; *Śiva consciousness*; *Śivajñāna*; *Śivamaya*; *Sivanadiyar*; *Śiva-Śakti*; *Śivasāyujya*; *Śiva's cosmic dance*; *Śiva tattva*; *Śruti*
- Śiva Advaita (Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita)**: Appaya Dikshita, 672, 758; explanation, 828; history and philosophy, 507-510; school of Śaivism, 21, 819; Srikantha, 507-508, 670; summary, 515. See also *Śaivism's six schools*
- Śivachaitanya**: def., 828. See also *Śivasāyujya*
- Śivāchāra**: among *pañchāchāra*, 807; def., 828
- Śivachariar, Sambamurthy**: Hindu of the Year, 689
- Śivāchārya**: def., 828; training and duties, 319
- Śiva consciousness**: def., 828. See *Samarasa*; *Sarvabhādra*; *Sāyujya*; *Śivachaitanya*; *Śivasāyujya*
- Sivadaya**: life, 676
- Śiva Dṛiṣṭi**: authorship, 828
- Sivaji**: overcomes Muslims, restoring Hindu rule, 674
- Śivaji festival**: Bal Gangadhar Tilak, 680. See *Festivals*
- Śivajñāna**: saints proclaimed, 561. See also *Śiva*; *Jñāna*
- Śivajñānabodham**: contents, 553-555, 828; contrasted with commentaries, 553-555; described, 552; Meykandar, 496, 798; pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta, 671; verses, 553-555. See *Meykandar*
- Śivakarnāmṛita**: contents, 829
- Śivālaya**: def., 829. See *Temple*
- Śivaliṅga**: and *bilva* leaves, 734; def., 829; scriptures speak on, 322-323, 336-337; Paraśiva, 57; Śaiva Siddhānta, 431; *sphaṭika*, 831; *svayambhū*, 835; symbol, 734; Tamil tradition, 524; Vira Śaivism, 501. See also *Image (of Divinity)*; *Liṅgāchāra*; *Liṅga Dikshā*; *Paraśiva*
- Śivaloka (causal plane, heaven, Third World)**: Charts Resource, 740-741; creation of, 123; creed belief, 477; def., 765, 781, 794, 829; described, 129; heaven, 781; realms of, 740-741; Śiva's creation, 123; soul's evolution, 87. See *Janaloka*; *Satyaloka*; *Tapoloka*. See also *Causal body*; *Heaven*; *Lokas*; *Three worlds*
- Śivamaya**: def., 829; Siddhāntin view, 556. See also *Cosmic cycle*; *Māyā*; *Monistic theism*; *Śiva*; *Three worlds*
- Śivamayakośa**: def., 829; *kośa*, 792. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Paramēśvara*; *Viśvagrāsa*
- Sivanadiyar**: def., 829
- Sivananda, Swami**: Divine Life Society founder, born, 679; profile, 829
- Śivānubhava Maṇḍapa**: def., 829; Vira Śaivism, 502
- Śiva Purāna**: def., 829; on Śiva, 492; *smṛiti*, 830
- Śiva Rakshamaṇi Dīpikā**: identified, 829
- Śivarātri**: def., 829. See *Mahāśivarātri*
- Śiva-Śakti**: creed belief, 469; def., 829; Primal Soul, 55; *Tirumantiram* on, 57. See *Paramēśvara*; *Primal Soul*. See also *Perfections*; *Śiva*
- Śiva Saṁhitā**: contents, 829; Siddha Siddhānta, 512; *yoga* classic, 675
- Śivaśaraṇa**: def., 829; Vira Śaiva saints, 501
- Śivasāyujya**: def., 829; and *kuṇḍalini*, 793, 829; path to, 365. See also *Samādhi*; *Samarasa*; *Sarvabhādra*; *Sāyujya*; *Śiva*; *Śivachaitanya*; *Śiva consciousness*
- Śiva's cosmic dance**: dancing with Śiva, 9, 11; scriptures on, 15; symbolism, xxxix-xl, 41; Naṭarāja, 802. See also *Cosmic cycle*; *Naṭarāja*; *Śivamaya*
- Śiva Sūtra(s)**: contents, 829; date, 669; finding, 505; *yoga* text, 393
- Śiva tattva**: def., 837. See also *Śiva*; *Tattvas*
- Sivathondan, Sivathondu**: def., 829. See also *Karma yoga*; *Sevā*
- Śiva Viśiṣṭādvaita**: Śiva Advaita philosophy, 508
- Śivāya Namaḥ**: def., 403, 829
- Sivayogamuni**: identified, 830
- Sixth Sense**: movie incorporates Hindu themes, 689
- Skanda**: creed belief, 473; def., 830. See *Kārttikeya*
- Skanda Kālotara**: *Devikālotara Āgama*, 771
- Skanda Shashṭhi (six-day festival)**: described, 830; Kārttikeya, 289; major Deity festival, 283. See *Festivals*
- Skills**: *kalā*, traditional list, 788; taught to boys and girls, 245, 261
- Skin color**: not racial, 815
- Skull**: Kāpālikas, 500; penance for murder, *pāpa*, 808
- Slavery**: abolished in British Commonwealth, 677; ban on importation in US, 677; Committee for Abolition of Slave Trade, 676
- Sleep**: Antarloka, 794; gaining knowledge, 409; inner-plane schools, 127. See also *Antarloka*; *Dreams*
- Śloka**: def., 830
- Smārta**: def., 830; rope seen as a snake, 525. See also *Smārtism*
- Smārta Hinduism**: See *Smārtism*
- Smārta Sampradāya**: def., 830. See *Smārtism*
- Smārtism**: on *avatāra* doctrine, 646; described, 830; emergence, 662; goals and path, 577-578; major scriptures of, 647; personal God, 646; regions of influence, 647; on Śakti, 646; on soul and God, 647; spiritual practice, 647. See also *Hindu sects*; *Smārta Smṛiti*
- Smṛiti**: dating, 661; def. and contents, 830; devotional hymns, 393; epics and myths, 391; Müller's dating, 662; philosophy, 393; recognition of, 387; sacred literature, xiii, 387; Smārta, 27, 830; touchstone of culture, 387; *Vedas* and *Āgamas* amplified in, 389; *yoga*, 393. See *Itihāsa*; *Paddhatis*; *Purānas*; *Upavedas*; *Tirumurai*; *Vedāngas*. See also *Hindu scriptures*; *Śruti*
- Snake**: mistaking a rope for, 525; symbolism, 722
- Snare**: def., 830; desire analogy, 139
- Social changes**: adaptation, 37. See also *Society*
- Social dharma**: See *Varṇa dharma*
- Society**: Bhārata, 377; class and caste, 171; and marriage, 211; needs religious people, 35; *varṇa dharma* defined by, 844; withdrawal from, 277. See also *Dharma*; *Good company*; *Groups*; *Individuality*; *Social changes*; *Varṇa dharma*
- Socrates**: dates, 663
- Solar plexus**: *maṇipūra chakra*, 744
- Solomon, King**: fleet in India, 661
- Soma**: *amṛita*, 756; elixir, 774
- Somananda**: life and work, 830. See *Kashmīr Śaivism*
- Somanatha Śiva temple**: location, 830; Pāśupata temple, 499; plundered, 670
- Sons**: duties of eldest, 231; following in father's profession, 245
- Song**: and *Āgama* philosophy, 493; *Gāyatrī*, 778; *Sāma Veda*, 821; in secondary scriptures, 387
- Sorrow**: bound to joy, 151; obstacle, 255

- Soul (paśu):** *Āgamas*, 379, 492; *aṅga*, 757; *ātman*, 79, 760; beginningless, 560; body, see *Soul body*; bringing into birth, 239; created and uncreated, 544; creation, 435, 475; creed belief, 475; death transition, 277; def., 79, 809, 830; described, 55, 79-85; destiny, 13, 81, 87, 425, 639; essence of, see *Essence*; eternal, 99; evolution, 81, 87, 107, 775; evolutionary limitations, 536; five sheaths, 79; good and evil, 141; goodness of, 137; Hindu sects' views, 576-578, 647; identity with Śiva, 83, 431, 435; individual, 784; intellect, 141; *jīva*, 535, 786; *jñāna pāda*, 115; *kriyā pāda*, 111; limitlessness, 159; merger with Śiva, see *Viśvagrāsa*; monism, 417, 423, 539, 555; monism-pluralism on, 534-537, 543-545; Nandinātha beliefs, 522; nature of, 522; Pāsupata view, 499; Primal, 812; purity, 181; reincarnation, 79, 97, 816-817; scripture on, 88; Siddhānta views, 433, 435, 437; in Śiva Advaita, 508; Śiva and, monism/pluralism, 534-537, 543-545; Śiva's child, 137; Śiva's likeness, 55, 81, 137; suffering and, 151; in Vira Śaivism, 504, 757; and world, 145, 849. See *Ātman*; *Jīva*; *Purusha*. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Monism-pluralism in Śaiva Siddhānta*; *Pati-paśu-pāśa*; *Primal Soul*; *Reincarnation*; *Sākshin*; *Soul body*
- Soul body (ānandamaya kośa, causal body, kāraṇa śarīra, karmāśaya):** Charts Resource, 741; creation by Śiva, 435; def., 757, 765, 790, 792, 830; described, 129; evolution of, 775; *kāraṇa śarīra*, 790; *śarīra*, 824; Śiva and, 79-83; temporarily differentiated, 423, 425, 435, 536. See also *Kāraṇa chitta*; *Kośas*; *Śivaloka*; *Soul*
- Souls Are Beginningless:** booklet, 567
- Sound:** def., 831. See also *Nāda*
- Soundless Sound:** Śiva *tattva* (Paranāda), 837
- Space:** cosmic dissolution, 131, 439; *mūlādhāra chakra*, 744
- Spanda:** in Kashmir Śaivism, 506
- Spanda Śāstra (Spanda Kārikā):** contents, 831; Kashmir Śaivism, 506
- Spanish Armada:** destroyed by British, 674
- Spanish influenza:** epidemic's toll, 681
- Spanish Inquisition:** beginning, 672
- Spark:** def., 831; emanation analogy, 419, 774; soul and Śiva, 549. See also *Analogies*; *Fire*
- Sparsā tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Sphaṭika Śivaliṅga:** def., 831. See *Iraivan Temple*
- Spinoza, Baruch:** contribution, 831; pantheist, 419
- Spiritual evolution:** def., 831. See *Evolution of soul*
- Spiritualism:** trance, 840
- Spirituality:** cognition and Kārttikeya, 69; consciousness and peace, 203; development and temple worship, 327; discipline, 11, 195; growth and suffering, 151; honored, 357; knowledge and *vel*, 71; lineage of *gurus*, 449; mysticism, 800; path of striving, 7; practice, Hindu, 647; preceptor relationship, 363; qualities, 39; rites of passage, 269. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Spiritual path*; *Spiritual unfoldment*
- Spiritual path:** eight successive steps, xxxiii; four successive stages, 526; many, 573-647; San Marga, 823. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Mārga*; *Pāda*; *Paths of attainment*; *San Marga*; *Sādhana*; *Spiritual unfoldment*
- Spiritual unfoldment:** *adhyātma vikāśa*, 754; catalyst, 765; def., 831; foundation for, xxxiv; *jñāna pāda*, 787; *karma* catalyzes, 95; in marriage, 227; obstacles, 255; *padma* symbolizes, 725; *sādhana*, 818; *śaktipāta*, 821; *seval* symbolizes, 731. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Kuṅḍalīni*; *Sādhana*; *Spiritual path*; *Spirituality*; *Tapas*
- Spokes of a wheel:** analogy, 275, 377. See also *Analogies*
- Spouse:** def., 831; and joint family, 231, 787; loyalty, 219; selecting, 229
- Śrāddha:** death commemoration, 277; def., 831; timing of, 831. See *Death*; *Samskāras*
- Śrāddhā:** def., 831; faith, 776. See also *Pañcha śrāddhā*; *Śrāddhā dhāraṇā*
- Śrāddhā dhāraṇā:** def., 831; Śaivite creed, 463-487. See also *Creed*
- Śrauta Sūtras/Śāstras:** contents, 831; *Kalpa Vedāṅga*, 789; *smṛiti*, 389; *Vedāṅga*, 845; *yajña* rites in, 849
- Śri:** Śakti, 821
- Śri Chakra:** described, 850; Śakta *yantra*, 23, 820, 850
- Srikantha:** and Appaya Dikshita, 508-509; life and work, 670; monistic theist, 537; profile, 832; Śiva Advaita, 507-508, 670. See *Śiva Advaita*
- Śrikrishṇakīrtan:** written, 672
- Śrikula:** Śakti, Goddess family, 821
- Srikumara:** life and work, 832; Śaiva Siddhānta, 496
- Sri Lanka:** Buddhism in, 664; civil war, 685; Dominion status, self-government, 683; early histories, 667; and Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; location, 832; Sinhalese kingdom founded, 663; Yogaswami, 455
- Śrīmad Bhāgavatam:** See *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*
- Srinagar:** and Kashmir Śaivism, 505; location, 832
- Srinatha:** identified, 832; and monistic theism, 505
- Sringeri Math:** Sri Bharati Tirthaswami, 689
- Sri Nathji temple:** Manjalpur Mandir, 688
- Śrī pādūkā:** identified, 832. See *Pādūkā*, *Tiruvadi*
- Śrī Rudram:** identified, 832; at Mahāśivarātri, 285; popular in diaspora, 691
- Śriṣṭi:** create, emit, 546; Naṭarāja's drum, 803
- Śri Vaishṇava sect:** founded, 669
- Śrotra tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Śruti:** amplified in *smṛiti*, 387; dating, 375, 379; def., 832; discussion, 373-381; orally conveyed, 373; scripture speaks on, 382-383; synopsis, 832. See *Āgamas*; *Vedas*. See also *Hindu scriptures*; *Smṛiti*
- Stages:** attainment in Kashmir Śaivism, 507; of inner progress, 481; life and *dharma*, 173; of manifestation, thirty-six *tattvas*, 123
- Stars:** influence, 259; *jjyotisha*, 787; *nakshatra*, 801; *ṛita* guides, 169
- States of mind:** See *Five states of mind*
- Statue of Liberty:** India's counterpart, Tiruvalluvar, 688
- Steadfast(ness):** See *Dhṛiti*
- Steam locomotive:** built, 676
- Stein, Sir Aurel:** finds shards in Rajasthan, 682
- Steps:** eight in *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, xxxiii; must begin at beginning, xxxiii; one and nine, 524; seven in marriage rite, 273
- Sterilization:** in Hinduism, 217. See also *Sexuality*
- Sthapati:** def., 832; hereditary temple builders, 301

- Shapati, V. Ganapati:** Iraivan Temple, 686; Tiruvalluvar statue, 688. See *Iraivan*; *Tiruvalluvar*
- Sthāpatyaveda:** architecture, 389; contents, 832; *smṛiti*, 389; *Upaveda*, 843
- Sthiti:** Nāṭarāja, preservation, 803
- Sthūla śarīra:** def., 832. See *Physical body*
- Stinginess:** def., 832; obstacle, 255
- Stoics:** def., 832; pantheist, 419
- Straightforwardness:** See *Ārjava*
- Strangers:** hospitality, 263
- Strī dharma (wife's dharma):** def., 832; described, 215, 772. See also *Dharma*; *Purusha dharma*; *Wife*
- Stubbornness:** dancing reluctantly with Śiva, 9
- Student:** *brahmachārī*, 764; first stage in *āśrama dharma*, 173. See also *Brahmacharya āśrama*; *Study*
- Study:** commencement rite, 271. See also *Brahmacharya āśrama*; *Samśkāras*; *Student*
- Subāla Upanishad:** contents, 832
- Subconscious cleansing:** See *Vāsanā dāha tantra*
- Subconscious mind:** aura reflects, 761; Charts Resource, 739-740; conscience, 767; def., 798; dross and *satguru*, 365; impressed by rites of passage, 269; one of five states, 798; and sin, 828; subliminal traits, 255; *vāsanā*, 844. See also *Astral body*; *Five states of mind*; *Emotions*; *Instinctive mind*; *Memory*; *Vāsanā dāha tantra*
- Subha muhūrta:** def., 832; morning worship and *sādhana*, 259. See also *Auspiciousness*; *Muhūrta*
- Subjective:** def., 832; world, 125
- Subliminal:** def., 832; traits, 255, 798
- Subramanya:** def., 833. See *Kārttikeya*
- Subramuniya:** def., 833
- Subramuniyaswami, Sivaya (Gurudeva):** Bharata natyam revived in temples, 684; books authored, 526; Himalayan Academy, 683; Hindu Heritage Endowment, 686; HINDUISM TODAY, 684; Innersearch programs, 689; Iraivan Temple, 686; Jagadāchārya, 685; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449, 683; life and works, 833; meaning of name, 833; ordination, 455; passes away, 690; *satguru*, 449, 683; Shūm-Tyēif, 826; teaching mission, 681; United Nations' U Thant Peace Award, 688. See also *Dancing with Śiva*; *Guru*; *Iraivan Temple*; *Kailāsa Paramparā*; *Kauai Aadheenam*; *Lemurian Scrolls*; *Living with Śiva*; *Loving Gaṇeśa*; *Maṭhavāsi Śāstras*; *Merging with Śiva*; *Saiva Siddhanta Church*; *Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order*; *Satguru*
- Substance:** def., 813, 833; Primal, see *Parāśakti*
- Substratum:** def., 833. See *Parāśakti*
- Subsubconscious mind (vāsanā chitta):** Charts Resource, 739-740; def., 798. See also *Five states of mind*; *Vāsanās*
- Subsuperconscious mind (anukāraṇa chitta):** Charts Resource, 739-740; def., 798, 833; *kriyā*, 115. See also *Five states of mind*; *Intuitive mind*
- Subtle body (astral body, liṅga śarīra, sūkshma śarīra):** and *chakras*, 766; Charts Resource, 739-743; cognitive (mental) body, 767, 798; and death, 770; def., 759, 784, 833, 834; *devas*, 771; evolution between births, 95, 770; *kośas* comprising, 792; *manomaya kośa*, 796; *mantra*, 796; and *nāḍīs*, 801; *prāṇic* body, 812; *śarīra*, 824; *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati*, 827; *sūkshma śarīra*, 723. See *Cognitive body*; *Instinctive-intellectual body*; *Prāṇic body*. See also *Antarloka*; *Kośas*
- Subtle plane:** def., 833. See *Antarloka*
- Suchi of Magadha:** birth, 661
- Śuddha avasthā:** def., 833. See *Avasthā*; *Evolution of soul*; *Moksha*; *Self Realization*; *Vīsvagrāsa*. See also *Śuddha māyā*; *Śuddha state*; *Śuddha tattvas*
- Śuddha Advaita Vedānta:** Vallabhacharya, 673, 843-844
- Śuddha māyā:** actinic, 754; *śuddha tattvas*, 837. See also *Śuddha avasthā*; *Śuddha state*
- Śuddha Śaiva(s):** *Tirumantiram* verse, 550
- Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta (Advaita Siddhanta):** Arumuga Navalar, 676; def., 755, 833; philosophy, 395; *Tirumantiram* on, 33, 381, 494. See *Monistic theism*
- Śuddha state:** pluralistic view, 535. See also *Śuddha avasthā*; *Śuddha māyā*; *Śuddha tattvas*
- Śuddhāśuddha tattvas:** def., 837
- Śuddha tattvas:** def., 837. See also *Śuddha avasthā*; *Śuddha māyā*; *Śuddha state*
- Śuddhavidyā tattva:** def., 833, 837. See also *Tattvas*
- Śūdra:** caste, 765; def., 833, 844; *dharma*, 171. See also *Varṇa dharma*
- Suffering:** creation of, 157; *karma*, 139; purpose, 151; scripture on, 160-161; and sin, 153; source, 137. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Experience*; *Karma*
- Suicide:** consequences, 101; def., 833; Malaysian Hindus, 691; *prāṇatyāga*, 812. See also *Death*; *Prāyopaveśa*; *Reincarnation*; *Soul*; *Terminal illness*
- Sūkshma śarīra:** def., 834. See *Subtle body*
- Śukla Yajur Veda:** *Yajur Veda*, 850
- Sūkta(s):** *Rig Vedic* hymns, 817. See *Rig Veda*
- Śulba Śāstras/Sutras:** def., 834; *Kalpa Vedāṅga*, 389, 789; *smṛiti*, 389; *Vedāṅga*, 845. See *Kalpa Vedāṅga*
- Sultan of Delhi:** Muhammedan, 671
- Sun:** Sūrya, 834; symbolism, 722, 732
- Sundaranathar:** identified, 834. See *Tirumular*
- Sundarar, Saint:** *bhakti* movement, 494; life and work, 669; Nalvar, 801; profile, 834; *Tirumurai*, 669, 840
- Śuṅga dynasty:** timeline, 664-665
- Sunnis:** Islamic sect, 607
- Śūnya:** Buddhism, 582; in Vīra Śaivism, 504
- Śūnya Sampādane:** contents, 834; *smṛiti*, 830; Vīra Śaiva scripture, 504
- Superconscious mind:** causal plane, 129; Charts Resource, 739-740; conscience, 768; def., 798; good and evil, 141; good conduct, 157; Satchidānanda, 825; soul, 79; *yoga*, 115. See also *Five states of mind*; *Three phases of mind*
- Supernova:** firefly not comprehending, 538
- Suprabheda Āgama:** contents, 834
- Supreme God:** def., 834. See *God*; *Śiva*
- Surdas:** life and work, 393, 673, 834
- Surgery:** father of, 662
- Surinam:** Hindu exodus, 684
- Surrender:** def., 834; *prapatti*, 812; *tapas* leads to, 836
- Sūrya:** importance, 834; Konarak temple, 671; Smārtism, 27; symbol, 732; Tai Pongal, 291

