

Dictionary of Advaita Vedanta in Quotations

About the Dictionary

Dedication

To Śabda Brahman

Publishing data

Dictionary of Advaita Vedanta in Quotations
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Epigraph

“Most of the terms of Eastern schools of philosophy cannot be defined, like the terms of Western philosophy. They are symbolical and do not indicate particular concepts. Words such as Atma, Buddhi, Dharma, Karma, etc., have meaning according to the context in which and the occasion and the time at which they are used or occur. Atma, for instance, may mean many things, ranging from the Supreme Self via the soul (whatever it means) to the body, the lowest form of the “self”...

The symbols of traditional psychology and many of the terms of Oriental philosophy are hints and cannot be equated with the terms of Western philosophy. Eastern and Western philosophy, traditional psychology and the modern outlook, cannot meet, unless the modern thinker finds his way back to the wisdom which is hidden in his unconscious and contains the wide world of ancient, but perennial, traditions.”

Mees G. H. The Revelation in the Wilderness.

Introduction

Purpose and description

The need for a dictionary of Indian philosophy existed already in the VI Century B.C., when Nirukta, a glossary treating etymology, particularly of obscure words, mostly those occurring in the Vedas, was compiled. Its glosses were very brief, and wisdom was passed on largely by word of mouth. Now, for better or for worse, things are different. Words are usually read, and dictionaries are critical. On hearing a word in a rich context, as in a guru’s answer to one’s question, - understanding happens by itself. If, however, an unknown word crops up in a philosophical text, say in an Upanishad, one often falls into a black hole: the context does not clarify the word, and the only way to understand it is to wait in suspension for another context. Understanding augments but is still incomplete. Then again, another occurrence. And so it continues until a basic concept is formed. The Sanskrit vocabulary of

Indian philosophy is famous for its fluidity and contextual dependency of meanings, which become even more elusive in English translation.

The Dictionary offers an unusual approach to solve the problem of contextuality of Sanskrit terms. It presents a mosaic of contexts for each head word, even its definitions are often drawn from a variety of sources. Every context reveals a facet of the word, and their combined action accelerates and improves the process of understanding.

The Dictionary contains 350 head words, with thousands of quotations from 112 primary and secondary literature sources, and 1400 cross-references.

The Dictionary covers only the basic stock of the vocabulary of Advaita Vedanta, and it is especially useful for the new learners. The reader is warned against taking any text in the Dictionary for granted. The texts are exact citations, and may reflect arguable positions or even mistakes of their authors. For instance, Wikipedia says that the Katha Upanishad “propounds a dualistic philosophy”. Hardly any Advaitin will agree with that. Still, such statements are present in the Dictionary, mostly in the **General** subsections, in accordance with the principle of non-interference with the cited text. And of course, a certain diversity of opinion stimulates the student’s critical ability.

Traditions of Advaita Vedanta

The Advaita Vedanta entry in the Dictionary gives the general description of the darshana. Within it there are many traditions - big and small, almost identical and yet vastly different in form, preferred themes, priorities and terminology. Texts of five major Advaita Vedanta traditions, complemented by general sources, provide the material for citations.

Academic literature is represented rather sparsely because of the practical orientation of the Dictionary. Unlike Western philosophies, in Indian darshanas texts are subservient to the practical dimension, and very often when separated from practice they simply do not make sense. That is why the Dictionary is based primarily on the texts written by practitioners of Advaita Vedanta. Affiliation of the sources is shown with an unusual prominence in the Dictionary. Why? Because the central subject, non-duality, is so simple that there is nothing to say about it, therefore the whole game shifts to the way how the individual teachers manage to speak and yet say nothing about Nothing. Even a very brief acquaintance with the lives and teachings of the five founders of the Advaita Vedanta traditions selected for the Dictionary, suffices to prove the point.

Narayana Guru tradition

The Narayana Guru tradition is the least known among the major traditions and the most philosophical of them all. Knowledge is foremost, and the devotional component is derivative. Knowledge is the closest English word to the Malayalam arivu (see in the Dictionary), used by Narayana Guru (1854-1928) to describe one of the central notions of his philosophy. With knowledge at the centre of his exposition of the Advaita system, the absolutist outlook and dialectical method become its natural ingredients. Nataraja Guru (1895-1973), a direct disciple of Narayana Guru, founded the Narayana Gurukula movement to continue the tradition. The next guru was Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati (1924-1999), the current Head of the Narayana Gurukula is Guru Muni Narayana Prasad (1938-).

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna is not a typical Advaita Vedanta teacher. His tantric and bhakti allegiances were more in the public eye. Why then is his tradition included in the Dictionary? At least for two reasons.

First, he taught his most prominent disciples, such as Vivekananda, Brahmananda, Nirmalananda and others in the Advaita Vedanta tradition, and their published texts are incontestably Advaitic.

Second, the Ramakrishna Math with its publishing division, and other organizations in the Ramakrishna tradition belong to Advaita Vedanta and have done perhaps more than anyone else, apart from the Sankara tradition, to propagate it both as theory and practice.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana Maharshi did not associate himself with any particular system of thought. He was equally supportive of any path leading one to one's true Self. Still, his teaching has much in common with Shankara's school, and his deep knowledge and fundamental agreement with the Advaitic thought shine unmistakably throughout his recorded talks and the few writings.

The most famous form of Ramana Maharshi's teaching was silence. Few people, however, are good students in silence, therefore Ramana Maharshi also had to talk. The source texts of his tradition are almost exclusively based on notes made by his listeners and devotees.

Ramana Maharshi had a very rare talent of explaining concepts incomprehensible for the everyday human intellect in clear, succinct and natural words. It is a real boon for a dictionary like this.

Sankara tradition

The Sankara tradition is central to Advaita Vedanta. Its literature, used in this Dictionary, includes both Sankara's own works and works of his followers. There were different interpretations of primary texts and various trends even within the tradition itself, but the grain of this dictionary is not intended to catch such fine details. In many texts of this tradition the line between primary sources and associated commentaries is more blurred than in more recent traditions, therefore one has to be especially vigilant to the context. If a citation is not quite clear, the reader is advised to consult the referenced text.

Sivananda tradition

Sivananda's tradition in Advaita Vedanta was widely propagated by his disciples. Swami Krishnananda and Swami Chinmayananda were especially successful in explaining the basics of Advaita to the Western audience. Literature of this tradition counts hundreds of items, from scholarly treatises to study courses conducted at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy and Vedanta Centres in many countries.

How to use the Dictionary

General principles

The Dictionary is easy to use, its structure allows the reader to see multiple meaningful units of the same and adjacent levels at once, as constellations. Such presentation is natural for our visual perception, therefore understanding of the system of words is faster and deeper than by reading the usual linear text.

Finding words:

a) Browsing is self-evident.

b) Keyword searching is often overlooked, although it is a powerful tool to find a word not only in the position of head word, but also in descriptions and other microtexts. It is also the only practical way to find words that have no entries of their own. For instance, the word “Consciousness” occurs in many entries, such as Atman, Chaitanya, etc., but not as a separate entry because of its non-Sanskrit origin. The same holds true for several other Western words that are important in translations but non-existent in the original texts. They are Absolute, Mind, Awareness, Soul, and so forth. They are all searchable.

Students of Advaita may enjoy reading the Dictionary as a book, wandering within clusters of words, or jumping to linked concepts, or even randomly browsing entries until attention singles out a word, and the reader immerses into the important topic to satisfy a fleeting interest in one entry, or obtain a deeper insight by means of a thread of words or an interlinked system of descriptions.

Dictionary entry

The Dictionary is a compilation of quotations from Advaita Vedanta texts and general works on Indian philosophy (see “Literature sources”).

Each dictionary entry is a distillation of knowledge about its headword from an array of texts. Entries have subsections, see below. Although the pattern of subsections for each type of entry is essentially the same, they are filled differently in many cases. Each entry was built from bottom up, and it contains only what was found about its head word in the sources. For instance, if there were no appropriate descriptions found, there is no Descriptions subsection in the entry.

The patterns of subsections are not carved in stone, they vary when changes improve the entry as an interface between the reader and the meaning of the word.

There are three types of dictionary entries, each with different subsections that are described below:

1. General entry
2. Person
3. Text

In some cases definitions or descriptions of the same term, coming from different sources, are almost identical. The reason for including such apparent tautology is to show that the same meaning of the term exists in different schools. Occasionally, it helps to gain a better understanding, which is the sole purpose of the Dictionary.

Many words are used both in Advaita Vedanta and in other schools. How to determine if it is an Advaita term or not? First, in some cases it is explicitly stated in the word entry. Secondly, if the word is explained in an Advaita source, such as Sankara’s or Narayana Guru’s philosophical works, then it may be deduced to belong to Advaita Vedanta. Sometimes there is no difference between the usage of a word in Advaita Vedanta and in a broader context. Most of the times, however, differences exist, but they are so subtle that the learner can ignore them until the need to know them becomes apparent.

The Dictionary is far from being finished, and it has word clusters at different stages of completeness. More words are gradually being introduced; interlinking between words improves and reveals new patterns of concepts; subsections are optimized, and many other things are happening.

1. General entry

Variant spellings

Sanskrit words are very often transliterated into English in multiple forms. The most common spelling is used for the head word, other variants are stored under this heading. They are searchable.

Definitions

Definitions are brief logical descriptions of the head word. Sources may offer differing definitions, plus their briefness leaves much out. Often they need elaboration which can be found in Descriptions and other subsections of the word entry.

Descriptions

A description is a context in which the head word reveals its meaning through analogy, comparison or a host of other means. Often several related words participate in the same description, reinforcing each other's clarification and facilitating their learning.

Etymology

The origin of a word sheds a unique light on its meaning. Whenever possible, etymology is added.

Related words

Without knowing words that are closely associated with the head word, its meaning will always be incomplete. The most common relations between words are marked in the Dictionary as

Broader term, e.g. for "Tat-tvam-asi" the Broader term is "Mahavakya";

Opposite, e.g. for "Cetana" the Opposite is "Jada".

Other relationships are not marked explicitly, they are clear from the context.

Sanskrit

The Sanskrit form of the head word.

Meditation

Some words are so elusive to description that almost the only means to understand them is by means of meditation. An example is "Turiya". Whenever possible, such meditations are provided.

Compiler's note

The only place apart from the About the Dictionary section, where the Compiler's voice can be heard. One of the underlying principles of the Dictionary was to reduce any text other than citations to a minimum.

2. Person

Name

The referent of the head word may have different names, and each of those names may have spelling variants. This subsection collects all such forms for the head word in one place.

Descriptions

Descriptions are not comprehensive, rather they depict separate traits or facets of the personality under consideration. Some of them are more telling than volumes of dry prose.

Life

The life story is as brief as possible due to the format restrictions.

Teachings

Teachings of Indian sages are not always easy to describe, they are always an integral part of their lives. It is especially hard to accomplish in a few words. However, when appropriate citations were found, they were included in the Dictionary.

Works

Under this heading publications, foundation of religious organizations, consecration of temples, - anything important is described.

Related words

There are usually strong associations with names which reveal a lot. For instance, related words for Sivananda are yoga and Vedanta, while for Ramana Maharshi it's moksha.

3. Text

Title

Surprisingly few books have fixed titles. Even such canonical texts as Bhagavadgita and Brahma Sutras have more than one variant. All such variants along with the Sanskrit title are corralled in this subsection.

Author(s)

Old Indian texts are notorious for the absence of the names of their authors. Reconstructed names of ancient authors, as well as variants of names of known ones are presented here.

Descriptions

In accordance with the concept of the Dictionary, descriptions are brief narrations about anything deserving special attention regarding the text.

Synopsis

When possible, a synopsis is provided. Again, it has to be a citation - if no such citation was found, there is no synopsis for the text.

Commentaries

In India commentaries are often more important for understanding primary texts, e.g. sutras, than the texts themselves. The most important and generally recognized commentaries are listed here.

Publications

The lists are not intended to be comprehensive, they offer the more easily available editions of the text.

Related words

As in the case of other words in the Dictionary, related words may be an easy way to understand some important facets of the text.

External links

In most cases, external links lead to full texts available online.

Abbreviations and conventions

[] - additions to the original text by someone who is citing it. Additions by the compiler are marked as follows: [... - Compiler's Note].

Transliteration of Sanskrit

Head words are “anglicised”, their form has no diacritical marks or other typographical idiosyncrasies of the academic romanised Sanskrit that cannot be entered from the standard English language keyboard. Such forms, though incorrect in theory, can be searched and have other practical value for the English-speaking learner of Advaita Vedanta.

The use of diacritical marks in the word entries is not consistent throughout the Dictionary as a result of the lack of unified approach to it in the source texts. It was considered undesirable to make changes in them. Consequently, some Sanskrit words have more than one spelling variant in English, ex. sakti, shakti, and śakti.

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A

Abhasa

Variant spellings

abhasa
ābhāsa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ābhāsa — ... “the shining forth”; appearance; emanation, manifestation, creation, semblance; conduct motivated by selfish desire
1. Fallacy, according to Jainism.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ābhāsa - splendour, light; colour, appearance; mere appearance, fallacious appearance Vedāntas.; reflection; (in log.) fallacy, semblance of a reason, sophism, an erroneous though plausible argument (regarded by logicians as of various kind).

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Abhāsa ... the shining forth, (in Kāśmīr Saivism), the immanent or active phase of consciousness (also called sṛṣṭi.); (in Vedānta) the immanent aspect of the Ultimate Principle (Brahman), the manifest world is said to be merely an appearance (ābhāsa); (in Nyāya) fallacious reasoning.

Wikipedia

ābhāsa - splendour, light, appearance, shining forth.

Ramana Maharshi tradition²

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: Bhuma (Perfection) alone is. It is Infinite. There arises from it this finite consciousness taking on an upadhi (limiting adjunct). This is abhasa or reflection. Merge this individual consciousness into the Supreme One. That is what should be done.

...

Some say that mind arises from consciousness followed by reflection (abhasa); others say that the abhasa (reflection) arises first followed by the mind. In fact both are simultaneous.

Descriptions

General

Radhakrishnan. *Philosophy of Upanishads*

...the individual is a mere abhasa or appearance of Brahman.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*

The nature of the Supreme is described as untainted pure consciousness. The pure light that falls on a colored object such as green silk or a red flower changes its color quality as soon as it illuminates those objects. This taint which brings transformation is called ābhāsa. Similarly pure consciousness is not experienced by the individuated mind. That which shines in a person's mind is ābhāsa caitanya, tainted or colored consciousness. That is why a person is not fit to reveal the Supreme.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vidyaranya. *Panchadashi*, tr. Swahananda

32. 'Abhasa' means slight or partial manifestation... It does not have the properties of the real entity but resembles it in having some of them.

See also:

in Vritti: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

in Sarira: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. *Hindu philosophy*

ābhāsa - from prep. ā = "to, forth" + root bhās = "to shine".

Related words

Chaitanya

Sanskrit

Ābhāsa — आभास

ābhāsa - आभास

Abhava

Variant spellings

abhava

abhāva

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Abhāva — ... nonexistence; absence; negation; nothing

1. The Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, and Dvaita Vedānta schools hold that nonexistence is a distinct category. The Buddhist schools deny the existence of negation altogether, as do the Prabhakara Mīmāṃsā and Viśiṣṭadvaita Vedānta schools.

2. Nonexistence has two main divisions: (i) the absence of one entity in another (saṃsarga-abhāva), which is of three kinds: (a) prior nonexistence (prāg-abhāva), (b) annihilative nonexistence (pradh-vaṃsa-abhāva), and (c) absolute nonexistence (atyanta-abhāva); (ii) one object not being another (anyonya-abhāva) or reciprocal nonexistence.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

abhāva -

non-existence, nullity, absence;

proof from non-existence (one of the six pramāṇas in Vedānta phil. ('since there are no mice, therefore there must be cats here') see pramāṇa);

annihilation, death.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Abhāva ... non-existence, a means of correct knowledge (pramāṇa), defined as the deduction of the existence of one of two opposite things from the non-existence of the other; (in Nyāya) this is included in inference (anumāna).

Wikipedia

According to the Vaisheshika school, all things which exist, which can be cognised, and which can be named are padārthas (literal meaning: the meaning of a word), the objects of experience. All objects of experience can be classified into six categories, dravya (substance), guṇa (quality), karma (activity), sāmānya (generality), viśeṣa (particularity) and samavāya (inherence). Later Vaiśeṣikas added one more category abhāva (non-existence). The first three categories are defined as artha (which can be perceived) and they have real objective existence. The last three categories are defined as budhyapekṣam (product of intellectual discrimination) and they are logical categories.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Abhava — Absence, or the non-occurrence of an event; non-becoming.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vaisheshika admits of six philosophical categories, with a seventh controversial category added later. The six original categories are (1) substance, which consists of nine eternal realities that compose the foundation of the universe; substance is divided into (a) "atoms" of each of the five main elements or MAHABHUTAS and (b) time, ether, space, and soul; (2) attribute, of which there are 24; (3) karma, action or motion; (4) samanya, "generality," that which characterizes all the members of a given class; (5) vishesha or particularity, which distinguishes one member of a class from another; and (6) samavaya, "relation," or combination, that is, the relationship that exists between substance and its qualities. A seventh category, "non-existence" (abhava), was added later to deal with certain philosophical difficulties of the system.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

Although the term abhava as used in ordinary language means nothingness, according to the Nyaya (Logic) school of philosophy, it is counted as a padartha (i.e. a category of existence). Even according to the Advaita philosophy, abhava is non-different from its counterpart bhava (being). Before the pot originated, its non-existence is to be attributed to the clay. In other words, it is the clay that remains as the prior non-existence of the pot. Therefore the non-existence prior to the origination of the pot has its anterior existence which is stated to be the clay. To state this another way, the non-existence of the pot and the existence of the clay are the same. But in reality even after the origin of the pot what is the being of the pot is a supposition, and the being of the clay is real. The non-existence of a certain object always resides in the existence of another thing. As the clay constitutes the anterior non-existence of the pot, it remains as another entity. Similarly, before the origin of the world its non-existence remains something which is none other than the Absolute. In other words, it is the Absolute alone. But from the Absolute which is without change of form, how this world with all its different forms came about is a matter that cannot be decided on the basis of inferential reasoning (anumana), etc. Therefore, that non-existence which was the cause of the origination of the world and is non-different from the Absolute is described here as the principle of indeterminate possibility. In other words, Maya - is the non-existent - is the Absolute.

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

There are four kinds of non-existence acceptable to the Nyaya school of Indian logic, which are: anterior non-existence (prag abhava), mutual non-existence (anyonyabhava), ultimate non-existence (latyantabhava) and posterior non-existence (pradhvamsabhava). All these four forms of non-existence are known in Tantra sastra as padartha ('word content' or 'substance'). Abhava (nonexistence) is one of the seven significant substances (padarthas) categorized by the Nyaya school, negation being considered as real as minus one in mathematics. It is quite real to say that one got five of the ten oranges from a shop on credit, which would not mean that the debt is not real; it is real in a negative sense.

Such are some of the intricacies of Indian logic, tacitly accepted by Vedanta.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

abhāva - from the verb root bhū = “to be become, exist”; and a = “not”.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

abhāva - from neg. part. a = “not” + bhāva = “becoming”; root bhū = “to become”.

Related words

Bhava

Pramana

Sanskrit

Abhāva — अभाव

abhāva - अभाव

Abhaya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Abhaya — ... fearlessness; without fear (from a = “not, without” + bhaya = “fear”)

1. The divine virtue of fearlessness is a state of steadfastness in which one is not swayed by the fear-bom inner or outer enemies.
2. Abhaya mudrā is a symbolic gesture formed by raising one hand with the palm outward, meaning “do not fear.” Many deities, saints, and idols are depicted with this gesture. It is the hand gesture of fearlessness; or “seal of fearlessness.” All fear is ultimately groundless for one’s true nature is bliss. (See mudrā.)
3. In Advaita Vedānta, abhaya is equivalent to liberation {mokṣa}.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

abhaya -

unfearful, not dangerous, secure;

fearless, undaunted;

N. of Śiva;

absence or removal of fear, peace, safety, security;

a kind of symbol procuring security;

a sacrificial hymn recited to obtain personal security

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Perceiving the all-underlying Reality in oneself, and what is Real in oneself as underlying everything, makes one free of all fears. For this reason, this wisdom is often considered a synonym for fearlessness (abhaya). He who sees himself as existing separate, on the other hand, always fears the “other”; indeed he fears everything. His life in effect is a continuous search for security.

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The Brhadāranyaka Upanisad teaches the great dictum, abhaya vat brahma, “fearlessness is the mark of Self-realization.”

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

abhaya — from a = “not, without” + bhaya = “fear”.

Sanskrit

Abhaya — अभय

abhaya - अभय

Abhyasa

Variant spellings

abhyasa

abhyāsa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Abhyāsa — ... continuous endeavor; constant practice; repetition; exercise; exertion.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

abhyāsa -

reaching to, pervading;

... prospect, any expected result or consequence.

Wikipedia

'Abhyasa', in Hinduism, is spiritual practice which is regular and constant practice over a long period of time. It has been prescribed by the great sage Patanjali Maharishi in his Yoga Sutras, and by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita as an essential means to control the mind together with Vairagya.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Abhyasa : Continued practice or repetitively doing something of high value.

Descriptions

General

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

Now all these actions or functions [of the mind, etc.] have to be restrained, and in the end to be suppressed, and this is said to be effected by exercises (Abhyâsa) and freedom from passions (Vairâgya).

Indian philosophers have the excellent habit of always explaining the meaning of their technical terms. Having introduced for the first time the terms exercise and freedom from passion, Patañjali asks at once: 'What is Abhyâsa or exercise?' Abhyâsa is generally used in the sense of repetition, but he answers that he means hereafter to use this term in the sense of effort towards steadiness (Sthiti) of thought. And if it be asked what is meant by steadiness or Sthiti, he declares that it means that state of the mind, when, free from all activity (Vntti), it remains in its own character, that is, unchanged. Such effort must be continuous or repeated, as implied by the term Abhyâsa.

This Abhyâsa is said to become firmly grounded, if practised for a long time thoroughly and unintermittingly.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... Krishna shows how to gently tame your mind by detaching yourself from the things with which you are infatuated. Also how, by continuous abhyasa, continuous practice, you can make it learn to love everything as aspects of the one Being or the one Supreme. How, by maintaining vairagya, detachment, and doing abhyasa continuously, you will one day be able to make your mind fully in harmony with your vision of oneness.

Abhyasa and vairagya

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: Abhyasa and vairagya are necessary. Vairagya is the absence of diffused thoughts; abhyasa is concentration on one thought only. The one is the positive and the other the negative aspect of meditation.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

abhyāsa - from abhi - "toward" + the verb root as = "to throw".

Related words

Vairagya

Sanskrit

Abhyāsa — अभ्यास

abhyāsa - अभ्यास

Acharya

Variant spellings

acharya

acarya

ācārya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ācārya — ... preceptor; teacher; spiritual guide; monk-scholar; master.

1. A title affixed to the names of learned spiritual individuals. Technically, it is a person who lives according to the scriptures (śāstra) of a particular tradition. It is "knowing or teaching the ācāra or rules of conduct." The title applies especially to one who invests the student with the sacrificial thread and instructs one in the Vedas.

2. According to Jainism, one stage of the ascetic order. Their duties are to initiate people in the spiritual path; to guide, instruct, and correct those aspirants; and to govern and regulate the monks of the Order.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ācārya -

'knowing or teaching the ācāra or rules', a spiritual guide or teacher (especially one who invests the student with the sacrificial thread, and instructs him in the Vedas, in the law of sacrifice and religious mysteries;

the title ācārya affixed to names of learned men is rather like our 'Dr.'.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Acharya. Traditional term of respect for a religious leader or a spiritual teacher; the word connotes great learning as well as a religious life. The term literally means someone who knows or teaches about achara, the traditionally accepted way of life prescribed in the dharma literature. As a title in modern Hindu life, it indicates the respect and social standing conveyed by the English word doctor.