- Suryavarman II, King:** builds Angkor Wat, 670
- Sushumṇā (nāḍi):** Ardhnanārisvara, 758; *daṇḍa*, 770; def., 834; *kuṇḍalinī*, 793; monastic, 347; *namaskāra*, 802; Śakti, 820; spiritual unfoldment, 831; *tantra*, 836; *tantrism*, 836; *triśūla*, 733. See also *Energies*; *Iḍā nāḍi*; *Piṅgalā nāḍi*; *Rāja yoga*
- Susupti:** subsuperconsciousness, 768
- Susruta:** father of surgery, 662
- Suśruta Saṁhitā:** on abortion, 753; *āyurveda*, 762
- Sutala chakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742, 744, 746-747; location, 766; def., 834; Naraka, 802; retaliatory jealousy, 744. See also *Chakras*; *Naraka*
- Sūta Saṁhitā:** contents, 834
- Sūtra(s):** dating, 660; def., 834; structure, 834
- Sutta-Nipāṭta:** Buddhist scripture, 580
- Svadharmā (personal dharmā):** def., 810, 834; described, 175, 772; God's law, 167. See *Chaturdharma*
- Svādhishthāna chakra:** Charts Resource, 740-742, 744, 746-747; def., 834; location, 766; reason, 744. See also *Chakras*; *Reason*
- Svādhyāya:** def., 834; guideline for parents, 714; *niyama* (Patanjali), 850. See also *Yama-niyama*
- Svānubhūti:** evolution of the soul, 775
- Svapna:** astral consciousness, 768. See also *Dreams*; *Sleep*
- Svarga:** def., 834. See *Svarloka*
- Svarloka:** area of astral plane, 760; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 835; *maṇipūra chakra*, 744, 747; three worlds, 839. See also *Antarloka*
- Svatmarama:** *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*, 513, 672
- Svayambhū Liṅga:** def., 835. See *Śivaliṅga*
- Svāyambhuva Āgama:** identified, 835. See *Āgamas*; *Saiva Āgamas*
- Svāyambhuva Sūtra(s):** identified, 835
- Śvetāmbara:** Jain sect, 665
- Śvetāśvatara Upanishad:** contents, 835; three perfections, 545
- Swāmī (sannyāsin):** consulting, 185; def., 824, 835; described, 343, 361; disciplines, 824; honoring, 263; in *sushumṇā* current, 347; religious leaders, 351; scripture on, 353; vows, 351. See also *Daṇḍa*; *Sannyāsa*; *Vairāgi*
- Swāminārāyaṇ sect:** Sahajanandaswami, founder, 676
- Swarnamukhi, Kumari:** dancer, 569
- Swarup, Ram:** Voice of India founder dies, 687
- Swastika:** ancient sun symbol, 722, 726; def., 835
- Symbol(s):** power of, 721-722; of Saivism, 721-735. See also *Image*; *Symbolism*
- Symbolism:** Naṭarāja, xxxix-xl. See also *Symbols*
- Syncretism:** def., 835; Hindu, 417; Smārta, *pañchāyatana pūjā*, 807; universalist, 842
- Tagore, Rabindranath:** identified, 835; Nobel Prize, 678; poet, 393
- Tai Pongal festival:** described, 835; harvest, 291. See also *Festivals*
- Tai Pusam festival:** described, 835; Kārttikeya, 283, 289. See also *Festivals*
- Taittiriya Āraṇyaka:** identified, 835
- Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa:** dating, 657
- Taittiriya Saṁhitā:** dating, 657; *Yajur Veda*, 850
- Taittiriya Upanishad:** contents, 835; emanation, 545
- Tāj Mahal:** date and cost of construction, 674
- Tala:** def., 835; Naraka, 802. See also *Chakras*; *Naraka*
- Talātala chakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742, 744, 746-747; def., 766, 835; Naraka, 802; prolonged confusion, 744. See also *Chakras*; *Naraka*
- Tali:** wedding pendant, 848
- Taliban:** US retaliates World Trade Center strike, 690
- Tamas(ic):** def., 835; *guṇa*, 780; Śiva as Rudra, 49; and *triśūla*, 733
- Tamerlane:** invades India, 672
- Tamil language:** affirmation of faith in, 407; def., 835; early development, 663; *karttanam* written, 675; Nandinātha scriptures, 520; required for Śaiva Siddhānta?, 563; and Tirumular, 494. See also *Race*; *Tamils*
- Tamil(s):** fractured into "isms," 567; monism, 566; monistic theism, 567; religion distinguished, 524. See also *Tamil language*
- Tamil Nadu:** early humankind, 657; location, 835; and Saivism, 491; Sunday Hinduism classes, 691
- Tamil Saṅgam:** dates, 659, 662
- Tāṇḍava:** *ānanda tāṇḍava*, 757; def., 836; poses, Chidambaram performance, 569. See also *Naṭarāja*
- Tanmatra:** def., 838. See also *Tattva*
- Tantra, tantrism:** *Āgamas*, 379; *āyurveda*, 259; def., 836; Śāktism, 23; Vedic methods, 255; *yogī's* tool, 511. See also *Rāja yoga*; *Śākta Tantrism*; *Tantric rites*
- Tantrāloka:** Abhinavagupta, 506; identified, 836
- Tantric rites:** Śāktism, 23, 578. See also *Tantra*
- Tao:** def., 836; *rita*, 169
- Taoism:** adherents, 589; beliefs, 591; founder, founding, 589, 662; goals, 590; path of attainment, 590; scripture of, 589; sects, 589; summary, 589-591. See also *Far Eastern religions*
- Tao te Ching:** dating, 662; Taoist scripture, 377, 589
- Tapas (austerity):** absolution of sin (*pāpa*), 808, 814, 828; Advaita Siddhānta, 755; austerity, 761; born of God, 63; *daṇḍa*, 770; def., 761, 836, 850, 851; for goodness, 7; *jivanmukta*, 786; *jñāna*, 115; Kadaitswami, 787; *karma*, 790; liberation, 151; monastic, 730; Nātha Sampradāya and, 447; *niyama*, 850; Pāsupata, 497; penance, 810; performance of, 189; purity-impurity, 814; *sannyāsin*, 824; *satguru* and, 365; *tīrthayātrā*, 839; *vel*, 71; *yoga tapas*, 113, 851. See *Asceticism*; *Penance*; *Sādhana*; *Tapasvin*; *Yama-niyama*
- Tapasvin:** def., 361, 836; *haṭha yoga*, 781; monastic, 799. See also *Tapas*
- Tapoloka:** *ājñā chakra*, 743, 747; area of Śivaloka, 740-741; Charts Resource, 740-741; def., 836; *loka*, 794; three worlds, 839. See also *Śivaloka*
- Tat:** def., 836
- Tatparyadīpikā:** contents, 836; Srikumara, 495
- Tat Sat:** def., 837-837
- Tattvapraśāsa:** Bhojadeva Paramara, 763; def., 838; and Śaiva Siddhānta, 495
- Tattvas (categories of existence):** Charts Resource, 739,



tivals

- 748; creation, 123; 837-838; groups, 837; *Mātariṅga Paramēśvara Āgama*, 797; scripture on, 133, 427; *Tirumantiram* verses, 547. See also *Atattva*; *Tattvatrayī*
- Tattvatrayī:** def., 838. See *Tattvas*; *Padārtha*; *Pati-paśu-pāśa*; *Śivamaya*
- Tayumanavar, Saint:** life and work, 675, 838; lineage of Tirumular, 547
- Teachers:** *swāmīs* as, 345. See also *Education*; *Schools*
- Tears:** of Śiva, 732
- Technical skills:** training boys, 245
- Technological age:** Śaivism in, 533
- Technology:** and religion, 37; subtle-plane training, 127
- Tejas tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Telephone:** analogy for image worship, 317
- Temple(s):** activities, 307; *Āgamas*, 373, 379, 493; attendance, 303; behavior, 305; *bilva* trees, 725; building, 301, 502; center of Śaivism, 39; Chālukya dynasty, 766; consecrated, 768; def., 838; described, 299-307; entry, 305; festivals, 283, 291; flag, 305, 733; founded by Śiva, 301; gateways, 729; Kālamukhas, 500; scripture on, 308-309; teaching and service programs needed, 691; websites, 689. See also *Home shrine*; *Iraivan Temple*; *Priests*; *Pūjāris*; *Temple worship*
- Temple worship:** common to Hindu sects, 19; creed belief, 485; culture and, 770; *Kāraṇa Āgama*, 789; Nātha Sampradāya, 447; relation to the fine arts, 261; Śaiva Siddhānta, 21, 431; scripture on, xxiv, 322-323, 576; *Vedas* used daily, 377. See also *Temples*; *Worship*
- Temporary body:** image of God, 317. See *Image*; *Mūrti*
- Ten-day festivals:** Ārdrā Darśanam, 283, 285, 758; Brahmotsava, 283, 765; Gaṇeśa Chaturthī, 283, 287, 777. See also *Festivals*
- Teotihuacan:** growth of, 665
- Teradi:** abode of Chellappan, 453; def., 838
- TERI:** warns of India's environmental degradation, 687
- Terminal illness:** def., 838; self-willed death, 101; suicide, 833-834. See *Death*; *Prāyopaveśa*; *Suicide*
- Terror:** ingested in meat, 201. See also *Ahimsā*; *Veg-itarianism*
- Terrorists:** World Trade Center destroyed, 690
- That:** def., 838
- Theater:** secondary scriptures, 387
- Theism:** belief, 419; def., 799, 838; evolutionary, 564; monistic theism, 431, 564, 799; monotheism, 799; pantheism, 33, 808; pantheism, 808; in *Vedas*, *Āgamas* and hymns of saints, 425; reality of God, 423; Śaivism, 33, 425
- Theodosius, Emperor:** Greek Hellenistic temples destroyed, 666
- Theologians:** *swāmīs* as, 345
- Theological tradition:** Hindu, 447
- Theosophical Society:** Madame Blavatsky, 677, 679
- Third eye:** See *Ājñā chakra*; *Bindu*; *Clairvoyance*
- Third World:** def., 838. See *Śivaloka*
- Thirst:** obstacle, 255
- Thomas, Saint:** and India, 665
- Three bonds:** See *Malas*
- Three hundred thirty million Gods:** all created by Śiva, 63
- Three kinds of karma:** See *Kriyamāna karma*; *Prārab-dha karma*; *Sañchita karma*
- Three perfections:** See *Perfections*
- Three phases of mind:** def., 798-799. See *Instinctive mind*; *Intellectual mind*; *Superconscious mind*. See also *Evolution of soul*; *Five states of mind*; *Mind*
- Three pillars:** of Śaivism, 39, 299
- Three stages of existence:** See *Avasthā*
- Three worlds:** Charts Resource, 739-741; communing at temple, 299, 301, 331, 477; creed belief, 477; def., 838; discussion, 123-133; at *mahāpralaya*, 131; scripture on, 132; Śiva is source, 49, 123; sustained by Śiva, 53. See *Antarloka*; *Bhūloka*; *Śivaloka*. See also *Cosmic cycle*; *Cosmos*; *Inner planes*; *Lokas*; *Śivamaya*; *Worlds*
- Thugees:** suppressed by British, 677
- Tilaka:** applied, 257; def., 839; Hindu identity, 261; importance, 839. See *Bindu*; *Tripunḍra*; *Vibhūti*
- Time:** *atattva* transcends, 760; cosmic dissolution, 439, 769; created by Śiva, 123; cyclic dissolution by Śiva, 131; Gaṇeśa, God of, 67, 175; Mahākāla, 795; *mūlād-hāra chakra*, 744; in Natarāja, 41; *sandhyā upāsana*, 823. See also *Auspiciousness*; *Cosmic cycle*; *Kalpa*; *Mahāpralaya*; *Muhūrta*; *Yuga*
- Timeline:** dating disputes, 653-655; Hindu, 656-691; how to read, 656; Vedic Age, 657-661; Western calendar, 665-691
- Timepiece:** first worn, 668
- Timing events:** *Jyotisha Vedāṅga*, 389
- Tirobhāva:** def., 803, 839. See also *Tirobhāva śakti*
- Tirobhāva śakti:** def., 839. See *Concealing grace*
- Tirodhāna śakti:** def., 839. See *Concealing grace*
- Tirtha, Rama:** spreads Vedānta, 679
- Tirthaswami, Bharati:** Sringeri Math, 689
- Tirthayātrā:** def., 839. See *Pilgrimage*
- Tirukural:** basis, 395; charity, 263; contents, 839; scriptural authority, 526; Tiruvalluvar, 839; written, 664. See also *Tiruvalluvar*
- Tirumantiram:** *Āgama* authority, 431; basis of this catechism, 395; *charyā pāda*, 109; compared to *Meykandar Śāstras*, 551; on creation, 546-547; *kriyā pāda*, 111; on *pāśam*, 560; scriptural canon, 526; on soul's destiny, 549; synopsis, 839; teaching, 494; Tirumular, 451, 662; treatise of *siddha yoga*, 395, 839; verse one hundred fifteen, 560; *yoga* text, 393. See also *Tirumular*; *Tirumurai*
- Tirumular:** on common Śaiva's lot, 566; controversial verse one hundred fifteen, 560; life and work, 664; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; Meykandar compared, 431, 552; monistic theist, 425; profile, 839; Śaiva Siddhānta, 451, 494; *siddha*, 494-495; story of, 451; Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta, 562; Sundaranathar, 834; *Tirumantiram* of, 451, 840. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*; *Tirumantiram*
- Tirumurai:** anthologized, 670; authors, 840; basis, 395; contents, 839-840; Karaikkal Ammaiyar, 669, 789; Manikkavasagar, 494, 796; monistic hymns, 537, 541; monistic Siddhānta, 537; Nalvar saints, 801; Nayanar saints, 803; Śaiva saints, 494; Sambandar, 494, 668; scriptural authority, 526; Sekkilar, 670; *smṛiti*, 830;

Sundarar, 494, 669, 834; *Tirumantiram*, 839; Tirunavukkarasu (Appar), 494, 667; *Tiruvasaḡam*, 840

**Tirunavukkarasu, Saint:** life and works, 667

**Tiruppugal:** hymns of Arunagirinathar, 673

**Tiruvadi:** symbol, 731. See also *Pāda*; *Pādapījā*

**Tiruvalluvar, Saint:** Auviayar's contemporary, 669; huge granite statue, 688; life and work, 664, 840; *Tirukural* of, 839. See also *Tirukural*

**Tiruvasaḡam:** contents, 840; Manikkavasagar, 393, 494; written, 669. See *Manikkavasagar*; *Tirumurai*

**Tiruvavaduthurai:** Tirumular, 451

**Tithe:** def., 840. See *Dāna*; *Daśamāṁśa*

**Tithis:** days of worship, 285; def., 840; names listed, 840. See also *Jyotisha*

**TM (Transcendental Meditation):** prominence, 684

**Tolerance:** *ahimsā*, 197; children learn, 709; need for, religious, 564; peace, 203

**Tolkappiyar:** records Tamil grammar, 662

**Tolkappiyam:** date composed, 659, 662

**Torah:** Judaic scripture, 377, 601

**Torment:** and Naraka, 155

**Touchstone:** def., 840; sacred literature, 387

**Toynbee:** predictions, 691

**Trade:** British trading post in India, 674; cinnamon from Kerala, 660; early dating, 658; India-Israel, 661; India-Phoenicia, 661; India-Sumeria, 658; Indus Valley-Mesopotamia, 659; monsoon winds, 664; Silk Roads, 665

**Tradition(s):** respect for all, 35; *sannyāsin* follows, 351; *smṛiti* as, 387

**Traits:** def., 840; source in *saṁskāras*, 255

**Trance:** def., 840; Śākta mediumship, 23

**Transcendence (of God):** genderless, xxxix; Plotinus taught, 665; timeless, xl; *Vedas*, 425. See also *Absolute Being*; *Atattva*; *Paraśiva*; *Perfections*; *Self*

**Transcendental Meditation (TM):** practice of, 684

**Transcendent/immanent:** Supreme Being, 521

**Transmutation:** monks, 799; nuns, 805; *sādhana*, 818. See also *Brahmacharya*; *Sex*; *Yama-niyama*

**Tribal, tribalism:** belief, 612; def., 841; Hinduism, 417; shamanism, 826. See also *Paganism*

**Trident:** def., 841. See *Trīśūla*

**Trikaśāsana:** def., 841. See *Kashmīr Śaivism*

**Trika:** Kashmir Śaivism, 506

**Trikoṇa:** def., 841; symbol, 731

**Triloka:** def., 841. See *Three worlds*

**Trimūrti:** def., 841. See *Brahmā*; *Rudra*; *Vishṇu*

**Trinidad:** Hindu prime minister, 690; Indian laborers, 678, 681

**Tripitaka:** Buddhist scripture, 580

**Triple bondage:** See *Malas*

**Tripuṇḍra:** def., 841; symbol, 724. See *Tilaka*; *Vibhūti*

**Trīśūla (trident):** def., 841; Pāśupatas, 497; symbolism, 733, 841; worshipful icon, 57

**Truth:** deep and shallow, 565; def., 841; one, 35, 379, 415; search, 151. See also *Satya*

**Truthfulness:** See *Satya*; *Truth*

**Tryambaka:** def., 841; emblems, 841; Gāyatrī Mantra, 778; Śaivism, 505

**Tukaram, Saint:** life and work, 674, 841

**Tulsidas:** identified, 841; life and work, 673

**Turiya:** and reincarnation, 817; superconscious state, 768, 798

**Turiyātīta:** transcendent state, 768

**Turkey:** early civilization, 657; Vedic Deities, 660

**Turks:** defeated Hindu confederacy, 670; Mahmud plunders Somanath Śiva temple, 670

**Turmeric:** def., 841. See also *Kuṅkuma*

**Tvak tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*

**Twain, Mark:** visits India, 680

**Tyāga:** def., 841; in *yajña*, 849. See *Renunciation*, *Vairāgya*

**Tyēif:** def., 841; *lekhaṇārtha havana*, 793



*Goddess; Śakti*

**Ucchāraṇa vyākhyā:** def., 841

**Ucchishta:** def., 841; *guru bhakti*, 363

**Udgāta:** *Sāma Veda*, priests of, 821

**Uganda:** Indians expelled, 684

**Ujjain:** location, 841

**Umā:** def., 841; in Śāktism, 23. See *Goddess; Śakti*

**Unbreakable:** movie incorporates Hindu themes, 689

**UNCED:** environmental summit, 686

**UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Hindu Cham temples, 688

**Unevolutionary perfection:** def., 841; Primal Soul, 81

**Unfoldment:** See *Spiritual unfoldment*

**United Nations:** founding, 682; U Thant Peace Award, Gurudeva, 688

**United States:** anti-Indian racial riots, 681; *āyurvedic* conference, 689; dropping atomic bombs on Japan, 682; first chair of Sanskrit and Indology, 678; first Hindu temple, 683; hallucinogenic drug culture, 684; Hindu dance in, 680; Hindu scriptures popularized, 676; Hindu Students Council, 689; immigration, see *US immigration*; Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated, 684; over eight hundred Hindu temples, 686; President Kennedy assassinated, 684; putting man on moon, 684; slave importation banned, 677; Watergate scandal, 684; World Trade Center destroyed, 690. See also *America*; *Hindu diaspora*

**Universal dharma:** See *Ṛita*

**Universal dissolution:** def., 841. See *Mahāpralaya*

**Universalism (-ist):** belief, 613; def., 841-842

**Universal love:** See *Divine love*

**Universal mind:** *ākāśa*, 756; explanation, 799; *māyā*, 797. See *Ākāśa*; *Consciousness*; *Mind*; *Satchidānanda*

**Universe:** See *Cosmos*; *World*

**Unmanifest Reality:** def., 842; described, 51. See *Atattva*

**Untouchability:** India's Constitution, 683

**Upa:** def., 842

**Upādāna kāraṇa:** cause, 766; material cause, 797

**Upadeśa, upadeśi:** def., 804, 842; *satgurus*, 359

**Upāgama(s):** augmenting *Āgamas*, 389; hundreds, 842; *smṛiti*, 389. See also *Mṛigendra Āgama*; *Parākhyā Āgama*; *Paushkara Āgama*; *Smṛiti*

**Upanayana:** def., 842. See also *Gṛantha*

**Upanayana:** described, 822; initiation, 271, 719, 842.



See *Sacred thread*; *Samśkāras*

- Upanishads (general):** *advaita* philosophy, 754; and Advaita Vedānta, 755; Aum explained in, 761; *Brahma Sūtra* and, 507, 765; Darwinism vs., 804-805; dating, 660-661, 842; described, 842; Emerson and, 676; great sayings, see *Mahāvākya*; *jīvayajña*, 849; *māyā* in, 797; *neti neti*, 804; on nonhuman birth, 804; *Rig Veda*, 817; Śaiva Siddhānta and, 497; Smārtism and, 27; translated widely, 377; Vedānta, 826, 845; *Veda*, 375, 845. See also *Śruti*; *Upanishads (individual)*; *Vedānta*; *Vedas*
- Upanishads (individual):** See *Advayatāraka Upanishad*; *Aitareya Upanishad*; *Āruṇeya Upanishad*; *Ātma Upanishad*; *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*; *Çhāndogya Upanishad*; *Devī Upanishad*; *Gaṇapati Upanishad*; *Goraksha Upanishad*; *Īśa Upanishad*; *Jābāla Upanishad*; *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa Upanishad*; *Kaivalya Upanishad*; *Kaṭha Upanishad*; *Kaushītaki Upanishad*; *Kena Upanishad*; *Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad*; *Maitrī Upanishad*; *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*; *Mukti Upanishad*; *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*; *Nārada Parivrājaka*; *Narasinha Pūrvatāpaniya*; *Paiṅgala Upanishad*; *Prāṇāgnihotra Upanishad*; *Prasna Upanishad*; *Sāṅḍilya Upanishad*; *Sannyāsa Upanishad*; *Subāla Upanishad*; *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*; *Taittirīya Upanishad*; *Upanishads*; *Varuha Upanishad*; *Yājñavalkya Upanishad*; *Yogatattva Upanishad*. See also *Upanishads (general)*
- Upāsana:** children taught, 711; def., 823, 842; religious practice, 185, 257; *sannyāsin's*, 824; *Vedas* guide, 377
- Upasarga:** def. and lists, 842; twenty obstacles, 255
- Upastha tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Upanveda:** contents, 842-843; *smṛiti*, 389, 830. See *Arthaveda*; *Āyurveda*; *Dhanurveda*; *Gāndharvaveda*; *Kāma Sūtra*; *Sthāpatyaveda*. See also *Smṛiti*
- Upāya:** def., 842-843; Kashmir Śaivism, 507
- US immigration:** first Indians, 676; Indian citizens excluded, 681; quota for Asians, 685; racial qualifications canceled, 684; statistics, 684-685. See also *United States*
- USSR:** Communist leadership collapses, 685
- Utpaladeva:** life and work, 843
- U Thant Peace Award:** awarded to Gurudeva, 688
- Utsava:** children taught, 711; def., 843; religious practice, 185
- Utsavaka:** def., 843. See also *Festivals*
- Uttaraphala:** *karma*, after-effect, 790
- Uttarāphalguni nakshatra:** Naṭarāja worship, 285



**Vachanas:** def., 843; of Vira Śaivism, 393, 503-504

**Vadakalai:** Vaishṇava sect, 671

**Vagbhata:** writings, 667

**Vāgdāna:** betrothal, 273; def., 843. See *Samśkāras*

**Vāhana:** def., 843; and *dhvajastambha*, 773; *haṁsa*, 781; *mayūra*, 797; *Mūshika*, 800; *Nandi*, 725, 802

**Vaidya:** *āyurveda*, def., 762, 843

**Vaikāsi Viśākhā festival:** described, 843; Kārttikeya, 289; major Deity festival, 283. See also *Festivals*

**Vaikharī:** in *Tirumantiram*, 547

**Vaikunṭha:** def., 843. See *Vaiṣṇavism*

**Vairāgi(s):** def., 843; Mahāśivarātri, 285. See also *Swāmi*

**Vairāgya:** def., 843. See also *Renunciation*

**Vaiśeshika:** def., 843; described, 826; of *śaḍ darsana*,

417. See also *Śaḍ darsana*

**Vaiṣṇava(s):** Alvar saints, 667; def., 843; *vairāgi's*,

*kumbha mela* battle, 675. See also *Vaiṣṇavism*

**Vaiṣṇava Āgamas:** revelations, 379. See also *Pāñcharātra Āgama*; *Vaikāśana Āgamas*

**Vaiṣṇava Hinduism:** See *Vaiṣṇavism*

**Vaiṣṇavism:** *Āgamas*, 379; *avatāra* doctrine, 646; described, 25, 843; goals, 577; on God, 646; Hindu denomination, 19; influence, 553, 647; influence on pluralism, 553; major scriptures of, 647; path of attainment, 578; Rādhāsoamī sect, 676; renaissance, 665; Śakti, 646; soul and God, 647; spiritual practice, 647; Vedānta, 417. See also *Hindu sects*; *Vaiṣṇava Āgamas*; *Vaiṣṇavas*; *Vishṇu*