Wikipedia

In Indian religions and society, an acharya... is a guide or instructor in religious matters; founder, or leader of a sect; or a title affixed to the names of learned men. The designation has different meanings in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and secular contexts. Acharya is also used to address a teacher or a scholar in any discipline, e.g.: Bhaskaracharya, the mathematician. It is also a common suffix in Brahmin names, e.g.: Krishnamacharya, Bhattacharya. In South India, this suffix is sometimes shortened to Achar, e.g.: TKV Desikachar. In the social order of some parts of India, acharyas are considered as the highest amongst the brahmin community often described as the "shrestha brahman" i.e. best in brahmins.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Acharya : Teacher, especially one with religious authority.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Acarya: A teacher or preceptor. In the Vedantic context, any of the various commentators on the basic scriptures - the Upanisads, Brahma Sutras of Badarayana and the Bhagavad Gita.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

In Hinduism

In the Hinduism, an acharya (आचार्य) is a Divine personality (महापुरुश) who is believed to have descended (अवतार) to teach and establish bhakti in the world and write on the philosophy (सिद्धांत) of devotion to God (भगवान्).

Examples of acharyas in the Hindu tradition are:

Adi Sankaracharya

Ramanujacharya

Madhvacharya

Nimbarkacharya

Vallabhacharya

Caitanya Mahaprabhu

Acharya Shree Koshalendraprasadji Maharaj – (Swaminarayan Sampraday – NarNarayan Dev Gadi)

Acharya Shree Rakeshprasadji Maharaj (Swaminarayan Sampradaya – LaxmiNarayan Dev Gadi)

In Jainism

In Jainism, an Acharya is a monk who is one of the five revered panch- paremeshtis, and thus worthy of worship. The word “Suri” is equivalent to Acharya.

An Acharya is the highest leader of a Jain order. He is the final authority in his monastic order and has the authority to ordain new monks and nuns. He is also authorized to consecrate new idols, although this authority is sometimes delegated to scholars designated by him.

Some sects, for example the Terapanthi Svetambaras, have a single Acharya. Others have multiple independent Acharyas.

An Acharya, like any other Jain monk, is expected to wander except for the four months of the monsoon (varsha- vas). The Bhat-tarakas, who head institutions, are technically junior monks, who are permitted to stay in the same place.

Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), who was born into a Jain community, was known as Acharya Rajneesh until 1971, because he was a college professor at one time. Although he remained unmarried, he was never a Jain monk.

In Buddhism

In Buddhism, the Pali variant acariya, lit. “teacher”, is one of the two teachers of a novice monk, the other being the upādhyāya.

In Mahayana traditions the epithet acharya was more widely used as an honorific indicating great scholastic renown; it was somewhat more general than the similar epithet paṇḍita. The Tibetan term loppön is used to translate acharya.

Acharya (Degree)

In Sanskrit institution Acharya is a Post Graduate Degree.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

ācārya - from the verb root car = “to go” + the prefix ā = “toward”; hence to approach.

Wikipedia

The term “Acharya” is most often said to include the root “char” or “charya” (conduct). Thus it literally connotes “one who teaches by conduct (example),” i.e. an exemplar.

Sanskrit

Ācārya — आचार्य

ācārya - आचार्य

Adharma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Adharma — ... demerit; unrighteousness; failure to perform one’s proper duty; medium of motion

1. Generally speaking, the word stands for unrighteous action or lawlessness. Such behavior stems from a lack of virtue or righteousness.
2. Jainism understands this concept as totally different from what it means in all the other systems of Indian philosophy. According to Jainism, it means the principle of rest which pervades the entire universe. It is one of the five categories included in the term nonself (ajiva). Along with the medium of motion (dharma), it is considered to be responsible for the systematic character of the universe. Without it, no substance could remain at rest.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

adhama -
unrighteousness, injustice, irreligion, wickedness; demerit, guilt

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Adharma. In the dharma literature, this term designates the absolute opposite of dharma, the fundamental values that serve to uphold society. Although adharma can denote a particular unrighteous action, it more widely implies a state of affairs in which society has been completely corrupted; the values that uphold society have been subverted, overturned, or ignored and hence such particular unrighteous actions become possible, even likely.

Wikipedia

Adharma is the Sanskrit antonym of Dharma. It means 'that which is not in accord with the law' - referring to both the human written law and the divinely given law of nature. Connotations include unnaturalness, wrongness, evil, immorality, wickedness, or vice.

Related words

Opposite: Dharma

Sanskrit

Adharma -- अधर्म

adhama - अधर्म

Adhithana

Variant spellings

adhithana

adhithāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Adhithāna — ... basis; substratum; ground.

1. According to the Bhagavad Gita, one of the five factors necessary for an action.
2. According to Advaita Vedanta, the Absolute (Brahman) is the only real adhiṣṭhāna.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

adhiṣṭhāna -

standing by, being at hand, approach;

standing or resting upon;

a basis, base;

the standing-place of the warrior upon the car;

a position, site, residence, abode, seat;

a settlement, town, standing over;

government, authority, power

Wikipedia

Adhishthana(m) is a term with multiple meanings which can mean: seat; basis; substratum; ground; support; and abode.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Adhishthana: That on which everything rests.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

In ordinary illusion some defect is necessary but the illusion of this world-appearance is beginningless, and hence it awaits no other dosa (defect) than the avidyā (nescience) which constitutes the appearance. Here avidyā is the only dosa and Brahman is the only adhiṣṭhāna or ground. Had there not been the Brahman, the self-luminous as the adhiṣṭhāna, the illusory creations could not have been manifested at all. The cause of the direct perception of illusion is the direct but indefinite perception of the adhiṣṭhāna. Hence where the adhiṣṭhāna is hidden by the veil of avidyā, the association with mental states becomes necessary for removing the veil and manifesting thereby the self-luminous adhiṣṭhāna. As soon as the adhiṣṭhāna, the ground, the reality, the blissful self-luminous Brahman is completely realized the illusions disappear. The disappearance of the phenomena means nothing more than the realization of the self-luminous Brahman.

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit word literally means “standing over” and conveys ideas of taking possession, dwelling within, presence, protection, and sovereignty.

Related words

Adhyasa

Sanskrit

Adhiṣṭhāna — अधिष्ठान

adhiṣṭhāna - अधिष्ठान

Adhyaropa

Variant spellings

adhyaropa

adhyāropa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Adhyāropa — ... superimpositon; incorrect attribution; erroneous knowledge

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

adhyāropa —

(in Vedānta phil.) wrong attribution, erroneous transferring of a statement from one thing to another

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

32. Adhyaropa is the superimposition of the unreal on the real, like the false perception of a snake in a rope which is not a snake. [Adhyaropa—A synonym of the word Adhyasa, has been defined by Sankara as “The apparent recognition of something previously observed in some other thing.” As for instance, we find the appearance of silver in a mother-of-pearl or water in a mirage.]

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Karapatra. Advaita Bodha Deepika

M.: The non-dual Being-Knowledge-Bliss or the Supreme Brahman is the Reality. Just as the false name and form of snake is superimposed on a rope, so also on the non-dual Reality there is superimposed the category of sentient beings and insentient things. Thus the names and forms which appear as the universe, make up the superimposition. This is the unreal phenomenon.

D.: In the Reality which is non-dual, who is there to bring about this superimposition?

M.: It is Maya.

D.: What is Maya?

35. M.: It is the ignorance about the aforesaid Brahman.

D.: What is this Ignorance?

M.: Though the Self is Brahman, there is not the knowledge of the Self (being Brahman). That which obstructs this knowledge of the Self is Ignorance.

D.: How can this project the world?

M.: Just as ignorance of the substratum, namely the rope, projects the illusion of a snake, so Ignorance of Brahman projects this world.

Adhyaropa-apavada

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Adhyāropāpavāda — the “method or theory of prior superimposition and subsequent denial”

1. By this method, one first superimposes illusory attributes on an attributeless entity and then subsequently denies or removes them. This technique is used by Advaita Vedānta to lead an aspirant to the knowledge of the nondual Self (Ātman).

2. See apavāda.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

... the Vedantins have made a device of judging a superimposition in contrast to a valid ground of knowledge. They draw a distinction between the ground and its superimposition. The negation of the superimposition is called apavāda and the superimposition itself is called adhyāropa. Consequently certain admissions are tentatively accepted as real and later rejected as unreal. Here the terms superimposition, sublation and the assertion of the unreal are all held to be epistemologically valid. Therefore, in higher philosophy such as in brahmavidyā, ordinary logic is not admissible. In the course of this Upanisad we will find that the arguments of several erudite philosophers, after being stated, are judged to be only partially valid and are therefore labeled one-footed logic.

Related words

Adhyasa

Apavada

Sanskrit

Adhyāropa — अध्यारोप

adhyāropa - अध्यारोप

Adhyasa

Variant spellings

adhyasa

adhyāsa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Adhyāsa — ... superimposition; illusion; false attribution

1. The imposition of a thing on what is not that thing (atasmims-tad-buddhih). It is of two kinds: svarūpa-adhyāsa and samsarga-adhyāsa. The former consists in superimposing an illusory (mithyā) object on something real; i.e., superimposing an illusory snake on a real rope, which is an example of an ordinary error, or of superimposing ignorance (avidya) and the empirical world upon the Absolute (Brahman), which is an example of a foundational error. Samsarga-adhyāsa is the superimposition of an attribute on an object. This relation is false (mithya); i.e., to superimpose redness upon a crystal which is in the immediate physical proximity of a red object.
2. It may also be divided into (i) artha-adhyāsa (the superimposition of an object upon a substratum) and (ii) jñāna-adhyāsa (superimposition of the knowledge of the former upon the knowledge of the latter).
3. A third division of adhyāsa is (i) dharma-adhyāsa (superimposition of objects) and (ii) dharmi-adhyāsa (superimposition of attributes).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

adhyāsa -

imposing (as of a foot);

(in phil.) = adhy-āropa; an appendage

Wikipedia

Adhyāsa. Throwing over or casting upon; misconception or erroneous attribution, the significance being that the mind casts upon facts, which are misunderstood, certain mistaken notions; hence false or erroneous attribution. Equivalent to Adhyāropa. Simply put Adhyasa means superimposition or false attribution of properties of one thing on another thing.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Wisdom's frame of reference

Adhyasa: Superimposition; false attribution; illusion. Adhyasa is of two forms:

Svarupa-adhyasa and Samsarga-adhyasa.

Svarupa-adhyasa consists in superimposing an illusory (mithya) object on something real.

Example: Seeing a snake on a real rope, or of superimposing ignorance (avidya); the empirical world upon Brahman, which is an example of a foundational error.

Samsarga adhyasa is the superimposition of an attribute on an object. This relation is false (mithya).
Example: A transparent crystal placed on a red silk appears to be red.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Adhyasa: Superimposition; the erroneous attribution of reality to phenomenal things.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Adhyasa (“superimposition”). In Advaita Vedanta ... this is a key concept used to explain the ultimate unreality of the world around us, despite its apparent reality. For the Advaita Vedanta school, there is ultimately only one real idea in the universe, namely Brahman. All things are in fact that one thing, and this never changes. Since Brahman is the all in all, it can never actually be an object of perception (pratyaksha). What the Advaitins then have to explain is how things in the world apparently change, or seem diverse and different. This is explained as stemming from our mistaken perception and understanding. They call this notion adhyasa, which is rooted in the human tendency to “construct” a picture of world. According to this explanation, human beings superimpose a false understanding (that reality is diverse and differentiated) on top of the correct understanding (that all reality is nothing but undifferentiated Brahman). According to the Advaitins, the world is real because Brahman is real. What is not real is the world as most unenlightened people perceive it.

Advaitins illustrate this concept by two well-known errors in judgment: the case of a rope that one briefly mistakes for a snake, or a post that one imagines is a man. Although these judgments are erroneous—as one quickly discovers— they are not made up out of nothing. In each case, one is perceiving something real—the rope and post both actually exist—but “superimposing” a different and mistaken identity on these things, and thus “transforming” them into something they are not. In the same way, it is argued, human consciousness begins with the Supreme Reality (Brahman), which is actually there, but superimposes onto it something which is not (the judgment of a diverse world).

According to the Advaitins, the real problem is epistemological, that is, how human beings come to know things, rather than in the nature of the things themselves. One comes to a true understanding not when the things themselves change—to refer back to the example, the rope always was and always will be a rope—but with the destruction of the mistaken notions that led to the initial error, and their replacement by true understanding. For the Advaitins, adhyasa is a manifestation of avidya (lack of true knowledge); this avidya is reinforced and upheld by the karmic power of one’s mistaken thoughts and actions. Adhyasa immediately disappears at the moment true understanding is gained, when one comprehends that the world (and oneself) are both nothing but Brahman. This moment of realization brings ultimate wisdom that can never be lost, just as that once one has recognized the piece of rope, it can never again become a snake.

Wikipedia

According to Advaita Vedanta error arises on account of the superimposition of one reality on another. Adi Shankara defines Adhyasa as “the apparent presentation, to consciousness, by way of memory of something previously observed in some other thing”.

Adhyasa is the illusory appearance, in another place, of an object seen earlier elsewhere. It is similar in nature to recollection. For instance on seeing a rope in dim light and not recognizing it as a rope, a person mistakes it for a snake which he has seen elsewhere. The snake is not absolutely unreal, because it is actually experienced, and produces the same effect, such as fear and so on, as a real snake would. At the same time, it is not real, because it is no longer seen when the rope has been recognized. It is therefore described as Anirvachaneeya or what cannot be classified as either real or unreal.

Adi Shankara further points out in his Adhyasa bhashya on the Brahma Sutras that, when there is superimposition of one thing on another, the latter (the substratum) is not affected in the least by the good or bad qualities of the former. (e.g., nacre does not become more valuable because it is mistaken for silver, nor does a rope get the qualities of the snake which it is mistaken for). The implication of this statement is that the self which is identical with Brahman does not undergo any of the changes, nor does it experience any of the joys and sorrows, of the body, mind and organs which are superimposed on it. It is, however, only because of this mutual superimposition of the self and the non-self that all action, both secular and religious, including the study of Vedanta, becomes possible. The self, by itself, is neither a doer of actions, nor an enjoyer of the results. It becomes a doer and an enjoyer only because of this superimposition, as a result of which, as Adi Shankara says, the real and the unreal, namely, the self and the non-self, are blended into one, as it were.. All action, including the various rites laid down in the Vedas, thus come within the sphere of Avidya or nescience, which is the cause of the superimposition.

Adhyasa is of two kinds. When a rope is mistaken for a snake, the snake alone is seen. The existence of the rope is not known at all. Here the snake is said to be superimposed on the rope. This is known as Svarupa-Adhyasa. The second kind of superimposition is when a crystal appears to be red in the proximity of a red flower. Here both the crystal and the flower are seen as existing, and the redness of the flower is attributed to the crystal also. This is known as Samsarga- Adhyasa. Both these kinds of Adhyasa are present in the mutual superimposition of the self and the non-self.

Because of the superimposition of the non-self on the self, the existence of the self is not recognized at all, and the non-self, (that is, the body, mind and organs), is alone recognized as existing. This is Svarupa-Adhyasa. In the superimposition of the self on the non- self, only the existence and consciousness aspects of the self are attributed to the body, mind and organs. This is Samsarga-Adhyasa. The result of this mutual superimposition is that every one identifies himself with the body. This is the root cause of all suffering. Giving up this wrong identification with the body-mind complex and realizing that one is the self which is beyond all suffering and all the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, success and failure and so on, is Vidya or knowledge. It is this knowledge that is contained in the Upanishads.

Svarupa-Adhyasa is also known as Nirupadhika-Adhyasa or superimposition without a limiting adjunct or Upadhi. The superimposition of an illusory snake on a rope is of this type. Upadhi has been defined by Bhaskararaya in his commentary on the name Nirupadhih (No.154) in the Lalitāsahasranāmabhāsyā as Upa samipe adadhathi sviyam dharmam that which imparts its own quality to an object near it. A red flower which makes a transparent crystal near it look red is an upadhi. The superimposition of the red colour on the crystal is a superimposition with upadhi and it is known as Sopadhika-Adhyasa, which is the same as samsarga- adhyasa.

In the superimposition of the snake on the rope, the substratum is considered to be the rope. But the rope itself is not real, and is a superimposition on Brahman or pure Consciousness. Therefore it is said in Vedanta that the substratum is Rajju-upahita chaitanyam or pure Consciousness apparently limited by the rope. Every object in this world should therefore be looked upon as Brahman limited by that object or Brahman in the form of that object Sarvam khalu idam brahma. The illusory snake is described as

Pratibhasika or illusory; the rope, like everything in this world, is Vyavaharika or empirical reality. Brahman alone is Paramarthika or absolute reality. The aim of Vedanta is to enable one to attain this realization.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Memory is at the basis of our vision of the manifested world. This is the theory of adhyasa or superimposition, well-known to Vedantic thought. The reality that we attribute to the objects we see is to be traced to their source by a process of reasoning which goes from effect to cause. Such a philosophical way of enquiry is natural and normal to the human mind. We always ask ourselves about the “how”, “why” or “what” of things. All things must have a cause, and science is what reveals the cause behind effects which constitute all the appearances in which we all live.

Adhyasa (superimposition) has been defined as the grafting by memory of something which does not belong to the place or context. It is a special or particular instance of wrong perception. The associative or apperceptive masses that are formed by our long contact with objects in our past, however long, are not lost, but remain as samskaras or conditioning unit factors which colour our present vision giving it a “reality” which is not really there. Subtle associative unit masses of habitual forms called vasanas (tendencies) operate to shape or determine our present view of things.

Nataraja. Wisdom’s frame of reference

The conditioning of one type of thought by the other, which is called adhyasa, by which what is meant to be symbolic is treated as actual and vice-versa, has been the fecund cause of monstrous errors in the matter of religion and theology in both the East and the West, even from the most ancient of times.

See also:

in Advaita Vedanta: [Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

adhyāsa - from adhi “above, over” + the verbal root as “to throw, cast”.

Related words

Adhithana
Adhyaropa
Pratibhasika

Sanskrit

Adhyāsa — अध्यास

adhyāsa - अध्यास

Adhyatma

Variant spellings

adhyatma
adhyātma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Adhyātma — ... personal; individual; of the supreme Self; supreme; spiritual; pertaining to the self.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

adhyātma -
the Supreme Spirit; own, belonging to self

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Adhyatma: Loosely translated as spirituality. Strictly, that kind of knowledge which tries to understand the Reality in everything, with one's self-existence as the point of reference.

Nataraja. Vedanta Revalued and Restated

Q. What is adhyatma (that which pertains to the Self) ?

A. Svabhava (one's proper nature)

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nirmalananda. Bhagavad Gita

Adhyatma firstly is the principle of the indwelling Brahman in all beings as their Eternal Witness. But it is also the principle of the individual spirit's eternal distinction from Brahman which enables it to manifest and dwell in many forms in succession. The power which brings this embodiment about is karma in its fundamental nature. So from this we see that karma is not only a reaction, but the action that originates our coming into relative existence. Karma both initiates and maintains the rebirth process.

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

adhyātma - from adhi = "to make a basis," and atma - "oneself or the self".

Related words

Brahman

Sanskrit

Adhyātma — अध्यात्म

adhyātma - अध्यात्म

Advaita

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Advaita — ... nondualism; nonduality; “not-two”

1. A term used to indicate a position of nonduality adopted by various Indian schools of thought. Advaita Vedānta adopts a position of absolute nonduality while all other uses of the term accept internal distinctions within their various types of monisms. Thus, in its latter usages, it signifies the interconnectedness of everything which is dependent upon the nondual One, Transcendent Reality.

2. Advaita Vedānta is commonly referred to as Advaita because it was the first and, perhaps, the greatest exponent of this idea. It is one of the six orthodox (āstika) schools of Indian philosophy and the first school of Vedānta philosophy. It has no individual founder, for its roots are to be found in the Vedas, and particularly the Upaniṣads— though its greatest exponent is Śaṅkarācārya Bhagavatpāda. Its central teaching is the oneness of the individual soul (jīva) with the Absolute (Brahman). It affirms the nonduality of Brahman, the nonreality of the empirical world, and the nondifference between the individual soul and Brahman (brahma satyam, jagan-mithyā, jīvo brahmaiva napaṛah). Its basic source books are the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and the Brahma-sūtra. (See prasthāna-traya.)

3. The key concept in Advaita Vedānta is ignorance (avidyā/māyā). This explains the otherwise perplexing distinction between the formless (nirguṇa) and the having form (saguṇa) Brahman, between the nondual Reality appearing as individuals and as God (Īśvara). It accounts for Advaita’s metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

advaita -

destitute of duality, having no duplicate;

peerless;

sole , unique;

epithet of Viṣṇu;

non-duality;

identity of Brahmā or of the Paramātman or supreme soul with the Jīvātman or human soul;

identity of spirit and matter;

the ultimate truth;
title of an Upanishad.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Advaita: Non-duality. The final establishment of unitive vision, when the vestiges of every shade of duality, whether psychological or cosmological, have been transcended by the man of philosophical vision.

Nitya. Love and Blessings

Advaita: Literally, not two. The doctrine which maintains that all duality as between self and other, seer and seen, and knower and known is purely illusory. Ultimately refers to the supremely blissful state of being one with all.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Advaita (non-dual, from the root *dvi*, or two) is a term used to describe the unitary philosophies and religious movements in India. Rather than a definition of these schools of thought as unitary or monist, the negative description is generally used. Advaita is usually translated as “non-dual.” Duality would imply that there is more than one reality; non-duality implies that there is nowhere a second to the one reality.

A number of philosophies in Indian tradition are conventionally called advaita. Their characteristics vary considerably. Best known is “absolute advaita,” formulated by the Vedanta founder SHANKARA, in which the individual self, and all apparently separate selves, are understood to be nothing but the ultimate Self, that is, non-dual with it; there are no distinctions between selves. A further aspect of Shankara’s advaita system is that the world is false or MAYA, illusion. Only the one BRAHMAN is true.

The views of RAMANUJA and VALLABHA are also technically referred to as advaita or non-dualistic, as both their systems maintain that individual selves are nothing but the ultimate Self. However, they both also include qualifying language to show that they do not hold Shankara’s absolute view. In their understanding, the highest Self or brahman is God and therefore has certain inherent characteristics that distinguish it from any other self. No individual self can possess the power and supremacy of the divinity; in fact, both Ramanuja and Vallabha see the individual selves as being distinct from each other. Similarly, Ramanuja and Vallabha qualify their advaita belief that the world or universe is in fact nothing but the divinity: from another perspective the world is different from the divinity.

Many other Vedantins similarly could be called advaita with these sorts of reservations. They sometimes use terms like *Dvait-advaita* (nondualist and dualist) or *BHEDABHEDA* (both different and non-different). Philosophically they are quite similar to Ramanuja and Vallabha.

Finally, most TANTRIC philosophical systems are also termed advaita or non-dual. In these cases, the individual self is understood as being precisely brahman, God or Goddess, with no reservations. The power inherent in the divinity is understood to belong to any individual, at the highest level of realization. The world too is understood to be non-dual with the divinity.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Mastership over self, Victory over the Fallen Man, perfect alignment of the fragments of the soul, Rulership of the Microcosm — all these achievements express in their own way an aspect of what happens when the soul comes into its Own: Advaita.

The attainment of Advaita is not a peaceful sinking away into the negative nothingness which some Western philosophers have imagined the Buddhist Nirvana and the Hindu samadhi to be. On the contrary, the attainment of Advaita or Nirvana can come only after the Final Battle which forms an heroic feat which only few men in every age are capable of performing. It is well-known how tradition conceives of Buddha's encounter with Mara and his hosts before his Enlightenment under the Bodhi-Tree.

... The attainment of Advaita or Self-realization is the End of Tradition, in the senses of the purpose, the extreme limit and the destruction of the Tradition. We shall see later that the traditions of the Twilight of the Gods have besides other meanings, these implications.

In Advaita or At-onement the Pure Consciousness of the Mother and the Mystery of the Father, the Power of Sakti and the Being of Siva, lose their separate identity.

In Advaita even Sin and Virtue are no more.

But as long as Advaita is not attained, the Tradition is indispensable, for no one can undergo Birth but for the Mother.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

This was the vision that had come to him at this time. All thoughts of devotion vanished at this spot, self-effaced. Sin and evil and suffering had no place in the scheme to which the vision belonged. Good and bad, truth and falsehood faded before the uniting principle. The visible world melted and formed part of the vision. It was not a vision that came to pass away. It was one into which one entered to live there forever. Here was a state in which all colours and shades mingled into one white light.