**Vaiṣṇavite:** def., 843. See *Vaiṣṇavism*

**Vaiśya:** caste, 765; def., 843; *dharma*, 171. See *Caste*

**Vaivasvata (Manu):** birth, 657

**Vāk tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*

**Valipadu:** def., 843; importance of, 524; Śaiva Siddhānta, 431; Veerabhagu's citation, 534. See *Ritual*; *Worship*

**Vallabhacharya, Saint:** identified, 843-844; life and work, 673; monist, 561; monistic theist, 425

**Valmiki:** life and work, 668

**Vāma:** def., 844; left-handed, 793, 844; *tantrism*, 836. See also *Left-hand*; *Śākta Tantrism*

**Vānaprastha āśrama:** ceremony, 822; def., 844; entrance into, 277; retirement, 173. See also *Āśrama dharma*; *Shashtyābda pūrti*

**Vanity:** release from, 71; removal through *kavadi*, 289

**Varanasi:** earliest records, 661; location, 844; monastery founded, 674; Pāsupatas, 499

**Vardhamana:** founder of Jainism, 583

**Vārkarī school:** founding, 671

**Varṇa(s):** caste, 765; def., 844; described, 844. See also *Caste*; *Varṇa dharma*

**Varṇa dharma (social dharma):** *chaturdharma*, 766; def., 771, 844; described, 171; God's law, 167; *Manu Dharma Śāstra* and, 796; personal *dharma* and, 175; *varṇāśrama dharma* includes, 844. See also *Caste*; *Chaturdharma*; *Groups*; *Individuality*; *Jāti dharma*; *Varṇa*

**Varṇāśrama dharma:** def., 844

**Vartamāna:** *kriyamāna karma*, 790

**Varuha Upanishads:** *yama-niyama*, 850

**Vāsana(s):** def., 844; *saṁskāras*, 255, 844; *Yajur Veda* on, 265. See also *Memory*; *Samśkāras*; *Subsubconscious mind*; *Vāsana daha tantra*; *Vāsana chitta*; *Vṛtiti*

**Vāsana chitta:** See *Subsubconscious mind*; *Vāsana*

**Vāsana daha tantra:** described, 844. See *Fire*; *Homa*;

*Vāsana*s. See also *Burning prayers*

**Vasishtha:** life and work, 845; Nandinatha and, 493

**Vāstuvīdyā:** Vedic architecture in renaissance, 689. See also *Architecture*

- Vastuvidya Gurukulam:** in Kerala, 689
- Vasugupta:** discovers *Śiva Sūtras*, 669; life and work, 505, 669, 845; monistic theist, 537; philosophy, 425
- Vaswani, Sadhu J.P.:** Hindu of the Year, 690; life and work, 681
- Vaswani, Sadhu T.L.:** missions and educational institutions, 679
- Vaṭa:** def., 845; symbolism, 723
- Vāta:** *dosha*, 773, 845. See *Āyurveda*; *Doshas*
- Vatican:** condemning Eastern mystical practices, 685; papal doctrine of infallibility, 679
- Vatsyayana:** writes *Kāma Sūtra*, 666
- Vātula Āgama:** *Devikālotṭara Āgama*, 771. See *Āgamas*
- Vāyu tattva:** def., 838. See also *Tattvas*
- Veda:** See *Vedas*
- Vedāṅga(s):** dating, 660; identified, 845; *smṛiti*, 830; synopsis, 845; *Vedas* augmented by, 389. See *Çandas Vedāṅga*; *Jyotisha Vedāṅga*; *Kalpa Vedāṅga*; *Nirukta Vedāṅga*; *Śikshā Vedāṅga*; *Vyākaraṇa Vedāṅga*. See also *Smṛiti*
- Vedānta:** Advaita Siddhānta, 755; of *śaḍ darśana*, 417; on *antaḥkaraṇa*, 757; *bhedābheda*, 763; *Brahma Sūtra*, 765; brain drain toward, 562; central scriptures of, 507; def., 845-846; fruit of Siddhānta, 555; interpretation, 508; on *māyā*, 797; and monistic theism, 425; *padārtha*, 806; "practical," 679; pragmatic appeal, 563; on Satchidānanda, 825; school summaries, 845; Siddhāntins on, 534; Smārtism, 830; Śuddha Advaita philosophy, 673; synopsis, 826; three schools of, 531; *Upanishad*, 842; Vedic-Āgamic, 846; Viśiṣṭādvaita, 670, 845, 847; without Siddhānta, 566. See also *Advaita Vedānta*; *Dvaita Vedānta*; *Shaḍ darśana*; *Śuddha Advaita Vedānta*; *Upanishads*; *Vedāntists*; *Vedas*
- Vedānta Sūtras:** See *Brahma Sūtras*
- Vedāntists:** denying God, 566; doctrine of *māyā*, 556. See also *Vedānta*
- Vedas:** authority, 19; authorship, 654-655; basis, 395; contents, 375, 384, 396; described, 845; fact, not myth, 655; Hindu use, 377; *homa*, 782; hymns composed, 659; monism, 537; monistic theism, 425; Müller's motives, 653; Namah Śivāya, 401; Nātha canon, 526; pluralists denying, 566; rejection, *nāstika*, 417; Śāktism, 23; scorned in Vira Śaivism, 503; scripture on, 373, 382-383; secondary, see *Upavedas*; significance, 377; *śruti*, 832; translations, 377. See *Atharva Veda*; *Sāma Veda*; *Ṛig Veda*; *Yajur Veda*. See also *Āraṇyakas*; *Brāhmaṇas*; *Samhitās*; *Śruti*; *Upanishads*; *Vedāṅga*; *Vedānta*
- Veda Vidya Peetham:** teaching *Sāma Veda* chanting, 691
- Vedic-Āgamic perspective:** def., 846. See also *Āgamas*; *Monistic theism*; *Saiva Siddhānta*; *Tirumular*; *Vedas*
- Vedic Age:** timeline, 657-661. See also *Vedas*
- Vedic culture:** archeological dating, 658; at end of Ice Age, 657; fire rites, 658; Indo-Europeans, 660; Iran, Afghanistan, 660; in modern times, 685, 689-690, Near East, 660; proto-, early, late and post-Vedic periods, 656, 658, 660-661; Turkey, 657, 660; widespread, 660. See also *Archeology*; *Indus Valley*; *Vedas*
- Vegetarianism:** *āyurveda*, 259; def., 846; importance, 201; Jainism, 786; Plotinus, 665; Pythagoras, 662; *sannyāsa*, 351; scriptures speak on, 205. See also *Ahimsā*; *Diet*; *Guṇas*; *Health*; *Mitāhāra*; *Yama-niyama*
- Veiling grace:** def., 846. See *Concealing grace*
- Vel:** belief, 473; def., 846; described, 71; *jñāna śakti*, 787; Kārttikeya, 289; symbol, 732. See also *Kārttikeya*
- Veshṭi:** def., 846; temple garb, 329. See also *Dhoti*
- Vestments:** *sannyāsini's*, 349
- Veylanswami:** See *Bodhinatha Veylanswami*
- VHP:** See *Vishva Hindu Parishad*
- Vibhūti:** def., 846; temple, 321; *tripuṇḍra*, 724; Vira Śaivism, 504. See also *Ash*; *Tilaka*; *Tripuṇḍra*
- Victoria, Queen:** proclaimed ruler of India, 679
- Victors and vanquished:** attitude of violence, 199; def., 846
- Vid:** def., 846; *Vedas*, 373
- Videhamukti:** def., 846; and *jīvanmukti*, 786; sought at death, 101. See also *Death*; *Mukti*; *Self Realization*
- Vidyā:** def., 847. See also *Vidyākālā*, *Vidyā tattva*
- Vidyākālā:** sphere of knowing, *kālā*, 788. See also *Vidyā*
- Vidyārambha:** childhood rite, 271; def., 847; described, 718, 822. See also *Saṃskāras*
- Vidyā tattva:** def., 837. See also *Vidyā*; *Tattvas*
- Vietnam:** Hindu Cham temples, restoration, 688
- Vighneśvara:** identified, 847; Lord of Obstacles, 67. See *Gaṇeśa*
- Vigil:** performed daily, 257. See *Sādhana*
- Vijaya, Prince:** founds Sri Lanka kingdom, 663
- Vijayalaya:** reestablishes Chola dynasty, 669
- Vijayanagara Empire:** Appaya Dikshita and, 509; collapses, 674; founded, 672; location, 847; unity's fruits, 567; timeline, 672
- Vijñānamaya kośa:** def., 792, 847. See *Cognitive body*
- Vikings:** landing in Nova Scotia, 670
- Villems, Richard:** genetic research, 657
- Vināyaka:** def., 847; scripture on, 73. See *Gaṇeśa*
- Vināyaka Ahaval:** identified, 847
- Vināyaka Vratam (twenty-one-day festival):** described, 847; Gaṇeśa, 287; major Deity festival, 283
- Violence:** and *ahimsā*, 195; meat eating, 201; overcoming, 203; returns to originator, 197; source of, 199. See also *Ahimsā*; *Corporal punishment*; *Domestic violence*; *Killing*
- Vira, King:** enlarges Śiva temple, 669
- Vira Śaivism:** aspects, 847; and Hinduism, 503; history and philosophy, 501-505; Kālāmukhas, 501; school of Śaivism, 21, 820; summary, 515; synopsis, 847. See *Śaivism's six schools*
- Virginity:** good conduct, 183; for stable marriage, 219. See also *Brahmacharya*; *Marriage*
- Virtue:** Eastern and Western views, 637; good conduct, 181, 185; lack of, 157; spiritual path, 107. See *Dharma*; *Goodness*
- Visarjana:** def., 847; concluding Gaṇeśa Chaturthī, 287
- Vishṇu:** aspect of Parameśvara, 808; def., 847; incarnations, 25; Śiva as preserver, 49, 521; *śuddhavidyā tattva*, 837; worship in Smārtism, 27. See *Five acts of Śiva*; *Hari-Hara*; *Parameśvara*; *Preservation*. See also *Vaiṣṇavism*

- Viṣhnudevananda, Swami:** passing, 686
- Viśva Hindu Parishad (VHP):** founded, 684; Hindu Sangam Cultural Festival in California, 689; Sanskrit chanting school, 690; Swami Chinmayananda, 681
- Visions:** and temples, 301; of Śiva, 55. See also *Clairvoyance*
- Viśiṣṭādvaita:** described, 847; monistic theism, difference, 423; Vedānta, 670, 845, 847
- Viśuddha cakra:** Charts Resource, 740-743, 746-747; def., 766, 847; divine love, 743; *nāḍīs* cross at, 745; subtle plane, 127. See also *Chakras; Divine love*
- Viśvagrāsa (merger with Śiva):** *ānandamaya kośa*, 792; def., 847; destiny of all souls, 81; destiny beyond *moksha*, 87; evolution of the soul, 775; ocean analogy, 435, 544; perfect identity, 423; pluralistic view of, 548; powers of Śiva, 549; return to perfect Being, 543-544; separateness lost, 439; ultimate goal, 13, 523; *Vedas*, 425. See also *Destiny; Evolution of soul; Mahāpralaya*
- Viśvāmitra I:** reign of, 659
- Viśvāsa:** faith, 776
- Vitala cakra:** Charts Resource, 740, 742, 744, 746-747; def., 848; location, 766; raging anger, 744. See also *Chakras; Naraka*
- Vital Breath:** Śiva consciousness, 828. See also *Prāṇa*
- Vivāha:** def., 848; described, 822; marriage sacrament, 273, 719. See *Marriage; Saṁskāras*
- Viveka:** See *Discrimination*
- Viveka Chūḍāmaṇi:** commentary written, 668; contents, 848
- Viveka Mārtaṇḍa:** Gorakshanatha, 511; identified, 848
- Vivekananda, Swami:** life and work, 678-679, 848; monist, 561; Parliament of World Religions, 680; Ramakrishna Mission, 680
- Voice of India:** founder dies, 687
- Vows:** See *Vrata*
- Vrata (sacred vows):** def., 848; *niyama*, 189, 850. See also *Daśama bhāga vrata; Pradosha; Sannyāsa āśrama; Sannyāsa dīkṣhā; Vināyaka Vratam; Yama-niyama*
- Vratayastoma:** conversion rite, 769. See also *Saṁskāras*
- Vṛitti(s):** def., 848; *japa* quiets, 786; Satchidānanda and, 825; *vāsanā*, 844. See also *Vāsanās*
- Vyaghrapada:** Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; life of, 848; in Nandinatha's line, 493. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*
- Vyākaraṇa Vedānga:** contents, 848; *Vedānga*, 845. See also *Vedāngas*
- Vyasa, Sage:** composes *Mahābhārata*, 661
- War:** and belief, 199; in the home, stopping, 688; scriptures on, 389. See also *Wars*
- War of the Ten Kings:** dating, 657
- Warp and woof:** God is, 433
- Wars:** American Civil, 678; Anglo-Marāṭha, 677; Bhārata, 655, 658, 660, 686; board games, 666; damaged temples, 688; Greek-Trojan, 661; "holy," 670; in the home, 688; Indo-Chinese border, 684; Indo-Pakistan border, 684; Sri Lankan civil, 685, 687; of the Ten Kings, 657; World War I, 680; World War II, 682. See *War*
- Warsaw Pact:** dissolution, 685
- Washington, George:** defeats British at Yorktown, 676
- Wave:** creation analogy, 123, 433, 543-545. See also *Analogies*
- Wealth:** def., 848. See *Artha*
- Weaving:** early basketry, 659; *kalā*, 788
- Websites:** Hindu resources, 689. See also *E-mail; Internet*
- Weddings:** pendant, 273, 848; temple, 307; Vaikāsi Viśākham, 289. See also *Bride; Groom; Marriage; Saṁskāras*
- Wells, Spencer:** genetic research, 657
- Western religions:** contrasts among, 643-644; dualism and *Zend Avesta*, 662; Eastern views compared, 634-642. See *Abrahamic religions; Christianity; Islam; Judaism; Zoroastrianism*. See also *Eastern religions; Far Eastern religions; Religions*
- Wheel:** Vedic analogy, 275, 377. See also *Analogies*
- Whitney, Eli:** invents cotton gin, 676
- Who am I?:** answer, 5
- Wickedness:** See *Evil*
- Widowers:** as assistant priests, 319
- Wife:** adopting religion and lifestyle of husband, 227; aggressiveness, 233; ceremonies during pregnancy, 275; duty to have children, 239; femininity, 233; *grihastha āśrama*, 173; needs from husband, 211; scripture on, 220-221; sexual union, 217; treatment of husband, 233; working in the world, 215. See also *Family; Marriage; Parents; Strī dharma; Women*
- Will:** of God, xxiv, 55, 607, 637; Kārttikeya, God of, 69; Śiva's, 524; survives death, 99; *yogī's* indomitable, 51. See also *Free will; Icchā śakti; Willpower*
- Willpower:** Kārttikeya, 69; *sādhana*, 818. See also *Discipline; Free will; Maṇipūra cakra; Sādhana; Self-control; Will*
- Window:** *chakra*, perspective, 565
- Wisdom:** *jñāna pāda*, 115; path of enlightenment, 107; rigid rule, 217. See also *Evolution of soul; Jñāna*
- Women:** choice of spouse, 227; countering domestic violence, 688; qualities, 215; *sannyāsa*, 349; scripture on, 235, 367. See also *Brahmachāriṇī; Menses; Mother; Wife; Yoginī*
- Word of God:** revealed scripture, 373
- Words of Our Master:** contents, 849. See also *Yogaswami*
- Work:** husband's, 213; wife's, 215
- World(s):** in *Āgamas*, 379; created by God?, 539; creation (*Old Testament* dating), 658; creation of seven, *Tirumantiram*, 547; def., 849; duality, 773; eternal?, 538; good and purposeful, 137, 540; living positively in, xxxvi, 145; monism-pluralism debate, 433, 534-545; monistic view, 417; Nātha views, 521; Pañchākshara Mantra and, 401; *pāśa*, 809; perfection of, monism, 539; sacredness, 9; *saṁsāra*, 822; scriptures on, 132-133; Siddhānta views, 433, 437, 439; Śivamaya, 525, 556; suffering, 151; time and, 726. See also *Cosmic cycle; Cosmos; Earth; Joy and sorrow; Lokas; Malas; Pati-paśu-pāśa; Planets; Renunciation; Saṁsāra; Śivamaya; Tatvas; Three worlds*
- World Council of Religious Leaders:** charter, 691



**War:** and belief, 199; in the home, stopping, 688; scriptures on, 389. See also *Wars*

**War of the Ten Kings:** dating, 657

**Warp and woof:** God is, 433

**Wars:** American Civil, 678; Anglo-Marāṭha, 677; Bhārata, 655, 658, 660, 686; board games, 666; damaged temples, 688; Greek-Trojan, 661; "holy," 670; in the home, 688; Indo-Chinese border, 684; Indo-Pakistan border, 684; Sri Lankan civil, 685, 687; of the Ten Kings, 657; World War I, 680; World War II, 682. See *War*

**World Heritage Sites:** Hindu Cham temples, 688  
**World Hindu Conference:** South Africa, 686  
**Worldliness:** def., 849; *sannyāsin* repudiates, 351. See also *Renunciation*  
**World Religious Parliament:** naming five Jagadāchāryas (World Teachers), 685  
**World Trade Center:** destroyed by terrorists, 690  
**World Wars:** See *Wars*  
**World Wide Web:** See *Websites*  
**Worship:** absolves sin, 153; aftermath, 307, 333; *Āgamas*, 313, 373, 379, 493; before death, 101; belief, 485; ceased, 309; children with parents, 241, 709; described, 313; effect, 331; evening, 335; Gaṇeśa first, 65; God and Gods, 63; God's presence during, 317; good conduct, 185; guide, 189; home shrine, 335; how to, 307; human *dharma* and, 173; Huyler's "Meeting God" exhibit, 690; image, 57, 317; individual, 315; inner, 307; inner planes reached by, 129; internalized, 785; *kriyā pāda*, 111, 524; *kriyā pāda*, *avasthās*, 524; nature of, Eastern-Western, 638; never outgrown, 327; *niyama*, 850; outer, 307; outside temples, 333; and path of unfoldment, 107; preparation, 329; in present times, 37; priests, 319; protocol, 305; *sandhyā upāsana*, 823; *Smārta*, 27; steps, 321; *Vedas*, 375, 377; *yajña*, 848. See also *Altar*; *Bhakti yoga*; *Festivals*; *Fire worship*; *Homa*; *Home shrine*; *Image (of Divinity)*; *Īśvarapūjana*; *Kriyā pāda*; *Mūrti*; *Offerings*; *Prayer*; *Priesthood*; *Pūjā*; *Temples*; *Temple worship*; *Yama-niyama*  
**Written prayers:** burned, 331; *lekhaprārtha havana*, 793. See also *Tyēf*  
**Wrongdoing:** and God, 157. See also *Karma*; *Sin*  
**Wu, Emperor:** reign, 664  
**Xuan-zang:** See *Hsüen Tsang*



**Y2K:** no disaster, 688  
**Yāgaśālā:** *yajña*, place of, 849  
**Yajña:** def. and types, 849; in *Vedas*, 373. See also *Fire*; *Homa*; *Offerings*; *Rites*; *Worship*  
**Yajnavalkya, Sage:** identified, 850;

life, 660

**Yājñavalkya Smṛiti:** contents, 850. See *Smṛiti*  
**Yājñavalkya Upanishad:** contents, 849-850  
**Yajñopavīta:** def., 850; *upanayana*, 842  
**Yajur Veda:** among four *Vedas*, 375; contents, 850  
**Yajur Veda Samhitā:** *Yajur Veda*, 850  
**Yale University:** Chair of Sanskrit and Indology, 678  
**Yama (Lord of death):** identified, 850. See *Death*; *Gods*  
**Yama(s) (restraints):** listed, 850; ten classical restraints, 187. See also *Yama-niyama*  
**Yama-niyama:** listed, 850; Pāśupata vow, 497-498; *rāja yoga*, 815; scripture on, 191. See also *Dharma*; *Niyamas*; *Rāja yoga*; *Yamas*  
**Yamuṇā River:** changing course, 659  
**Yantra:** def., 850; Śāktism, 23. See also *Image*; *Mūrti*  
**Yengishiki:** Shinto scripture, 595  
**Yoga:** in *Āgamas*, 379, 492; of *śaḍ darśana*, 826; *āyurveda* and, 259; causal plane, 129; daily life, 257; as

death nears, 101; Deepak Chopra popularizes in US, 688; def., 850; Gorakshanatha's, 511; *guru* directs, 257; history, 851; human *dharma* and, 173; in Jainism, 584; Kārttikeya's realm, 69; Kashmir Śaivism, 506-507, 791; Nātha Sampradāya and, 447; Patanjali, 393, 809, 815, 826, 851; path to God, 7; Pythagoras taught, 662; Śaivism, 21; Śāktism, 23; *sannyāsa*, 347; in schools, Christians' opposition, 690; scripture on, 353; of *śaḍ darśana*, 417; as *tantra*, 255; *Tirumantiram*, 494; treatises, 393; uniting with God, 113. See *Bhakti yoga*; *Haṭha yoga*; *Jñāna yoga*; *Karma yoga*; *Kuṇḍalīni yoga*; *Rājā yoga*; *Siddha yoga*. See also *Śaḍ darśana*; *Spiritual path*; *Viśvagrāsa*; *Yoga mārga*; *Yoga pāda*; *Yoga schools*; *Yoga tapas*; *Yogī*

**Yoga mārga:** def., 526

**Yogananda, Paramahansa:** life and work, 680

**Yoga pāda:** *Āgamas* section, 379; *avasthās*, 524; belief in, 481; described, 113; def., 851; temple worship, 327. See also *Pādas*; *Yoga*

**Yogas:** of *āyurveda*, 259. See also *Yoga*

**Yoga Sampradāya:** def., 851. See *Siddha Siddhānta*

**Yoga schools:** roots in Siddha Siddhānta, 513; today, 513. See also *Yoga*

**Yoga Shakti, Ma:** Hindu of the Year, 687

**Yoga Sūtras:** text, 393; *smṛiti*, 830; written, 664

**Yogaswami, Sage:** initiation, 455, 680; Kailāsa Paramparā, 449; life, 679; monistic theist, 425; "not one evil thing", 540; profile, 851. See also *Kailāsa Paramparā*; *Natchintanaī*; *Words of our Master*

**Yoga tapas:** def., 851; and *jñāna*, 115. See *Tapas*; *Yoga*

**Yogatattva Upanishad:** on *doshas (upasarga)*, 842; contents, 851. See also *Upanishads*

**Yoga Vāsishṭha:** contents, 851; leading *yoga* text, 393; written, 668

**Yoga Yājñavalkya:** written, 671

**Yogī:** becomes *jñānī*, 525; def., 827, 851; described, 361; search for Reality, 51; worship, 333. See also *Yoga*

**Yogini:** def., 851; described, 361. See also *Yoga*

**Young soul:** *charyā pāda*, 109; def., 851; sin, 153. See also *Destiny*; *Evolution of soul*; *Old soul*; *Sin*

**Youth:** losing Hindu heritage, 690-691; pluralists stifle, 562; summer-camp intensives, 689. See also *Diaspora*; *Education*; *Family*; *Hindu Students Council*

**Youth Symposium:** addressing common concerns, 688

**Yudhisthira:** reign, 660

**Yuga:** def., 789, 851; list and colors, 851. See also *Cosmic cycle*; *Kali Yuga*; *Kalpa*; *Mahāpralaya*; *Pralaya*



**Zend Avesta:** and *Rig Veda*, 662; Zoroastrian scripture, 662

**Zoroaster:** life and work, 662

**Zoroastrianism:** adherents, 598; beliefs, 600; def., 851; founder, founding, 598, 662; goals, 599; path of attainment, 599; scripture of, 598; sects, 598; setting dualistic tone for Western religions, 662; summary, 598-600. See also *Western religions*



# Index of Scriptural Verses

## *Sāstra Udharanasūchī*

### शास्त्र उधरणसूचि



IN VIRTUALLY EVERY TEXT-PAGE OF *DANCING WITH ŚIVA* VERSES FROM HINDU SCRIPTURE APPEAR. IN MOST CASES, A VERSE IS ACCOMPANIED BY ITS REFERENCE. THIS INDEX PROVIDES REFERENCES FOR VERSES NOT IDENTIFIED IN THE TEXT. THE NUMBER at left is the page on which the verse appears, followed by the scriptural reference, sourcebook and page number. Scripture and sourcebook abbreviations are given on pages 907-9.