It is like trying to describe the nature of light in terms of darkness to try to state exactly the nature and character of this state. Some have tried to describe it as Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Others describe it as the state of the Paramahansa. The Buddhists have the word Nirvana and the conception of the Boundless Light or Amitabha, into which the individuality merges its identity. In more unsophisticated language some others call it the attainment of the Supreme Bliss or Happiness.

Some attain this only after death, and then it is Salvation or Heaven. This corresponds to the conception of Moksha in Sanskrit, and according to this conception a man can attain Moksha while still living here on earth - this is called the state of Jivan Mukti.

By whatever special name this state is known, it is one and the same experience. This experience is in more modern language called Cosmic Consciousness. It may be described as the experience of the whole, which leaves no remainder. It is the vision of the supreme unity that characterises all the states referred to. There is a happy expression in Sanskrit which describes the essential nature of this state in the least controversial form, and that expression is 'Advaita', which means the state in which there is no second to speak about. The

Upanishads sum up in the boldest possible terms this conception of Advaita when they state: 'Tat- tvam- asi' ('That thou art'). It was this same eternal and universal principle of which the Guru's life was an expression.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

Advaita means nonduality; there are no two, but One. We see that here is a proposition that the Absolute, the One is manifesting Itself as many through the veil of time, space, and causation. Therefore it seems that here are two, the Absolute, and Mâyâ (the sum-total of time, space, and causation). It seems apparently very convincing that there are two. To which the Advaitist replies that it cannot be called two. To have two, we must have two independent existences, just as that of the Absolute, which cannot be caused. In the first place, this time, space, and causation cannot be said to be an independent existence. Time is entirely a dependent existence; it changes with every change of our mind. Sometimes in a dream one imagines that he has lived several years; at other times several months were passed as one second. So that time has entire dependence on our state of mind. Secondly, the idea of time vanishes altogether sometimes. So with space, we cannot know what space is. Yet it is there, indefinable, and cannot live separate from anything else. So with causation.

See also:

in Saguna-brahman: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

advaita - from a = “not” + dvaita = “dual, two”.

Related words

Advaita Vedanta

Sanskrit

Advaita — अद्वैत

advaita - अद्वैत

Advaita Vedanta

Variant spellings

Advaita Vedanta

Advaita Vedānta

Definitions

General

Wikipedia

Advaita Vedānta is a sub-school of the Vedānta (literally, end or the goal of the Vedas, Sanskrit) school of Hindu philosophy. Other major sub-schools of Vedānta are Dvaita and Viśishtādvaita. Advaita (literally, non-duality) is a monistic system of thought. “Advaita” refers to the identity of the Self (Atman) and the Whole (Brahman).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

Advaita Vedanta — Philosophy of non-dualism, based on a contemplative unitive approach. Unitive understanding.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The main idea of the Vedānta philosophy.

The main idea of the advaita (non-dualistic) Vedānta philosophy as taught by the Shakara school is this, that the ultimate and absolute truth is the self, which is one, though appearing as many in different individuals. The world also as apart from us the individuals has no reality and has no other truth to show than this self. All other events, mental or physical, are but passing appearances, while the only absolute and unchangeable truth underlying them all is the self. While other systems investigated the pramanas only to examine how far they could determine the objective truth of things or our attitude in practical life towards them, Vedānta sought to reach beneath the surface of appearances, and enquired after the final and ultimate truth underlying the microcosm and the macrocosm, the subject and the object. The famous instruction of Shvetaketu, the most important Vedānta text (mahāvākya) says, “That art thou, O Shvetaketu.” This comprehension of my self as the ultimate truth is the highest knowledge, for when this knowledge is once produced, our cognition of world-appearances will automatically cease. Unless the mind is chastened and purged of all passions and desires, the soul cannot comprehend this truth; but when this is once done, and the soul is anxious for salvation by a knowledge of the highest truth, the preceptor instructs him, “That art thou.” At once he becomes the truth itself, which is at once identical with pure bliss and pure intelligence; all ordinary notions and cognitions of diversity and of the many cease; there is no duality, no notion of mine and thine; the vast illusion of this world process is extinct in him, and he shines forth as the one, the truth, the Brahman.

Wikipedia

The first person to explicitly consolidate the principles of Advaita Vedanta was Adi Shankara, while the first historical proponent was Gaudapada, the guru of Shankara’s guru Govinda Bhagavatpada.

Three levels of truth

The transcendental or the Pāramārthika level in which Brahman is the only reality and nothing else;

The pragmatic or the Vyāvahārika level in which both Jiva (living creatures or individual souls) and Ishvara are true; here, the material world is completely true, and,

The apparent or the Prāthibhāsika level in which even material world reality is actually false, like illusion of a snake over a rope or a dream.

List of teachers of Advaita Vedanta

Advaita Vedanta has had many teachers over the centuries in India and other countries. This article lists some of the major teachers. Adi Shankaracharya was the most prominent in the tradition of Advaita Vedanta to formulate its doctrine in his many works.

Sages and saints

Marichi

Angiras

Atri

Yajnavalkya

Pulastya

Vashishta

Kashyapa

Vishwamitra

Jamadagni

Bharadwaja

Bhrigu

Agastya

Shri Dattatreya

Shri Ashtawakra

Vyasa

Recent Jagadgurus of Peethams

Sringeri Sharada Peetham

Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharathi Mahaswamiji, Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham [1] (1865- 1912); a realised Yogi; initiated many into Adi Shankaracharya's philosophy including Sacchidanandendra Saraswati- founder of Adhyatma Prakashana Karyalaya ;known as "Abhinava Shankara" because of his many tours around Bharatvarsha spreading the Advaita Vedanta philosophy and Hindu Dharma

Sri Chandrashekhara Bharathi Mahaswamiji, Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham (1912- 1954); A well known Jivanmukta; said to be one of the greatest saints ever to take birth in India

Sri Abhinavavidya Tirtha Mahaswamiji, Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham (1954- 1989); A great Yogi and master of scriptures; blessed with realisation early in life; In His many tours of Bharatvarsha and also Nepal He established many maths, shrines and temples.

Sri Bharathi Tirtha Mahaswamiji, Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham (1989-);A distinguished sage and present Jagadguru of Shringeri Peetha, Sringeri, Karnataka.

Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham

Sri Chandrashekharendra Saraswathi Mahaswamiji Jagadguru of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham (1894- 1994), also called as Nadamadum Deivam(Walking God) by devotees and followers all over the world

Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swami, Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham

Jagadguru Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swami, Kanchi Kamakoti peetam

Sapta Na Sannyasin Ruchira Buddha Adi Da Samraj Jagadguru of Naitauba Peetham the main Hermitage Ashram called "Samrajashram" in the Fijian Islands. Other Satguru Peethams: Mountain Of Attention Sanctuary, Love's Point Hermitage and Tat Sundaram Hermitage and Tat Sundaram Hermitage, all in Northern California; and Da Love-Ananda Mahal in Kauai, Hawaii

Other teachers

Adyashanti, popular modern Western teacher.

Shri Totapuri Maharaj, One of the Dasanami order sanyasis who initiated Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa into Advaita Vedanta.

Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) well-known modern proponent of Advaita; the primary source book, Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna (Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita), was written by an eyewitness devotee Mahendranath Gupta. It documents his later life and conversations with disciples and devotees and serves as the key reference for his philosophy and teachings

Shri Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950) the silent sage of Tamil Nadu who had a profound realization of nonduality

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, wrote books on four Hindu Yogas: Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda contains a complete collection of transcribed lectures. He spoke at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893.

Sri Narayana Guru (1856-1928)- Vedic scholar, mystic philosopher, prolific poet and social reformer, from the present-day Kerala.

Mannargudi Raju Sastri (1815 -1903), Formed 'The Advaita Sabha' for propagating the tenets of the Advaita faith

Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950) Bengali philosopher-sage who synthesized Advaita thought with Western philosophical theories of evolution.

Swami Tapovan Maharaj - A virakta mahatma

Swami Sivananda (1887—1963), Divine Life Society. Bestowed samyasa initiation of Swami Chinmayananda, scholar, and author of over 300 books on Hinduism, many available on the web.

Swami Karpatri (1905-1980), a well-known sannyasi of Varanasi

Swami Chinmayananda Jnana diksha bestowed under Sri Swami Tapovan Maharaj in Uttarkashi. Disciples founded the Chinmaya Mission. 'Chinmaya' = "pure consciousness of bliss".

Shri Swami Dayananda Saraswati, (c. 1824- 1883) a contemporary Advaitin who united disparate Hindu sects under a single body known as the Arya Samaj.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati, (c.1930-) originally student of Chinmaya above. He has set up many traditional gurukula (vedanta schools) in India and Western countries.

Sacchidanandendra Saraswati, a profound Advaitin and the founder of the Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya in Holenarasipura

Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi (c. 1838-1918), a great philosopher of Maharashtra who propagated the oneness of God and urged harmony amongst the various religions.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj A twentieth- century master of Advaita from Mumbai

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of the Transcendental Meditation programme and movement, which have practices and philosophy firmly rooted in the Advaita tradition. The TM initiation puja references Adi Shankara and the monastery set up by his devotee Trotakacharya at Jyotir Math. This was the same monastery re- established by Sri Brahmananda Saraswati, Maharishi's master, often referred to as "Guru Dev."

Sri H.W.L. Poonja (1910-1997), or Papaji. Disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, he denied being part of any formal tradition, and remained always available, welcoming newcomers to his home and satsangs.

Tibbetibaba - Hindu Bengali Saint whose life was based on both Advaita Vedanta and Mahayana principles.

Adi Da (1939–2008) American-born teacher of enlightenment whose followers state he is the promised Hindu Avatar and first seventh stage realizer, who has written over 70 books on “Advaitayana Buddhism”, the unique philosophy that transcends both Advaita thought and the philosophical theories of Buddhism.[2]

American yogi, Richard Hittleman, who was the first person to bring Hatha and Raja Yoga to English-speaking audiences via the medium of a television series (in the 1950s and 1960s). His teachings were essentially those of Advaita Vedanta and Ramana Maharshi (Richard Hittleman, Guide for the Seeker, Bantam Books, 1978, p. 92)

American yogini, Gangaji (Toni Roberson); disciple of Papaji (see above) and author of several books.

Ontology

Kārya and kārana

The kārya (effect) and kārana (cause) form an important area for investigation in all the systems of Vedanta. Two kāranatvas (ways of being the cause) are recognised:

Nimitta kāranatva — Being the instrumental cause. For example, a potter is assigned Nimitta kāranatva as he acts as the maker of the pot and thus becomes the pot’s instrumental cause.

Upādāna kāranatva — Being the material cause. For example, the mud is assigned Upādāna kāranatva as it acts as the material of the effect (the pot) and thus becomes the pot’s material cause.

Advaita assigns Nimitta kāranatva to Brahman with the statements from the Vedas (only two are given below):

That Lord has created all the forms and is calling them by their names (Taittiriya Aranyaka 3.12.7)

He thought, “Let Me create the worlds” (Aitareya Upanishad[9] 1.1.1)

Advaita also assigns Upādāna kāranatva to Brahman vide the statements from the Vedas (only two are given below):

Dear boy, just as through a single clod of clay all that is made of clay would become known, for all modifications is but name based upon words and the clay alone is real (Chandogya Upanishad[10] 6.1.4)

(He thought) Let me be many, let me be born (Taittiriya Upanishad[11] 2.6.4)

The Chandogya Upanishad[10] 6.2.1 states

It is One without a second

Thus, based on these and other statements found in the Vedas, Advaita concludes that Brahman is both the instrumental cause and the material cause.

Kārya-kārana anyatva

Advaita states that kārya (effect) is non- different from kārana (cause). However kārana is different from kārya. This principle is called Kārya-kārana anyatva (the non- difference of the effect from the cause). To elaborate,

If the cause is destroyed, the effect will no longer exist. For example, if from the effect, cotton cloth, the cause, threads, are removed, there will be no cloth, i.e., the cloth is destroyed. Similarly if in the effect, thread, the cause, cotton, is removed, there will be no thread, i.e., the thread is destroyed. This is brought out by Adi Shankara in the Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya , commentary on the Brahma sutra,[12] 2.1.9, as:

Despite the non-difference of cause and effect, the effect has its self in the cause but not the cause in the effect. The effect is of the nature of the cause and not the cause the nature of the effect. Therefore the qualities of the effect cannot touch the cause.

During the time of its existence, one can easily grasp that the effect is not different from the cause. However that the cause is different from the effect is not readily understood. As to this, it is not really possible to separate cause from effect. But this is possible

by imagining so. For example, the reflection of the gold ornament seen in the mirror is only the form of the ornament but is not the ornament itself as it (the reflection) has no gold in it at all.

Adi Shankara says in the Chāndogya Upaninad Bhāṣya, commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad, 6.3.2: All names and forms are real when seen with the Sat (Brahman) but are false when seen independent of Brahman. This way Advaita establishes the non- difference of effect from cause. To put it in a nutshell, Kārya is not different from kārana; however kārana is different from kārya.

In the context of Advaita Vedanta, Jagat (the world) is not different from Brahman; however Brahman is different from Jagat

Salvation

Advaitins believe that suffering is due to Maya, and only knowledge (called Jnana) of Brahman can destroy Maya. When Maya is removed, there exists ultimately no difference between the Jiva- Atman and the Brahman. Such a state of bliss when achieved while living is called Jivan mukti. While one is in the pragmatic level, one can worship God in any way and in any form, like Krishna or Ayyappa as he wishes, Adi Shankara himself was a proponent of devotional worship or Bhakti. But Adi Shankara believes that while Vedic sacrifices, puja and devotional worship can lead one in the direction of jnana, true knowledge, they cannot lead one directly to Moksha.

Theory of creation

In the relative level, Adi Shankara believes in the Creation of the world through Satkaryavada. It is like the philosophy of Samkhya, which says that the cause is always hidden into its effect—and the effect is just a transformation of the cause. However, Samkhya believes in a sub-form of Satkaryavada called Parinamavada (evolution) — whereby the cause really becomes an effect. Instead, Adi Shankara believes in a sub- form called Vivartavada. According to this, the effect is merely an apparent transformation of its cause — like illusion. eg., In darkness, a man often confuses a rope to be a snake. But this does not mean that the rope has actually transformed into a snake.

At the pragmatic level, the universe is believed to be the creation of the Supreme Lord Ishvara. Maya is the divine magic of Ishvara, with the help of which Ishvara creates the world. The serial of Creation is taken from the Upanishads. First of all, the five subtle elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) are created from Ishvara. Ether is created by Maya. From ether, air is born. From air, fire is born. From fire, water is born. From water, earth is born. From a proportional combination of all five subtle elements, the five gross elements are created, like the gross sky, the gross fire, etc. From these gross elements, the universe and life are created. This series is exactly the opposite during destruction.

Some people have criticized that these principles are against Satkaryavada. According to Satkaryavada, the cause is hidden inside the effect. How can Ishvara, whose form is spiritual, be the effect of this material world? Adi Shankara says that just as from a conscious living human, inanimate objects like hair and nails are formed, similarly, the inanimate world is formed from the spiritual Ishvara.

Mahavakya

Mahavakya, or “the great sentences”, state the unity of Brahman and Atman. There are many such sentences in the vedas, but one sentence from each veda is usually chosen. They are shown below

Sr. No.	Vakya	Meaning	Upanishad	Veda
1	प्रज्ञानम ब्रह्म (Prajñānam brahma)	<i>Consciousness is Brahman</i>	aitareya	Rig Veda
2.	अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि (Aham brahmāsmi)	<i>I am Brahman</i>	brihadāranyaka	Yajur Veda
3.	उत्त्वमसि (Tat tvam asi)	<i>That thou art</i>	chhandogya	Sama Veda
4.	अयमात्मा ब्रह्म (Ayamātmā brahmā)	<i>This Atman is Brahman</i>	mandukya	Atharva Veda

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The particular type of monism taught by Śamkara is very old, though in its final form it owes a great deal to his contribution. Its most distinguishing feature on the theoretical side is its conception of nirguṇa Brahman as the ultimate reality with the implied belief in the Māyā doctrine, the identity of the jiva and Brahman and the conception of mokṣa as the merging of the former in the latter; on the practical side, it is the advocacy of karma-samnyāsa or complete renunciation with its implication that jñāna and jñāna alone is the means of release. The earliest extant formulation of this doctrine is found in Gaudapada's Karikā, which purports to summarize the teaching of the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, but really accomplishes much more by giving an admirable summary of advaitic teaching. The main points of Sankara's philosophy—its basic principles such as the inapplicability of the notion of causality to the ultimate reality—are already there. The most important of Sankara's works is the bhāṣya on the Vedānta-sūtra, which is as remarkable for the charm of its style as for the logical consistency of its arguments.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Advaita Vedanta. One of the branches of Vedanta, the philosophical school claiming to reveal the ultimate (anta) teaching of the ancient sacred texts known as the Vedas. The Advaita school upholds a philosophical position known as monism, which is the belief that a single Ultimate Reality lies behind all things. Advaita proponents believe that reality is nondual (advaita)—that is, that everything in the world is actually the formless, unqualified Brahman, despite the appearance of difference and diversity. To support this claim, the Advaitins provide a convincing explanation for the world one perceives to have many separate and diverse things. Advaitans account for this apparent diversity by using the concept of adhyasa (superimposition), in which a false, mistaken understanding is projected upon a real object—in the classical Advaita example, seeing a rope in the twilight and mistaking it for a snake. For the Advaitins, the “snake” is not completely unreal, since it depends on the rope for its existence—one cannot see the snake unless the rope is there. At the same time, the “snake” is clearly not real since one does not persist in this error, and once the illusion of the snake has been dispelled, one can no longer see it.

In the same way, the Advaitins believe that our idea of the phenomenal everyday world is projected upon the one thing in the universe that is truly real—Brahman. Like the snake, the world is unreal as it is perceived but real insofar as it depends on Brahman. For the Advaitins, the roots of adhyasa are epistemological, that is, related to how human beings come to know things, but the results of adhyasa are both epistemological and ontological (related to how things actually are). On one hand, adhyasa obscures the Ultimate Reality and prevents one from accurately perceiving it, and on the other, its projective character creates our notions of the world. For the Advaitins, the source of all this confusion is ultimately rooted in avidya, or primal ignorance, under the influence of which one forms mistaken ideas about the world. The operation of this ignorance is said to have no beginning, but one of the

things that keeps it going is one's karma, based on the continuing actions caused by this mistaken understanding. Another source of this ignorance is the power of illusion (maya) wielded by God (Ishvara), which bewilders human beings. For the Advaita Vedantin, God is identified as a qualified (saguna) form of Brahman—thus below the highest unqualified (nirguna) Brahman, and himself a product of superimposition.

Since the Advaita school believes that the source of bondage to karma results from mistaken understanding, the only way to destroy bondage is to gain the correct understanding. Although the Advaitans say that people must perform obligatory religious actions (nitya karma) as a matter of duty, actions can never bring about the understanding that is necessary for salvation, although they may aid the process by removing some of the karmic obstacles. To support this understanding, the Advaitins begin their analysis with an appeal to the knowing subject as the one thing that can never be doubted, and claim that this self-consciousness is evidence for the existence of the inner Self, or atman. Aside from this appeal to experience, they depend heavily on the authority of the sacred texts, particularly the Upanishads, to uphold their key doctrines: that Brahman is the source of all things; that the human soul is ultimately identical to Brahman, although hampered by obstructions based on past karma; and that gaining true knowledge is the basis of liberation.

The first and greatest Advaita thinker was the philosopher Shankaracharya; other significant figures were his two disciples, Sureshvara and Padmapada, as well as Mandana Mishra and Vachaspati Mishra.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Vedanta, particularly Advaita Vedanta, admittedly represents the finality of Indian wisdom, as the very word suggests: Vedanta literally meaning “the finality” (anta) of knowledge (veda). In the sense that it is the body of wisdom contained in the Upanisads, the concluding section (anta) of the Vedas, also it is called “Vedanta.” Originally the Upanisads were themselves called Vedantas. The Upanisadic wisdom as interpreted by the great Sankara is known as Advaita Vedanta, meaning non-dualistic Vedanta. Sankara expounded the hidden wisdom of the Upanisads (upanisad means “hidden wisdom”) in the 8th century AD.

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

The Advaita Vedanta as formulated and presented in the writings of Sankara was itself a revaluation of the Upanishadic and Buddhist wisdom which formed its background. Sankara subjected the values held before and in his time to a critical and methodical scrutiny. His approach could even be said to be that of a positivist, since objective rational norms entered into it, and because he did not try to explain away anything. That was over a thousand years ago but, making due allowance for the conditions of his day, Sankara may be said to have approached the subject in a fully scientific spirit, insofar as such an approach could apply to a subject in which much a priori reasoning has to be given its legitimate place. More than a millennium after Sankara, from almost the same part of India, there appears another Guru, the Guru Narayana, who, as it were, is a representative of the same direct and vertical line of philosophical re-valuators - a recognizable revaluators-line which can be said also to connect Sankara in his turn with the most ancient phase of human history.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

Materialism prevails in Europe to-day. You may pray all the world over for the salvation of these sceptics, but they do not yield, they want reason. The salvation of Europe depends on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita—the non-duality, the Oneness, the idea

of the impersonal God—is the only religion that can keep any hold on intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear, and irreligion seems to prevail, and that is why it is gaining ground in Europe and America.

... In modern times the Advaitins have all ranged themselves under Sankarâchârya; and he and his disciples have been the great preachers of Advaita, both in Southern and in Northern India. The influence of Sankarâchârya did not penetrate much into our country of Bengal, or into Cashmere and the Punjab; but in Southern India the Smartas are all followers of Sankarâchârya, and with Benares as the centre, his influence is simply immense even in many parts of Northern India.

Main sources

Prasthanâ-traya

Sankara: Works

For beginners

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Of the numerous hand-books written to explain the Advaita system, we may mention here the Naiskarmya-siddhi of Sureśvara, who was at first probably a Mīmāṃsaka, and the Samkṣepa-śārīraka by his pupil, Sarvajñātman. Another work of particular value, especially in regard to the Māyā doctrine, is the Iṣṭa-siddhi of Vimuktātman (A.D. 1050). Later still are the Nyāya-makaranda of Anandabodha (A.D. 1050) and the Pahca-daśī of Vidyāranya, a popular treatise. The Siddhānta-leśa-samgraha of Appaya Dīkṣita describes the divergences of view ... which arose within the doctrine as a result of its wide expansion in the centuries following Śankara. The Vedāntaparibhāṣā of Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra gives a technical and systematic exposition of the doctrine, especially on its logical and epistemological side; and the Vedānta-sāra of Sadānanda (A.D. 1550) is an easy introduction to Advaita philosophy.

Advaita-Vedanta and Sankhya-Yoga

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The Advaita resembles the Sankhya-Yoga in regard to its conception of the psychic apparatus: and it also believes like the other in the theory of representative knowledge. The only difference that maybe noticed is that while, according to the Sankhya-Yoga, the ten senses are traced to aham-kāra, here they are supposed to be derived from the elements much as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Ramakrishna

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

In the Vedas and Upanishads we find records of some of the very earliest religious ideas of the Hindus, ideas that long antedated the time of Kapila, ancient as this great sage is. He did not propound the Samkhya philosophy as a new theory of his own. His task was to throw the light of his genius on the vast mass of religious theories that were existing in his time and bring out a rational and coherent system. He succeeded in giving India a psychology that is accepted to the present day by all the diverse and seemingly opposing philosophical systems to be found among the Hindus. His masterly analysis and his comprehensive statement of the processes of the human mind have not yet been surpassed by any later philosopher and he undoubtedly laid the foundation for the Advaita philosophy, which accepted his conclusions as far as they went and then pushed them a step further, thus reaching a final unity beyond the duality that was the last word of the Samkhyas.