PAGE      SCRIPTURE      SOURCE, PAGE

#### Introduction

- v      *Tirumantiram* 2789, 2749, 2757. *TM*  
 xix     *Tirumantiram* 3021, 3043, 3045. *TM*  
        *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 1.3.28. *HH*, 202  
 xxvi    *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, 3.5.1. *SA*, 233  
        *Mṛigendra AG* 1.49KH-50K. *SA*, 233  
 xxxiii   *TV* 74, 214. *GT*, 182, 249

#### Maṇḍala 1: Self Realization

- 5      *SYV, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 4.4.18. *UpP*, 179  
 7      *KYV, Maitrī Upan.* 4.3. *UpR*, 810  
 9      *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 2.1.10. *BO UpR*, 682  
 11     *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 3.2.4. *BO UpM*, 81  
 13     *SYV, Paingala Upan.* 4.10. *UpR*, 921

#### Maṇḍala 2: Hinduism

- 19     *AV, Kaivalya Upan.* 8. *BO UpR*, 928  
 21     *KYV, Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 4.16. *BO UpR*, 736  
 23     *Devī Gītā*, 5.52. *DG*, 88  
 25     *Bhagavad Gītā* 9.22. *VE*, 160  
 27     *Crest Jewel of Discrimination.* *CJ*, 89

#### Maṇḍala 3: Saivite Hinduism

- 33     *Tirumantiram* 1432. *TM*  
 35     *AV Saṁhitā* 7.52.1  
 37     *RV, Aitareya Upan.* Invocation. *UpP*, 95  
 39     *RV Saṁhitā* 1.89.8. *RvP*, 287  
 41     *Mṛigendra AGj* 2.A3. *MA*, 58

#### Maṇḍala 4: Our Supreme God

- 49     *KYV, Maitrī Upan.* 5.2. *BO UpH*, 423  
 51     *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 2.1.2. *MU*, 57

- 53     *KYV, Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 6.11. *UpM*, 95  
 55     *Raurava AGk* 63.2-6. *AK*, 51  
 57     *Tirumantiram* 2722. *TM*

#### Maṇḍala 5: Lords of Dharma

- 63     *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 2.1.7. *UpR*, 681  
 65     *Tirumantiram*, Invocation to Vinayaka. *TM*  
 67     *Mṛigendra AGj* 13.A.5. *MA*, 289  
 69     *SV, Chandogya Upan.* 7.26.2. *UpH*, 262  
 71     *Tirumurai* 11. *KD*, 224

#### Maṇḍala 6: The Nature of the Soul

- 79     *KYV, Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 5.11-12. *UpM*, 94  
 81     *KYV, Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 1.15. *UpR*, 718  
 83     *KYV, Kathā Upan.* 2.2.12. *UpR*, 640  
 85     *Tirumantiram* 2331. *TM*  
 87     *KYV, Kathā Upan.* 2.3.4

#### Maṇḍala 7: Karma and Rebirth

- 93     *SYV, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 4.4.5. *BO UpH*, 140  
 95     *SYV, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 4.4.5. *UpH*, 140  
 97     *SYV, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 4.4.6  
 99     *SYV, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 4.4.3. *BO UpH*, 140  
 101    *SYV, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 3.3.36. *BO UpH*, 139

#### Maṇḍala 8: The Way to Liberation

- 107    *Tirumantiram* 1444. *TM*  
 109    *Tirumantiram* 1502. *TM*  
 111    *Tirumantiram* 1496. *TM*  
 113    *KYV, Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 2.9. *UpP*, 192  
 115    *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 3.2.5. *BO UpH*, 376

#### Maṇḍala 9: The Three Worlds

- 123    *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 1.1.7. *BO UpR*, 673

- 125 KYV, *Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 6.2. UpR, 743  
 127 SYV, *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 1.5.16. UpH, 89  
 129 RV *Samhitā* 9.113.9. VE, 634  
 131 KYV, *Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 3.2. VE, 621

#### Maṇḍala 10: The Goodness of All

- 137 KYV, *Kathā Upan.* 5.11. BO UpH, 357  
 139 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 3.2. UpH, 418  
 141 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 6.34. UpM, 104  
 143 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 3.2. UpH, 418  
 145 SYV, *Īśa Upan.* 1. UpM, 49

#### Maṇḍala 11: Sin and Suffering

- 151 *Ajita* AG 2.10–2.13. MA, 94  
 153 RV *Samhitā* 2.28.5. VE, 514  
 155 SYV, *Īśa Upan.* 3. BO UpR, 570  
 157 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 6.34. UpH, 447  
 159 *Mṛigendra* AGj 5.A1. MA, 138

#### Maṇḍala 12: Four Dharmas

- 167 SYV, *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 1.4.14. BO UpH, 84  
 169 RV *Samhitā* 10.85.1. RvP, 4347  
 171 SYV, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.7.2.1. VE, 393  
 173 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 4.3. BO UpR, 810  
 175 AV *Samhitā* 3.22.3. VE, 344

#### Maṇḍala 13: Good Conduct

- 181 KYV, *Taittirīya Upan.* 1.11.1. BO UpR, 537  
 183 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 6.18. BO UpH, 436  
 185 KYV, *Taittirīya Upan.* 1.11.4. BO UpR, 539  
 187 AV, *Praśna Upan.* 1.16. UpH, 380  
 189 AV, *Praśna Upan.* 1.15. UpH, 380

#### Maṇḍala 14: Noninjury

- 195 AV, *Śaṅḍilya Upan.* 1.3. UpA, 173  
 197 SYV, *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 3.7.15. UpH, 116  
 199 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 3.2. UpH, 418  
 201 *Tirukural* 26.1; 26.9. WW  
 203 AV *Samhitā* 19.9.14. VE, 306

#### Maṇḍala 15: Husband and Wife

- 211 AV *Samhitā* 14.2.71. VE, 260  
 213 AV *Samhitā* 6.78.1–2. BO AvW, 339  
 215 RV *Samhitā* 10.85.27. VE, 255  
 217 RV *Samhitā* 10.85.47. VE, 257  
 219 AV *Samhitā* 7.36. VE, 259

#### Maṇḍala 16: Marriage

- 225 RV *Samhitā* 8.31.9. VE, 265  
 227 RV *Samhitā* 10.191.4. VE, 863  
 229 RV *Samhitā* 10.85.23. VE, 254  
 231 RV *Samhitā* 10.85.42. VE, 256  
 233 AV *Samhitā* 3.30.5. VE, 857

#### Maṇḍala 17: Children

- 239 RV *Samhitā* 8.31.8. RvP, 3015  
 241 AV *Samhitā* 3.30.1–2. VE, 857  
 243 SYV *Samhitā* 3.37. BO VE, 343  
 245 RV *Samhitā* 9.43.6. RvP, 3675  
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#### Maṇḍala 18: Ways of Wisdom

- 255 *Yogatattva Upan.* BO UpA, 193  
 256 KYV, *Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 2.14. BO UpH, 399  
 257 KYV, *Maitrī Upan.* 6.34. VE, 422  
 259 AV *Samhitā* 19.9.10. GK, 161  
 261 RV *Samhitā* 8.69.9. BO GK, 330

#### Maṇḍala 19: Sacraments

- 269 AV, *Mundāka Upan.* 2.1.6. BO UpH, 371  
 271 RV *Samhitā* 10.101.9. VE, 279  
 273 *Hiranyakeśi Gṛihya Sūtra* 1.6.21.2. VE, 263  
 275 SYV *Samhitā* 34.5. VE, 799–800  
 277 RV *Samhitā* 10.18.6. VE, 609

#### Maṇḍala 20: Festivals

- 283 RV *Samhitā* 10.130.2. VE, 356–357  
 285 KYV, *Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 3.11. UpP, 195  
 287 RV *Samhitā* 2.23.1. HP, 291  
 289 RV *Samhitā* 10.68.1. VE, 812  
 291 SYV *Samhitā* 3.38. VE, 362

#### Maṇḍala 21: Siva Temple

- 299 KYV, *Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 5.4. VE, 335  
 301 AV *Samhitā* 19.42.1. VE, 360  
 303 RV *Samhitā* 5.13.3. VE, 854  
 305 KYV, *Taittirīya Samhitā*, 1.6.8.1. VE, 401  
 307 AV, *Mundāka Upan.* 1.2.6. VE, 414

#### Maṇḍala 22: Temple Rites

- 313 RV *Samhitā* 10.130.1. VE, 356  
 315 RV *Samhitā* 1.189.2. VE, 810  
 317 KYV, *Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 3.5. UpM, 89  
 319 *Kāraṇa* AG 18. BO MT, 75  
 321 SYV, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 9.4.4.15. VE, 396

#### Maṇḍala 23: Love of God

- 327 AV *Samhitā* 10.8.1 & 29. VE, 824–827  
 329 RV *Samhitā* 10.151.4–5. VE, 180  
 331 RV *Samhitā* 7.10.3. VE, 818  
 333 AV *Samhitā* 7.21. VE, 661  
 335 *Kāraṇa* AG 12. BO MT, 67

#### Maṇḍala 24: Monastic Life

- 343 SYV, *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upan.* 4.4.22. VE, 717  
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 347 *Tirumantiram* 1615. TM  
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#### Maṇḍala 25: Knowers of God

- 357 RV *Samhitā* 1.164.6. VE, 660  
 359 RV *Samhitā* 7.2.2. BO AvG, 3  
 361 AV *Samhitā* 11.5.1. AvG, 55  
 363 *Kulārṇava Tantra* 9.14. BO KT, 84  
 365 *Svāyambhuva Sūtra* 105. AK, 98

#### Maṇḍala 26: Revealed Scripture

- 373 *Tirumantiram* 2404. TM  
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 377 *Praśna Upan.* 2.6. UpH, 381

- 379 *Tirumantiram* 2397. TM  
381 *Tirumantiram* 1429. TM

**Maṇḍala 27: Secondary Scripture**

- 387 *AV Saṁhitā* 10.7.14. VE, 64  
389 *Jñāneśvarī* 1.3–4. JN, 25  
391 *Bhagavad Gītā* 18.70–71. SH, 94  
393 *Bhagavad Gītā* 4.37–38. VE, 528  
395 *Tayumanavar* 3.2. PT, 20

**Maṇḍala 28: Affirmations of Faith**

- 401 *Natchintanai*, “Garland...” NT, 123  
403 *Tirumantiram* 941. TM  
405 *Śiva Saṁhitā*. 3.11. SS, 25  
407 *Tirumantiram* 3003. TM  
409 *Tirumantiram* 270. TM

**Maṇḍala 29: Monism and Dualism**

- 417 *KYV, Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 1.1. BO UpH, 394  
419 *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 2.1.1. VE, 735  
421 *KYV, Maitrī Upan.* 6.35. VE, 741  
423 *SYV, Īsa Upan.* 5–6. VE, 811  
425 *KYV, Śvetāśvatara Upan.* 6.6. UpH, 409

**Maṇḍala 30: Views of Reality**

- 431 *Tirumantiram* 95. TM  
433 *SYV*  
435 *AV, Mundāka Upan.* 3.2.8. UpR, 691

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**Maṇḍala 31: Himalayan Lineage**

- 447 *Tirumantiram* 1487. TM  
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453 *Natchintanai*, “My Master” NT, 154–5  
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**Resources**

- 492 *Kailāśasam, Śiva Purāṇa* 9.23–26. AI, 1707  
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500 *Mālatī–Mādhava* 4.27. KK, 58  
503 *Inscription on Kedareshvara Temple and Matha*, 1162 ce. KK, 103  
503 *Allama Vachana Candriki* 959. SO, 167  
503 *Vachana Ganachara*. RL, 105  
*Vachana Basavanna* 901. VB  
*SunyaSamp*, vol 1, p. 57. RL, 99  
504 *Renukacharya*. SV, 57  
508 *Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya, Srikantha*. HN, 391  
508–509 *Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya, Sk*. HN, 394  
509 *Śivakarnamṛita*. AD, 105  
509 *Śivarakshamaṇi Dipikā*. AD, 93  
511 *Viveka Mārtāṇḍa*. PG, 245  
653 Letter by Max Müller, TY, xxv

**SCRIPTURAL ABBREVIATIONS**

- AG: *Āgama*  
AGj: *Āgama, Jñāna Pāda*  
AGk: *Āgama, Kriyā Pāda*  
AV: *Atharva Veda*  
BO: Based on  
KYV: *Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda*  
RV: *Ṛig Veda*  
SYV: *Śukla Yajur Veda*  
Upan.: *Upanishad*

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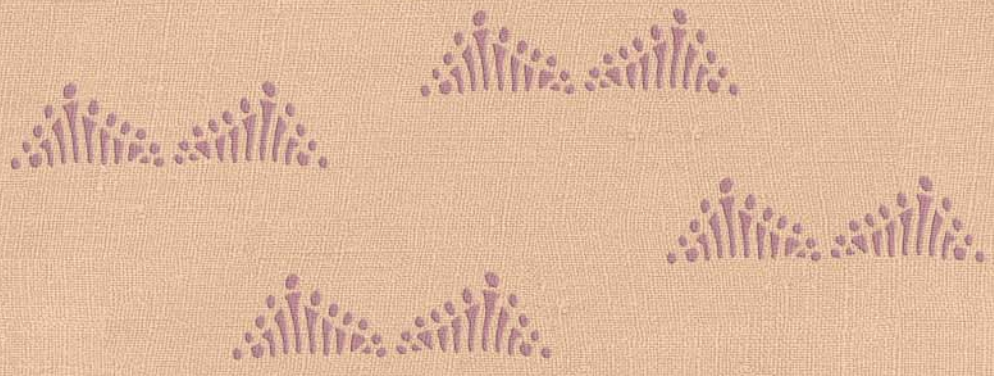
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## Table of the Vedas

This table shows the correlation of various books of the *Vedas*, listing for each *Veda* the corresponding *Samhitās* (hymn collections), *Brāhmaṇas* (ceremonial handbooks), *Āraṇyakas* (forest treatises) and *Upanishads* (metaphysical dialogs). The bracketed titles under *Samhitās* are names of some of the different Śākhās (branches), versions or recensions of the same texts. The parentheses indicate synonymous titles. This is not a complete list of all *Veda* texts, but it does include those translated in *The Vedic Experience*, the primary source of quotations in *Dancing with Śiva*.

ॐ	SAMHITĀ	BRĀHMAṆA	ĀRAṆYAKA	UPANISHAD
RIG VEDA	Riḡ Veda [Śakala] [Bāskala]	Aitareya Kaushitaki (Śāṅkhāyana)	Aitareya	Aitareya Kaushitaki
ATHARVA VEDA	Atharva Veda [Śaunaka] [Paippalāda]	Gopatha		Muṇḍaka Prašna Māṇḍūkya Kaivalya
SĀMA VEDA	Sāma Veda [Kauthama] [Rāṇayaniya] [Jaiminiya]	Jaiminiya Taṇḍya Mahā (Pañchaviṃśa)	Jaiminiya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa (Talavakāra)	Çhandogya Kena (Talavakāra)
KRISHNA VEDA YAJUR	Taittirīya (Apastambīya)  Maitrāyani	Taittirīya	Taittirīya	Taittirīya Kaṭha Śvetāśvatara Mahānārāyaṇa Maitrī Prāṇāgnihotra
ŚUKLA VEDA YAJUR	Vājasaneyi [Kāṇva] [Mādhyamdina]	Śatapatha		Bṛihadāraṇyaka Īśa Jābāla Paiṅgala Sūrya





# Colophon

## *Antyavachanam*

### अन्त्यवचनम्



*DANCING WITH ŚIVA, HINDUISM'S CONTEMPORARY CATECHISM* WAS DESIGNED AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE SWĀMĪS OF THE SAIVA SIDDHANTA YOGA ORDER AT KAUAI'S HINDU MONASTERY ON THE GARDEN ISLAND IN HAWAII. THIS FIRST BOOK IN

The Master Course Trilogy was originally composed and assembled in 1991 using QuarkXPress on a network of PowerMac 9500s with the author's original input from a mobile network of Macintosh PowerBooks using Farallon's Timbuktu in a Winnebago field office. This edition was typeset in Adobe InDesign CS2 on a Gigabit Ethernet network of Apple Macintosh PowerBook G4 and PowerMac G5 computers and an Xserve G5. Text was typeset in Adobe's Minion fonts to which diacritical marks were added with Fontographer. The main chapters are set in 12.65-point Minion with 15-point linespacing. The Lexicon and Index are set in Minion 8.25 on 9.75. Sanskrit and Tamil fonts include those by Ecological Linguistics, Brahmi Type and Srikrishna Patil. For the sixth edition, the original artwork was scanned on a Heidelberg Linoscan 2200 flatbed scanner and an Imacon FlexTight Precision transparency scanner and color corrected in Adobe Photoshop CS. Imaging and presswork were supervised by Jainendra Prakash Jain at Shri Jainendra Press in New Delhi, India.

The cover style and Himalayan Academy logo were created by San Francisco artist John Kuzich in 1970. The exquisite oil portrait on the back cover and the Gaṇeśa on page ii were inspired gifts by India's renowned artist Sri Indra Sharma during his visits to Kauai in early 1995 and 1997. In April 1997, we learned of the marvelous art collection that graces the fifth and later editions: the life work of Tiru S. Rajam of Chennai, India. Remarkably, his watercolors, produced over a 50-year period, and the book's subjects were a perfect and fortuitous match, as though he intuited the catechism's many subjects over the years. For the sixth edition we added another two dozen pieces commissioned in 2002, bringing a total

of seven decades of this remarkable artist's timeless work to these pages.

The original paintings were acquired through the help of two families of my Saiva Siddhanta Church living temporarily in India: Mrs. Tara Katir and her daughter Selvi, along with Durvasa and Isani Alahan and their daughters Neesha, Sitara and Priya. The stunning new portrait of Satguru Siva Yogaswami that appears with the dedication was painted in 1998 by Sri Indra Sharma of Mumbai, India, based on a group of photos and consultations with Tamil elders. S. Rajam was commissioned in 1997 to paint the cover art, then in 2000 at age 81 to execute the twelve circular paintings that illustrate A Śaivite Creed, and the line drawings appearing on the title pages of the Upanishads, Maṇḍalas and Resources. These line drawings were colorized by Ms. Sarkunavathy Sockanathan of Klang, Malaysia, and Mrs. Vidya Nathan of Koloa, Hawaii, using Adobe Photoshop. From 2000-2002 Tiru A. Manivelu of Chennai, India, was commissioned to paint the various small pieces that illustrate Truth Is One, Paths are Many, Hindu Timeline and A Children's Primer.

Rajkumar Manickam of Malaysia, on task force for six months in Hawaii, completed the work of putting the entire 1008-page fourth edition book on the World Wide Web, which has since been updated to reflect the additions, corrections and new artwork in the sixth edition. Sanskrit proofreading and guidance for the first printing were kindly provided by Vyaas Houston, founder of the American Sanskrit Institute; Dr. P. Jayaraman, Executive Director of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Woodside, New York; Pundit and Jyotisha Sastri Laxmishanker Trivedi and his son Devendra of Fremont, California; Professor Jayaram Sethuraman of the Florida State University in Tallahassee; Braj B. Kachru and his wife Yamuna, professors of linguistics at the University of Illinois, Urbana; Veda Pundit Ravichandran of Chennai and California; and Pundit A.V. Mylvaganam of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

In the Timeline, for a new view of Indian history for dates before 600 BCE, we drew from the work of S.B. Roy, author of "Chronological Framework of Indian Protohistory—The Lower Limit." For the second printing, Professor Shiva G. Bajpai, Director of Asian Studies at California State University, Northridge (co-author of *A Historical Atlas of South Asia*), proofed the timeline and made valuable additions. Extensive historic aid was gratefully accepted from Dr. David Frawley, author of *Gods, Sages and Kings*, and Sripadu D. Kulkarni, editor of the 18-volume *Study of Indian History and Culture*. Corrections were provided by Dr. Georg Feuerstein,

author of *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga*, Professor Subash Kak of Louisiana State University and Bill Shurtleff of Lafayette, California. Corrections for the entire second printing were submitted by Markandeya and Sundari Peruman of Houston, Texas; Al Rammohan of Woodridge, Illinois, Director of the International Tamil Language Foundation; Kenneth Stuart, a scholar in Mount Shasta, California; Chaturbhuj N. Gidwani, of the United Arab Emirates; Navnit C. Shah of Ocean, New Jersey; and Vijay S. Alsi of Vienna, Virginia. Proofreading of the entire sixth edition was accomplished by Mrs. Sheela Venkatakrisnan of Chennai.

The comprehensive index for further study was originally compiled by Jordan and Vita Richman of Writer's Anonymous, Phoenix, Arizona, then greatly enhanced and updated for the sixth edition by Chamundi Sabanathan of Santa Rosa, California. Dr. Prem Sahai of Webster City, Iowa, contributed to the descriptions of the Hindu family structure. In presenting the major sects of Hinduism, C. Ramachandran, editor of *Tat-tvaloka*, answered questions on behalf of the Śaṅkarācharyā of Śrīṅgeri Maṭha; and three scholars wrote tracts on Smārtism, Śāktism and Vaishṇavism, respectively, for HINDUISM TODAY: T.K. Venkateswaran, Professor of Religious Studies at University of Detroit; June MacDaniel, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the College of Charleston, South Carolina; and Graham M. Schweig, Director of the Institute for Vaishṇava Studies.

Dr. Virender Sodhi, Āyurveda Vaidya, of Bellevue, Washington, confirmed the accuracy of the sections on the science of *āyurveda*. Assistance on astrology was received from Pundit K.N. Navaratnam of Melbourne, Australia, and Chakrapani D. Ullal of Los Angeles. The Hindu Heritage Endowment, the Hindu Businessmen's Association and the Hindu Workingmen's Associations have established an irrevocable fund to annually provide hundreds of individuals and worthy institutions with complimentary copies of this vital sourcebook.