See also:

in Antahkarana: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

in Sakshin and antahkarana: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Related words

Advaita

Sankara

Vedanta

Visishta-Advaita

Sanskrit

अद्वैत वेदान्त

Advaita Vedānta - अद्वैत वेदान्त

Agama

Variant spellings

agama

āgama

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Āgama — ... scripture; what has come down from tradition; canonical literature; source; beginning; “that which has come down”

1. Divinely revealed scripture which has been handed down from teacher to pupil through the ages. A scripture in which creation, destruction, worship of deities, repetition of mantras, and accomplishment, means of attaining the sixfold desires, forms of meditation, and four kinds of yoga are described is considered by the wise as Āgama.

2. They are divided into three main branches according to the deity that is worshipped therein. Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa Āgamas are the Vaiṣṇava scriptures which extol Viṣṇu. The Śaiva Āgamas extol Śiva. And the Śakta Āgamas extol the Goddess (Devī). Śakta tantras are enumerated as sixty-four and grouped into two kinds: dakṣiṇa and vāma or right and left hand. Vaiṣṇava tantras are subdivided into Vaikhānasa and Pāñcarātra. Those revealed by Sage Vikhanas to his disciples Bhṛgu, Marici, Āti, etc., are Vaikhānasa tantras. Pañcarātra Āgamas are threefold: divya or directly revealed by Lord Nārāyaṇa; Munibhāṣita or those handed over to the sages such as Bharadvājasamhitā, Pārameśvarasamhitā, etc., and Aptamanujaprokta, or those written by men whose word is trustworthy. Śaiva Āgamas are fourfold: Kāpāla, Kālāmukha, Pāsupata, and Śaiva. Traditionally, twenty-eight Śaiva Agamas are recognized as forming the revealed canon (though hundreds of these scriptures are spoken of): Kāmika, Yogaja,

Cintya, Kāraṇa, Ajita, Dīpta, Sūkṣma, Sahasra, Amśumad, Suprabheda, Vijaya, Niśśvāsa, Svāyambhuva, Anala, Vira, Raurava, Makuṭa, Vimala, Candrajñāna, Mukhabimba, Progīta, Lalīta, Siddha, Santāna, Sarvokta, Pārameśvara, Kirana, and Vātula.

3. An Āgama deals with four topics: temple construction, making idols, etc.; philosophical doctrines; meditative practices; and methods of worship (kriyā, jñāna, yoga, and caryā). These are divided into three divisions: tantra which teaches rituals; mantra which teaches the yoga stage of worship; and upadeśa which expounds the existence and nature of the three eternal entities—in-dividual souls, bonds, and God (paśu, pāśa, and pati).

4. Traditionally, twenty-eight Āgamas are recognized as forming the revealed canon, though hundreds of these scriptures are spoken of.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

āgama —

coming near, approaching;

origin;

reading, studying; acquisition of knowledge, science;

a traditional doctrine or precept, collection of such doctrines, sacred work, Brāhmaṇa;

anything handed down and fixed by tradition (as the reading of a text or a record, title-deed, &c.);

a grammatical augment, a meaningless syllable or letter inserted in any part of the radical word;

a Tantra or work inculcating the mystical worship of Śiva and Śakti.

Dictionary - Runes

Agama: (Skr.) One of a number of Indian treatises composed since the 1st cent. A.D. which are outside the Vedic tradition, but are regarded authoritative by the followers of Vishnuism, Shivaism, and Shaktism. Amid mythology, epic and ritualistic matter they contain much that is philosophical. K.F.L.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Agama. In its most general meaning, this refers to any authoritative text. In a philosophical context, this word designates one of the pramanas, the means by which human beings can gain true and accurate knowledge. As a pramana, the agama denotes testimony from a reliable source, particularly from scriptures such as the Veda. Within specific sectarian communities, such as the devotees (bhakta) of the gods Shiva (Shaivas) and Vishnu (Vaishnavas), the word also commonly designates the particular texts deemed most authoritative by that community

Wikipedia

Agama is a term for scriptures in Buddhism, Jainism, and Sanatana Dharma:

Hindu Agamas

Āgama (Buddhism)

Āgama (Jainism)

Āgama (Hinduism)

The corresponding adjective is Agamic.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Wisdom's frame of reference

Agama: A synonym of any ancient scripture, particularly the Vedas. There are non-Vedic agamas also, like Saivagama, Vaisnavagama, Jainagama etc.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

agama. In the tantric tradition ... agama most commonly means "authoritative scripture." Different systems of tantric tradition may designate different texts as agamas. In South India, for instance, there is a tradition called Agamanta SHIVISM that relies upon 28 agamas. In this tradition, the VEDAS are referred to as NIGAMA. Agamas tend to be fairly late texts (compared to the Vedas); the earliest agama could hardly have been written before the sixth century C.E. Though many of the agamas of the diverse tantric traditions are philosophical, others focus on Shaivite temple ritual, including the layout of temples, the installation of icons, and the ritual forms to be used. In this sense, they are foundational texts for temple Hinduism.

In a more limited sense, an agama is a tantric text that takes the form of a teaching by SHIVA to PARVATI or another goddess. (In this context, a Nigama is a text taught by the goddess to Shiva.) Finally, agama is a linguistic term used in PANINI, The great Sanskrit grammarian, for an augment added to a base to form a complete word.

Wikipedia

The Agamas are sectarian and monotheistic texts dedicated to worship of Vishnu, Shiva and Devi. For example, the Shaivite Agamas are the primary religious text in Virasaivism. The Tantras are Agama texts devoted to worship of Devi.

Agamas are non-Vedic texts attributed to Dravidian sources as against the 'Aryan' Vedic literature. The origins of these Agamas are traceable to the days of the Indus Valley around 3000 BCE. Most of the early 'Self Realization' concepts and Yogic texts are also Agama in origin from which Tantra has branched off.

Almost all idol worship (Puja) and Temple rituals follow the Agama Vidhis (rules). The Puranas are also influenced largely by the Agama devotional traditions.

The Vedas on the other hand, are entirely about Nature Worship (Varuna- water, Agni- Fire, Vayu- wind), fire rituals (homas), animal sacrifices and do not promote idol worship at all.

In this sense, almost the entire Hindu system of today can be said to be Agama in origin and not Vedic as is commonly believed. Vedic fire rituals are now only of minor importance in a Hindu persons life as compared to the Agama Temple rituals and the Agama Siddhanta philosophies.

Early Jain and Buddhist literature are also called Agamas because they owe their origins to the same non-vedic sources.

Strictly speaking, Indian religious and philosophical literature can be divided into two main streams, Agama and Vedic. The first has its roots in the early civilizations of the Indus Valley period (spread all over the sub-continent - not just Harappa and Mohenjodaro) and the second has its roots in the post Aryan period starting from about 2000-1500 BCE.

The early Agama traditions also migrated abroad from South/east India and influenced life in Indonesia where the 'Hindu Agama' religion in Java has a huge following even today.

The Agamas, in spite of being the fundamental philosophical and traditional base of present day Hinduism, they have, unfortunately, not received the exposure and publicity that the Vedas have enjoyed.

Place in Hinduism

In Hinduism, the Agamas are an enormous collection of Sanskrit scriptures which are revered. The Agamas are the primary source and authority for yoga methods and instruction. The Shaiva Agamas revere the Ultimate Reality as Lord Shiva (Shaivism). The Vaishnava- Agamas (Pancharatra and Vaikhanasas Samhitas) adore the Ultimate Reality as Vishnu (Vaishnavism). The Shakta- Agamas (Tantras) venerate the Ultimate Reality as Shakti the consort of Shiva and Divine Mother of the universe (Shaktism). Each set of texts expands on the central theological and philosophical teachings of that denomination.

The two main schools in the Vaishnava Agama are Pancharatra and Vaikanasa Agama. The Saiva Agama has led to the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy in South India and to the Pratyabhijna system of Kashmir Saivism. Smartas recognize the Agamas, but don't necessarily adhere to them, relying mainly on the smriti texts. In the Malay languages the word Agama literally means religion. The Agamas are also sometimes known as Tantras.

Agamas deal with the philosophy and spiritual knowledge behind the worship of the deity, the yoga and mental discipline required for this worship, and the specifics of worship offered to the deity. Each Agama consists of four parts. The first part includes the philosophical and spiritual knowledge. The second part covers the yoga and the mental discipline. The third part specifies rules for the construction of temples and for sculpting and carving the figures of deities for worship in the temples. The fourth part of the Agamas includes rules pertaining to the observances of religious rites, rituals, and festivals.

Elaborate rules are laid out in the Agamas for Silpa (the art of sculpture) describing the quality requirements of the places where temples are to be built, the kind of images to be installed, the materials from which they are to be made, their dimensions, proportions, air circulation, lighting in the temple complex etc. The Manasara and Silpasara are some of the works dealing with these rules. The rituals followed in worship services each day at the temple also follow rules laid out in the Agamas.

Āgama (Buddhism)

In Buddhism, an āgama (Sanskrit and Pali for “sacred work”[1] or “scripture”[2]) is a collection of Early Buddhist scriptures, of which there are five, which together comprise the various recensions of the Sūtra Pitaka of the Sanskritic early schools. The various schools had different recensions of each āgama, and the five āgamas parallel the first five collections (nikāyas) of the Sutta Piṭaka of the Theravadin school's Pali Canon. Āgamas of various schools, primarily the Sarvāstivāda, are preserved in their entirety in Chinese translation, and portions also survive in Sanskrit and in Tibetan translation.

Jain Agamas

Agamas are canonical texts of Jainism based on Mahavira's teachings. Mahavira's preaching were orally compiled by his disciples into various Sutras (texts) which were collectively called Jain canonical or Agamic literature. Traditionally these sutras were orally passed on from teachers (acaryas or gurus) to the disciples for several centuries. The scholars date the composition of Jain agamas at around 6th to 3rd century BCE.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

āgama — from the verb root gam = “to go” + the preposition ā = “toward”

Related words

Pramana

Sanskrit

Āgama — आगम

āgama - आगम

Agni

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Agni — ... fire; Vedic god

1. Fire is of five kinds: the fire of time (kāla-agni); the fire of hunger (kṣudhā-agni); the cold fire (śīta-agni); the fire of anger (ko-pa-agni) and the fire of knowledge (jñāna-agni). These five fires reside respectively in the feet, navel, stomach, eye, and heart.
2. In the Hindu śrauta ritual, there are three types of fire: the householder's fire (gārha-patya), the fire to be offered into (āhavanīya), and the southern fire (dākṣiṇa). In order to perform śrauta rites, one must "establish" these three fires. In the Vedas, Agni appears in three phases: in heaven as the sun, in midair as lightning, and on earth as ordinary fire. In the Vedas, Agni was one of the chief deities with more hymns addressed to him than any other god.
3. According to some, Agni is the Divine Will and/or the sacred spark of divinity within an individual, and/or fire per se, the priest god, and the great effulgence of God, and/or Gaṇeśa/Subramanyam. He is considered the mediator between human beings and the gods, as well as their protector and witness to their actions.
4. See tejas.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

agni -

fire, sacrificial fire (of three kinds, Gārhapatya, Ahavanlya, and Dakṣiṇa);
the number three Sūryas;
the god of fire;
the fire of the stomach, digestive faculty, gastric fluid;
bile;
gold

Wikipedia

Agni is a Hindu deity.

Agni has three forms: fire, lightning and the sun.

Agni is one of the most important of the Vedic gods. He is the god of fire and the acceptor of sacrifices. The sacrifices made to Agni go to the deities because Agni is a messenger from and to the other gods. He is ever-young, because the fire is re-lit every day, yet he is also immortal.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Agni, the god of fire, is one of the most central divinities in the early Vedic tradition. There are more hymns to Agni in the RIG VEDA, the earliest SANSKRIT text, than to any other divinity. Agni is sometimes said to be the son of earth and sky. He is also sometimes said to be the offspring of BRAHMA. He is sometimes called the son of ADITI and the RISHI Kashyapa. Finally, he is also sometimes called the son of the rishi Angiras.

Agni's most important role is in the Vedic ritual, where he is the messenger between humanity and the gods. He is called upon always to take the gods to the ritual place so that they can hear the pleas and praises of the chanters. In Vedic poetry he is called a domestic priest, a poet, and a sage, as though to identify him directly with the RISHIS. There is a sense of his presence in every home as the hearth fire, and there is a closeness and intimacy expressed in the Vedic poetry with him that are lacking with many of the other Vedic divinities. He is seen to extend protection to humans in many ways and to grant wealth and length of life.

Iconographically, in later times Agni is seen as red or black in color, riding a ram. He is guardian of the southeastern direction among the eight guardians of the directions. Fire is considered one of the five elements (PANCHA BHUTAs).

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Agni ("fire," cognate with Latin ignis) Hindu deity present in every fire. Agni is also one of the eight dikpalas, or Guardians of the Directions, with responsibility for the southeast quarter. As fire, Agni is also one of the five elements in classical Hindu cosmology. Agni is important in the samhitas (hymns) of the Rg Veda and in the Brahmanas, a later strand of Vedic literature emphasizing sacrificial rites. The Rg Veda opens with a hymn to Agni and describes him as "the household priest, the god and officiant of the sacrifice, [and]. . .the giver of blessings." Agni remained important in the Brahmanas since, as the sacrificial fire, he was essential to all ritual. Agni's importance in these texts stems from his presence in all three levels of the Vedic universe—on the earth as fire, in the middle atmospheric realm (antariksha) as lightning, and in the sky as the sun. This ability to move between these levels made Agni the intermediary between the gods and human beings. From above, Agni served as the messenger of the gods, while as the sacrificial fire on earth, Agni not only consumed the offerings but conveyed them in the smoke to the gods above. Because of his role in bringing about the sacrifice, another epithet for Agni is the "mouth of the gods."

Unlike many of the other Vedic deities, Agni has retained a certain prominence even in the present day. Although Vedic sacrifices are uncommon, sacrificial motifs have been incorporated into many contemporary rites. Ceremonies often have a part in which offerings (often of clarified butter) are ladled into a sacrificial fire. Fire plays an important role in many rituals, particularly that of arati, in which lamps are waved before the image of a divinity as an offering of light. Agni also serves as the divine witness to the single action widely believed to seal a marriage. This is agnipradakshinam, in which the bride and groom make seven revolutions around a lamp or fire. Even on the most prosaic level, fire is still essential to daily life since most Indians continue to cook over an open flame—whether coal, wood, dung, or bottled gas. This everyday utility, combined with his abiding ritual presence, have assured Agni a continuing presence in Hindu life.

Wikipedia

Agni, the Vedic god of fire who presides over the earth, has made the transition into the Hindu pantheon of gods, without losing his importance. With Vayu and Surya, who presided over the air and sky, he is one of the supreme gods in the Rig Veda. The link between heaven and earth, he is associated with Vedic sacrifice, taking offerings to the other world in the fire. His vehicle is the ram. His cult survived the change of the ancient fire worship into modern Hinduism. The sacred fire- drill (agnimathana) for procuring the temple-fire by friction – symbolic of Agni’s daily miraculous birth – is still used.

In the Vedas

Agni is the first word of the first hymn of the Rigveda:-

अग्निमि ईळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवम् ऋत्वजिम् । होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥

agním ĩle puróhitam / yajñásya devám rtvijam / hótāram ratnadhātamam

Agni I laud, the high priest, god, minister of sacrifice, The invoker, lavishest of wealth.

He is the supreme director of religious ceremonies and duties, and figures as messenger between mortals and gods. Vedic rituals concerned with Agni include the Agnicayana, that is, the piling of the fire altar, the Agnihotra, viz., invocation of Agni.

The Rigveda often says that Agni arises from water or dwells in the waters.

Other Rigvedic names, epitheta or aspects of Agni include Matarishvan, Bharata and the Apris.

Agni is a deva, second only to Indra in the power and importance attributed to him in Vedic mythology, with 218 out of 1,028 hymns of the Rigveda dedicated to him. He is Indra’s twin, and therefore a son of Dyaus Pita and Prthivi. He is married to Svaha, “oblation” personified.

He is one of the Guardians of the directions, representing the southeast.

He is said in the Rigveda to have two parents (the two parts of the firedrill used to start the fire), and ten servant maids (the fingers of the man who is lighting the fire.)

Depictions

In Hindu art, Agni is depicted with two or seven hands, two heads and three legs. He has seven fiery tongues with which he licks sacrificial butter. He rides a ram or in a chariot harnessed by fiery horses. His attributes are an axe, torch, prayer beads and a flaming spear.

Agni is represented as red and two-faced, suggesting both his destructive and beneficent qualities, and with black eyes and hair, three legs and seven arms. He rides a ram, or a chariot pulled by goats or, more rarely, parrots. Seven rays of light emanate from his body. One of his names is Saptajihva, “having seven tongues”.

Legends

Agni is the eldest son of Brahma. In Visnu Purana , Agni (Abhimani) the fire god is said to have sprung from the mouth of the Virat purusha, the Cosmic Man. His wife is Svaha. Abhimani had three sons of surpassing brilliancy: Pavaka, Pavamana, and Suchi, the personifications of the three fires that produced our earth and humanity (VP 1:10). All these three names indicate purity. Abhimani, his three sons, and their 45 sons constitute the mystic 49 fires of the Puranas and theosophy.(cf Agni Purana.)

As the eldest son of Brahma, Abhimani represents the cosmic Logos, the first force produced in the universe at its evolution, the fire of cosmic creative desire.

His three sons, according to the Vayu Purana, stand for three different aspects of Agni (fire): Pavaka is the electric fire, Pavamana the fire produced by friction, and Suchi the solar fire. Interpreted on the cosmic and human planes, these three fires are “Spirit, Soul, and Body, the three great Root groups, with their four additional divisions” (SD 2:247). They are said to have been cursed

by the sage Vasishtha to be born again and again (cf BP 4:24,4; SD 2:247- 8). “Every fire has a distinct function and meaning in the worlds of the physical and the spiritual. It has, moreover, in its essential nature a corresponding relation to one of the human psychic faculties, besides its well determined chemical and physical potencies when coming in contact with the terrestrially differentiated matter” (SD 1:521).

Agni is also an important entity in ayurveda. It is considered to be the one which is responsible for the sustenance of life. Agni helps in the various physiological functions of the body.

See also:

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Diagram: Mahabhutas

Etymology

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The word agni is Sanskrit for “fire” (noun), cognate with Latin ignis (the root of English ignite), Russian огонь (ogon), Polish “ogień,” Lithuanian - ugnis - all with the meaning ‘fire’ -, with the reconstructed Proto-Indo- European root being h’égni-

Related words

Tejas

Mahabhuta

Sanskrit

Agni — अग्नि

agni - अग्नि

Aham

Definitions

General

Aham, the personal pronoun ‘I’.

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Aham — ... “ I “; “I-awareness”; the notion of the ego; the individual soul; self- consciousness; ‘I’- consciousness; the pure inner Self.

1. There are said to be two “ I’s “ : the lower self or egotistical individual and the higher self or the pure (śuddha) Self.
2. According to Kashmir Saivism, it points to the free and Self-illuminating consciousness that resides in the Heart.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

aham -
nom. sg., 'I'

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. *The philosophy of Narayana Guru*

Aham: I; often used by Narayana Guru as a synonym of atma.

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

... it is necessary to understand what Hinduism teaches regarding the Aham, the "I", a word that is etymologically related to the Latin "ego" and the English "I". It has been noted by Hindu philosophers that "Aham" consists of the letters "a" which is the first, and "ha" which is the last letter of the Sanskrit Alphabet, and the word has therefore the implication of signifying the whole of Existence. The final "m" is a suffix. The same idea is found in the Apocalypse: "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." According to the great Hindu teachers "Aham" means literally "I am He", and therefore represents the spiritual effort to abolish the duality of Man and God, or of the soul and the rest of the Universe, including, in the first place, of course, humanity.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. *That alone, the core of wisdom*

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that when the first being came into manifestation it was like a person, though it was neither male or female. When the person recognized its beingness, it said "I am," or in the original Sanskrit, aham, "I am That." The Upanishad says when a person introduces himself he first says "I am," and then adds his name. So first we say aham, "I am," and then we say whatever we want to add to it.

... a certain movement of consciousness as "I...I...I..." "I am listening to you,"—that's one 'I'. "I appreciate what you say,"—that's another aham. "I don't like it." Another aham. "Oh, I like it very much." Another aham. "It depresses me." Aham. "It hurts me." Aham. The 'I' and 'me' which come one after another are as endless as waves on the ocean, while at the same time each formation of the 'I' perishes in the very next moment, just as waves expend themselves on the shore.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*

HOW TO CONQUER THE EGO

119. If one ponders over this word 'I', trying to track it down, one sees that it is only a word which denotes egotism. But it is extremely difficult to shake it off. So one must say, "You wicked 'I', if you will not go by any means, remain as the servant of God. The ego that feels itself to be the servant of God is called the 'ripe I'.

120. Sankaracharya had a disciple who had been serving him for a long time but was not still given

any instruction by him. Once, while seated alone, Sankara heard the footsteps of someone coming behind. So he called out, "Who is there?" The disciple answered, "It is I." The Acharya thereupon said, "If this 'I' is so dear to you, then either expand it to infinity (i.e., know the universe as yourself), or renounce it altogether."

121. If you find that you cannot drive off this feeling of I, then let it remain as the servant I. There is not much to fear from the ego which is centered in the thought, "I am the servant of God; I am His devotee." Sweets cause dyspepsia, but not sugar candy which is an exception. The 'servant I', the 'I' of a devotee, the 'I' of a child— each of these is like a line drawn with a stick on the surface of water. 'I' does not last long.

122. Just as sugar candy has no unwholesome effect like other sweets, so also the 'ripe' ego which considers itself to be the servant or worshipper of God causes none of those evil consequences characteristic of the unripe ego. On the other hand it leads to God, and signifies that one has progressed in Bhakti Yoga or the path of devotion.

123. What is the nature of the feelings and impulses of one who has the attitude of the servant I? If his conviction is true and sincere, then there remains only the forms, the appearance, of his former feelings and impulses. Even if the ego of the servant or the ego of the devotee remains, one who has realised God can hurt none. The whole sting of individuality vanishes from him. The sword becomes gold by a touch of the philosopher's stone. It retains its former shape, but can no longer hurt any one.

124. If you feel proud, let it be in the thought that you are the servant of God, the son of God. Great men have the nature of children. They are always children before Him; so they are free from pride. All their strength is of God, and not their own. It belongs to Him and comes from Him.

...

126. As long as one says, "I know" or "I do not know", one looks upon oneself as a person. My Divine Mother says: It is only when I have effaced the whole of this Aham (I-ness) in you, that the Undifferentiated Absolute (My impersonal aspect) can be realised in Samadhi." Till then there is the 'I' in me and before me.

127. After a process of severe struggle with one's lower nature and the assiduous practice of spiritual discipline leading to Self-knowledge, one attains the state of Samadhi. Then the ego with all its train vanishes. But it is very difficult to attain Samadhi; the ego is very persistent. That is why we are born again and again in this world.

128. So long as one is not blessed with the vision Divine, so long as the touch of the philosopher's stone has not transmuted the base metal in one into gold, there will be the illusive feeling: 'I am the doer.' And until this illusion ceases, there will persist the idea that gives the sense of distinction between 'I have done this good work', and 'I have done that bad work'. Maya means this sense of distinction, and it is because of it that the world continues. One reaches Him if one takes refuge in Vidya Maya—that aspect of Divine Power having the preponderance of Sattva—which leads one by the right path. He alone crosses the ocean of Maya, who comes face to face with God—realises Him. A man is truly free, even here in this embodied state, if he knows that God is the true agent and he by

himself is powerless to do anything.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Osborne. *The collected works of Ramana Maharshi*

The three bodies, are non-self and are unreal. The Self, that is the Aham or 'I' is quite different from them. It is due to ignorance that the sense of Self or the 'I' notion is foisted on that which is not Self, and this indeed is bondage. Since from ignorance arises bondage, from Knowledge ensues liberation. To know this from the Guru is sravana.

The process of manana, which is subtle enquiry or deep contemplation, consists in rejecting the three bodies consisting of the five sheaths (physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and blissful), as not 'I' and discovering through subtle enquiry of 'Who am I?' that which is different from all three and exists single and universal in the Heart as Aham or 'I', just as a stalk of grass is delicately drawn out from its sheath. This 'I' is denoted by the word tvam (in the scriptural dictum 'Tattvam- asi', That thou art).

Aham and koshas

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

Mr. C.: What is will? I mean - where does it fit in, in the five kosas?

M.: The 'I-thought' arises first and then all other thoughts. They comprise the mind. The mind is the object and the 'I' is the subject. Can there be will without the 'I'? It is comprised in the 'I'. The 'I-thought' is the vijnanamaya kosa (intellectual sheath). Will is included in it.

... On a former occasion ... asked: Who am I? How is it to be found?

M.: Ask yourself the question. The body (annamaya kosa) and its functions are not 'I'. Going deeper, the mind (manomaya kosa) and its functions are not 'I'. The next step takes on to the question. "Wherefrom do these thoughts arise?" The thoughts are spontaneous, superficial or analytical. They operate in intellect. Then, who is aware of them? The existence of thoughts, their clear conceptions and their operations become evident to the individual. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the individuality of the person is operative as the perceiver of the existence of thoughts and of their sequence. This individuality is the ego, or as people say 'I'. Vijnanamaya kosa (intellect) is only the sheath of 'I' and not the 'I' itself. Enquiring further the questions arise, "Who is this 'I'? Wherefrom does it come?" 'I' was not aware in sleep. Simultaneously with its rise sleep changes to dream or wakefulness. But I am not concerned with dream just now. Who am I now, in the wakeful state? If I originated from sleep, then the 'I' was covered up with ignorance. Such an ignorant 'I' cannot be what the scriptures say or the wise ones affirm. 'I' am beyond even 'Sleep'; 'I' must be now and here and what I was all along in sleep and dreams also, without the qualities of such states. 'I' must therefore be the unqualified substratum underlying these three states (anandamaya kosa transcended). 'I' is, in brief, beyond the five sheaths. Next, the residuum left over after discarding all that is not-self is the Self, Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Vijnanamaya kosha and aham

See also:

in Turiya: [Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam](#)

in Vijnanamaya kosha: [Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani](#)

Related words

Ahankara

Idam

Vijnanamaya kosha

Sanskrit

Aham — अहम्

aham - अहम्

Aham Brahma Asmi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Aham-brahmāsmi — ... “I am the Absolute (Brahman)”

1. A Great Saying (mahāvākya) conveying the wisdom of the Upaniṣads which occurs in the Brhadāranyaka Upanisad of the Yajur Veda
2. See mahāvākya.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Aham brahma asmi - Literally ‘I am the Absolute.’ The Upanishadic dictum describing the mystical experience of a person’s complete identity with the Absolute. It is also read as “I am of the Absolute.”

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Aham Brahmasmi (“I am Brahman.”). In the Hindu philosophical tradition, this is one of the four “great utterances” (mahavakyas) expressing an ultimate truth. The truth expressed in this utterance is the idea that atman (the individual Self) and Brahman (Ultimate Reality) are one and the same—identical; this truth is at the heart of the speculative texts called the Upanishads. The four mahavakyas, aside from their philosophical importance as capsulizing fundamental truths, were also appropriated by the four divisions of the Dashanami Sanyasi ascetics as identifying symbols. Each division had a different mahavakya, just as each had a different Veda, a different primary sacred center, and a different paradigmatic ascetic quality. Aham Brahmasmi is the mahavakya associated with the Bhuriwara division of the Dashanami Sanyasis.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

If we can somehow manage to return to the source, where knowledge, abstracted and held out as a notion in our mind, is identified as nondifferentiated from the knower and the known, and by the same token know that the knower and the known are the same, we achieve what is called unitive understanding (advaita darsana). The person endowed with this realization can easily understand the Upanishadic dictum “This Knowledge is verily the Absolute,” (prajnanam brahma). As a corollary he also sees that “this Self is none other than the Absolute,” (ayam atma brahma). Having known this for sure, he can declare this truth to any seeker: “That thou art,” (tat tvam asi). The great dictum “I am the Absolute,” (aham brahma asmi) is given in the Upanishads to describe the complete and final identity of the seer with the Supreme Self.

Regaining identity with the Absolute is like going back home from a long and tedious pilgrimage through several lives, and sitting on one’s own seat in calm repose, with the recognition that there is nothing else to gain in the three worlds other than the Self.

Regaining one’s true Self is described in the Upanishads as achieving nativity (svarajya), and getting established in the Self is described as becoming the “Imperial Master” of the domain of the Absolute.

See: Mahavakyas as used for instruction

Related words

Yajur Veda
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
Maha-Vakya

Sanskrit

Aham-brahmāsmi — अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि

aham brahmāsmi - अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि

Ahankara

Variant spellings

ahankara
ahañkāra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ahañkāra — ... T’-ness; egoism; the concept of individuality; literally = “the T’-maker”

1. In the evolutionary process ahankara is said to evolve from the intellect (buddhi) and give evolution to the senses (indriya) and the subtle essence of the elements (tanmātra) in turn. Its function is self-assertion. It is an aspect of the inner organ (antahkaraṇa) and it has the three aspects of vaikārika or sattva, taijasa or rajas, and bhūtādi or tamas.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ahamkāra -

conception of one's individuality, self-consciousness;

the making of self, thinking of self, egotism;

pride, haughtiness;

(in Sāṅkhya phil.) the third of the eight producers or sources of creation, viz. the conceit or conception of individuality, individualization

Wikipedia

Ahamkāra is a Sanskrit term that is related to the ego and egoism - that is, the identification or attachment of one's ego.

Ahamkara is one of the four parts of the antahkarana (inner organ) described in Hindu philosophy. The other three parts are Buddhi, Chitta and Manas.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Ahamkara - relating what is known to oneself in terms of value experience.

The I-sense each individual has.

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

ahamkara: ego, I-consciousness, affectivity, affective core of antahkarana, the inner organ (psychic dynamism).

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Besides containing the "heart centre" of Yoga, traditionally said to be in the middle of the body in the region of the heart, the upper part of the trunk contains the "Hridaya" or "Heart" of the tradition of the Jnanis of Hinduism. This is said to be situated in the right side of the chest. We find it also in the Bible: "A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left." The "heart" at the right side is the symbolic, spiritual, centre, the heart on the left the physical pump of the literalists, "fools". ... The Heart of the Jnanis forms the Centre of Jnana or "Gnosis", that is, Self-realization, bringing the unity of Consciousness and Being.

... It is interesting that Hindu tradition teaches that the "I" arises in the "heart centre" of Yoga and that the Self or Divine I lives in the Heart on the right side of the chest.

... Intimately associated with "desire" is "egoism". The Yogic tradition teaches that in the Anahata or "heart centre" arises Ahamkara (pronounced Ahankara), meaning "I-factor" or "ego-activity". Ahamkara is basically the spiritual effort to establish the duality of Man and God, and of Man and Man, or Woman — according to the usual interpretation. The word indicates "the dynamic activity of the ego".

Wikipedia

To have an understanding of this term means that we have a powerful tool for understanding the nature and behaviour of ourselves and of others. The Vedic philosophy taught that when one's mind was in a state of ahamkara, one was in a state of subjective illusion, where the mind had bound up the concept of one's self with a created thing. The created thing is usually a phenomenon which can be thought of as external to the self. It could be a tangible, concrete (material) thing - e.g., a motor car - or an intangible thing - e.g., such as a concept or idea (as in, for example, the concept of the fight for peace). The ego is involved in constructing the illusion.

...the mind has created a state of illusion, but it seems very real to the person in that state, and objectivity and reality are obscured. Consider how an otherwise apparently nice, normal family man in the military - Rudolf Höss, could also happily undertake the role as the Commandant of the Auschwitz death camp in Nazi Germany. Höss' autobiography, written whilst he was awaiting execution after the trial for war crimes, indicates that was unable to see that he had been doing anything other than just doing his job to the best of his ability.

Ahankāra and spiritual development

General

Wikipedia

Ahamkāra is the instrument of Aham (the Spirit), the principle of individuation, acting as an independent conscious entity within the impure reality - yet, it does not have consciousness of its own.

It is a receptacle of Cit śakti, its consciousness being a small spark from Cit, the universal consciousness.

It manifests itself by assuming authorship of all the actions of buddhi, manas, the senses and organs of action.

It is believed to exist in the sphere of duality, in a state of identification with the physical body, its needs and desires.

It is related to Vak tattva, one of The 36 tattvas in Vedic and Hindu religious philosophy.

In ahamkāra, a state of rajas guna (agitation) predominates. This is because it identifies only with a small part of the creation (the body) and rejects everything else as "not me"; it becomes subject to a series of afflictions such as: pride, egoism, competitiveness, hate and jealousy.

Though ahamkāra is generally a state of illusion, once in that state, Vak tattva (one of The 36 tattvas) can appear. When it does, then, for the first time, individual will, determination, a sense of morality and ethics come into play - which is the first step on the path to spiritual development/enlightenment. Without a sufficiently harmonious and powerful ahamkāra (personality), it is thought to be impossible to exert the level of effort necessary to accede to a higher spiritual level. The position of ahamkāra and buddhi are sometimes presented in reversed order because, as the principle of "I-ness", ahamkāra is allowed control over the manas (sensorial mind) and buddhi (superior intellect, intuition). Yet, buddhi is a superior tattva, and ahamkāra is thus only able to be in a superior position to buddhi from a functional point of view. From an absolute point of view, ahamkāra is created by buddhi and thus subordinate to it.

Ahankara and states of consciousness

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Maharshi's Gospel

M: The ego in its purity is experienced in the intervals between two states [of consciousness] or between two thoughts. The ego is like the worm which leaves one hold only after it catches another. Its true nature is known when it is out of contact with objects or thoughts. You should realise this interval as the abiding, unchangeable Reality, your true Being, through the conviction gained by the study of the three states, jagrat, svapna and sushupti.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

104. Know that it is the ego which, identifying with the body, becomes the doer or the experiencer, and in union with the Gunas such as Sattwa, this ego assumes the three different states (of waking, dreaming and deep-sleep.)

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

This sense of individuality, when it identifies with the three Gunas-Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, which are the three modes of the mind, comes to express itself in the three states of Consciousness— waking, dream and deep-sleep. Thus, roughly we may say, the ego conditioned by Sattwa is the 'waker': conditioned by Rajas is the 'dreamer'; and conditioned by Tamas is the 'deepsleeper'. The same ego, according to the condition of the mind, experiences itself as the waker, the dreamer and the deep-sleeper, and in all these states, naturally, it claims to be the 'doer' and the 'experiencer'.

Ahankara and mahat

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

... This mahat-tattva being once produced, further modifications begin to take place in three lines ... representing the sattva preponderance, rajas preponderance and tama preponderance. This state when the mahat is disturbed by the three parallel tendencies of a preponderance of tamas, rajas and sattva's called ahamkāra, and the above three tendencies are respectively called tāmasika ahamkāra or bhūtādi, rājasika or taijasa ahamkāra, and vaikārika ahamkāra. The rājasika ahamkāra cannot make a new preponderance by itself; it only helps (sahakāri) the transformations of the sattva preponderance and the tamas preponderance. ... Further development with the help of rajas on the line of sattva development ... is called sāttvika or vaikārika ahamkāra. This ahamkāra represents the development in buddhi to produce a consciousness-stuff as I or rather "mine,"... From this again come the five cognitive senses of vision, touch, smell, taste, and hearing, the five cognitive senses of speech, handling, foot-movement, the ejective sense and the generative sense; the prānas (bio-motor force) which help both conation and cognition are but aspects of buddhi-movement as life. ... Each buddhi with its own group of akamkāra (ego) and sense-evolutes forms a microcosm separate from similar other buddhis. ... as knowledge is subject to sense-influence and the ego, it is different for each individual, but so far as a general mind (kāraṇa buddhi) apart from sense knowledge is concerned, there is a community of all buddhis in the buddhitattva. Even there however each buddhi is separated from other buddhis by its own peculiarly associated ignorance (avidyā). ... The other tendency, namely that of tamas, has to be helped by the liberated rajas of ahamkāra, in order to make itself preponderant, and this state in which the tamas succeeds in overcoming the sattva side which was so preponderant in the buddhi,

is called bhūtādi. From this bhūtādi with the help of rajas are generated the tanmātras, the immediately preceding causes of the gross elements.

See: Antahkarana, manas, citta, buddhi, ahankara

See: Jiva and ahankara

See: Manas, indriyas, chitta, vritti, buddhi, ahankara, mahat

See: Vaishvanara and ahankara

See also:

in Amrta: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

in Hiranyagarbha: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

in Manas and avidya: [Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji](#)

in Prakriti: [Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita](#)

in Vairagya: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

ahañkāra —from the verb root kṛ = “action” + aham = “ I “

[Wikipedia](#)

The term “ahamkara” comes from an approximately 3,000 year-old Vedic philosophy, where Aham refers to the concept of the Self or “I” and kāra refers to the concept of “any created thing” or “to do”.

Related words

Aham

Antahkarana

Buddhi

Chitta

Jiva

Mamakara

Manas

Sanskrit

Ahaṅkāra — अहङ्कार

ahaṅkāra - अहङ्कार

Ahimsa

Variant spellings

ahimsa

ahiṃsā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ahiṃsā — ... noninjury; nonviolence

1. One of the great vows (mahāvratā) of the Jains. It is the law of compassion in body, mind, and spirit. Negatively it means refraining from causing any injury, and positively it stands for the practice of love toward all living beings.
2. It is the first and most important of the abstentions (yama) of the Yoga System. It is the cardinal virtue upon which all others depend. It is the law of compassion in body, mind, and spirit.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ahiṃsā -

not injuring anything, harmlessness (one of the cardinal virtues of most Hindū sects, but particularly of the Buddhists and Jains; also personified as the wife of Dharma; security, safeness

Wikipedia

Ahimsa is a term meaning to do no harm (literally: the avoidance of violence - himsa). It is an important tenet of the religions that originated in ancient India (Hinduism, Buddhism and especially Jainism).

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Ahimsa: The vow of non-hurting or compassion as understood in the Buddhist or Jaina religious systems. With Gandhi it meant nonviolence in political struggles.

Nitya. Love and Blessings

ahimsa: The habit of non-hurting. A natural outcome of seeing oneself as one with the whole and thus loving everything as one loves oneself.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ahimsa means “non-killing.” This is a concept that seems to emerge in late Vedic times (c. 800 B.C.E.) and is primarily associated with the Jain ... and Buddhist traditions at that time.

It gradually is taken into the Brahminical tradition and becomes central to it up to the present day. The notion of ahimsa is applied toward animal life primarily but in Jain tradition is recognized in the case of plants also.

Ahimsa understands that all animals (and for the Jains certain plants) have souls and that the killing of any animal (or certain plants) whether for eating or not accumulates karmic ... demerit to the one who does it. The Jains were the most radical in this regard, and their monks were enjoined to sweep their path clear with whisks to prevent stepping on insects and sometimes wore (and wear) masks over their mouths to prevent the breathing in and killing of small invisible beings and insects. Jains would never eat meat and would not countenance the eating of meat or the killing of any animal for any reason in their tradition.

... The notion of ahimsa is the primary motive for Indian vegetarianism and orthodox BRAHMINS too avoid all meat, animal products, and eggs (which are seen to be living embryos). Because of ahimsa there are certain orthodox Hindu ascetics who will not wear leather shoes or sandals, but will wear only wooden shoes. Mohandas Karamchand GANDHI expanded the notion of ahimsa to the interpersonal realm and developed it into a philosophy of personal action.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ahimsa (“refraining from harm”). Ahimsa refers to the conscious commitment to refrain from harming other living beings, either directly or indirectly. The emphasis on ahimsa originated with the Jains, for whom all actions carry karmic consequences, but who also believe that the karmic consequences generated by intentional evil acts are far more severe than those from unintentional ones. Jain and Buddhist commitment to ahimsa brought it further into Indian society, and it has been an important feature of Hindu practice for well over two thousand years. In the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali mentions ahimsa as one of the restraints (yama) and thus recommends it as one of the basic foundations for religious life. This commitment to ahimsa is believed to be one of the major forces responsible for the decline of animal sacrifice, which was one of the most important types of religious practice as described in the Vedas, the oldest Hindu scriptures. Far more recently, in the twentieth century, ahimsa was one of the guiding principles of Mohandas Gandhi during the struggle for Indian independence. Although Gandhi did not rule out the use of violence in principle, his commitment to ahimsa reflected his judgment that means and ends are karmically linked, and that the means one employs will determine both the nature and tone of one’s ends.

Wikipedia

Ahimsa is a rule of conduct that bars the killing or injuring of living beings. It is closely connected with the notion that all kinds of violence entail negative karmic consequences. The extent to which the principle of non-violence can or should be applied to different life forms is controversial between various authorities, movements and currents within the three religions and has been a matter of debate for thousands of years. Though the origins of the concept of ahimsa are unknown, the earliest references to ahimsa are found in the texts of historical Vedic religion, dated to 8th century BCE. Here, ahimsa initially relates to “non-injury” without a moral connotation, but later to non- violence to animals and then, to all beings. Though ritual sacrifice of animals and meat- eating are condoned in the earliest Vedic texts, other texts present counter- arguments against these activities. In the 19th

and 20th centuries, prominent figures of Indian spirituality such as Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharishi, Swami Sivananda and A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada emphasized the importance of ahimsa. Mahatma Gandhi applied ahimsa to politics, by his non-violent satyagrahas.

Ahimsa in Jainism emphasizes vegetarianism and bans hunting and ritual sacrifice. Jains go out of their way so as not to hurt even small insects and other minuscule animals and make considerable efforts not to injure plants in everyday life as far as possible. In accordance to this policy, eating of some foods, whose cultivation harms small insects and worms as well as agriculture itself, is to be abstained from. Violence in self-defense, criminal law, and war are accepted by Hindus and Jains. Though ahimsa is not used as a technical term in Buddhism unlike the other two religions, it condemns ritual sacrifice and violence, and moral codes emphasize the importance of not taking life.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

ahimsā - from the prefix a = “not” + the verb root hints = “to injure”.

Sanskrit

Ahimsā — अहिंसा

ahimsā - अहिसिा

Aitareya Upanishad

Title

Aitareya Upanishad

Author(s)

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Aitareya is a matronymic or patronymic deriving from the SANSKRIT root itara. It means “son of itara” (either masculine or feminine), who would be his mother or father. This is an ancient RIG VEDIC sage who also goes by the name of Mahidasa. Credited to him are the Aitareya Brahmana, the Aitareya Aranyaka, and the Aitareya Upanishad, all texts attached to the RIG VEDA.

Wikipedia

The rishi of the Aitereya Aranyaka and the Aitereya Brahmana is Aitereya Mahidasa. In Chandogya Upanishad, Aitereya Mahidasa is said to have lived 116 years (Chhandogya 3.16.7).

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

The Aitareya Upanishad is one of the older, “primary” Upanishads commented upon by Adi Shankara. It is a Mukhya Upanishad, associated with the Rigveda. It figures as number 8 in the Muktika canon of 108 Upanishads.

The Aitareya Upanishad is a short prose text, divided into three chapters, containing 33 verses. It comprises the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of the second book of the older vedic text, Aitareya Aranyaka.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Aitareya Upanishad begins with cosmological verses showing how the ultimate being, the ATMAN or Self, created the worlds, the elements, and human beings. Important here is the connection between each of the elements of the divine PURUSHA, which is the template Person, and the elements of nature aspects of the cosmos and the human being. From the original Person fire, air, Sun, the quarters of space, the Moon, death, and water emerge. All of these elements again go into making up the human being. Once this takes place the Self enters into the human being that has emerged as the result of his creation. This then makes clear that the self of a human being is the Ultimate Self, which is the source of everything.

Wikipedia

In the first chapter of the text, Atman, the inner self, is portrayed as a divine creator. In the second chapter, the three births of the Atman are described. The third chapter deals with the qualities of the self or Brahman. It contains one of the most famous expressions of the Vedanta, “Prajnanam Brahma”, which is one of the Mahāvākyas.

Related words

Mahavakya: Prajnanam Brahma

Rig Veda

Upanishad

Publications

Translations

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Ajati Vada

Variant spellings

ajati-vada
ajata-vada
ajāti-vāda

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ajāti-vāda — ... the theory of nonorigination

1. The Advaita Vedānta theory, especially associated with Gaudapāda, which denies any causal change. That which is nonexistent in the beginning and nonexistent at the end is also nonexistent in the middle and therefore completely nonexistent.

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit term Ajativada can be translated as “non- creation”. Ajativada is one of several alternately-held creation theories in Advaita Vedanta philosophy. According to Advaita Vedanta, the world of appearances is considered an illusion, and not to “exist”. The idea that the illusory world was not created is called Ajativada, or non-creation. The concept implies that searching for a source of the origin of the world in a creator is futile. Advaitins translate the concept of Ajativada with the phrase: “nothing ever happened” or: “Not even the appearance of creation exists”. That is to say, not even the illusion of the world “exists”.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

ajāta-vāda : The theory that no creation takes place. Only what exists gets transformed into new forms.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

According to the eighth century Advaitin Gaudapada, and his Mandukya Karikas, a treatment or commentary on the Mandukya Upanishad, Ajativada means that causality is internally incoherent and entails the belief that Atman is eternally unborn. Adi Shankara wrote the following in verse 426 of his work Viveka Chudamani (The Crest- Jewel of Discrimination'), Mohini M Chaterjee, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1932. On account of constant absorption in Brahman, freed from the sense of reality

of external objects, only seemingly enjoying them when offered by others, like a sleepy baby, perceiving the world as that seen in a dream and recognising it only now and then, such a man is indeed rare. He is the enjoyer of the fruits of untold merit and is truly held blessed and revered on earth.. This is about as close as one get to a description of the state of a Mukta, totally absorbed permanently..or realised one. A Mukta has realised Ajativada....

The twentieth century sage Ramana Maharshi was a particularly articulate adherent to the concept of ajativada. On Sri Ramana's view, ajativada or non- creation is a part of the highest form of consciousness that can be attained. Sri Ramana described three consecutive steps, each of which corresponds to a different understanding of reality:

That somebody or some god created the world

That the world arises simultaneously with our perception of it

Finally, ajativada, that the world never happened at all. ('Be as you are'.The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi..David Godman.. Arakana.London and New York...1986).

Sadhu Om: A chronicler and devotee of Ramana wrote; At times Sri Ramana Maharshi used to reveal some information which was not given by the scriptures and Puranas such as: how, in the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna began His teachings with the doctrines of Ajata and Advaita, but then condescendingly came down to various stages of Dwaita, and how He carefully used words which, though suited to Arjuna's limited grasping power, also gives room for well-ripened aspirants to discover, even now, the motive behind those words.

This is supported by the great Sage Nisargadatta Maharaj, who indicated the following;

- 1.That individuals begin with first believing they are making things happen;
- 2.Then realising things are in fact happening to them;
3. Then finally that nothing is happening at all ('I am That', Acorn Press. N.C. 1999).

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Iyer. At the Feet of Bhagavan

Q. What is the Ajata-vada?

A. It is the doctrine of no birth. Nothing is or ever was born, nor does it decay or die.

Q. Then what do we see happening before us?

A. The seer and the seen are mere phantoms as in a dream vision.

Q. But dream is bound up with sleep, while here we are awake.

A. What is sleep except being unaware of your own being? Mental activity in such unawareness gives rise to confusing thoughts; thus comes the mistake of seeing what is not and missing what is. Similarly in the waking state; we miss the Self and see the world, which really is not. That which is not cannot be born or die; it seems to emerge from the Real Being, and also merge in It again. To become aware of this Real Being is the ultimate goal of the man who is ignorant of It but yearns to realise It.

Ajata-vada fulfils this purpose, and it is based on the fundamentals laid down in the Upanishads and elaborated in the Karika of the Mandukyopanishad — which has been elaborately explained by Sri Sankaracharya. ...

Restatements of this Ajata vada, or expositions of this doctrine, either partial or full may be found in 'Yoga Vasishta'.