Nearly two decades ago, when the first edition was being produced, many contributed their time and knowledge. In researching the tradition of *sannyāsa*, two of my *swāmīs*—Paramacharya Bodhinatha and Acharya Palaniswami—traveled through South India and Sri Lanka speaking with heads of Śaiva Aadheenams and other Hindu monasteries. Particularly helpful were Swami Tapasyananda of the Ramakrishna Mission in Chennai, Swami Chinmayananda of Chinmaya Mission, Swami Satchidananda of the Integral Yoga Institute and Pandit M. Jnanaprakasam of Erlalai Aadheenam in Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Always available to assist in a wide range of philosophical and historical areas was Pandit M. Arunachalam. Information and assistance on clarifying the two schools of Śaiva Siddhānta came from numerous devout scholars, including Pandit Kandiah of Jaffna, A.P.C. Veerabhagu of Tuticorin; Sri La Sri Shanmuga Desikar Paramacharya, head of the 1,400-year-old Dharmapuram Aadheenam, and his *pandits*, and Justice Maharajan of Chennai, the world's foremost adept on *Tirumantiram*. We could not have developed the chapter on monism and pluralism without them, nor without our noble opposition in the mid-1980s at the Śaiva Siddhānta Perumandram in Chennai and at the Selangor Wilayah Persekutuan Ceylon Śaivites Association in Kuala Lumpur, notably from the late Tiru V.K. Palasuntharam. Several other heads of *aadheenams* were helpful in this and other areas, including Sri La Sri Arunagirinatha Sri Gnanasambanda Desikar Paramacharya Swamigal of the 1,200-year-old Madurai Aadheenam, and the late Kundrakuddi Aadigal of the 400-year-old Kundrakuddi Aadheenam. I would also like to honor Sri La Sri Sivaprakasa Paramacharya Swamigal, Guru Mahasannidhanam of the 500-year-old Tiruvavaduthurai Aadheenam, for his support through the years.

Finally, appreciations to the *swāmīs* of my Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order—Paramacharya Bodhinatha, Acharya Palaniswami, Acharya Ceyonswami, Acharya Kumarswami, Muruganathaswami, Arumugaswami, Natarajathaswami, Sivakatirswami, Shanmuganathaswami—who met daily, month after month, to finalize the essential philosophical presentation contained in these pages, and to my tireless band of Sivanadiyars, *yogīs* and *sādhakas*, who also assisted in so many important ways.

Coordinating as liaison officers for two decades were Dr. S. Shanmugasundaram in Sri Lanka, and in Chennai, the late Tiru N.K. Murthi, retired aerodrome officer, and recently Tiru Lakshmanan Nellaiappan. Also crucial was the untiring support of Sri Lanka's A. Gunanayagam and V. Canaganayagam. In outlining temple liturgy, we were blessed with the backing of Sivasri Dr. T.S. Sambamurthy Sivachariar of the South India Archaka Sangam, who sent to Hawaii two expert priests, Kumaraswami Gurukkal and Shanmuga Gurukkal, to train my Śaiva *swāmīs* in the Parārtha Pūjā for daily performance in our Kadavul Hindu Temple, and in Śaiva Ātmārtha Pūjā for my family Church members.

In the area of scriptural translations, we owe a debt of gratitude to a host of scholars, including Dr. B. Natarajan, who rendered the *Tirumantiram* into English at our behest; Professor Raimundo Panikkar for

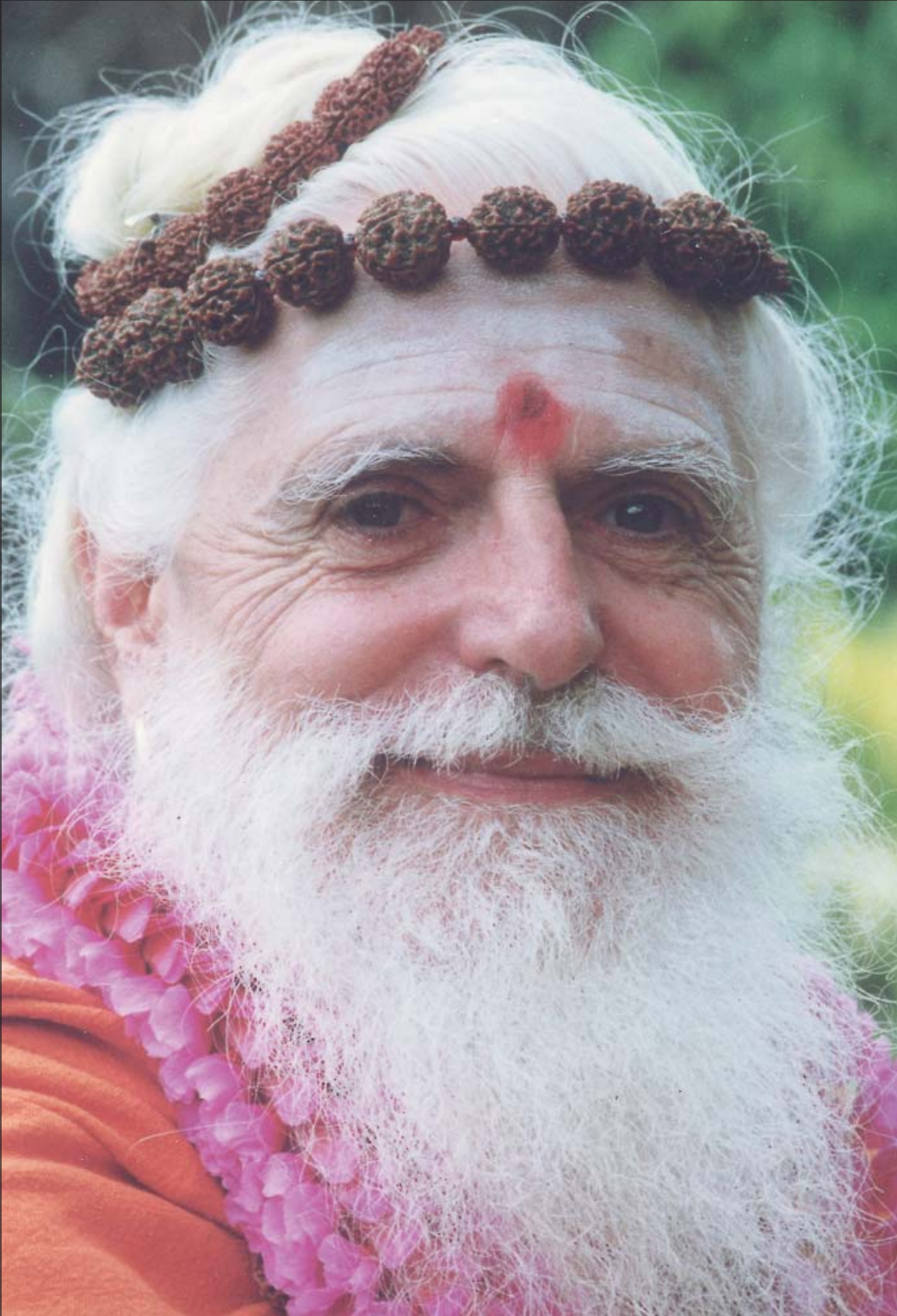
his splendid anthology of Vedic texts, *The Vedic Experience*, which he produced over a period of ten years while residing above a Śiva temple in Varanasi; the late Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of India, Robert Hume and Juan Mascaro for their translations of the major *Upanishads*; the Sivathondan Nilayam of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, for their English translation of Sage Yogaswami's *Natchintanai*, and Ratna Ma Navaratnam for her *Testament of Truth, Aum Ganesha* and *Karttikeya, the Divine Child*.

Dr. A. Anandanatarajah Deekshidhar and others of the ancient hereditary Deekshidhar priesthood at Chidambaram Temple in South India performed monthly *pūjās* blessing this work for many years. At Kauai Aadheenam's Kadavul Hindu Temple, during the twenty years it took to create this text, my monks held (and continue to hold) three-hour vigils around the clock and performed *pūjā* every three hours, night and day, without fail.

Going back even further, we express our deepest gratitude to Tiru Kandiah Chettiar, his wife and their son Vinayagamurti, with wife Sivayogam, for introducing me at age 21 to the refined culture and holy people of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, for adopting me into their family and especially for taking me on that never-to-be-forgotten full-moon day in May of 1949 to my beloved *satguru*, Sage Yogaswami, to receive initiation into *sannyāsa*. It was the slap on the back (called "a coronation" by the local Jaffna Hindus) from that remarkable soul that resonates in the 1,000 pages of *Dancing with Śiva*.

We cannot fail to gratefully remember Professor. R. Ramaseshan of Tanjavur, India, who translated the first edition of *Dancing with Śiva* into Tamil just before he was murdered by atheists who opposed his spiritual work. Pundit Mylvaganam of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, translated a later edition into Tamil in the late 1990s. Munshiram Manoharlal of New Delhi printed an Indian edition in 1996. The Tantra-Sangha of Moscow translated and published the Russian language edition in April 1997. In May, the Marathi translation was completed by Mrs. Kulkarni of Mumbai, India. A Malay translation was finished in 1996 by Sukumaran Apparu of Malaysia. A Spanish translation was completed in 2005 by Sarasvati Kumaran of California. Partial translations have been submitted for Tamil and French. Offers have been made to render the book into Japanese, and more languages are welcome.

For all this noble and selfless assistance, we offer our heartfelt thanks. May many blessings come to each one who contributed to this tome.



## About the Author



ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE ON THIS EARTH THERE ARISES A SOUL WHO, BY LIVING HIS TRADITION RIGHTLY AND WHOLLY, PERFECTS HIS PATH AND BECOMES A LIGHT TO THE WORLD. SATGURU SIVAYA SUBRAMUNIYASWAMI (1927-2001) WAS SUCH A BEING, a shining example of awakening and wisdom, a leader recognized worldwide as one of Hinduism's foremost ministers. ¶As a youth, he was trained in classical Eastern and Western dance and in the disciplines of *yoga*. Becoming the premier danseur of the San Francisco Ballet by age 19, he renounced the world at the height of his career and traveled to India and Sri Lanka in quest of Absolute Truth. In the caves of Jalani in 1949, he fasted and meditated until he burst into enlightenment. Soon thereafter, he met his *satguru*, Sage Yogaswami, who gave him the name *Subramuniya*, initiated him into the holy orders of *sannyāsa* and ordained him into his lineage with a tremendous slap on the back, saying, "This sound will be heard in America! Now go 'round the world and roar like a lion. You will build palaces (temples) and feed thousands." While in Sri Lanka, he founded Saiva Siddhanta Church, the world's first Hindu church, now active in many nations. In late 1949 he sailed back to America and embarked on seven years of ardent, solitary *yoga* and meditation which brought forth faculties of clairvoyance and clairaudience, culminating in *Cognizantability*, a collection of profound aphorisms and commentary on the states of mind and esoteric laws of life. In 1957, Subramuniyaswami, affectionately known as Gurudeva, founded Himalayan Academy and opened America's first Hindu temple, in San Francisco. He formed his monastic order in 1960. In Switzerland, 1968, he revealed Shūm, a mystical language of meditation that names and maps inner areas of consciousness. From 1967 to 1983 he led fourteen Innersearch pilgrimages, guiding hundreds of devotees to the world's sacred temples and illumined sages. In 1970 Gurudeva established his world headquarters and monastery-temple on Kauai, northernmost of the Hawaiian Islands. Beginning in the 1970s and continuing to 2001, he gave blessings to dozens of groups to build temples in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and elsewhere, gifting Deity images, usually of Lord Gaṇeśa, to 36 temples to begin the worship. Over the years, he personally guided groups of trustees through each stage of temple development. He



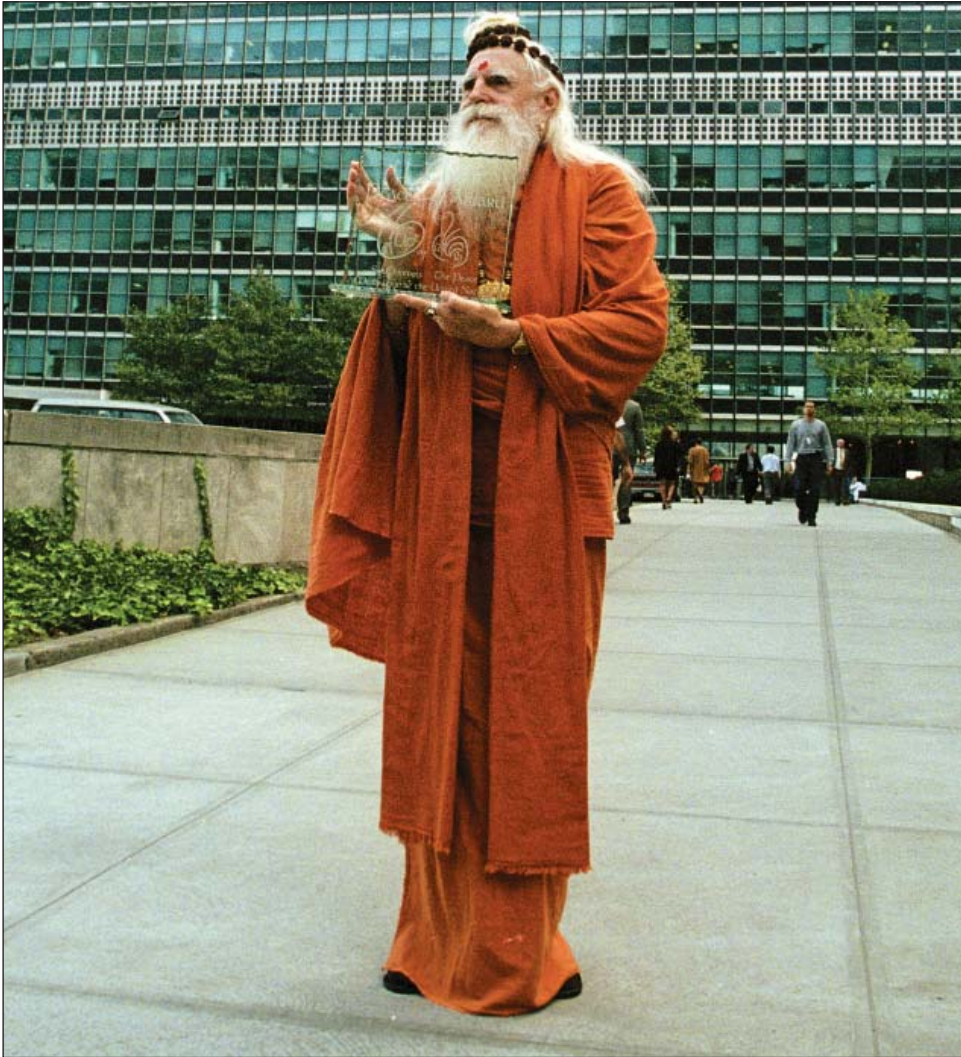
thus authenticated and legitimized the establishment of the temple as essential to any Hindu community. His relentless drive to establish Hindu worship in the West was based on his revelatory mystic visions of the Gods not as symbolic depictions but as real beings who guide and protect mankind, with whom we can commune most effectively through consecrated temples. ¶In 1973, after establishing Kadavul Temple, he clairvoyantly read from inner-plane libraries to bring forth *Lemurian Scrolls* and other esoteric writings to guide his monastic order and revive the centrality of celibacy and sexual transmutation. In 1975 he conceived the San Marga Iraivan Temple on Kauai as the first all-granite temple established outside of India. In 1977 he intensified requirements for his Western devotees to sever all prior religious, philosophical loyalties, legalize their Hindu name and formally enter Hinduism through the name-giving rite. In 1979 he published *Holy Orders of Sannyāsa*, defining the ideals, vows and aspirations of Hindu monasticism in unprecedented clarity. Also in 1979 he began publishing HINDUISM TODAY. His international Hindu renaissance tours in the early '80s revealed that Hindus were not globally connected or organized. Those in India knew little of their brothers and sisters in South America. Those in Fiji had no knowledge of Hindus in Europe or Mauritius. Seeing this need, Gurudeva focused his journal on uniting all Hindus, regardless of nationality or sect, and inspiring and educating seekers everywhere. That same year, he produced the first edition of his Hindu catechism, later to become *Dancing with Śiva*. ¶His travels in the 1980s brought him face to face with hundreds of thousands of Hindus, most notably in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and Mauritius, to whom he spread a powerful message of courage, regenerating pride of heritage. In the early '80s he established the antiquity and legitimacy of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta at international conferences among pundits who had insisted that Siddhānta is solely pluralistic. In 1985 Gurudeva adopted Apple's Macintosh-based publishing technology to supercharge his prolific outreach through scriptures, books, pamphlets, art, lessons and later through CDs and the world's foremost Hindu websites. ¶In 1986 he founded a branch monastery in Mauritius, whose government had invited him there to revive a languishing Hindu faith. That same year, New Delhi's World Religious Parliament named him one of five modern-day Jagadāchāryas, world teachers, for his international efforts in promoting a Hindu renaissance. Also in 1986 he created Pañcha Gaṇapati, a five-day Hindu festival celebrated around the time of Christmas. In 1987

he published *God's Money* to explain tithing and how it is practiced by members of his Hindu church. 1989 saw the culmination of numerous books and pamphlets that later became part of the Master Course trilogy. In 1990 in Bangalore, he ceremoniously chipped the first stone of Iraivan temple and established a small village where craftsmen and their families could live and carve this architectural gem by hand over the next fifteen years. In 1991 he produced the *Nandinātha Sūtras*, 365 aphorisms outlining the entire gamut of virtuous Hindu living. In 1994 Gurudeva founded Hindu Heritage Endowment, now a multi-million-dollar public service trust that establishes and maintains permanent sources of income for Hindu institutions worldwide. In 1995 he published the final edition of *Śaiva Dharma Śāstras*, drawing on aspects of the American church system to make his organization socially viable and structurally effective. Therein he finalized patterns for the future, including the extended family structure for his missions, and designated as his successors three of his senior monastics: Acharya Veylanswami, followed by Acharya Palani-swami and then Acharya Ceyonswami. ¶From 1977 to 2001 Gurudeva nurtured a staunchly Hindu, highly disciplined, global fellowship of family initiates, monastics and students, training them to follow the *sādhana mārḡa*, the path of *yogic* striving and personal transformation, and to assist him in his global mission. With this competent team and a sophisticated infrastructure, his Church nurtures its membership and local missions on five continents and serves, personally and through publications and the Internet, the community of Hindus of all sects. It furthers the dual mission of Hindu solidarity and monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, vowing to protect, preserve and promote the Śaivite Hindu religion as expressed through three pillars: temples, *satgurus* and scripture. The recognized hereditary *guru* of 2.5 million Sri Lankan Hindus, Gurudeva proclaimed his Church a Jaffna-Tamil-based organization which branched out from the Sri Subramuniya Ashram in Alaveddy to meet the needs of the growing Hindu diaspora of this century. It gently oversees some 40 temples worldwide. Missionaries and teachers within the family membership provide counseling and classes in Śaivism for children, youth and adults. Gurudeva's numerous books present his unique and practical insights on Hindu metaphysics, mysticism, culture, philosophy and *yoga*. His *Śaivite Hindu Religion* children's course is taught in many temples and homes, preserving the teachings in five languages for thousands of youths. ¶In 1995, in Delhi, the World Religious Parliament bestowed on him the title

Dharmachakra for his remarkable publications. The Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders for Human Survival chose him as a Hindu representative at its unique conferences. Thus, at Oxford in 1988, Moscow in 1990 and Rio de Janeiro in 1992, he joined religious, political and scientific leaders from all countries to discuss the future of human life on this planet. At Chicago's historic centenary Parliament of the World's Religions in September, 1993, he was elected one of three Hindus to the Presidents' Assembly, a core group of 25 men and women voicing the needs of world faiths. Especially in the early '90s he campaigned for fair treatment of temple priests, namely the same respect enjoyed by the clergy of other religions. From 1996 onward, Gurudeva was a key member of Vision Kauai 2020, a group of inspirers (including the Mayor, county council, business and education leaders) that meets to fashion the island's future based on spiritual values. In 1997 he responded to President Clinton's call for religious opinions on the ethics of human cloning. That same year, he spearheaded the 125th anniversary of Satguru Yogaswami and his golden icon's pilgrimage around the world, ending in Sri Lanka. During these final years he worked daily in the morning hours in refining the Shūm language as his supreme gift to his monastic order. ¶ In 1998 Gurudeva began an ardent campaign for the right of children to not be beaten by their parents or their teachers, and helping parents raise children with love through Positive Discipline classes taught by his family devotees as their primary community service. In 1999 he traveled to Mauritius to publicly inaugurate his Spiritual Park as a gift to the island nation. In 2000 he published *How to Become a Hindu*, showing the way for seekers to formally enter the faith, refuting the dogma that "You must be born a Hindu to be a Hindu." On August 25, 2000, he received the prestigious United Nations U Thant Peace Award in New York (previously bestowed on the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa). He addressed 1,200 spiritual leaders gathered for the UN Millennium Peace Summit, with the message, "For peace in the world, stop the war in the home." Upon his return to Kauai, 350 citizens and county and state officials gathered to herald his accomplishments on the island and beyond. Governor Benjamin Cayetano wrote: "I am especially grateful for your efforts to promote moral and spiritual values in Hawaii. May our people forever embrace the message of peace you have so eloquently supported in your gracious wisdom." In November, 2000, Gurudeva launched Hindu Press International (HPI), a HINDUISM TODAY

daily news summary for breaking news sent free via e-mail and posted on the web. In 1999, 2000 and 2001 he conducted three Innersearch journeys, consecrating new temples in Alaska, Trinidad and Denmark. In 2001 he completed his golden legacy, the 3,000-page Master Course trilogy of *Dancing, Living and Merging with Siva*—peerless volumes of daily lessons on Hindu philosophy, culture and *yoga, respectively*. ¶For fifty years, Subramuniyaswami taught Hinduism to Hindus and seekers from all faiths. Known as one of the strictest *gurus* in the world, he was the 162nd successor of the Nandinātha Kailāsa lineage and satguru of Kauai Aadheenam, his 458-acre temple-monastery complex on the Garden Island of Kauai. From this verdant Polynesian *aśrama* on a river bank near the foot of an extinct volcano, his monastics continue to promote the *dharma* together through Saiva Siddhanta Church, Himalayan Academy and Hindu Heritage Endowment, perpetuating the mission given to Gurudeva by his *satguru*. ¶Gurudeva departed from this world as courageously as he had lived in it. Learning on October 9, 2001, that he had advanced, metastacized intestinal cancer, confirmed by a host of specialists in three states, all concurring that even the most aggressive treatment regimens would not prove effective, he declined any treatment beyond palliative measures and decided to follow the Indian yogic practice, called *prāyopaveśa* in Sanskrit scripture, to abstain from nourishment and take water only from that day on. He left his body peacefully on the 32nd day of his self-declared fast, at 11:54 pm on Monday, Chitra *nakshatra*, November 12, 2001, surrounded by his twenty-three monastics. Gurudeva consoled them, “Don’t be sad. When I am gone from this world, I will be working with you on the inside twenty-four hours a day.” The rock-solid foundation for the continuance of his work is Kauai Aadheenam and its resident Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order. This group of eleven initiated *swāmīs* with lifetime vows and nine *brahmachārīs*, celibate monks, come from six countries and include both men born into the Hindu religion and those who converted or adopted Hinduism—Asians and Westerners—made strong by decades of Gurudeva’s loving but strict personal guidance and insistence on 110 percent performance. In the first weeks of his fast, Gurudeva seamlessly transferred his duties and responsibilities to his chosen successor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, 59, a disciple for 37 years, declaring, “Bodhinatha is the new *satguru* now.” Ever concerned for others, even on his deathbed, just days before his Great Union, he whispered in assurance, “Everything that is happening is good. Every-

thing that is happening is meant to be.” He asked devotees worldwide to carry his work and institutions forward with unstinting vigor, to keep one another strong on the spiritual path, to live in harmony and to work diligently on their personal spiritual *sādhanas*. “You are all over-qualified to carry on.” ¶When notified of Gurudeva’s passing, Sita Ram Goel, one of India’s most influential Hindu writers and thinkers, wrote, “He has done great work for Hinduism, and the recent reawakening of the Hindu mind carries his stamp.” Ma Yoga Shakti, renowned *yoga* teacher, said, “For more than five decades, Subramuniaswami, a highly enlightened soul of the West—a Hanuman of today, a reincarnation of Śiva Himself—has watered the roots of Hinduism with great zeal, faith, enthusiasm and whole-heartedness.” Sri Shivarudra Balayogi Maharaj of India said, “By his life and by his teaching, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami has helped make Hinduism an even greater gift to humanity.” From Jaffna, president of Sivathondan Nilayam Arunasalam Sellathurai Swamigal wrote: “The life, mission and mandate of His Holiness Sivaya Subramuniaswami form an epic chapter in his unending spiritual quest leading him to the founding of the Saiva Siddhanta Church and a monastic order in Hawaii—a magnificent task! This will ever remain a monument to his spiritual fervor, proclaiming worldwide, East and West, in trumpet tones that Swamigal was a trailblazer of Lord Śiva’s choice to glorify the spiritual heritage and the essence of Śaiva Siddhānta.” ¶Gurudeva’s life was one of extraordinary accomplishments on so many levels; but his greatest *siddhi*, to which thousands of devotees will testify, was his incredible power to inspire others toward God, to change their lives in ways that were otherwise impossible, to be a light on their path, a mother and father and friend to all who drew near. Gurudeva lived so profoundly at the center of himself, so close to the core of being, the heart of Divinity, that everyone he met felt close to him. He personified the pure, blissful soul nature they seek and sense as the center of themselves.