Sanskrit

Ajāti-vāda — अजातिवाद

Ajnana

Variant spellings

ajnana
ajñāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ajñāna — ... ignorance; nescience

1. One of the five types of delusion (mithyātva) according to Jainism.
2. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is defined as beginningless (ānādi), positive (bhāva-rūpa), removable by right knowledge (jñānanivartya), having its locus either in the Absolute (Brahman) or in the individual (jīva), having the two powers of concealment (āvaraṇa) and projection (vikṣepa), and indeterminable (anirvacariya). (See avidyā and māyā.)
3. Primal limitation (mala), according to Saivism.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ajñāna -

non-cognizance;

ignorance, (in philosophy) spiritual ignorance (or a power which, consisting of the three Guṇas sattva, rajas, and tamas, and preventing the soul from realizing its identity with Brahma, causes self to appear a distinct personality, and matter to appear a reality);

Prakṛiti, Māyā, Illusion;

ignorant, unwise.

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

Ajñāna the cause of all illusions is defined as that which is beginningless, yet positive and removable by knowledge.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Ajnana: Ignorance. The mistaken notion concerning oneself and the world that what appears manifestly is real, completely oblivious of the one all-underlying Reality called brahman or atman.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Ajñāna is the ignorance which makes the Absolute appear as the relative or the One as the many.

[Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Ajnana: Ignorance; the technical term for any conscious activity which does not pertain to the knowledge of the unity of the Soul with Brahman.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

[Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

The words avidyā and ajñāna are usually rendered ‘ignorance’ but it is necessary to state that in this connection the word ‘ignorance’ has a meaning slightly different from the usual one. It does not mean negation of knowledge but is a positive concept...

Perhaps ‘error’ is a better rendering. The negative particle a in these words does not imply the negation of the term it qualifies but its antithesis. Thus akarma=evil act, akhyāti=ill-fame, etc.

See: Jnana and ajnana

See: Jnana, ajnana, vijnana

See: Maya, avidya, ajnana

See also:

Avarana and vikshepa

in Avarana: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

ajñāna— from the verb root jñā = “to know” + a = “not”

Related words

Avarana

Avidya

Cit

Maya

Vikshepa

Sanskrit

Ajñāna — अज्ञान

ajñāna - अज्ञात

Akasa

Variant spellings

akasa

akasha

akash

aakaasha

ākāśa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ākāśa — ... “not visible”; ether; space; inner sky; sky; room; any type of space: physical, mental, intellectual, spiritual

1. Space, the subtlest of the five physical elements, which gives rise to the other four elements and which has the attribute of all-pervasiveness. It denotes any type of space: physical, mental, intellectual, and/ or spiritual. It is also known as the inner mind or consciousness of an individual. (See pañcabhūta and mahābhūta.)
2. In Buddhism, one of the three asamskrta-dharmas. It is held to be a permanent, omnipresent, immaterial substance. Its essence is free from obstruction. (See asamskrta-dharma.)
3. In Jainism, it is an all-pervasive, subtle, existent substance which provides the ground for all other substances to exist. It is divided into space occupied by things (lokākāśa) and/or the space beyond, the void (alokākāśa).
4. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, it is what is inferred as the eternal and all-pervasive substratum in which sound inheres.
5. According to Sāṅkhya and Advaita Vedānta, it is one of the five elements which are produced and destroyed.
6. According to Sautrāntika, it is the same as the ultimate atom, since both are no more than notions.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ākāśa -

(Ved.) or (later) a free or open space, vacuity;

the ether, sky or atmosphere;

(in philos.) the subtle and ethereal fluid (supposed to fill and pervade the universe and to be the peculiar vehicle of life and of sound) Vedāntas;

Brahma (as identical with ether)

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Akasha (“space”). One of the five elements in traditional Indian cosmology, the others being earth, fire, water, and wind. In some philosophical schools, each of the senses; akasha is associated with hearing since it is believed to convey sound from place to place.

Wikipedia

Akasha is the Sanskrit word meaning “aether” in both its elemental and mythological senses.

Akasha is the omnipresent incontrovertible transcendent eternal source of all energy, the realm of promise, potential, paths to be walked and the primal source that creates and nourishes the other four elements, Fire, Earth, Air and Water. Akasha is all directions, East, South, West and North and all seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. It is not limited to three dimensions, Length, Width, and Depth or Height, but is made up of infinite ones comprising all possibilities of movement, both material and spiritual.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

Aliaa is the primal element out of which every gross thing proceeds.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Hinduism

In Hinduism Akasha means the basis and essence of all things in the material world; the smallest material element created from the astral world. It is one of the Panchamahabhuta, or “five great elements”; its main characteristic is Shabda (sound). In Hindi and Gujarati, the meaning of Akasha is sky.

The Nyaya and Vaisheshika schools of Hindu philosophy state that Akasha or ether is the fifth physical substance, which is the substratum of the quality of sound. It is the One, Eternal, and All Pervading physical substance, which is imperceptible.

According to the Samkhya school of Hindu philosophy, Akasha is one of the five Mahābhūtas (grand physical elements) having the specific property of sound.

Jainism

Akasha is space in the Jain conception of the cosmos. It falls into the Ajiva category, divided into two parts: Loakasa (the part occupied by the material world) and Aloakasa (the space beyond it which is absolutely void and empty). In Loakasa the universe forms only a part. Akasha is that which gives space and makes room for the existence of all extended substances.

Buddhism

In Buddhist phenomenology Akasha is divided into Skandha, Desa, and Pradesa.

The Vaibhashika, an early school of Buddhist philosophy, hold Akasha’s existence to be real.

Cārvākism

Adherents of the heterodox Cārvāka or Lokāyata philosophy of India hold that this world is made of four elements only. They exclude the fifth element, Akasha, because its existence cannot be perceived.

Theosophy

The Western religious philosophy called Theosophy has popularized the word Akasha as an adjective, through the use of the term “Akashic records” or “Akashic library”, referring to an ethereal compendium of all human knowledge.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

... It's hard to say whether sky and space are the same or not. In Sanskrit both are called akasa. The definition of akasa is avakasa datur akasa — that which enables a thing to claim its existential being is akasa. In other words akasa is that which enables a thing to exist by its non-beingness. Earth, water, fire and air have their positive existence in the beingness of akasa's nonexistence. Yet this nonexistent akasa is all-inclusive and has a beingness which should be qualified as primordial. Its existence is to be taken in the sense in which the Indian Logician calls non-being a substance.

... Sound is treated as a quality of akasa (ether). Next in the series is touch, a quality of vayu (air), form is of agni (fire), taste is of jala (water) and smell is of prithvi (earth).

Nitya. Saundaryalahari of Sankaracarya

... akasa ... has no equivalent term in English. Aspects of a number of terms such as sky, ether, space, time and ground are to be put together to form an integrated concept which stands for akasa. The definition of akasa in the Sankhya Darsana is avakasadr, that which makes it possible for an object to exist. The space occupied by an object is, as it were, donated by akasa. We may say the entirety of space is one aspect of akasa. In the Bhadaranyaka Upanisad Yajnavalkya teaches Gargi that the warp and the woof of the universe is akasa, and that the structure of the Absolute is in akasa. It is to be known as both spiritual and non-spiritual. Its quality is vibration. As vibration indicates direction of movement, kinetic frequencies, and dynamics, the sequential quality of akasa produces time. Thus akasa as a manifested reality becomes the time-space continuum. It is also to be conceived of as a unified field in which everything functions according to the assigned nature of each element. In fact, akasa becomes the first step towards physical creation. As sound, which in its graded operation controls the entire field of the noetics and semiotics of the world of conception and expression, akasa becomes the ground of mental, psychic and spiritual manifestations, which find their natural home in the world of elements.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

The forces permeate all matter; they all dissolve into ether, from which they again come out; and the first to come out is akâsa. Whether you translate it as ether, or as anything else, this is the idea, that this akasa is the primal form of matter. This akâsa vibrates under the action of prâna, and when the next srishti is coming up, as the vibration becomes quicker, the akasa is lashed into all those wave forms which we call the suns, moons, and systems.

Akasa and sound

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

Sound (sabda) is the specific characteristic element of the fifth bhuta which is akasa. In an extended sense electromagnetic phenomena including light waves are another characteristic of akasa. Wave propagation is a factor common to light and sound, and in an extrapolated sense, although the Vaiseshikas did not actually say so, light may be said to be the very essence of akasa, because it is independent of all ponderable media.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

The psychic expansion of space, or the extensiveness of the psyche if you prefer, is called akasa. Everything has its place in akasa. Its intrinsic quality, or dharma, is sound. For this reason, sound can affect everything. It can influence, alter, build up or destroy. According to Jaimini's school of Purva Mimamsa, this world is constituted of sound. They believe that since this world is created out of sound, you can change or modify it to your liking by using sound. They have made many sound structures called mantras. Mantras have a dynamic called mantra chaitanya, the psychodynamics of mantra, which can bring about such changes.

See also:

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

in Mahabhutas: [Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy](#)

in Mahabhutas: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Diagram: Mahabhutas

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

ākāśa - from prep. ā, 'to' + kāśa, 'appearance' < the root kāś, to shine, to appear

Related words

Bhuta

Mahabhuta

Prana

Sabda

Vayu

Sanskrit

Ākāśa — आकाश

ākāśa - आकाश

Akhanda

Variant spellings

akhanda
akhaṇḍa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Akhaṇḍa — ... indivisible; whole; undivided

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

akhaṇḍa -
not fragmentary, entire, whole;
time

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Akhanda: The indivisible infinite; particularly referring to atman or brahman.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Akhanda brahmacharya is continence without a break.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

In the Vedānta-Sāra Brahma is described as Akhanda, without parts. It is argued that if Brahma were made up of parts, it would follow that It was non-eternal. Sankara says, “ We admit Brahman to be without parts just because Scripture reveals it.”

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

akhaṇḍa —from a = “not” + khaṇḍa = “break”

Sanskrit

Akṣara — अखण्ड

akṣara - अखण्ड

Aksara

Variant spellings

aksara

akshara

akṣara

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Akṣara — ... imperishable; indestructible; immutable; undying; syllable

1. A name for the Reality (Brahman) in its transcendent immutable aspect. Sometimes used as a name for māyā or prakṛti.
2. A name for the word om.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

akṣara -

imperishable;

unalterable;

a sword;

Śiva;

Vishṇu;

a syllable;

the syllable om;

a letter;

a vowel;

a sound;

a word;

Name of Brahma;

final beatitude religious austerity, sacrifice.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

All these relativistic systems referred to in the above verses are only of a different phenomenological content within the negative principle of the Absolute, which is known as manifestation. The unmanifested aspect remains beyond all time-space concepts and the norms of relative understanding. This unmanifested aspect is called the aksara. This chapter is especially dedicated to the unmanifested and imperishable aspect of the Absolute.

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The Science of Absolute (brahmavidyā) is established on the imperishable sound akṣara. In the Platonic and Christian concepts akṣara is equivalent to the Logos or the Word. Such is the elaborate study to which we come in this mantra.

Prasad. Chandogya Upanisad

Any letter of the Sanskrit alphabet is called an akṣara; so is any pronounced syllable. One of these syllables, AUM, in rituals, is to be articulated along with udgītha and other incantations; whereas in wisdom it is to be understood as the imperishable (akṣara) syllable representing imperishable Reality. Vedists claim that the letters and words of the Vedas are eternal (akṣara).

Nitya. Psychodynamics of Pranava

In our school days, we are taught how to make linear signs to be pronounced as sounds. Consonants are invented and conjoined with nature vowels and all the alphabet characters together are called aksaras. There is only one aksara, one imperishable, but unfortunately the identification of aksara, with a written or spoken letter of the alphabet makes most Indians confuse the imperishable AUM with a stylized scribbling of the Sanskrit or Tamil language, and the profound is changed into the profane. The imperishable AUM spoken of here is not what is written or drawn with a few sinuous curves. Yet the idolatrous mind of man has made the spoken AUM a cliché and the written AUM an idol. First of all, one has to break oneself away from such puerile forms of giving veneration to AUM. For this reason we see mystics everywhere swearing against idolatry. Whether in science or mysticism, one has to clear one's ground before settling down to the serious business of penetrating to the depth of the real that is shrouded in the enchanting veil of the phenomenal.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

The two realities are the empirical reality and eternal reality, the visible reality and the invisible reality, the external reality and the universal reality, the material reality and the spiritual reality. These are the contrasts that are made here by the words 'kshara' and 'akshara': All that is perishable is kshara, and all that is imperishable is akshara.

...If we are to take the verses that come in the Fifteenth Chapter literally, it is possible to consider purusha as akshara and prakriti as kshara, and Purushottama transcends both kshara and akshara.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

"I was twenty-two or twenty-three when the Divine Mother one day asked me in the Kali temple, 'Do you want to be Akshara?' I didn't know what the word meant. I asked Haladhari about it. He said, 'Kshara means jiva, living being; Akshara means Paramatman, the Supreme Soul.'

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

akṣara - from a = "not" + kṣi = "to destroy, perish".

Sanskrit

Akṣara — अक्षर

akṣara - अक्षर

Amṛta

Variant spellings

amṛta

amrita

amṛta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Amṛta — ... "not death"; immortal; immortality; divine nectar; juice of divine delight; ambrosia; mystical bliss

1. The nectar of immortality. The divine nectar which flows down from the thousand-petaled lotus (sahasrāra cakṛa) when one has raised the kuṇḁalinī.

2. The elixir of immortality which was the first item to emerge from the ocean of milk when the gods and demons churned it.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

amṛta -

not dead;

immortal;

imperishable;

beautiful, beloved;

an immortal,
a god;
N. of Śiva;
of Viṣṇu;
the plant Phaseolus Trilobus Ait.;
collective body of immortals;
world of immortality, heaven, eternity;
immortality;
final emancipation;
the nectar (conferring immortality, produced at the churning of the ocean), ambrosia (or the voice compared to it);
nectar-like food;
antidote against poison;
N. of a medicament;
the residue of a sacrifice;
unsolicited alms;
milk L. clarified butter;
anything sweet, a sweetmeat;
a pear;
food, property;
gold;
quicksilver;
poison;
a ray of light;
of a sacred place (in the north);
the number, 'four'.

[Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Amṛta ("imperishable"). In Hindu mythology this is the nectar of immortality, which is churned from the Ocean of Milk through the combined efforts of the gods and the demons. The word is also used metaphorically to describe anything believed to be especially purifying and powerful, such as charanamṛta ("foot nectar"). Charanamṛta are the liquids (milk, water, etc.) given to devotees (bhakta) to drink, which are often the fluids in which their guru's feet or the image of a deity have been bathed.

[Wikipedia](#)

Amṛta or Amṛit is a Sanskrit word that literally means "that which is immortal", and is often referred to in texts as nectar. Corresponding to ambrosia, it has different significances in different Dharmic Traditions.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Amrita is the term used in the VEDAS for SOMA, comparable to the ambrosia of the Greeks. It is considered a nectar of immortality of sorts and is taken during certain rites to achieve transcendent insight. Perhaps because the Moon is sometimes called Soma, amrita in the Vedic context is said to be found on the Moon; it feeds the Fathers in the dark half of the Moon's phases and the gods in the bright half.

The story goes that the gods and antigods (asuras) once joined together to churn the MILK OCEAN to make amrita. A huge mountain was used as a churning stick and the divine snake ADISHESHA (or Vasuki) was used as the rope around the stick. Many things emerged from the Milk Ocean at that time including the special divine wish-giving cow who appears in later mythology. Finally, the amrita emerged held in a cup by the divine physician Dhanvantari. The gods then plotted with VISHNU so that the antigods (asuras) would not be able to drink the nectar. Vishnu took on his form of the dazzling maiden, MOHINI, and as he distracted the asuras, the gods drank all the amrita themselves.

One story says that when the gods drank the amrita it spilled at four sites: HARDVAR, Nasik, Ujjain, and ALLAHABAD (Prayag). In esoteric HATHA YOGA it is thought that amrita can be accumulated in the skull above the posterior of the nasal passage. This amrita is understood to be transformed semen that can create bodily immortality. By severing the frenulum, or skin attachment under the bottom of the tongue, a yogi can force his tongue backward into what is called the Khechara MUDRA, in order to drink the amrita.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Guru appears in the form of Dhanvantari, the God bringing the Bowl with the Amrita. ... In recent Hinduism, Dhanvantari is considered to be the Patron of "the Ayurvedic system of medicine". In a deeper sense, he is, like Aesculapius, much more than that, for the "medicine" is that which heals the ills of life which are caused by the Ahankara. The "medicine" is really the Elixir of Immortality. It is the Antidote to the Poison. In a certain sense it is as it were the product of a synthesis of all the medicines in the world, which are all meant to produce a particular effect. But the Elixir, the Amrita, does not aim at bringing about a "particular" or "part" effect. It is the Great Solvent. It brings Wholeness, Harmony, Oneness. It is the Heavenly Water of the Ocean in which the salt doll, the earthly man, will be finally dissolved. The Sanskrit word Ayuh, which is found in Ayurveda, is popularly said to mean "a long life". It actually means aeviternity, that is to say, eternity-within-time, or modified eternity, to use these poor expressions. The word Ayuh is related to the Greek Aion, meaning the same. This Greek word and the related Latin word Aeon are found in Gnostic symbology. Further more, "old age" as well as "youth" is universally connected with the Spirit. From the point of view of the Fall "age" predominates, bringing experience through the ages. From the point of view of the Return "youth" predominates. The Elixir, marking the end of the Return, represents Immortal Youth. In this "Age" and "Youth" become one.

... The Sura and the Amrita correspond to the Nectar and Ambrosia of Greek tradition which formed the Drink and the Food of the Olympic Gods. They also correspond to the Wine and Bread of Genesis

... After the soul has once tasted of the Perfect Bliss of God, the Ahankaric pleasures of the world have no more power over it.

Wikipedia

Hinduism

Amrit is repeatedly referred to as the drink of the gods, which grants them immortality.

Amrit features in the Samudra manthan, where the gods, because of a curse from the sage Durvasa, begin to lose their immortality. With the help of the asuras (demons), they churned the sea in order to find the nectar of immortality, amrit. After drinking it, the gods regained their immortality and defeated the demons.

In yogic philosophy (see yoga, Hindu philosophy) amrita is a fluid that can flow from the pituitary gland down the throat in deep states of meditation. It is considered quite a boon: some yogic texts say that one drop is enough to conquer death and achieve immortality.

A more positive interpretation is found in south Indian tradition, where amrita can mean “She who provides the nectar of life to those who thirst.”

Sikhism

Amrit (Punjabi: ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ) is the name of the holy water used in the baptism ceremony (known as Amrit Sanskar or Amrit Chhakhna by the Sikhs). This ceremony is observed to initiate the Sikhs into the Khalsa brotherhood. The ceremony requires the drinking of the Amrit. This water is created by mixing a number of soluble ingredients, including sugar, and is then rolled with a khanda (a type of knife) with the accompaniment of scriptural recitation of five sacred Banis (chants). This Amrit is also referred to God’s name as a nectar which is obtained through Guru’s word.

Buddhism

Amrita, under its Tibetan name of dutsi, also features in Tibetan Buddhist mythology, where it is linked to the killing of the monster Rahu by Vajrapani, whose blood dripped onto the surface of this earth, causing all kinds of medicinal plants to grow.

Dutsi also refers to a herbal medicine made during ceremonies involving many high lamas in Tibetan Buddhism, known as drub-chens. It usually takes the form of small, dark-brown grains that are taken with water, or dissolved in very weak solutions of alcohol, and is said to improve physical and spiritual well-being.

Chinese Buddhism describes Amrita as blessed water, food, or other consumable objects often produced through merits of chanting mantras.

Amrta and Soma

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Amrita is the Solar Elixir and is symbolically connected with the Ether-Sphere. It is closely related to the Soma, the Lunar Elixir, which is symbolically connected with the Moon-Sphere, the Sphere of Consciousness and the Tradition.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

amṛta — from the verb root mṛ - “to die” + the prefix a - “not”

Related words

Soma

Sanskrit

Amṛta — अमृत

amṛta - अमृत

Ananda

Variant spellings

ananda

ānanda

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ānanda — ... bliss; delight; a type of samādhi in which the mind concentrates on the intellect

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ānanda -

happiness, joy, enjoyment, sensual pleasure;

‘pure happiness’, one of the three attributes of ātman or Brahman in the Vedānta philosophy Vedāntas;

(in dram.) the thing wished for, the end of the drama [e.g. the VIth Act in the Veṇis.];

a kind of flute;

N. of Śiva;

(often at the beginning and end of proper names)

Dictionary - Runes

Ananda: (Skr.) Joy, happiness, bliss, beatitude, associated in the thinking of many Indian philosophers with moksa (q.v.); a concomitant of perfection and divine consciousness (cf. sat- citananda). K.F.L.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ananda (“bliss”). One of the three traditional attributes of the Supreme Reality (Brahman), usually described as being-consciousness-bliss (sacchidananda). Ananda, or bliss, is heavily stressed in certain forms of tantra, an esoteric ritual tradition. In tantra, ananda is both an aspect of mundane physical enjoyment and a way of describing the ultimate realization. In this understanding, even ordinary pleasures are reflections of ultimate bliss. Ultimate bliss differs from ordinary pleasure both because it is permanent, and because you lose your sense of self and are aware only of bliss.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Ananda: Bliss. Should be understood in the context of the Good in Western philosophy as a supreme Value. Bounty, goodness and kindness are all conceptions depending upon a notion of value. Sat, existence; Chit, substantial being in a rational sense; and Ananda as a supreme value, are terms conjointly used to describe the Absolute in Vedanta, representing three stages in the appraisal of the true from the point of view of human intelligence. Ananda, is thus supreme bliss or goodness and describes the Absolute in terms of human feeling.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ananda literally means “bliss.” In Hinduism, ananda is the bliss beyond comprehension that is experienced when one is in communion with or has realized in totality the Godhead.

Ananda is seen as an aspect of the Divine and is often mentioned together with sat (divine being) and cit (divine consciousness). The term SAT-CHIT-ANANDA (divine being, consciousness, bliss) often appears in Vedantic contexts ... and has become a proper name for SWAMIs or holy men.

Many teachers also have “ananda” appended to their names, such as Nikhilananda, “He who has realized total divine bliss,” or Satyananda, “He who has realized the divine bliss of the One Truth,” or Muktananda, “He who has realized the divine bliss in liberation from birth and rebirth.”

Radhakrishnan. Philosophy of Upanishads

Ananda or delight is the highest fruition, where the knower, the known and the knowledge become one. Here the philosophical quest terminates, the suggestion being that there is nothing higher than ananda. This ananda is active enjoyment or unimpeded exercise of capacity. It is not sinking into nothingness, but the perfection of being.* “The discerning see by their superior knowledge the Atman which shines all bliss and immortality.” Strictly speaking, we cannot give any account of the highest reality of ananda, Even the question whether it is abstract or concrete is illogical. Intellectual necessities require us to give some description. It is truer to consider it concrete than abstract. Each higher principle is more concrete and inclusive than the lower one, and therefore ananda, which is Brahman, is the most inclusive of all. From it all things flow. By it all things are sustained, and into it all things are dissolved. The different parts, the mineral world, the plant life, the animal kingdom, and the human society, are not related to the highest in any abstract or mechanical way. They are one in and through that which is universal about them. All parts in the universe share in the light of this universal spirit and possess specific features on account of the special functions which they have to perform.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

Bliss or ananda is an all-comprehensive value factor. Even animals have this experience in their own way. Happiness with a capital letter can even be identified with the highest aim of all absolutist teaching. The Science of the Absolute can also be called the Science of Happiness in this sense. The secret here is to understand the all-inclusive character of absolute Happiness.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... sat-cit-cmānda. Sat means existence, cit is subsistence, and ananda is the value-factor. Actual presences or value-factors belonging to the universe are described in this chapter as aspects of the Absolute with which we can relate ourselves. ... We can catalogue a long list of evil items, but we cannot assign the cause of these to an agency outside the pale of the Absolute. That is why we don't want to translate ananda as bliss. The term we use here is "value". Items of pleasure can be arranged in terms of qualitative or quantitative units of values of an ascending or descending order. We are counting positive values when we go from indifference to the highest state of bliss. We descend in the value-scale when we go from the highest bliss to the zero point. If we go any further from the zero point we will advance in the opposite direction, which should be counted as negative values. Thus, pain and pleasure, irrespective of their accompanying modes of affectivity, come under the scale of values, positive or negative. ... I value my beingness and you value your beingness. Everything tends to become valuable in one way or another. All these values are measured by our own happiness. This is called ananda.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Ananda is not mere happiness. It is rather the norm that enables us to measure and discern each event as pleasurable or painful. Or else, it is the neutral value-sense that unfolds itself as our experiences of pleasure and pain.