*Gurudeva holds the U Thant Peace Award in front of the United Nations in New York*

## **Milestones of Ministry**

*Enumerating a Spiritual Master's Many Gifts to Mankind*

Empowered by his Self Realization, his ordination as a *satguru* and the blessings of Gods and *devas*, Gurudeva contributed to the revival of Hinduism in immeasurable abundance. He was simultaneously a staunch defender of traditions, as the proven ways of the past, and a fearless innovator, rivaling the *rishis* of Vedic times in instilling fresh understanding and setting new patterns of life for contemporary humanity. Here is a partial list of his trail-blazing mission and accomplishments.

### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

Bringing seekers new meaning to life through *The Master Course as a path of self-transformation through sādhana*, a self-initiated journey to bravely, cheerfully face the *karma* one has created in the past.

Pioneering the language Shūm in 1968 to enhance seekers' *yogic* efforts and vigorously developing it from 1995-2001, as his choicest inner gift to his monastics.

Bringing the Gods "out of exile" by explaining and writing about the mysteries of temple worship and the three worlds of existence from his own experience.

Unfolding theological summations for a religion in renaissance, such as "Four Facts of Hinduism," "Nine Beliefs," "Hinduism's Code of Conduct," the 365 *Nandinatha Sutras*, and a Hindu catechism and creed. Bringing forth *Lemurian Scrolls* and other esoteric writings from inner-plane libraries to guide his monastic order and revive the centrality of celibacy and sexual transmutation.

Translating and publishing Tiruvalluvar's ethical masterpiece, the *Tirukural*, in modern, lucid English.

### LEADING THE HINDU RENAISSANCE

Building Hindu pride; convincing Hindus everywhere to stand up and proclaim themselves Hindus and stop repeating equivocal slogans like, "I'm not really a Hindu. I am a universalist—a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim and a Buddhist."

Proclaiming that Hinduism is a great, living religion, not a archeologic relic of the past as oft depicted by Western scholars—one that should be presented by Hindu writers, as he did in his peerless publications.

Teaching Hinduism to Hindus, awakening their self-appreciation as a world community, blessed inheritors of a grand civilization and culture, indeed, the religion best suited to the new age.

Rescuing the word *Hinduism* from its fallen status as a dirty word and restoring it to its age-old glory.

Heralding sectarianism when the prevailing trend was bland uniformity, insisting that only if each denomination is strong and faithful to its unique traditions will Hinduism itself be strong.

Championing the centrality of temples, legitimizing their establishment, and authenticating their purpose.

## CAMPAIGNS AGAINST WRONGS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Dispelling myths and misinformation about Hinduism through HINDUISM TODAY for two decades.

Promoting the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* as the holy bible of Hinduism, rather than the mythological *Purāṇas* and the historical *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Establishing rational-mystical explanations for Hindu practice to displace the Purāṇic “comic book” mentality.

Reinstating *ahimsā*, noninjury, as the cardinal ethic of Hinduism when militants were promoting righteous retaliation, often by citing the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Rejecting traditional stories that glorify violence, such as many found in the *Periyapurānam*.

Repopularizing Śiva as a God of love to be worshiped by all devotees, not a fearsome being approached only by ascetics. Assuring Hindus it is all right, in fact necessary, to have Lord Śiva in the home.

Speaking for the purity of Hindu monasticism and against the idea of “married *swāmīs*” and mixed-gender *āśramas*.

Campaigning against the use of illegal drugs by exposing the harmful effects and *karmic* consequences.

Combatting unethical Christian conversion by enhancing Hindu education, exposing the devious tactics of evangelists and the immaturity of faiths that consider theirs the only true path and aggressively seek to compel others to adopt it.

Debunking the notion that “All religions are one” and publishing a comparative summary of the major religions of the world, side by side with prominent secular philosophies.

Enjoining temple boards of trustees to get along with each other, to beware of detractors and to establish teaching programs for the youth.

## RELIGIOUS STATESMANSHIP

Providing a fearless, outspoken Hindu voice at interfaith conferences and spiritual and political forums, objecting to Christian hegemony at such gatherings, calling for equal representation by other religions, including the indigenous peoples, and decrying the hypocrisy of scientists who would speak as potential saviors for Earth’s problems when science itself had caused many of the predicaments.



Defending advaitic Śaiva Siddhānta at international conferences and with pundits of South Indian *aadheenams* to successfully affirm the legitimacy and antiquity of the nondual theology which so perfectly reflected his own realizations.

Creating a method of ethical self-conversion for seekers to formally enter the Hindu religion, insisting that Hinduism has always accepted newcomers, refuting the notion that “You must be born a Hindu to be a Hindu.”

Encouraging people to practice their religion, whatever it may be, rather than nonreligious paths such as materialism, communism, existentialism and secular humanism.

### PIONEERING NEW PATTERNS

Harnessing information technology to drive Hindu Dharma into the new millennium, including setting up the first Macintosh publishing network (1986) and founding the first major Hindu website (1994). In 1998 he launched TAKA, “Today at Kauai Aadheenam,” to chronicle daily activities at his Kauai and Mauritius centers. He observed, “Now we have computers and the Internet—modern technology capable of bringing the spiritual beings and all religious people of the world closely together wherever they live. This one thing the typewriter could not do, the pen and paper could not do, the stylus and *olai* leaf did not do.”

Calling for the establishment of schools, *pathasalas*, to train temple priests outside of India.

Promoting the idea of resident facilities for the elderly to live together close to temples in the West.

Gifting Deity icons, usually of Lord Gaṇeśa, to initiate the worship and remove obstacles at 36 temples globally.

Establishing perpetual funds to finance his own and others’ religious endeavors through Hindu Heritage Endowment.

Finding ways for Hindus to meet cultural dilemmas in the modern age, such as devising a new festival, Pañcha Gaṇapati, celebrated for five days around the time of Christmas.

Supporting cross-national marriages within his congregation and to the wider Hindu world.

Drawing from the American church system to make his organization, and other Hindu institutions, socially viable, legally strong and struc-

turally effective.

Encouraging selfless, religious giving of one's time, resources and finances, and establishing tithing as a monthly practice within his global congregation.

Establishing Innersearch Travel Study as a means of self-discovery and spiritual renewal for devotees and students, with his last three journeys consecrating new temples in Alaska, Trinidad and Denmark. Distinguishing outstanding leadership with his Hindu of the Year award. Introducing to Kauai: Toggenberg goats, Jersey cows, the honey bee industry and various species of exotic flora.

### REVIVING NOBLE TRADITIONS

Bringing sacraments, *saṁskāras*, back into vogue through his writings and by implementing them among his congregation with reverence and formal documentation.

Campaigning for priests' rights and fair treatment, demanding they receive the same respect enjoyed by the clergy of other religions.

Supporting and reviving the traditional arts, especially South Indian painting, with which he illustrated his trilogy; Indian dance, which he and his followers learned and taught; temple architecture, which he embodied in Iraivan Temple; Vedic astrology, which he used daily for its insights into character of people and timing of events; and *āyurveda*, which he promoted in his publications and encouraged as a natural healing system for his followers.

Rescuing the home shrine from extinction—"out of the closet, into the most beautiful room of the home."

### STRENGTHENING MONASTICISM

Garnering respect for Hindu monastics of every order when "*swāmī* bashing" was common, proclaiming that *swāmīs* and *sādhus* are the ministers of this noble faith and that genuine *gurus* should be venerated, obeyed and sought out for their wisdom.

Creating a global enclave of several hundred Hindu leaders and regularly calling on them for their wisdom on critical issues, from abortion, to cloning, to medical ethics and Hindu family life, publishing their collective views in HINDUISM TODAY.

Breathing new life into the *aadheenams* of South India (temple-monastery complexes), bringing new prominence to the Saṅkarāchārya

centers and to the seats of power of all monastic lineages. Codifying in his *Holy Orders of Sannyāsa* the ideals, vows and aspirations of Hindu monasticism in unprecedented clarity and detail.

### IMPROVING FAMILY LIFE

Upholding the integrity of the family, extolling the extended family, finding ways to keep families close and harmonious, declaring that divorce is never a happy solution to marital conflict.

Denouncing and taking action against wife abuse as a despicable act that no man has the right to perpetrate.

Insisting on “zero tolerance for disharmonious conditions” within his monasteries and the homes of followers.

Protecting children from abuse, standing up for their right to not be beaten by parents or teachers and debunking the notion that corporal punishment is a part of Hindu culture.

Helping parents raise children with love and respect through Positive Discipline classes taught by his family devotees as a primary service to the community.

Establishing a counter “women’s liberation movement,” reminding Hindus that family well-being lies in the hands of women, who with their special *śakti* are uniquely able raise their children well and make their husbands successful by not working in the world, but following the traditional role of wife and mother.

### SETTING STANDARDS IN LEADERSHIP

Creating Kauai Aadheenam, a temple-monastery in Hawaii so traditional and spiritual—replete with two Śiva temples, a large monastic order and a *satguru pīṭha* (seat of authority), all amid religious art, sculpture, traditional temple architecture and liturgy—that it stands as the most authoritative *aadheenam* in the West.

Manifesting Iraivan, the first all-stone Āgamic temple in the West.

Initiating and nurturing a traditional order of two dozen celibate Śaiva monastics, molding them into an effective, harmonious, traditional multi-national team.

Building two platforms: Hindu solidarity, which he promoted through HINDUISM TODAY, and monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, which he elucidated in his eloquent and prolific publications.

Being always available: personally greeting thousands of Hindu visi-

tors to his *aadheenam*, speaking with them about their lives, concerns and aspirations.

Fulfilling the motto “Think globally, act locally,” joining monthly with Kauai leaders in an island visioning group to help manifest an enhanced social and economic future.



*In December of 1995 Gurudeva was invited to the opening of a temple in Mumbai, India, where eighty-nine Śivāchāryas were gathered to conduct the sacred rites. Gurudeva took the opportunity to meet with them and speak of the importance of their priestly traditions and the need to own and manage their own temples.*

## There are a few unusual men who have had enough of worldliness and choose to dance, live and merge with Śiva as Hindu monks.

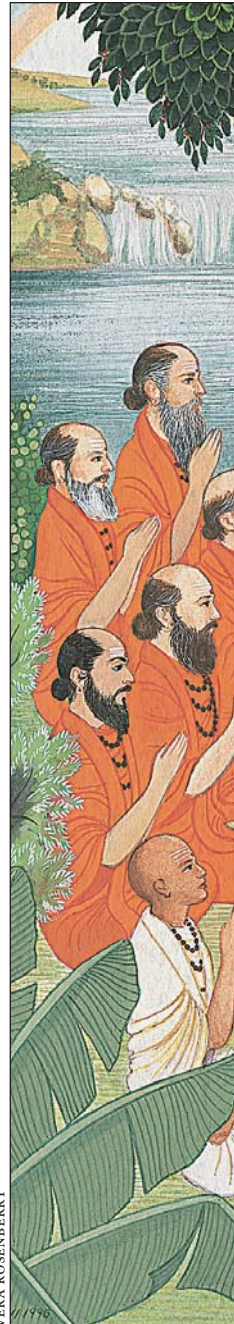


THESE RARE SOULS FOLLOW THE PATH OF THE TRADITIONAL HINDU MONASTIC, VOWED TO POVERTY, HUMILITY, OBEDIENCE, PURITY AND CONFIDENCE. THEY PURSUE THE DISCIPLINES OF *CHARYĀ*, *KRIYĀ*, *YOGA* AND *JÑĀNA* THAT LEAD TO SELF REALIZATION.

Knowing God is their only goal in life, the power that drives them tirelessly on. They live with other *maṭhavāsis* like themselves in monasteries, apart from worldliness, to worship, meditate, serve and realize the truths of the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*. Guided by Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, successor to Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, and headquartered at Kauai Aadheenam in Hawaii, USA, on the beautiful Garden Island of Kauai, the Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order is among the world's foremost traditional Śaivite Hindu monastic orders, accepting candidates from every nation on Earth. It is an *advaitic* Śaiva Siddhānta order, a living stream of the ancient Nandinātha Sampradāya, originally deriving from India, and in recent centuries based in Sri Lanka. Young men considering the renunciate path who strongly believe they have found their spiritual calling in this lineage are encouraged to write to Bodhinatha, sharing their personal history, spiritual aspirations, thoughts and experiences. Holy orders of *sannyāsa* may be conferred on those who qualify after ten to twelve years of training. Write to:

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, Guru Mahāsannidhānam, Kauai Aadheenam, 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii 96746-9304 USA  
E-mail: [bodhi@hindu.org](mailto:bodhi@hindu.org);  
World Wide Web: [www.gurudeva.org](http://www.gurudeva.org)

*Gurudeva is seated in the yogic posture beneath the sprawling banyan tree at Kauai's Hindu Monastery, his hand raised to bless his maṭhavāsis gathered at his feet. The sādhakas in white vestments are following the path of service and training. The yogīs in yellow are preparing for sannyāsa, practicing advanced meditative disciplines and tapas toward self-transformation. The swāmīs in orange form the Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order, the ecclesiastical body of Saiva Siddhanta Church. The monastics are surrounded by Kauai's tropical lushness while behind them flows the sacred Wailua River and its Nani Kaula waterfall, which tumbles into a large, natural rock pond. Above the sky is filled with rainbows.*



Hail, O *sannyāsin*, love's embodiment! Does any power exist apart from love? Diffuse thyself throughout the happy world. Let painful *māyā* cease and never return. Day and night give praise unto the Lord. Pour forth a stream of songs to melt the very stones. Attain the sight where night is not, nor day. See Śiva everywhere and rest in bliss. Live without interest in worldly gain. Here, as thou hast ever been, remain.

SATGURU SIVA YOGASWAMI



## The Hindu Heritage Endowment



INDU THOUGHT AND CULTURE THREAD THROUGH ALMOST EVERY CIVILIZATION ON THE PLANET, WEAVING A SUBTLE TAPESTRY OF LOFTY PHILOSOPHY AND EARTHY, PRAGMATIC WISDOM. WHOSE LIFE HAS NOT BEEN TOUCHED? SOME HAVE BEEN raised in India and enjoy memories of warm extended families and cool temples resounding with ancient *mantras*. Others find peace of mind in Hindu *yoga* practices. Many find solace in the concepts of *karma*, *dharma* and reincarnation, which express their own inner findings and beliefs. If you are one who has been touched by Hindu thought and culture, you may wish to further enrich your life by giving back to Sanātana Dharma in countries around the globe and helping preserve its rich heritage for future generations. ¶Hindu Heritage Endowment (HHE) provides such an opportunity. A public charitable trust recognized by the United States government, HHE was created to maintain permanent endowments for Hindu projects and institutions worldwide. Its endowments benefit orphanages, children's schools, *āśramas* and temples. They support priests and publish books; and they are designed to continue giving that financial support year after year, decade after decade, century after century. The staff at HHE is one-pointed in their dedication to seeing that qualified donations will be used effectively for the purposes intended. Each beneficiary must give a detailed yearly report on its income from HHE and a schedule of how the next year's funds will be spent before funds are issued. We take it as a *sādhana* to see that your gifts meet their purpose. Please place Hindu Heritage Endowment in your will, your year-end giving and/or your monthly budget. Whether you are inspired to give a few dollars to support orphanages or bequest millions in your will, write, give us a call or look us up on the Internet. Find out how to enrich your life by helping to preserve the treasures of a profound heritage for generations now living or as yet unborn.

Hindu Heritage Endowment, Kauai's Hindu Monastery  
 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii, 96746-9304, USA. Phone: (800) 890-1008;  
 outside of the US: (808) 822-3012, ext. 244; fax: (808) 822-3152;  
 E-mail: [hhe@hindu.org](mailto:hhe@hindu.org) World Wide Web: <http://www.hheonline.org/>



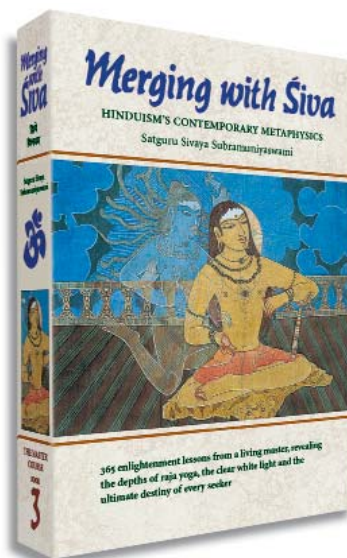
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### *Merging with Śiva*

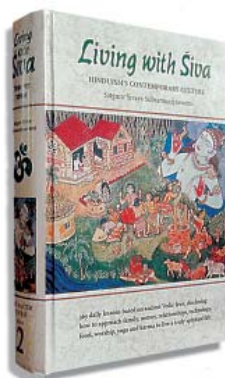
*Hinduism's Contemporary Metaphysics*  
Book 3 of The Master Course Trilogy  
By Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Here is the ultimate text for the serious seeker. It may well go down in history as the richest and most inspired statement of meditation and God Realization ever, in any language. Yet, it's user-friendly, easy to follow, sensible and nonacademic! *Merging with Śiva* is 365 daily lessons about the core of your own being. It's about God, about the mystical realm of the fourteen *chakras*, the human aura, *karma*, force fields, thought and the states of mind, the two paths, *samādhi* and so much more. Illustrated with fifty original South Indian paintings. Second edition, 2002, 1,000 pages, 7" x 10", case bound (ISBN 0-945497-99-7), US\$59.95.



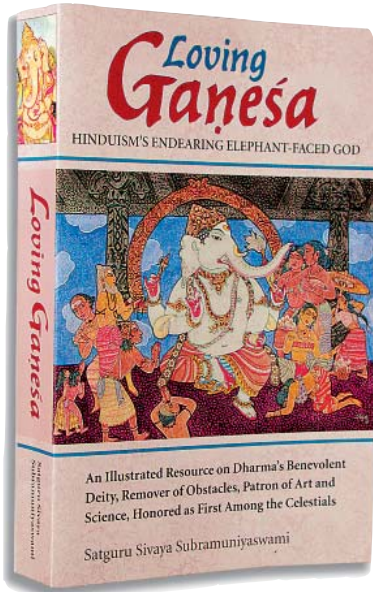
### *Living with Śiva*

*Hinduism's Contemporary Culture*  
Book 2 of The Master Course Trilogy  
By Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami



In the same bold, candid style of *Merging with Śiva*, Gurudeva focuses here on Hinduism's twenty restraints and observances that bring order in life and establish a foundation for spirituality, meditation and realization. He addresses frankly and offers sound advice on the various problematic areas of modern living. The book is conveniently structured in 365 daily lessons disclosing how to approach family, money, relationships, technology, food, worship, *yoga* and *karma* to live a truly spiritual life. Second edition, beautiful full color art throughout, *hatha yoga* and religious dues resources. Second edition, 2001, 7" x 10", case bound (ISBN 0-945497-98-9), US\$59.95.





## Loving Gaṇeśa

*Hinduism's Endearing Elephant-Faced God*  
By Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

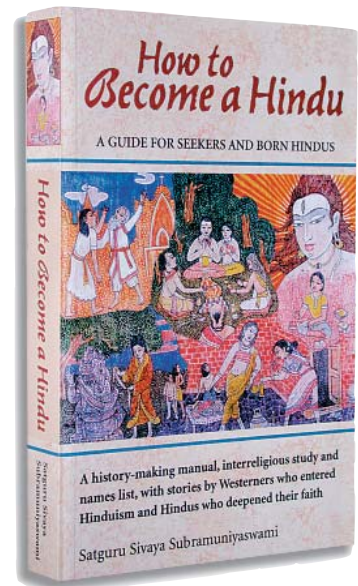
No book about this beloved elephant-faced God is more soul-touching. The Lord of Dharma will come to life for you in this inspired masterpiece. It makes approaching this benevolent Lord easy and inspiring. Learn about Gaṇeśa's powers, pastimes, mantras, nature, science, forms, sacred symbols, milk-drinking miracle and more. "A copy of *Loving Gaṇeśa* should be placed in every library and Hindu home" (Sri Om Prakash Sharma). Second edition, 1999, 576 pages, 5½" x 8½", softcover (ISBN 0-945497-77-6), US\$29.85.

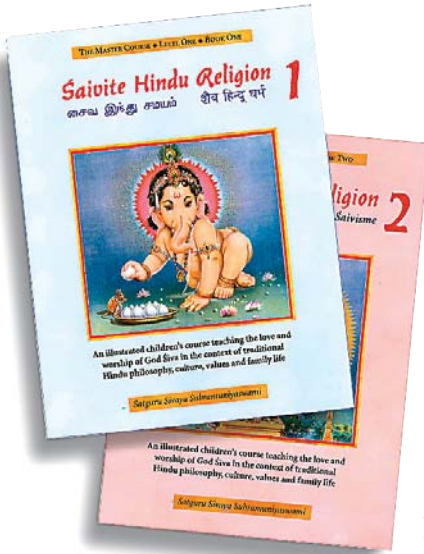
## How to Become a <sup>Better</sup> Hindu

*A Guide for Seekers and Born Hindus*  
By Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Hundreds of thousands of half-Hindus, having received a first name of a God or Goddess from their *yoga* teacher or a *swami*, want to enter the religion fully. Because of Hinduism's liberal doctrine, it is left to the individual as a "do-it-yourself conversion." *How to Become a Hindu* explains how the six steps of ethical conversion have enhanced the lives of many in the East and West. Here Americans, Canadians and Europeans tell their stories of passage from Western faiths to Hinduism. The book raises and convincingly settles the debate about non-Hindus entering the religion.

"This elucidative book will provide immense help to those who wish to enter the Hindu fold, and also the younger generation of Hindus living outside India" (Puri Shankaracharya). First edition, 2000, 496 pages, 8½" x 5½", softcover (ISBN 0-945497-82-2), US\$27.95.