This value-sense in each of us is an unsharable one; the pleasure and pain we feel are also so. One's experience of them can only be conjectured by others from the externally visible behaviour of one who feels pain and pleasure internally. The unsharable value-sense is part of our being and is eternally one with us. What we do externally is only a sign of what really is within.

What is the dearest of all for each of us? It is ourselves. This love for oneself is eternal whereas the apparent bodily existence is transient. That means, it is not the bodily existence we consider the dearest, but it is the essential, eternal Reality in us, the atma in us, that everyone loves.

To be engaged in efforts to attain something dear to us is natural and eternal with us. It shows, despite the transience of our bodily existence, the value-sense in us, in everyone, is beginningless and endless. And this eternal value-sense in all is what we call ananda; it is unthinkable and non-dual. Eternally perceiving this non-dual ananda alone in and through all the ups and downs of life is where we attain realization of the non-dual ananda, the Supreme ananda, also known as paramananda. This itself is the moksa (liberation) the Guru perceives.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Ananda is felt after the cessation of thoughts in sleep. It is also manifest on other occasions as love, joy, etc., priya, moda and pramoda. But they are all chitta vrittis (modes of mind).

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

A rich Reddy from Nellore who happened to be there said, "Ananda is said to be Atma. Ananda is free from sorrow. If so, when the jiva experiences ananda, will he be free from sorrow?" Bhagavan replied, "There can be ananda (joy) only if there is dukkha (sorrow). It is only if a thing is known as dukkha then ananda can be known. If dukkha is not realised, how can ananda be realised? So long as there is one who knows, these two will exist. Vastu (the thing that is) is above sukha and dukkha. Even so, that vastu is known as sukha because Sat is above sat and asat. Jnana is above jnana and ajnana, Vidya is above vidya and avidya. The same thing is said about several other things. So what is there to say?" said Bhagavan.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

There are a lot of people who translate the word 'ānanda' as bliss which is not correct. Bliss itself is a vṛtti-viśesa, whereas the ānanda is the nature of the ātmā and not a vṛtti.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

ānanda - from the verb root nand = "to rejoice"

Related words

Moksa

Priya

Saccidananda

Sanskrit

Ānanda -- आनन्द

ānanda - आनन्द

Anandamaya kośa

Variant spellings

anandamaya kośa

ānandamaya-kośa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Anandamaya-kośa — ... the sheath of bliss

1. The innermost of the five sheaths enveloping the self. (See kośa.)

2. Truly speaking it is infinite, transcendent, and perfect and not really a sheath, according to some schools, but the very essence of the Self.

3. It is also known as the causal body (kāraṇa-śarīra), according to Advaita Vedānta.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ānandamayakośa -

the innermost case of the body, the causal frame enshrining the soul

Wikipedia

Anandamaya kosha. Anandamaya means composed of ananda, or bliss. In the Upanishads the sheath is known also as the causal body. In deep sleep, when the mind and senses cease functioning, it still stands between the finite world and the self. Anandamaya, or that which is composed of Supreme bliss, is regarded as the innermost of all. The bliss sheath normally has its fullest play during deep sleep: while in the dreaming and wakeful states, it has only a partial manifestation. The blissful sheath (anandamaya kosha) is a reflection of the Atman which is bliss absolute.

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. A Commentary on the Upanishads

“A man is, above all, his will. As is his will in this life, so does he become when he departs from it. Therefore should his will be fixed on attaining Brahman.” (Chandogya Upanishad 3:14:1b)

This is surely one of the most important statements in the upanishads. The will is the highest faculty we possess. It is higher even than the intellect, for we often say: “I won’t think about that right now...” and we do not, because the will controls it. The only thing higher than the will is the Self. The will approaches closer to the Self than any other aspect of our being. This is so important, because the quality of our religion and our yoga is determined by which aspect is the basis of our belief and practice.

... The will is the anandamaya kosha, which corresponds to the ether element, whose special faculty is sound (shabda), both the passive faculty of hearing and the active faculty of speech. Which is why the highest yoga is based on Sound—specifically, the highest sound: Om. Om Yoga is the way to correct and develop the will. Since we are our will according to the upanishad, it must be made alive through the continual japa and meditation of the Pranava, the Word of Life: Om. Only through Om can we gain mastery of the will, and thereby of ourselves. We must become Om, “the Word that is God” according to the Bhagavad Gita (7:8. “I am the sacred syllable Om.” 10:25). By becoming Om, we become God—not in the absolute sense, but in the relative sense of knowing ourselves as an eternal part of God, identical in essence, even though not the Whole.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The common man is aware of himself only when modifications arise in the intellect (vijnanamaya kosa); these modifications are transient; they arise and set. Hence the vijnanamaya (intellect) is called a kosa or sheath. When pure awareness is left over it is itself the Chit (Self) or the Supreme. To be in one’s natural state on the subsidence of thoughts is bliss; if that bliss be transient - arising and setting - then it is only the sheath of bliss (Anandamaya kosa), not the pure Self. What is needed is to fix the attention on the pure ‘I’ after the subsidence of all thoughts and not to lose hold of it. This has to be described as an extremely subtle thought; else it cannot be spoken of at all, since it is no other than the Real Self. Who is to speak of it, to whom and how?

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

Anandamaya sheath is the reflection of the absolute bliss, yet not free from ignorance. Its attributes are pleasure and the like, through it the higher affections are realised (e.g. in svarga). This sheath, whose existence depends upon virtuous action, becomes manifest as anandamaya without effort (that is, as the necessary result of a good life) in a virtuous man enjoying the fruits of his own merit. 209

The principal manifestation of the anandamaya sheath is in dreamless slumber. In the waking and dreaming states it becomes partially manifested at the sight of pleasant objects. 210

Nor is this anandamaya the supreme spirit, because it is subject to conditions. It is a modification of prakṛti, an effect, and the sum of all the consequences of good acts. 211

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

209. The ānandamaya kośa is a mental modification born of tamas; pervaded by reflected ānanda, possessing the attributes as priya etc.; and rises with the gain of a desirable object. For those who have done good deeds, it shines at the time of experiencing the punya. At that time everyone who has a body, rejoices well without effort, becoming that very ānanda itself.

The ānandamaya is described in this verse. Ānandamaya is a specific vṛtti, born of tamas, avidyā-tamojṛmbhitā. All the vṛttis are born of avidyā only. Being a vṛtti, the ānandamaya is not ānandasvarūpa.

...

In the Taittirīyopaniṣad each kośa is described with the imagery of a bird. The bird has a head, body, two wings and a tail. The tail gives stability to the body. Describing ānandamaya the upaniṣad says, "The head of this ānandamaya is priya. Moda and pramoda are the right and left wings. And the body is ānanda". Priya-moda-pramoda are ānanda-vikāras, the modifications of the vṛtti which manifests as ānanda. The body of this ānandamaya-paksi is of the nature of ānanda. It is the body that supplies blood, energy etc., to the head and the wings. Similarly, in the case of ānandamaya here the ānanda experienced as priya-moda-pramoda is lent by the ātmā that is ānanda. And that ananda has its culmination in Brahman - brahma puccham pratisthā. So the ānandamaya has its being in Brahman alone, which is the real ānanda.

Krishnananda. The Essence of the Aitareya and Taittirīya Upanishads

Now comes the question of love and happiness. How are we happy? And how is it that when there is love for a particular object, happiness seems to manifest itself from within? This is a very interesting philosophical as well as psychological feature in us. This is mentioned in a few words (perhaps only three or four words) towards the end of the Taittirīya Upanishad when it discusses the nature of the innermost sheath in us, called the anandamaya kosha. The causal sheath, the most subtle and pervasive and the innermost of sheaths in us, in our personality, is called the anandamaya kosha. It is called anandamaya because it is characterised by blissfulness or happiness. Ananda means happiness; maya means 'filled with'. It is filled with and constituted of happiness only, warp and woof.

... This anandamaya kosha, or the sheath of bliss, is the subtlest layer, the most initial movement of consciousness outwardly.

Then it becomes grosser as intellect, further grosser as mind, and then as the senses, prana, and the physical body, and then as its relationship with the other physical objects.

Krishnananda. Lessons on the Upanishads

In the state of deep sleep, none of these [prana, manas and buddhi] are active. Neither the body is operative there, nor the mind, nor the intellect, nor is there any consciousness that we are even breathing. The consciousness is withdrawn entirely from all the sheaths – physical, vital, mental and intellectual. There is only one sheath operating in the state of sleep. That is the causal sheath – the anandamaya kosha, as it is called in Sanskrit.

Anandamaya and causal body

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. A Commentary on the Upanishads

“Different from the intellectual sheath is the sheath of the ego. This sheath is encased in the intellectual sheath and has the same form.” (Taittiriya Upanishad 2:5:2a)

The completion of the body complex is the highest body, the anandamaya kosha which is the seat of will and the sense of asmita–“I exist.” The intellect may know it is seeing a tree, but the will decides whether or not to keep looking at it. In this way it fully controls the lesser levels. It both brings them into function and stops their actions. Just as the buddhi makes us intelligent human beings, the will-body makes us effective human beings.

The anandamaya kosha is the subtlest causal level, so subtle that it “touches” and partakes of the nature of the spirit-self. Functionally speaking, it is a mixture of subtle energy and pure consciousness–though it is not really, since “beyond all sheaths is the Self.” (Taittiriya Upanishad 2:5:2b) Sometimes we have to speak inaccurately to get across at least a shadow of higher realities.

Diagram: The five sheaths (pancha-kosas)

Related words

Karana-sarira

Kosha

Priya

Sukha

Sanskrit

Ānandamaya-kośa — आनन्दमयकोश

ānandamaya-kośa - आनन्दमकीश

Ananta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ananta — ... “infinite”; without end; endless; name of the snake upon which Visnu rests.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Adishesha (also Shesha or Ananta)

Adishesha, the divine thousand-headed serpent, is the couch for Lord VISHNU as he sleeps between eras on the vast ocean of milk. When the MILK OCEAN was churned by the demons and gods to produce the nectar of immortality Adishesha was the churning rope, according to some versions of the story. It is also said that, when time begins again in a new era, the world sits on the head of Adishesha; whenever he stirs, earthquakes result. At the end of each cosmic era he vomits out the fire of destruction, which incinerates the universe.

In the story of PRAHLADA and HIRANYAKASHIPU, Prahlada prays to Adishesha when forced by his father to eat poison and is saved. Other stories associate Adishesha with cosmic poison in different ways.

Many different personages in Indian tradition have been said to be incarnations of Adishesha, most notably BALARAMA, the brother of Lord KRISHNA. Adishesha is usually described as the son of a rishi, a seer. However, as is common in Indian mythology many contradictory stories exist, and some say that he was born of SHIVA. He has even been identified with the eternal, all-encompassing BRAHMAN itself.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ananta -

endless, boundless, eternal, infinite;

N. of Vishṇu;

of Śesha (the snake-god);

of Śesha's brother Vāsuki;

of Kṛishṇa;

of his brother Baladeva;

of Śiva;

of Rudra;

of one of the Viśva-devas;

of the 14th Arhat;

the letter A;

N. of Pārvatī and of various females;

the plant Śārivā;

the sky, atmosphere

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Ananta: Literally "endless". Name of the snake upon which Vishnu is supposed to sleep, resting on the primordial milk-ocean of universal goodness. The name stands for eternity. The counterpart name is Adi-Sesha meaning "what originally remains," i.e. the eternal present from the most ancient antiquity. This snake is many-headed, signifying the multi-sided nature of creation at any given moment.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Dialectics

... Vishnu, who lives in Vaikuntha on the eastern peak of Mount Meru. Here there is a snake with a thousand hoods called Ananta(the Endless)which represents pure duration, and on which Vishnu, ever in meditative repose, reclines. The snake itself is represented as floating in an ocean of milk, which stands for the pure life-value of abundance or mercy, which is boundless.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

ananta - from a = "not" + anta = "end".

Sanskrit

Ananta — अनन्त

ananta - अन्नत

Ananya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ananya — ... similar but not equal; nondifferent; identical; nonseparate.

1. One who has realized his or her oneness with the Absolute (Brahman).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ananya -

no other, not another, not different, identical;

self;

not having a second, unique;

not more than one, sole;

having no other (object), undistracted;

not attached or devoted to any one else

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

The samnyasin (renouncer of actions) here represents a thorough-going contemplative or yogi with whom no question of having to do anything arises. His yoga has the character of being ananya (without any extraneous factors and consists of being wholly absorbed in the Absolute).

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. The secret of the Katha upanishad

Ananya, grammatically, means 'other than what is already there', or 'different from what is there', or 'non-difference'. This word occurs also in the Bhagavadgita, and even there the commentators vary in the interpretation of what it really signifies. The teacher should not be an anya, or an 'other', but must be an ananya, a 'non-other'. An ananya, is one who is 'not different from that which he teaches'. Nowadays, we have learned men, professors, who are supposed to be repositories of knowledge, but their life is different from what they preach. They are anya or 'other' from knowledge. The practical life of a professor is different from what he teaches in his college. When knowledge is different from life, such knowledge becomes a husk without substance. It is a burden that you carry, like an ass carrying bricks. Knowledge becomes valuable when it becomes ananya with one's own life.

Ananya-manas

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

ananya manasah (mind strictly exclusive of all extraneous interests).

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Ananya-manas: The state in which one experiences one's mind as fully identified with the cosmic mind.

Related words

Anya

Sanskrit

Ananya — अनन्य

ananya - अनन्य

Anatma

Variant spellings

anatma

anatman

anātman

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Anātman — ... without substance; not-self.

1. The Buddhist theory of the nonexistence of the soul.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

anātman -

not spiritual, corporeal, destitute of spirit or mind

Wikipedia

In Buddhism, anattā (Pāli) or anātman (Sanskrit: अनात्मन्) refers to the notion of “not- self”. In the early texts, the Buddha commonly uses the word in the context of teaching that all things perceived by the senses (including the mental sense) are not really “I” or “mine”, and for this reason one should not cling to them.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Anatma (Anatman): Non-self.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

In Chapter Six, verses 5 and 6 [Bhagavad Gita], we are given the instruction that the Self should be raised by the Self, and the Self should never let down the Self, the Self is the best friend of the Self, and the Self can also become its own worst enemy. Whenever you consider part of the Self as non-Self, that non-Self itself will become your enemy, it will behave as if it is your enemy.

We can experience this in our everyday life. If I consider a certain person as my very Self then it will be a great joy to have him around. Everything we do brings great joy to my heart: seeing him, talking with him, admiring him. The joy does not happen anywhere else than in my heart, so I am bringing joy to myself by giving my love to him. But if I consider him as not being a part of me, as not belonging to me as part of my Self, he may become my enemy. He is an ‘other’, and the very fact of seeing him walk into my room fills me with rage. My body starts shivering and trembling with anger. I cause myself great pain by hating him in this way, pain which may not affect him at all. Then I feel fear that this fellow has come to do some evil to me. I avoid him because I fear for my safety: he is my enemy and may become violent. He may take away my possessions. I start living in fear.

Of course, its all just an attitude within me. I can make myself happy in my friend’s presence, or I can make myself very miserable just by changing my attitude. This is what the Gita calls making the anatma, the non-Self, behave as the enemy. In considering part of your own Self as non-Self, you make that part a potential enemy. In one way or another we are all doing this every day by

alienating people, by negating people, by cultivating discontent within ourselves. It is a scourge, a plague. If we do not like the presence of certain people, their very look or sound, we don't have anything to do with them. In this way we chop up our world into so many small bits and poison several of them.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

... very important teaching known in Sanskrit as anatma—the teaching regarding what is not the self. Buddha emphasized this greatly, and was being completely traditional in doing so. Sadly, those outside India who encountered his teachings thought that the term (anatta in Pali) meant there is no self. But the term means not-self, not no-self, which would be niratma or niratta. So wherever we see change...that is not the self.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

anātman - from an = “not” + ātman = “Self”.

Related words

Atman

Sanskrit

Anātman — अनात्मन्

anātman - अनात्मन्

Annamaya kosha

Variant spellings

annamaya kosha

annamayakośa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Annamaya-kośa — ... “the sheath of food”

1. It is the outermost sheath enveloping the individual soul. It is made of food and is also called the physical body or the gross body. (See sthula-śarīra.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

annamayakośa -

the gross material body (which is sustained by food = sthūla-śarīra)

Wikipedia

Annamaya kosha. This is the sheath of the physical self, named from the fact that it is nourished by food. Living through this layer man identifies himself with a mass of skin, flesh, fat, bones, and filth, while the man of discrimination knows his own self, the only reality that there is, as distinct from the body.

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

When the mind is attached to the consciousness of the external world, it sees gross objects and abides in the Annamaya-kosa, the physical sheath of the soul, which depends on food.

Diagram: The five sheaths (pancha-kosas)

Related words

Kosha

Sthula-sarira

Sanskrit

Annamaya-kośa — अन्नमयकोश

annamayakośa - अन्नमयकीश

Antahkarana

Variant spellings

antahkarana

antaḥkaraṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Antaḥ-karaṇa — ... the internal organ; inner sense; inner instrument; “inner causes”

1. It is comprised of the intellect, the mind, the ego, and the consciousness (buddhi, manas, ahañkāra, and cit), according to Advaita Vedānta. The Sāṅkhya school recognizes only the intellect, mind, and ego as comprising the inner organ.

2. It is the seat of the functions of the senses as distinct from their outer organs. It receives and arranges what is conveyed to it through the senses. It reflects objects by its relation with the self (purusa) according to Sāṅkhya or by its relation to the Self (Ātman) according to Advaita Vedānta.
3. According to Advaita Vedānta, the perceived variations of different individuals' cognitions are due to the differences in their respective antahkaraṇas.
4. The inner organ functions by streaming out to an object, illumining it, assuming its shape, and then cognizing it according to Advaita Vedānta.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

antahkaraṇa -

the internal organ, the seat of thought and feeling, the mind, the thinking faculty, the heart, the conscience, the soul

Wikipedia

In Hindu philosophy, the antahkarana (Skt.) refers to the highest, i.e. most abstract, part of the mind, and it may include the concrete part of the mind (manas). In the consciousness level classification karanopadhi it is regarded as separate from the emotional part of the mind, which in another classification (that of planes) is regarded as being on the same level of mind. Antahkarana is higher than that level because a lower upadhi than karana includes the emotions. Antahkarana is called the link between the higher mind and the enclosing soul (buddhi) consciousness, the latter of which is 'thoughtful consciousness that can think of the mind' (some would call this 'higher mind'). In Dharma (Sanatana, etc.) the antahkarana is described as the reincarnating part of the mind, so it has a special link with the soul.

The concept has been compared to that of Nous, which when capitalized includes the human monad (or jivatman) and beyond, i.e. it is the higher manas within the jive/jivatma (monad), which links its own part of the jivatma with the rupa or arupa manas above the separate kama-manas.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Antahkaranas

The common name for the four mental faculties involved in the process of knowing: namely manas (questioning), buddhi (reasoning), citta (memorizing and recalling) and ahamkara (relating what is known to oneself in terms of value experience).

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The internal organ (antah-karaṇa) ... is here [in Advaita Vedānta]conceived as bhautika [formed of the gross elements] and as constituted of all the five elements. Though it consists of all the five elements, tejas predominates, which accounts for its being sometimes described as taijasa ('made out of tejas'). It accordingly partakes more of the character of that element than of any other and is unstable—always liable to alter its form either where it is or where it reaches by 'streaming out,' as it is said, through a sense. That is, the antah-karaṇa is always active, except only in states like suṣupti, where it becomes latent. Each of the forms it assumes by exercising this activity is known as a vṛtti as in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga. The explanation that all these organs are bhautika

is important on account of the recognition it implies of the indispensableness of physical aids for the manifestation of consciousness. Though indispensable, their distinction from the psychical element is not in the least ignored. It is in fact the constant association of these two incompatibles as implied in common experience that forms ... the crux of the philosophic problem according to Samkara.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

From the light the Lord lends to the three modalities constituting the body, there arises the inner organ, which in its turn brings about ego-consciousness, mind, intellect, and the organs of perception and action. In this sense every individuated self is a reflection of the Divine in the physical organism. When a person dies, all that happens is the withdrawal of the circumscribed Spirit back to its original source. When the same is re-projected in matter to again function in accordance with the impressions formed in the previous life (vasanas), it may be called reincarnation.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Antahkarana—The inner organ, of which Chitta, Buddhi, Manas and Ahamkara are the different aspects.

Antahkarana, manas, citta, buddhi, ahankara

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The same antahkarana, according to its diverse functions, is called mānās, buddhi, ahamkāra, and citta. In its functions as doubt it is called mānās, as originating definite cognitions it is called buddhi. As presenting the notion of an ego in consciousness ahamkāra, and as producing memory citta. These four represent the different modifications or states (vrtti) of the same entity (which in itself is but a special kind of modification of ajñāna as antahkarana).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Love and Blessings

All knowledge begins with the four-fold inner organ. The sense organs do not operate unless they are commissioned by the inner organ. Then alone arises the world of external objects and the various universes of interest. The four aspects of the inner organ are:

- 1) manas, the interrogating or inquiring aspect of consciousness;
- 2) chitta, the aspect of consciousness that memorizes and recalls;
- 3) buddhi, the aspect of consciousness that judges and arrives at certitude; and
- 4) ahamkara, the ego factor that is affected, positively, negatively or neutrally.

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Both Yoga and Vedanta allude to the inner organ (antahkarana), an inner mechanism with four distinct agencies of operation: the interrogative aspect (manas); the faculty of memory and recall (citta); the faculty of judgment (buddhi); and the ego, the affective core that is intimately connected with the biological as well as psychological individuation of experiencing pain and pleasure and

all such dualities of life (ahamkara). The instrument of the registry of stimulation and recall of memory is a repository of all the colorations and conditionings that happen to a person during his or her lifetime. Hence all conditional reactions throughout life stem from this faculty (citta). Its modulation is called citta vritti.

... The physical body encased in skin marks the separation of one individual from another. It is the physiological scaffolding of the psychic interior operating mechanism called the antahkarana, which functions as a liaison between sense organs as well as between the sensory and motor systems. As we have seen, the four aspects of the inner organ are:

1. the mind (manas)
2. the structuring of associations of memories with an inquiry as to their relevancy in presenting with a will to know (citta)
3. the crucial judgment that is to be made about every situation to which attention is given (buddhi)
4. the affectivity registered for the future retention of a memory that can always hold out a memory tag to caution the jiva of its affective importance, pleasurable, painful, or indifferent (ahamkara)

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Take your mind back a few hours to when you were in deep sleep. At that time there was no consciousness. This can be analogically related to the world being completely merged in darkness. As dawn comes, things slowly begin to appear. Similarly, the deep unconscious in you slowly moves aside, and a vague awareness of consciousness comes. When that awareness becomes assertive, questions come to your mind. "Is it morning? What time is it now? What am I going to do today?" There is always some question coming up in your mind. This interrogative aspect of consciousness is called manas.

According to Vedantins, there are four categories of wakeful consciousness. The first is this questioning aspect, which is an attempt to assign meaning to whatever confronts you. Meaning is given to sense impressions or stray ideas by relating them to something already known. New impressions or ideas are oriented in relation to previously experienced situations in time and space. When they are thus given a formal fixation, they find a place in your scheme of understanding. In order to do this, you recall the memories which seem to be associated with what is being presented to your senses or mind. This faculty employed in the recall of memory is called cittam. It is the second category of consciousness.

After the relevant memory associations are revived, they are then used to decide the nature of the impression or idea under examination. The third category of consciousness is a faculty used to predicate the subject appropriately. It is called buddhi.

Now you are in a state of suspense until you make a judgement on the value of the new stimulus. Once its nature is decided, you feel either satisfied or disturbed by it. This feeling affects your personal identity in a variety of ways. The fourth category of consciousness is the affectivity of the ego, called ahamkara. Aham means 'I'. You relate your personal experience to a central consciousness in you called 'I' which is affected in terms of pain, pleasure or indifference. With this, one unit of impression has been almost instantaneously processed regarding its significance to the individual. Taken all together, these four aspects--manas, cittam, buddhi, and ahamkara -- are called karanam.