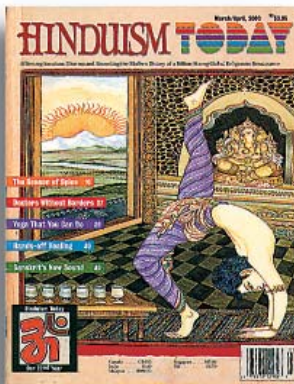


## Saiivite Hindu Religion

*A Children's Course, Books One, Two and Three  
By Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami*

What every Hindu parent needs: intelligent, nonviolent, traditional texts for their kids—an authentic, illustrated, seven-book series, teaching philosophy, culture and family life. Based on the holy *Vedas*, the world's oldest scripture, this course is the loving work of Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. An excellent resource for educators and parents, it explains the “why” of each belief and practice in simple terms in three languages. Prominent leaders of all sects have given enthusiastic endorsements. “A commendable, systematically conceived course useful

to one and all with special significance to fortunate children who shall be led on the right path (Sri Sri Sri Tiruchi Mahaswamigal, Bangalore, India).” Book One (5- to 7-year-old level) is available in a Hindi-Tamil-English edition, soft-cover, 8½" x 11", 170 pages, US\$9.95. Book Two (6- to 8-year-old level), English-Tamil-Malay, 196 pages, US\$9.95. Book Three (7- to 9-year-old level), English-Tamil-Malay-French, 96 pages, US\$4.95.

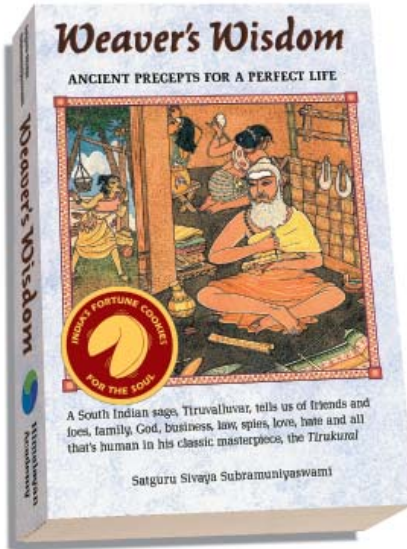


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Shannon, Portland). Introductory offer (US only): one-year subscription, 4 stunning issues, for US\$35! And yes, the author of this book founded this global magazine and guided it for 20 years. ISSN 0896-0801; UPC: 0-74470-12134-3. Visit: [www.hinduismtoday.com](http://www.hinduismtoday.com)



## Weaver's Wisdom

*Ancient Precepts for a Perfect Life*  
Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

A finely crafted American English translation of a beloved 2,200-year-old Tamil classic, *Tirukural*, by the weaver saint, Tiruvalluvar—yet, it's all about today's world, business, family, relationships, money, enemies, personal fears, gambling, politics, diet and health. Arguably the world's ultimate ethical guide, its pithy, often humorous, aphorisms offer an earthy assessment of human nature. In South India this scripture is sworn on in courts of law. Quote from it freely. Read from it to your children to train their

minds and guide them along the path of *dharma*. Over 100 illustrations, 1,080 verses. First edition, 1999, 408 pages, 5½" x 8½", softcover (ISBN 0-945497-76-9), US\$19.95. Hardcover version, US\$29.85. Hardcover, full-color edition with English and modern Tamil translations, 600 pages (ISBN 81-7017-390-6), US\$49.95.

## The Vedic Experience

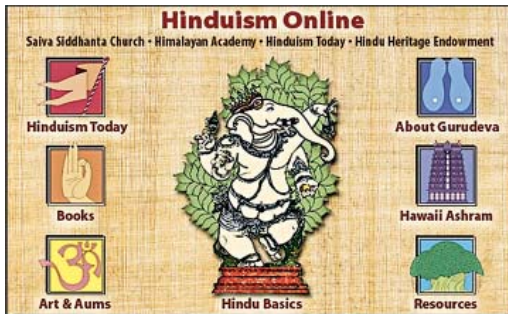
Back in 1991 when we were first gathering Vedic verses for *Dancing with Śiva*, we could hardly believe our eyes when we came upon this brilliant anthology from the Vedic *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and *Upanishads* and other scriptures. This Vedic epiphany tells the story of the universal rhythms of nature, history and humanity. The translation and abundant commentary are the work of Spanish renaissance thinker Raimundo Panikkar—the fruit of 12 years of daily *sādhana* in Varanasi between 1964 and 1976 while he lived above a Śiva temple on the river Gaṅga. He considers it perhaps his most significant contribution. This classic makes the *Vedas* available to all. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1977, smythe-sewn and case bound, cloth cover, 8½" x 5½", 1,000 pages, US\$39.75.





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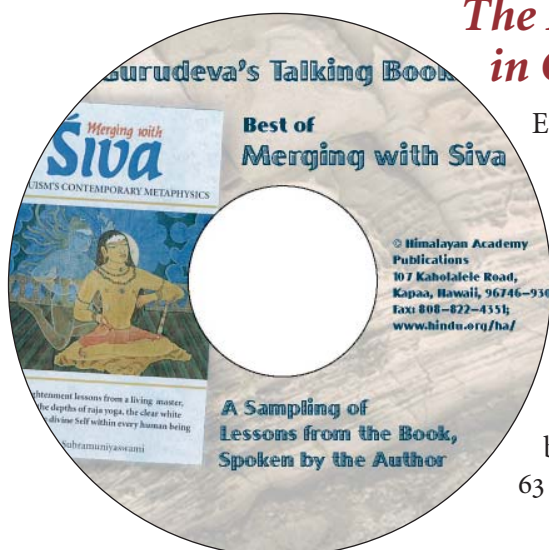
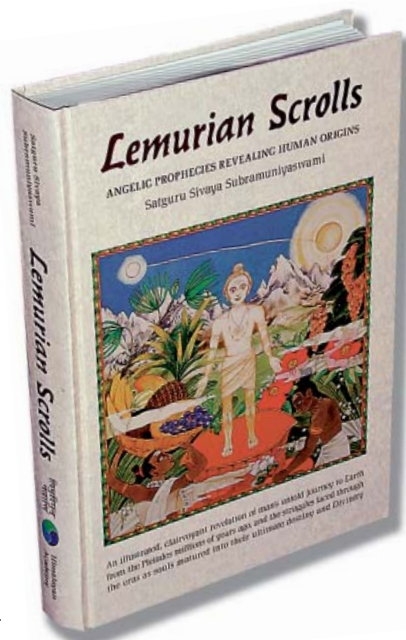
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## Lemurian Scrolls

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*Library Journal*; US librarians' foremost resource; New York, October 1, 1993, Carolyn Craft, Farmville, Virginia

This almost encyclopedic sourcebook presents Hinduism, particularly Saivite Hinduism, from the point of view of contemporary Hindus. It uses the traditional four-line presentation, followed by a 21-line commentary, to explain 155 points of history, doctrine, ritual and practice. These explanations are supplemented by verses of scripture, extensive illustrations, a Hindu timeline, a children's primer, and charts. This work is accessible to non-Hindus. Highly recommended.



**K.L. Seshagiri Rao, Ph.D.**  
Professor Emeritus at the University of Virginia, Editor of the quarterly journal *World Faiths Encounter*, Chief Editor of the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Columbia, South Carolina

*Dancing with Siva* elucidates with exceptional ability the self-understanding of Hindus about their complex tradition, in contemporary context. It sets the record straight in the form of questions and answers. It enables students and teachers to correct misconceptions and misinterpretations to which the Hindu tradition has been subjected by unsympathetic critics. The dynamic, experiential, constructive and open approach of Hindus to spiritual, moral and domestic life is highlighted. The author has captured the essential spirit of the tradition as a continuous celebration of God's revelations of eternal truth and love. This book is not only an important source of insightful information on the different dimensions of Saivism to the Hindus around the globe, but is also a useful guide for spiritual transformation of their lives. The beautiful illustrations, copious lexicon and an exhaustive index make the book specially attractive and useful. It deserves enthusiastic welcome and wide attention.



**Sri Sri Swami Satchidananda,**  
Founder and Spiritual Head of Satchidananda Ashram and its Light of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS), renowned yoga master and visionary, Yogaville, Virginia

*Dancing with Siva* is a must in every Hindu's library. Whoever wants to know Hinduism and its applicability to modern life should read this encyclopedia of Hindu wisdom.



**Karan Singh, Ph.D.**  
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), former Indian Ambassador to the US, Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University and son of Kashmir's last Maharaja, New Delhi, India

A monumental work! This is indeed a remarkable book.

**Dr. P. Jayaraman, Executive Director,**  
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan; New York

*Dancing with Siva* provides a comprehensive knowledge of different schools of Indian philosophy, with an authentic approach to the original Saivite scriptures written in Tamil and Sanskrit. It provides a glossary of terms with their authoritative sources and connotations. I strongly recommend this book, brought out with meticulous care and authored by an erudite scholar of the subject after great *sadhana*.

**Dr. K. Venkatasubramanian, former Vice-Chancellor of**  
Pondicherry's Central University; Madras, India

Your innovative new presentation of ancient knowledge simply fascinates me, and I am sure it will charm every reader. India needs the reassurance you have given. We will "integrate *bhakti* with *jnana*, Siddhanta with Vedanta, *Agamas* with *Vedas* and Hindu Dharma with everyday life." A reading of this outstanding publication gives us a new matchless "soul force" to live a life of beauty and peace amidst the modern horrors surrounding us.



**Professor Subhash Kak, Ph.D.**  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Louisiana State University; Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

*Dancing with Siva* is a magnificent book! It is beautifully produced and has profuse illustrations. It presents the endless variety of the ancient Hindu tradition in an easy question-and-answer format. There are precepts for the individual, the family and the community. The book communicates the central vision of Hinduism, that God is to be found in oneself and in all the creation around. There is even a delightful section for children. Altogether, the book is a superb achievement. It should be invaluable not only to Hindus but also to others who seek self-knowledge.



**Pundit Ramesh Tiwari,**  
President General, Edinburgh  
Dharmic Sabha;  
Chaguanas, Trinidad and  
Tobago

A new spiritual dawn awakens within me after reading the passages in this book. I am now reading the messages in a weekly radio program titled *Siva Shakti*, directed to the 300,000 Hindu population in Trinidad and Tobago.



**Pundit K.N. Navaratnam,**  
M.A.F.A., F.A.A., Jaffna Tamil  
elder, Jyotisha Marthand and  
National Astrologer of Australia,  
Sivathondan Center, Hallam,  
Australia

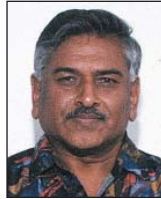
*Dancing with Siva* has stunned me with its golden words of wisdom and lucid expression of the most ancient Hindu religion, which can now be understood from the beginning to the end even by laymen. It leads the reader to the Holy Feet of the ever-dancing Nataraja, the Supreme God of the universe.



**Vishwaguru**  
Mahamandaleshwar Paramhans  
Swami Maheshwarananda  
Spiritual Head of the Society  
"Yoga in Daily Life,"  
Vienna, Austria

My sincere congratulations to the reprint and new edition of *Dancing with Siva* that proves the vivid interest in spiritual literature in our time. Especially I am very happy about this success, because this book is a real jewel among the vast literature about Hindu religion. It represents knowledge, wisdom and tolerance, which are imperatives to save humanity at the present time. Hindu civilization is the most ancient and rich in culture, traditions, philosophy and concepts. It has endeavored to secure the well-being of humanity and universal brotherhood. The Sanatana Dharma expounds universal welfare, development of divine virtues and attainment of spiritual success. It deals with the life of all humans and creatures of this world and also of the other worlds. *Dancing with Siva* offers not only a deep insight into the noble values of Vedic religion and culture in a most profound and inspiring way; the second part of the

book, named Truth is One, Paths are Many, gives clear evidence that the entire humankind is relying on the same fundamentals. May there be many divine books like *Dancing with Siva!* Thank you in the name of all Siva *bhaktas* and other devotees for undertaking the immense effort and research work to publish a book of such high rank.



**Liladhar J. Bharadia,** noted  
journalist; Nairobi, Kenya

To me, *Dancing with Siva* is a complete course on Hinduism. It is the most useful book I've seen for students' education. In Kenya, Hindu education is taught in primary and secondary schools by the Ministry of Education. This book should be presented to government bodies in various countries for teaching Hindu religion.

**Gloria J. Bethke; Camarillo, California**

I cannot tell you how many years I have waited for such a book as *Dancing with Siva*. How many years have I sent for this book and that, struggling to learn about this (to me) the best of all spiritual paths! And while I shouldn't be materialistic, I can't help mentioning that I had spent well over \$1,000.00 and still I hadn't the answers I have found in *Dancing with Siva*.



**Tiru A. Kandiah, Ph.D,** Jaffna  
Tamil elder, author of more than  
30 books in English and Tamil,  
Former Head of the Department  
of Tamil, University of Kelaniya,  
Sri Lanka, Former Professor at  
the University of London, now  
living in Sydney, Australia

*Dancing with Siva, Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism* is a truly miraculous realization of a vast and profound overview of Hindu religious life. It is the true reflection of the religious life of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, a world-renowned Hindu saint who practiced this elegant and intellectual Hindu philosophy. The exceptional contribution "Truth Is One, Paths Are Many" is the most outstanding piece of the religious aspect. In his words, "There is need for no-nonsense reviews of religions, and this may hopefully begin to meet that need." Here the world's major spiritual paths are brought out in a nutshell in simple, elegant and inspiring language. The author has brought out the true aspects of world major religions. Each spiritual path and its essence is brought



out briefly under the subheadings Synopsis, Goals, Path of Attainment, and Beliefs. The twelve beliefs of the Saivite Creed, with beautiful illustrations, and the Six Schools of Saivism are other essences of Hinduism portrayed in a simple, understandable way, highlighting the elegant Saivite Hinduism for everyone to understand. The Six Schools of Saivism are explained in simple language to bring out the fact that “In the search for peace, enlightenment and liberation, no path is more tolerant, more mystical, more widespread or more ancient than Saivite Hinduism.” ¶ *Dancing with Siva* is an extraordinary religious masterpiece which guides human beings toward a sacred and spiritual life and inspires everyone to explore ways toward a genuine spiritual transfiguration through consistent effort to inspire, enrich and uplift those around them. It is a must in every home and library in a multicultural country like Australia, where more than a hundred nationalities live, more than a hundred languages are spoken and many of the major spiritual paths are in existence.



**Thiru Satkunendran**  
Jaffna Tamil elder, Assistant  
Secretary of the Sivathondan  
Nilayam, Toronto, Ontario,  
Canada

Gurudeva’s “triple gems,” *Dancing, Living and Merging with Siva*, are a Godsend to us Hindus, and we are most grateful to his holiness for showing us the direct path, the San Marga. To read, understand, follow and attain *moksha*, liberation, one should read these triple gems. To be literally there and feel *moksha*, one should pilgrimage to Gurudeva’s Iraivan temple in Hawaii. To be in *moksha* itself, well, Gurudeva is there working for all of us now! In this work of art Gurudeva questions, “When God is everywhere, how can there be a place for evil?” And he answers by saying that *anava*, *karma* and *maya*, the play toys, are the source, as we play with *anava* in the playground of *maya*, fall and are bruised by *karma*, then run to God for solace and release into spiritual maturity. With scriptures in each chapter, meaningful pictures and easy-to-understand explanations (being short and sweet), the book is invigorating to read. Just one *sloka* and *bhashya* every morning, for the busy person, creates a good start for a pleasant day. ¶ Gurudeva’s advice for a happy marriage, reconciling problems—which are currently afflict-

ing the Jaffna Tamil diaspora—if followed faithfully, will result in a well-knit, prosperous family, whether it be Europe or North America. Questions arising in today’s youngster’s minds, viz.: “Why do *archanas* (*pujas*)? Why temple worship? What are the duties of priests? What are *mantras*?” and many other questions, which the average adult of today finds either difficult to answer or has no clue, are beautifully explained by Gurudeva, who always believed that the children have to be brought up well, according to the Hindu way, to be useful citizens of tomorrow. ¶ Gurudeva says, “Truth is one, paths are many” and delves into the goals of Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Are there any other religions or *gurus* that we can find today who will bother to discuss, in detail, another religion, leave alone so many as discussed by Gurudeva, including atheistic philosophies? It is my humble opinion that this gem, in beautiful color, should be read and treasured in every home. Thank you, Gurudeva, for being with us in this materialistic world for over seven decades, and presently guiding us in the spiritual world!



**Sivanesan Sinniah**  
School Community Advisor  
with Toronto School Board,  
President of the Association  
of Sri Lankan Graduates of  
Canada, founder member and  
past president of Sivathondan  
Center of Toronto

I am really blessed and fortunate in being asked to review this unparalleled work of Satguru Sri Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. I had the rare chance of living close to Gurudeva’s Guru, Sri Yogaswami, at Columbuthurai, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. I have a feeling that I am blessed by both of them. *Dancing with Siva* is a masterpiece which every Hindu must read and possess. The way the book has been published shows the amount of planning and careful calculations that have gone into its production. Each Upanishad *sloka* has been presented well in a single page, in the form of a question and answer so that everyone can understand it easily. Gurudeva in the introduction has given useful tips on studying the book and teaching it. There is also a wealth of information on *Vedas*, *Agamas* and Hindu traditions. This is a book worth reading daily to get deeper insight into the Hindu philosophy. The captivating traditional paintings of Rajam of Tamil Nadu add additional glory to this book. Even though

Gurudeva is not living amongst us now, I am sure he will be remembered always through the books he wrote over the last half a century. Hindus all over the world must be grateful to him for all his invaluable services to them and to their religion. I am reminded of Father Beski, alias Veerama Munivar, who translated the gem of Hindu scriptures, the *Thiruvacakam*, into English. Gurudeva could be called the Veerama Munivar of Hawaii. We also must appreciate the *sadhus* at Kauai who are tirelessly working to carry on the noble tasks started by Gurudeva.



**Swami Shuddhananda Brahmachari**  
**Founder of the Lokenath Divine Life Mission, India, and Lokenath Divine Life Fellowship, USA**

*Dancing with Siva* is indeed a gift to the world. Hinduism, with its vast expansion and unfathomable depth, has often been misinterpreted by authors of different sects. This has created more confusion and conflicts, particularly in the minds of the younger generations and Westerners. This book, with its beautiful pictures, is a resource book *par excellence*. Satguru Sivaya Subrumuniyaswami, through this sacred book, has answered the most common questions that come up in the minds of those who want to know about this most ancient religion in the world. It is precise, yet full of depth and easily understandable for a lay person. I am sure this encyclopedia of Hindu philosophy will find its place in every Hindu family and inspire humanity toward inner illumination and harmonious life on Earth.



**Professor Arvind Sharma, Ph.D.,**  
**Department of Religion, McGill University; Montreal, Canada**

There are many books on Hinduism; some are useful, none is adequate. The useful ones reasonably recapitulate Hinduism in outline, but they are inadequate inasmuch as they present the profile of Hinduism, rather than its personality. Even the profile, with few notable exceptions, seems hopelessly Western and sometime depressingly Christian in its orientation, to one belonging to the tradition. This book is an exception. It succeeds in portraying Hinduism as perceived by modern Hindus to an extraordinary degree. ¶This exceptional book

offers an insider's perspective on Hinduism and from a useful angle which even an outsider may appreciate. The catechismal format of the book and the manner in which it unfolds serve to disclose Hinduism's "coherent diversity" which might otherwise elude the reader. The book is more than a catechism, however. It contains not only a timeline chart, a lexicon, and so on, but also brief accounts of Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It thus honors the Hindu imperative that the proper study of one religion involves the study of all.

**Publisher's Weekly, America's most prestigious book trade journal; New York, September 13, 1993**

This is a remarkable book, a welcome statement of the Hindu Saivist worldview that owes much to the Indian diaspora, among whom are many young Indians presently at a loss for tools to explain their beliefs to their non-Indian compatriots.



**Tiru Al Rammohan, President,**  
**International Tamil Foundation, publisher of the ethical epic *Tirukural*;**  
**Woodridge, Illinois, USA**

*Dancing with Siva* is an illustrated sourcebook beyond compare for its quality in both content and presentation. The author, through his extraordinary insight and intuitive experience and realization has ably presented the wide spectrum of the Hindu principles and practices by taming the two rivers of Siddhanta and Vedanta in a contextual reference of world's major religious faiths. As the author lovingly puts it, this book is a view of Hinduism from the inside, as any practicing Hindu would longingly wish his beliefs honored and explained to others. The presentation, format and content successfully crystallize the divine knowledge of the Hindus—knowing about you and God, knowing how to live a spiritual life—emphasizing the importance of intuition over the intellect, experience over dogma and personal realization as infinitely more precious than merely listing a series of unyielding beliefs and explicit rules stressing outer expression and mechanical application of faith. ¶This book is significant, timely and remarkable for its success in documenting in one volume the Hindu's contemporary catechism, a task to this day considered by many an unthinkable and even perilous and impertinent

pursuit. This book is useful because for the first time it brings forth the elegant and sophisticated Hindu philosophy and practices in an easily understandable way for the children and spiritual truth seekers without masking the eternal truth in mere mythology. It is useful because the substance, format, illustrations and elegance invite the reader to test the teachings, know thyself, inquire and be free. Extensive use of Tamil sacred scriptures in addition to the Sanskrit scriptures make this noble effort even more pregnant with meaning, adding depth and perspective hitherto unavailable to the beginner. I strongly recommend that everyone place this book on their living-room coffee table for constant access and visibility and be benefitted from it.



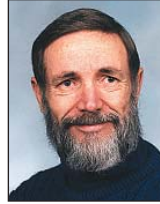
**V.P. Dhananjayan and wife Shanta, world famous exponents and teachers of *bharata natyam* dancing; founders of the Fine Arts Society, Yogaville, Virginia, USA, and Madras, India**

While at this beautiful place of Yogaville I happened to read through your wonderful book, *Dancing with Siva*. The essence of Sanatana Dharma has been very aptly interpreted in simple words. Your book is certainly a handbook for Hinduism and I will recommend everyone to read it.

**The Book Reader, leading independent review journal; California, Spring, 1993**

*Dancing with Siva* explores life's ultimate goals and how to achieve them. It is a sourcebook, timeline and lexicon which examines how Hindus view family, sex, sin, worship, death and nonviolence, by the author of nearly 20 books and monograms, a traditional *sat-guru*, who writes: "For the Hindu, intuition is more important than intellect, experience supercedes dogma, and personal realization is more precious than outer expressions or affiliations of faith." ¶ This contemporary catechism combines Vedanta and Siddhanta, two schools that have nurtured Hinduism. The information and guidance is massive, covering what most Hindus believe, Hinduism's place in world thought, the nature of the soul, ways to liberation and wisdom, sin and suffering, and views of monastic life and reality. For those who study and those who teach, it is a major textbook, but full of awareness, knowledge, love and blessings—a masterful guide to enlightenment,

liberation and Self Realization through a religion that embraces nearly one billion persons.



**Derwin Lackey, Human Service Alliance, President George Bush's 532nd Point of Light, Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

To take on the *dharma* of making the world's oldest religion so understandable is in itself a vastly courageous task. To have so beautifully succeeded makes the seemingly impossible a three-dimensional reality. *Dancing with Siva* is a treasure of Soul Work.

**Bo Lazoff, Human Kindness Foundation, Sponsoring the Prison-Ashram Project, Durham, North Carolina**

I find *Dancing with Siva* an extremely helpful reference guide to the essence of Hinduism. Its simple, straightforward explanations of the terminology and historical basis of Hinduism's major schools and practices is a real treat to finally have in one book! The exhaustive glossary is like an encyclopedia in itself, instructing as well as defining. And, of course, I was delightfully surprised to find the passing of my own *guru*, Neem Karoli Baba, included in Swamiji's timeline of world history. The timeline was a great idea. I find *Dancing with Siva* a perfect book for oral family readings, as each chapter is a good length for one day's reading.



**Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D., author of *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga and Wholeness and Transcendence*; Lower Lake, California**

*Dancing with Siva* is a truly remarkable accomplishment. It is the most comprehensive and sensitive introduction to the living spiritual tradition of Hinduism, a superb distillate of the essence of this vastly complex religious culture. This work by a well-respected Hindu teacher distills the quintessence of the many aspects of Hinduism into a single, large volume. Written in simple, inspiring language and edited with exemplary and loving care, this work is a feast for the heart and the mind. The author's purpose is to both inform and inspire. The book includes many quotes from India's sacred scriptures, diagrams, as well as an extensive chronology and glossary. The text is arranged into twelve Upanishads with an auto-commentary by

the author. As the subtitle of this volume indicates, it is an outline of the fundamental ideas and practices of Hinduism for deep and regular study. The beautiful and lavish design underscores the intrinsic merit of this work, which was obviously compiled and produced with great love and care. Anyone who wants to find out about the living heart of Hinduism should read this book.



**Dr. David Frawley, O.M.D., Vedacharya; author: *The Astrology of the Seers; The Yoga of Herbs; Gods, Sages and Kings*; Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA**

Hinduism, the Sanatana Dharma, or eternal tradition of the human race, is undergoing a great revival today, not only in India but in the Western world where many people are adopting aspects of Hinduism like *yoga*, meditation, vegetarianism, the practice of nonviolence, and belief in *karma* and reincarnation. However, there are very few books available that clearly explain this great tradition. *Dancing with Siva* is the most significant attempt to do this. The book deals with all facets of human life, individual and collective, mundane and spiritual, in a careful, sensitive and thorough manner that provokes deeper thought and self-examination. *Dancing with Siva* has been produced with great love. The art work is extraordinary and there are many quotes from Hindu scriptures. Probably no other person born in the Western world has received more honor and recognition as a teacher of Hinduism than the book's author, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. *Dancing with Siva* reveals the extent of his vision which projects the universal spirit of Hinduism into the dawning global age to help regenerate the planet.

**Mr. Bharat Gheewala, Independent Publishers, London**

This book is not only remarkable but simply a gift to humanity! It is a most beautiful event in the history of mankind!

**A. Balaretnam, Singapore**

I think that this is the first time somebody has attempted such an exhaustive and intensive book on various aspects of Hinduism. Nobody could have undertaken and completed such a task without God's grace. His Holiness Sivaya Subramuniyaswami should be congratulated for producing such a publication.

To me, who was educated throughout my school in a Christian missionary school (I am a Hindu by birth), the book will certainly enlighten me on the oldest religion of the world.

***Light of Consciousness* journal, Spring/Summer 1998, Desert Ashram, Tucson, Arizona**

It wasn't very long ago that information about Indian spirituality was difficult to find and more difficult to read. Times have changed. This encyclopedic sourcebook, beautifully illustrated on almost every page, is definitely reader friendly. Invaluable for every Hindu and anyone interested in Eastern philosophy, culture and religion (from the Saivite perspective, yet broad in scope), it also provides an excellent resource for anyone seeking guidance and inspiration in a changing world. The contents are vast. *Dancing with Siva* is a rare and welcome overview of Sanatana Dharma, Eternal Religion, enshrined within the living laboratory of spirituality known as Hinduism.



**Doris Carmen Cordova, CEO, The Excellerated Learning Institute**

A brilliant piece of work in bringing Hinduism and sophisticated religious teachings into everyday English. I was amazed that what I had perceived as "New Age" actually has been taught in Hinduism for thousands of years. I recommend this work to students of life, God and religions.

**Stan Kelly-Bootle, *UNIX Review* columnist and author; Mill Valley, California**

Hinduism, with almost a billion followers, is the world's oldest, least dogmatic, least understood and, one is tempted to say, least organized religion. Or perhaps not a "religion" at all: there is no "founder" to debunk or deify, no precise pool of "gods" to enumerate, no "I am" dictators and no baffling monotheistic Trinities. Evolutionary, intra-communal syncretisms, carried by gentle *satgurus*, emerge over the centuries, naturally and without bloody strife. Being convinced that knowledge and understanding provide the only hope for ecumenical salvation, I strongly recommend Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami's *Dancing with Siva*. This author of twenty books and monographs is uniquely qualified and supremely gentle in presenting the complex, complete, timeless, simple, incomplete, contemporary system of Hindu symbols and

beliefs. A sweet wind blowing good for Western religiosity: the Truth is One; the Paths are Many.



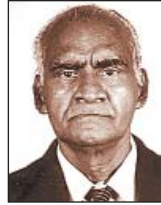
**Dr. V. Kandavanam, Patron:**  
Ontario Hindu Religious Society,  
Canada President: Canada  
Tamil Writers' Association  
Editor: *Athmajothy*

*Dancing with Siva* sails like a magnificent treasure ship through the Hindu Ocean. It endeavors to pick up the struggling mundane soul and convert it to a spiritual one for its own good and for the good of the world. It is a holy service that only our revered Jagadacharya could do. As a Saiva Hindu, I am certain that other Hindus will feel the same, because it speaks not only of Siva but also of all aspects of Hinduism. Being an enlightened soul, Gurudeva teaches us of other world religions, too, emphasizing that truth is one, but paths are many. By doing so he shows the world that Hindus are very liberal and tolerant. The question-and-answer technique employed by Gurudeva is typical to the *guru-sishya parampara* school where in the *guru* foresees *sishyas'* questions and possible doubts and clears them all in his teachings. The arguments are logical and so convincing that even atheists (if they are fortunate enough to read this bible) will be vanquished. Many are of the opinion that Hinduism is a complex religion and that its philosophy is very difficult to comprehend. To them I recommend strongly this masterpiece.

**Swami Arunasalam Sellathurai, Resident Monk and President, Siva Thondan Nilayam, Jaffna, Sri Lanka**

This is a book dealing with a universal religion and its omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God, Lord Siva. This is perhaps one of the greatest books of this century, by an inspired savant, a distinguished disciple of our own *paramaguru*, His Holiness Yogaswamigal of Sivathondan fame, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. As the author verily describes, it is an ageless link of hallowed Kailasa origin. This work is the *magnus opus* of our venerable sage, book one of a trilogy, a veritable compendium touching on all the tenets, essentials, of the glories of Hinduism and Saiva Siddhanta, its perennial philosophy. It is spiritually inspiring, culturally and aesthetically ennobling and psychologically quite refreshing, with the seasoned and reasoned exposition of His Holiness in chaste English, the

global tongue, accessible to all races and religions, whole and wholesome, of the Divinity of Lord Siva! In short, the book is the spontaneous outpouring of an enlightened *jnana guru*, a stupendous task that is bound to take the reader on a voyage of discovery. ¶In the world of today, broken up into narrow halls, where reasoning is made muddy and clouded by schism of all hues, this book is most welcome to heal, purify and uplift man and bind him by a single spiritual cord made up of the holy trinity of love, truth and beauty. In this respect, it is an enduring classic that is timeless! A Marvel! This is a book for all adherents of Lord Siva and for all in quest of a distilled knowledge of the Hindu lore—*dharma* and spirituality that is universally acknowledged! To Hindus, this is a book of enduring interest, a powerpack of the spiritual current for daily practice to illuminate their faith in Lord Siva, our one and only universal God. It will be richly rewarding to read, chew, swallow, digest and meditate on the divine path beautifully chalked out in this volume. This book of many intrinsic values should find a prominent place on the bookshelf of everyone who prides to be a Hindu by precept and practice.



**Dr. S.M. Ponniah, Professor,**  
INTI College; Member of the  
National Commission on Moral  
Education; Advisor to the  
Malaysian Hindu Sangam; Kuala  
Lumpur, Malaysia

This, indeed, is a book we have been waiting for all these years. Only after religiously reading the book, from cover to cover, page to page, did I realize the uniqueness of the book. It was not only its contents, but also its structure and the concise manner in which the subject matter of Hinduism is presented to the lay reader, supported by quotations from the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Agamas*, *Tirukural* and *Tirumurais*; illustrated by timecharts, clarified by a lexicon defining all the Sankrit and Tamil terms used in the book. In addition, there are pictures and reference lists as well as an index. This compendious work of 1,000 pages is indeed a handbook on Hinduism in English for every Hindu in the English-speaking world who has lost touch with Sankrit, as well as his or her mother tongue. ¶It becomes obvious that the loving Lord Siva Himself, perceiving our desperate need and the problem faced by Hindus overseas, had prevailed upon Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami of the Nandinatha Sampradaya to embark upon this all-

comprehensive publication to give a helping hand to helpless Hindus floundering in the sea of their own ignorance, blown and buffeted by alien winds, to return to a safe anchorage. *Dancing With Siva* is indeed a God-sent gift, an answer to all our prayers. Those of us in Malaysia who have for the last fifty years been involved in teaching Hinduism had to hunt for information before we could speak about the different aspects of our religion. We had been at a loss as to what the right approach to teaching Hinduism should be. Above all, we did not have all the answers; nor did we have the authority. ¶Our great Hindu seers and sages, who had trodden the narrow, single footpath left behind by those who had walked before them had prescribed for every aspiring Hindu a plan consisting of three systematic steps or stages to sustain Hindu Dharma throughout the ages, without any outside compulsion. It was a plan to inspire a self-motivated effort on the part of every individual to remain a true practitioner of the Dharma. The three-point plan was: *vichara*, enquire; *achara*, practice; *prachara*, preach. Each individual aspirant was urged: first, find out what Hinduism is; second, follow its teachings in your life; third, then teach others by your example and effort. This was indeed a Master Plan. Except for the ancient *gurukulas* and later religious orders who set up ashrams, there was no organized teaching of Hindu Dharma. The traditional *guru-shishya* system maintained or sustained the study of the *Vedas* and *Agamas*. Hinduism is as vast as the ocean, pervaded by the spirit of tolerance and marked by an absence of exclusiveness—a spirit reflected in a song of the Alvars: “Each and every man, in his own manner, by his own understanding, shall the Lord worship. His rewards shall be no less; As all paths lead unto him.” However, the vast majority of the people forgot about the first and third stages—*vichara* and *prachara*; they merely followed the practice of their parents and elders in what they did in their daily lives. ¶Hitherto there has been no single book in English which encompasses all the three stages of the “Master Plan,” *vichara*, *achara* and *prachara*! By the infinite grace of the Divine Dancer who dances not only “with us” but also “within each and every one of us,” we now have before us a clearly and methodically presented text, in one volume of questions and answers (*prasnot-taram*)—Hinduism’s Contemporary Catechism—all the information that an average Hindu needs to know in order to fulfill the three steps or stages—*vichara*, *achara* and *prachara*, prescribed for every Hindu in-

dividual. ¶*Dancing with Siva* is a timely publication that should find a place in every Hindu home and every temple and institution associated with the Hindu religion. It attempts to equip every Hindu to become a better Hindu. It therefore need to be in the hands of every student and teacher of Hinduism.



N.K. Naidu, Then India Ikya Sangam, Nadi, Fiji

Such a profound work of love and labor for humanity only a *satguru* of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami’s intense concern and care could produce. It is only through pure love for us that such events happen. Indeed, this generation as well as many more generations to come must remain ever indebted to the great Gurudeva.

**Michael Hornum, Gaithersburg, Maryland**

I am writing to express my gratitude for *Dancing with Siva*. I think that the book is truly remarkable. I have never seen so many wonderful insights so clearly and simply expressed, as well as so detailed a lexicon of Hindu ideas, particularly from a Saivite perspective. Thank you so much for offering to guide others along the path by which you have reached *samadhi* and for fostering the growth of Hinduism among Western-educated souls.

**A. Gunanayagam, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

If I were called upon to say just one word about the book *Dancing with Siva*, I could say *precise*. If I am allowed one more word, I would add *comprehensive*. There is no doubt that this is a precise and comprehensive publication, so useful to the Saivite Hindu and to all others who may be interested in religion. The four-line *slokas*, so logically arranged, followed by the amplifying *bhashya* which concludes with a quote from the *Vedas* so aptly chosen, the scriptural quotes at the end of each *mandala*, the wonderful pictures that adorn every page, all these and more make the publication not so much of a book as a work of art, a masterpiece so meticulously executed. ¶The *slokas* set out in precise form the main concepts of Saivite Hinduism, while the *bhashyas* that follow amplify them suitably. For example, *sloka* 50 categorically sates that “the world is a glorious place, not to be feared. It is a gift from Siva Himself.” This refutes the possible belief that the world is a place of pain and sorrow. As a followup of this idea, *sloka* 51 explains

the place of suffering as “a natural part of human life, and the impetus for much spiritual growth of the soul.” ¶The section Truth Is One, Paths Are Many sets out a very fair and unprejudiced analysis of the major religions of the world and leaves it open to any fair-minded man to judge for himself as to the most acceptable of these. The Hindu Timeline is a most useful addition to the book containing a wealth of information of not only Hindu events but all events of historical importance. The Lexicon is a massive compilation of the terms and their meaning, a valuable guide to everyone interested in religion. If anyone would find it difficult to read through the entire book, it would suffice for the moment to read the Author’s Introduction, which gives a synopsis of what Hinduism is and provides a guide for the study of the book at leisure.



**Swami Gokulananda,**  
Secretary, Ramakrishna  
Mission, New Delhi

Through this book, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, has presented Hinduism in great detail. Also, by giving a brief of all the world religions, he has rendered a unique service to the readers to make a comparative study vis-a-vis Hinduism, leading to the inevitable conclusion that Hinduism is the best of all religions. I felicitate Reverend Subramuniyaswami for his lucidity and the depth of understanding of the intricacies of the Hindu religion which he has presented through this book.

*Napra Trade Journal*, ABA 1994, Antionette Botsford,  
Ph.D., former chairperson of the Integral Yoga Institute  
of Southern California

English-speaking Hindus, yoga enthusiasts and those interested in Sanskrit literature and culture will be overjoyed by this remarkable reference work of Hindu belief and culture. A series of *mandalas* amplifies the central teachings for Hindu Dharma. Scriptural quotations from the ancient *Veda* to the more recent *Tirukural* demonstrate the unity and continuity of Hindu teachings. Every time I pick up this book, I discover fresh insights into life’s journey as seen through the eyes at once ancient and modern. Chapters describing the central beliefs and goals of each of the principal world religions illustrate the premise that “Truth is one, paths are many,” while celebrating the wondrous diversity underlying human perception of the sacred. A finely detailed and extensive bibliography will lead

the reader to continue exploration on a quest made irresistible by the best English overview of Hinduism available today.



**Anandhi Ramachandran,**  
Chennai, India

*Dancing with Siva* is invaluable both as a feast to the eyes and the soul. It is beautiful and inspiring, like the arts. Yes! It is a work of art. How were you able to find so many paintings to illustrate different themes? They are so appropriate. I have lived all my life in Bharata-varsha but never seen these paintings. Your words of wisdom about dance strike the correct note: “Dance is movement, and the most exquisite dance is the most disciplined dance.” Such profound truths in such simple words. Truth is heavy and so is the book, both in weight and contents.

*America Online’s (AOL) Religion Section on the Internet*

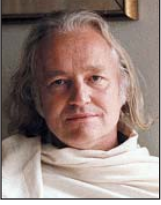
*Dancing with Siva, Hinduism’s Contemporary Catechism* looks and reads like *Fodors Travel Guide!* You cannot go wrong with it. It has hundreds of pictures and includes a Hindu timeline, children’s primer, lexicon, excellent index, suggested further readings, hundreds of quotes from the Hindu scriptures. Perhaps the best and most authentic desk reference. BEST BUY.

*Bulletin of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue*, May, 1994

In this day of dialogue with other religions it is a great help to find a book which gives all the tenets of a particular religion and its various schools in a clear and concise way. This is the advantage of *Dancing with Siva*, something of an encyclopedia of Hindu wisdom. The author is also founder and publisher of Hinduism’s international journal HINDUISM TODAY. The book deals with all facets of human life, individual and collective, mundane and spiritual. The book is valuable for all who are involved in interreligious dialogue.

*Paanan*, January, 1997, C.S. Kuppu Raj, Madras

This luxuriously printed 1,000-page book, with plenty of illustrations, is a virtual encyclopedia on Hinduism, with special emphasis on Saivism and more so on Saiva Siddhanta, the great legacy of South Indians, especially the Tamils. What many universities working for many years could not achieve, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami has achieved in this book.



**Lex Hixon, Ph. D., author;**  
Riverdale, New York

Sivaya Subramuniaswami is a master of *ishta-nishta*, commitment to one's chosen aspect of Divinity. His book *Dancing with Siva* is therefore a true embodi-

ment of Lord Siva, a potent verbal icon. Gurudeva is *svayambhu*, a self-manifesting form of Siva, come forth spontaneously in America. He demonstrates in his very being the fundamental principle that *jiva* is Siva, the limited soul is really the limitless Lord.

God is Truth, God is All-Pervasive. To us living in this Kali Yuga, when humanity itself is becoming an endangered species, Guudeva's gift is a great boon.

**Dr. A. Anandanataraja Deekshidar, Sivacharya priest,**  
Senthamizh Selvar, Arunthamizh Chemmal, Pulavar,  
Chidambaram, South India

Gurudeva's 1,000-page book, *Dancing with Siva, Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism*, is a very precious and holy book, very useful for mankind. It is a priceless diamond for Hindus. There is no parallel in this world. All the Dikshitar priests here at Chidambaram saw this book and requested me to convey their appreciation and thanks to Satguru for this unparalleled work.

**Vimala Krishnapillai, Ph.D.**  
Co-Trustee, Thiruvadi Trust of Sivayogaswami,  
President, Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Devi Samithi,  
Colombo; Lecturer: University of Colombo

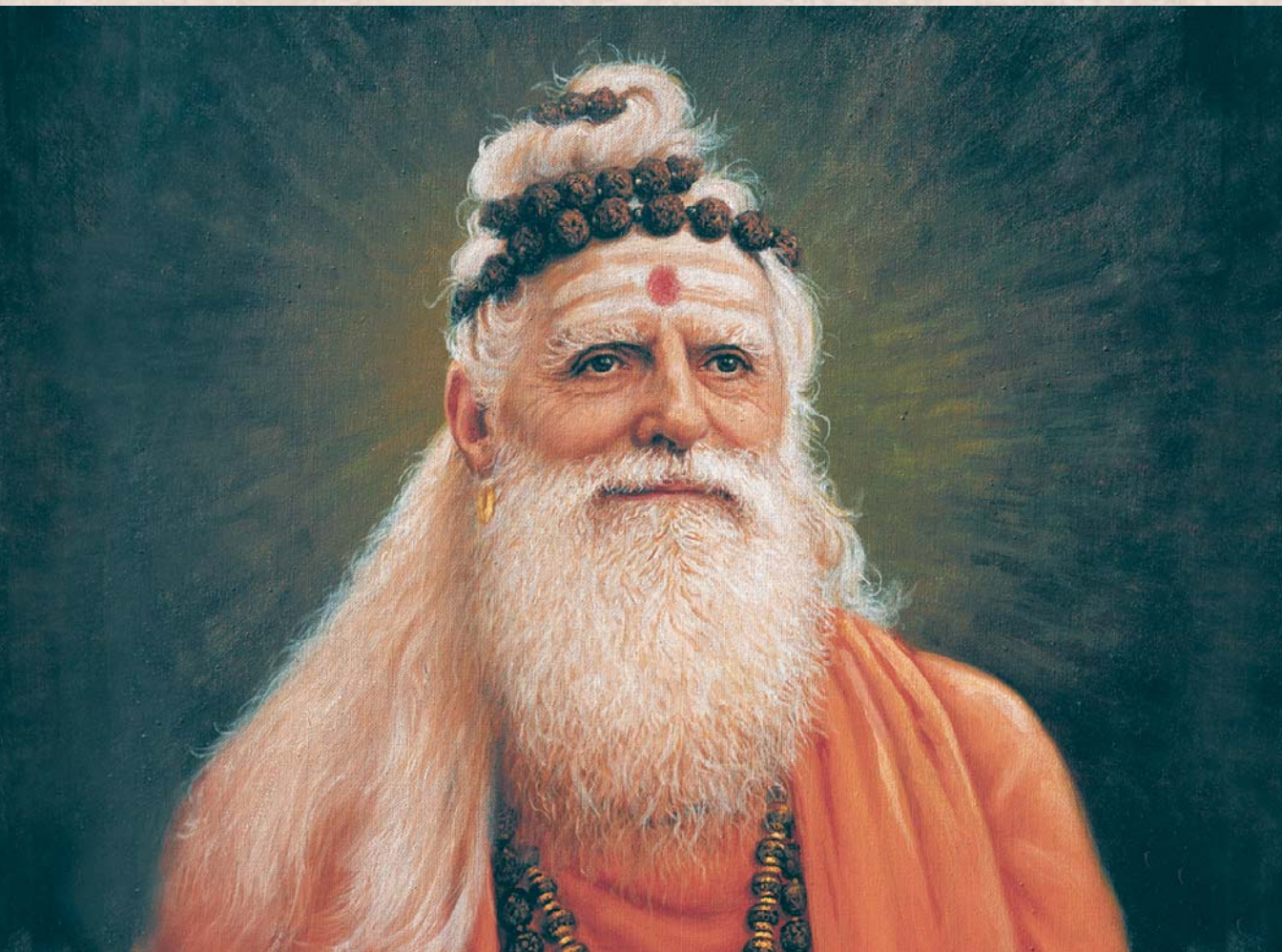
*Dancing with Siva* is a lovely flower of worship dedicated by Gurudeva Sivaya Subramuniaswami to his Paramaguru Siva Yogaswamigal of Sri Lanka. Gurudeva, as ordained by his Paramaguru, has built a bridge of understanding between the East and the West by his publications. The voluminous, ancient, complex *Vedagams*, analyzed, comprehended and tested by his lifetime of experience, are presented to us in the easiest and simplest way possible in this text. *Dancing with Siva* satisfies the criteria laid down for spiritual texts—*Veda, jukti* and *anubhava*—*Veda*, the authority of the scriptures; *jukti*, wisdom; and *anubhava*, experience. The presentation in simple language, illustrated by inspiring traditional art forms, places the knowledge even within the grasp of children. As we start reading the text, we feel the gracious warmth of Gurudeva's nearness, leading us step by step to our inner source of purity, peacefulness and perfection. In a nutshell, the message relayed to us through his divine consciousness is Anbe Sivam, Satyame Parasivam, Sarvam Sivamayam. God is Love,



Every spiritually-inclined human being will be enriched by the path revealed in this extraordinary book. India's tolerant and diverse vision of the Divine is all here: meditative, devotional, philosophical, scriptural and yogic, answering the vital questions:

- What are life's ultimate goals? How can I achieve them?
- How do Hindus view family, sex, sin, worship, death and nonviolence?
- What are the foremost schools of Hindu thought, and what do they teach?
- How do all the great religions look at God, salvation, heaven and hell?
- How did Hinduism evolve through history? What do we teach to children?

*Dancing with Siva* is Book One in *The Master Course* trilogy of Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, a traditional *satguru* who guided the global Hindu renaissance for half a century, named by Delhi's World Religious Parliament as a gifted Jagadāchārya, or world teacher.



## The Master Course Trilogy

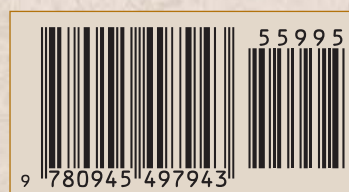
Yoga/Metaphysics/Religion



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