After going through the process of questioning, recollecting, reasoning and being affected, you pass on to the next stage: reacting to the situation. For this you need the use of your organs of perception and action. The senses, body and mind all come together in a confection which becomes a holistic action, monitored by the major urge, drive or interest that dominates that particular moment of your life. Each action-inaction complex contains a whole universe of interest. After one interest is fulfilled or thwarted, your mind moves on to another; thus you go from one world of interest to another in a continuous sequence. These worlds spring up from the awakening of the latent urges lying buried in the unconscious.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

... divisions of antahkaranas as follows: (1) Ullam, (2) mind, (3) intellect, (4) chittam, (5) ego.

Sri Bhagavan said: Four divisions are usual. The fifth item ullam has been brought in to correspond to five tattvas thus:

(1) Ullam (consciousness) is akasa (ether) tattva from the cranium to the brows.

(2) Manas (thinking faculty) is vayu (air) tattva from the brows to the throat.

(3) Buddhi (intellect) is agni (light) tattva from the throat to the heart.

(4) Chitta (memory) is jala (water) tattva from the heart to the navel, and,

(5) Ahankar (ego) is prithvi (earth) tattva from the navel to the coccyx.

Ullam is thus the pure mind or the mind in its pure being, i.e., mind divested of all thoughts. It is the ether of mind corresponding to the expanse of mind without being crowded by thoughts. When a person wakes up from sleep the head is raised and there is the light of awareness. This light was already there in the heart which is later reflected on the brain and appears as consciousness. But this is not particularised until ahankar steps in. In the undifferentiated state it is cosmic (cosmic mind or cosmic consciousness). This state lasts usually for a minute interval and passes off unnoticed. It becomes particularised or differentiated by the intrusion of the ego and the person says 'I'. This is always associated with an entity (here, the body). So the body is identified as 'I' and all else follows.

Because ullam is only the reflected light, it is said to be the moon. The original light is in the heart which is said to be the sun.

...

M.: The inner organs (antakaranas) are classified as five: (1) Knowledge - Jnana; (2) Mind - Manas; (3) Intellect - Buddhi; (4) Memory - Chitta; and (5) The ego - Ahankara; some say only the latter four; others say only two, namely (1) Manas, mind and (2) Ahankara, the ego; still others say the Antahkarana is only one whose different functions make it appear differently and hence its different names. Heart is thus the source of the Antahkaranas. There is the body which is insentient; there is the Self which is eternal and self-luminous; in between the two there has arisen a phenomenon, namely the ego, which goes under these different names, mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), memory (chitta), the ego (ahankara), power (sakti), life current (prana), etc. Seek your source; the search takes you to the Heart automatically. The antahkaranas are only ideas (kalpana) to explain the subtle body (sukshma sarira).

Sankara tradition

Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda

The inner organ (Antahkarana) is called Manas, Buddhi, ego or Chitta, according to their respective functions: Manas, from its considering the pros and cons of a thing; Buddhi, from its property of determining the truth of objects; the ego, from its identification with this body as one's own self; and Chitta, from its function of remembering things it is interested in.

See: Jnana, antahkarana, sakshin

See: Sakshin and antahkarana

See also:

Sakshin and sushupti

in Sakshin and jiva: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Related words

Ahankara

Buddhi

Chitta

Manas

Vritti

Sanskrit

Antah-karaṇa — अन्तःकरण

antaḥkaraṇa - अन्तःकरण

Anu

Variant spellings

anu

aṇu

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Aṇu — ... “atom”; atomic; elementary particle; that which cannot be further divided; an individual being

1. The smallest indivisible particle of matter of which all material things are ultimately produced. They are said to be eternal.
2. Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta calls the size of the soul “atomic.”
3. According to Jainism, atoms have touch, taste, smell, and color. Two atoms form a compound (skandha). They maintain that atoms are in contact with one another (a fact which Buddhists deny).
4. According to the Vaiśeṣikas, they are insentient. Two of them grouped together form a dyad and three dyads together form a triad, which is the smallest visible substance. The four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—are atomic in their primary form. The variety seen in the universe is due to the number of atoms in a particular object’s composition. Atoms are eternal and qualitatively differ as smell, taste, color, and touch. Atoms have no parts, are nonspatial, and are globular (pārimāndalya).
5. In Kashmir Śavisim, it is a technical term referring to the individual soul (jīva).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

aṇu -

fine, minute, atomic;

an atom of matter;
'an atom of time', the 54675000th part of a muhūrta (of 48 minutes);
N. of Śiva

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Anu ... fine, minute, atomic, (in Vaiśeṣika) a positional reality that has no length, breadth, or thickness; cf. paramāṇu.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Anu: Atom. Litterally, "the indivisible."

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

From the time of Democritus, Heraclitus and Lucippus in ancient Greece and Kanada in India, it has been believed that the world is constituted of minute particles, atoms or anu-s. When two anu's come together they become something new. Three anu's joined become something else. Quantitative variations therefore cause qualitative changes. As everything is made up of particles, all things here are a manifestation of very specific elements in particular combinations.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Anu is an atom, infinitesimal. It ends in subtle perception. The subtlety is of the sukshma body, i.e., the mind. Beyond the mind there is the Self. The greatest of things are also conceptions, the conceptions are of the mind; beyond the mind there is the Self. So the Self is subtler than the subtlest.

See: Pramanu, anu, vayu

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

anu - from *al-nu < I-E root ale, to grind, crush

Related words

Paramanu

Sanskrit

Anu — अणु

Anubhava

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Anubhava — ... perception; direct presentation; knowledge; experience

1. According to Jainism, the result or retribution of an action; intensity.

2. According to Advaita Vedanta, it is the final court of appeal: hear the truth-sruti; reflect upon it- yukti; direct personal experience-anubhava.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

anubhava -

perception, apprehension, fruition;

understanding; impression on the mind not derived from memory;

experience, knowledge derived from personal observation or experiment;

result, consequence

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Anubhava: When the mind by intellectual sympathy enters into the reality of a subject with full sense of identity with it, as when a man of wisdom enters Brahman-knowledge and thus becomes Brahman in effect, his is a state of anubhava.

Descriptions

General

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

... the Ātman, the only godly being is not unattainable to us, is even not far from us, for we have it fully and totally in ourselves as our own metaphysical entity; and here, when returning from the outside and apparent world to the deepest secrets of our own nature, we may come to God, not by knowledge, but by anubhava, by absorption into our own self. There is a great difference between knowledge, in which subject and object are distinct from each other, and anubhava, where subject and object coincide in the same. He who by anubhava comes to the great intelligence, “aham brahma asmi”, obtains a state called by Çañkara Sam-râdhanam, accomplished satisfaction

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

... the distinction between presentative cognition (anubhava) and representative cognition (smṛti). The former generally leaves behind a trace or impression called bhāvanā or samskāra which abides in the self and, when revived, leads to recollection of what was previously cognized. That is smṛti or memory. Such bhāvanā is a seventh specific quality of the self.

Presentative cognition may be broadly divided into two, viz. mediate and immediate, the manas being a necessary aid to both. The latter is termed pratyakṣa which may roughly be taken as equivalent to sensation and perception; and the former, such as inferential knowledge, is known as parokṣa which is based upon pratyakṣa and needs no further reference in this section. On the primary character of pratyakṣa is based its definition as knowledge which does not presuppose other knowledge. When we infer that there is fire on the hill, we should previously have observed smoke there, not to mention our acquaintance with the inductive relation between smoke and fire. But to cognize blueness, say, no such preliminary knowledge is necessary. That is, our first ideas are furnished by the senses.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

In the state of the incarnate, experiencing pain and pleasure through sensations is considered very important by embodied beings. Sankara discredits experience (anubhava) as not pertaining to the Self (atman). The English word experience clearly indicates its own limitation: it is knowing something outside the Self, that is, the non-Self. Sankara substitutes anubhava, experience, with anubhūti, imperience: an identification that comes through the establishment of an inner unity aided by intuition. It can only be imperientially comprehended.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

In English, the word 'experience' implies an interaction between the knower and what is known. In Sanskrit the word for experience, anubhava, means becoming likewise. It is not an interaction between the subject and object, but a transformation of the subject. The knower is transforming his consciousness of the moment into what is known. In the present context, experience should be understood as a subjective transformation. It is "in-formation" in the true sense of the word.

There is a state of knowing in which you become oblivious of your personal involvement as the knower. When you are fully engaged in an experience you are not simultaneously thinking of yourself. Ideas such as "I am knowing, I am enjoying," etc. only come when you ruminate on your mental states or communicate them to someone else. Otherwise there is just knowing by itself. It is the structure of the language into which we put our thoughts that creates differences between thoughts and things. For example, if you see a bird in a tree you don't think it is happening inside your head as an occurrence of knowledge, you see it as a bird "out there." Then the known itself is both the knowing and the knower. It is as if the knower is interjected into the known. You don't have to struggle in order to bring what is known into you, or to fuse the knower into the known. It all happens spontaneously and instantly.

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

anubhava - from anu = "according", and bhav = "to become".

Anya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

anya -
other, different;
other than, different from, opposed to

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Anya: The other. That kind of knowledge which cognizes multiple appearances.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

...I have to articulate meaningful things, and you have to listen and make meaning out of them by pondering over them. So we are all engaged in activities all the time. All these activities are happening with one consciousness.

We are always moving, shifting and changing our attention from the particular to the universal and from the universal back to the particular. The universal aspect is here called sama, sameness, and the particular aspect is called anya, the other. As you can see, sama is etymologically related to 'same' and anya to 'another'.

... the Guru says if you are always seeing things as distinct and separate, you are in a world called anya.

... The real issue ... is how to win over anya. Anya means the tendency of proliferating otherness. We are disturbed only because of this anya, this otherness. Wherever otherness comes it interacts with the 'I' in us, affecting our balance. If the 'other' is not there, our 'I' has nothing to fight with. The cancellation of the 'other' and the ego brings peace.

And how can we cancel out the effect of the 'other' ? The 'I' and the 'other' must be unified. By knowing what constitutes the 'I' is the same reality as that which constitutes the 'other' brings unification. We can also know that this 'I' is a fantasized modification of consciousness and the 'other' is a fantasized projection of consciousness. Both are false. Once we know that neither the 'I' nor the 'other' exist, there is no trouble. But it is not as easy as it sounds.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Osborne. The collected works of Ramana Maharshi

43. Gods and goddesses, merits, demerits and their fruits, which are likewise anya (other than oneself), objects of attachment and the knowledge of those objects — all these will lead one to bondage in mighty samsara.

Related words

Ananya
Samya

Sanskrit

anya - अन्य

Ap

Variant spellings

ap
āpaḥ

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ap (āpaḥ) — ... water

1. One of the five elements. It possesses color, taste, and touch

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ap -
work;
water;
air, the intermediate region;
the Waters considered as divinities

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Apas ... Water as an element, (in Vaiśeṣika) the second Eternal Reality (Dravya); (in Sāṃkhya) the fourth Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta), the principle of liquidity, its function is contraction, its Special Property (Viśeṣa) is Flavour (Rasa), its General Qualities (Sāmānya Guṇas), are Form (Rūpa), Touch (Sparśa), and Sound (Śabda)

Wikipedia

Ap (áp-) is the Vedic Sanskrit term for “water”.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

In the Rigveda, several hymns are dedicated to “the waters” (āpas): 7.49, 10.9, 10.30, 10.47. In the oldest of these, 7.49, the waters are connected with the draught of Indra (Soma, referred to as “the offspring of water”, napāt apām).

In Hindu philosophy, the term refers to water as an element, one of the Panchamahabhuta, or “five great elements”. In Hinduism, it is also the name of the deva, a personification of water, (one of the Vasus in most later Puranic lists).

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Apas from the root word ap, water

See also:

in Mahabhutas: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Diagram: Mahabhutas (Five Elements)

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

...in Classical Sanskrit occurring only in the plural, āpas (sometimes re-analysed as a thematic singular, āpa-), whence Hindi āp. The term is from PIE hxap “water”. The Indo-Iranian word survives also, as the Persian word for water, Āb, e.g. in Punjab (from pañcāpas “five waters”). In archaic ablauting contractions, the laryngeal of the PIE root remains visible in Vedic Sanskrit, e.g. pratīpa- “against the current”, from *proti- hxp- o-. The word has many cognates in archaic European toponyms (e.g. Mess- apia, perhaps also Avon).

Related words

Mahabhuta

Rasa

Sanskrit

Ap (āpaḥ) — अप् आपः

ap - अप्

āpaḥ - आपः

Apavada

Variant spellings

apavada
apavāda

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Apavāda — ... statement; recession; subsequent denial; refutation (see adhyāropa-apavāda)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

apavāda -
evil speaking, reviling, blaming, speaking ill of (gen.);
denial, refutation, contradiction;
a special rule setting aside a general one, exception (opposed to utsarga);
order, command;
a peculiar noise made by hunters to entice deer

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

When the rope, through illusion, appears as a snake, it does not actually change into the snake. Apavada destroys this illusion and brings out the truth. Similarly Brahman, through illusion, appears as the phenomenal world. The breaking up of this illusion—which consists only of name and form—and the consequent discovery of Brahman, which is the underlying reality, is called Apavada.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Karapatra. Advaita Bodha Deepika

Removal of Superimposition thus consists in the knowledge of non-dual Reality, Pure Being, beyond Maya and its effects. Its realization is Liberation while alive in the body (Jivanmukti).

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Apavāda, or negation, is the elimination, through discrimination, of falsely superimposed attributes in order to discover the true nature of a thing. Thus, by negating the attributes of the illusory water in a mirage, one discovers the true nature of the desert; by negating the attributes of the illusory snake, the true nature of the rope; by negating the attributes of the illusory man, the true nature of the stump; by negating the attributes of the illusory silver, the true nature of the shells. In a like manner, by negating, through discrimination, the attributes of the non-Self, one discovers the true nature of the Self, or Ātman, and by negating the attributes of the relative world, the true nature of Brahman.

See: **Adhyaropa-apavada**

Related words

Adhyaropa

Sanskrit

Apavāda — अपवाद

apavāda - अपवाद

Apara

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Apara — ... lower; lower knowledge

1. A term employed in the Upanisads to describe knowledge relating to the phenomenal world.
2. The Supreme has two natures: lower and higher. (See para.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

apara -

having nothing beyond or after, having no rival or superior;

(fr. a'pa), posterior, later, latter (opposed to pū'rva; often in comp.);

following;

western;

inferior, lower (opposed to pa'ra);

different (with abl.);

distant, opposite.

Sometimes apara is used as a conjunction to connect words or sentences e.g. aparaṁ-ca, moreover;
the hind foot of an elephant

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Darshana Mala

That because of which emanate all the sense-objects that constitute the gross world, is called apara. It in essence is the concretization of the atma's intentions (adhyatma-sthula- samkalpana-mayi)(cf. [para](#))

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Apara: Relativistic, conditional.

Related words

Opposite: Para

Sanskrit

Apara — अपर

apara - अपर

see also: [para](#)

Apara-brahman

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Apara-brahman — ... the supreme Reality as conditioned by attributes.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Apara-brahman: Lower brahman as opposed to para-brahman (supreme brahman). The causal Reality conceived as appearing as all the effects.

Related words

Opposite: Para-brahman

Saguna-brahman

Sanskrit

Apara-brahman — अपरब्रह्मन्

apara-brahman -अपरब्रह्मन्

Aranyaka

Variant spellings

aranyaka

āraṇyaka

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Āraṇyaka — ... “forest book”; “forest born”; scriptural text

1. That section of the Vedas included in the Brāhmaṇa section which gives philosophical prose treatises. It interprets the ritual section by allegorizing them and prescribing various modes of meditation (upāsanā) and/or symbolic worship. It was mainly meant for ascetics who lived in the forest.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

āraṇyaka -

forest, wild, forest-born, produced in a forest, relating to a forest or a forest animal, (the āraṇyakam parva of the Mahā-bhārata is either the whole third book or only the first section of it);

a forester, an inhabitant of the woods;

N[ame] of a class of religious and philosophical writings closely connected with the Brāhmaṇas and called Āraṇyakas because either composed in forests or studied there, (the Upanishads are considered to be attached to them.)

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Aranyaka (“Forest books”). **General** designation for a type of literature contained in the sacred texts known as the Vedas. The Aranyakas are transitional in nature; in their content they move away from the focus on ritual and sacrifice found in the Brahmana literature and foreshadow the later, more speculative texts known as the Upanishads. Because of their name, the Aranyakas are widely believed to have been composed in the forests, perhaps by ascetics who had left formal society. The tone in these texts is questioning and speculative, and in stylistic terms there is no clear break between the Aranyakas and the Upanishads: one of the earliest upanishads is named Brhadaranyaka (“Great Forest-Book”) Upanishad, which reinforces the connection.

Wikipedia

The Aranyakas are part of the Hindu śruti, the four Vedas; they were composed in late Vedic Sanskrit typical of the Brahmanas and early Upanishads; indeed, they frequently form part of either the Brahmanas or the Upanishads.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Aranyaka: The four Vedas were later supplemented and appended with extra portions dealing with many injunctions and laws connected with various rituals. The simplicity of Vedic worship gave place to elaborate discussions on the merits of certain rituals and their validity, etc. Before attaining to the status of proper critical discussion, this body of literature came to be known as Aranyaka, both because of the complicated nature of the teaching (a forest-Aranya), as also perhaps because of the stage of forest-life (Vanaprastha) to which the injunctions often referred. They mark the pre-Upanishadic stage in the development of Vedic lore as it developed through the centuries.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Aranyakas or “forest books,” originally part of the BRAHMANA sections within the VEDAS, contain esoteric interpretations of the Vedic rituals. They show the ritual actors performing aspects of the ritual internally and esoterically while meditating in the forest. In the development of Indian tradition, the Aranyakas are in one sense transitional between the typical Brahmana philosophy, which explains the Vedic acts in practical terms, and the UPANISHADS, which delve into the higher philosophical vision of the Vedas.

Wikipedia

Aranyakas ... contain Brahmana-style discussion of ritual regarded as especially dangerous, such as the Mahavrata and Pravargya, [1] and therefore had to be learned in the wilderness. They have also served as receptacles of later additions to the Vedic corpus. However, they have nothing to do, as later tradition has it, with Sannyasins or Vanaprasthas (ascetics) and they are not of “mystical” nature but very close in nature to the Brahmanas proper rather than to the esoteric Upanishads.

... The Aranyakas discuss sacrifices, in the style of the Brahmanas, and thus are primarily concerned with the proper performance of ritual (orthopraxy). The Aranyakas were restricted to a particular class of rituals that nevertheless were frequently included in the Vedic curriculum.

See: Brahmana, Aranyaka, Upanishad

See: Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

āraṇyaka - from the verb root ṛ = “to move” + the prefix a = “away”

Wikipedia

“Aranyaka” (āraṇyaka) means “belonging to the wilderness” (araṇya), that is, as Taittiriya Ar. 2 says, “from where one cannot see the roofs of the settlement”.

Related words

Brahmana
Upanishad
Veda

Arivu

Definitions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Wisdom's frame of reference

Arivu: A Malayalam word meaning 'knowledge'. Narayana Guru uses it as a synonym for Self, Consciousness and sometimes on par with Subsistence (Cit).

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Arivu: A Malayalam word for "knowledge." Narayana Guru prefers this word, especially when he refers to Pure Consciousness. The word is also used to denote any kind of knowledge.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Consciousness (arivu) alone is real. In its absence, the existence or otherwise of anything is irrelevant. Arivu unravels itself as everything, and is categorized into subjective and objective knowledges, both having eight constituent factors each. Therefore, the subjective and objective aspects of knowledge have a perfect parity. However, these analyses and classifications are meaningful only when we subject the indivisible arivu to such divisions. For even with such analyses and divisions, in reality, arivu remains indivisible and as one.

... What in essence is this Substance referred to both as atman and brahman? Let us, as Narayana Guru himself does in Verse 3 of his Advaita Dipika (Lamp of Non-Duality), analyze something that forms part of the world, e.g., a piece of cloth. The cloth when analyzed disappears in the being of yarn. The yarn, taken apart, disappears in the being of cotton fibres. The fibre, likewise, disappears in the being of constituent basic elements-- akasa (space), vayu (air), agni (fire), ap (water) and prthivi (earth). These elements, in their pure and uncompounded form, have no actual existence other than as concepts. The existence of concepts is in consciousness or mind alone. In other words, consciousness is the one Substance that manifests itself as the basic elements, as fibres, as yarn, as cloth, as everything perceptible, in short as the world. This unconditioned Consciousness, as the all- underlying Substance, is called cit or samvit in Sanskrit, and the Malayalam word the Guru prefers is arivu. The Reality we are in search of, thus, is this cit or arivu.

...Matter and life are simply two different facets of the self - unfoldment of one arivu. Relating the two as cause and effect is meaningless. The only causal Substance is arivu, and it, because of the mysterious creative urge inherent in it, unfolds itself as both matter and life.

Related words

Atman
Brahman
Cit

Meditation

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Narayana Guru

Narayana Guru raises arivu (knowledge) to the status of the Absolute. As counterparts of a dialectical situation, subject and object cancel each other out. Thus we arrive at a notion of the indescribable which is at once immanent as well as transcendent. Thingness and knowledge become synonymous and exchangeable. The fourth verse of the Atmopadesha satakam thus brings the quaternion of the four limbs of the Absolute [see Mandukya Upanishad] to its epistemological finality where the unspeakable fourth culminates in the silence that follows the secret syllable AUM:

Knowledge, the objectivization of the value of the known
and one's personal knowledge are nothing other than one primal glory (mahas);
merging into that infinite supreme
knowledge, become that alone.
(Atmopadesha satakam, verse 4)

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

The word the Guru uses repeatedly ... is arivu, meaning the Word or Knowledge. We often think of knowledge as merely pieces of information. To correct such a faulty notion at the very outset, the Guru qualifies arivu, knowledge, as arivilumeria arivu, the Knowledge that surpasses all knowledge. It is further described as that which is seen as the outside world and experienced within as one's subjective awareness.

...

The word 'knowledge' in the English language is used in a passive sense, so by translating arivu into knowledge we minimize its meaning. The dynamic power implied in the word arivu is not in knowledge. When we hear the word 'knowledge' we think of some impression being presented to the mind as a state of awareness, but this is only one small aspect of the word we are translating here. We have already defined the Self as that knowledge which shines by its own light, and by which alone all our experiences are produced. When we say 'consciousness' we also imply the unconscious, which is the substratum of consciousness. In fact, consciousness is only a very fragmentary part of the general unconscious. Similarly, when we speak of arivu, we also mean that which is prior to a thing that is being known, what the state is in which it is known, in which direction it moves, the reason for such movement, what it can affect, how it can affect, what motivation arises, and what causes that motivation itself. All these implications are to be taken in one sweep to understand the word arivu.

Artha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Artha — ... wealth; meaning of a word; object; thing; purpose; aim.

1. One of the goals of life (puruṣārtha) sought by individuals. It is the secular value which is both desired and desirable. It satisfies the acquisitive tendency in individuals. It is the economic value.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

artha -

aim, purpose (very often artham, arthena, arthāya, and arthe ifc. or with gen. 'for the sake of, on account of, in behalf of, for'); cause, motive, reason;

advantage, use, utility (generally named with kāma and dharma see tri-varga; used in wishing well to another dat. or gen.);

thing, object (said of the membrum virile);

object of the senses;

(hence) the number 'five';

substance, wealth, property, opulence, money;

(in law) lawsuit, action; sense, meaning, notion

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Artha ... aim, purpose; (in Nyaya) an object of Right Knowledge (Prameya) and defined as the object of the senses {Indriyas), viz. sound (sabda), touch (sparsa), form (rupa), flavour (rasa), and odour (gandha); wealth, as one of the three objects of human pursuit (Trivarga).

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Artha is the ordering of one's material affairs so as to conduce to wealth and health. "Wealth" and "health" are the physical plane correlatives of commonweal, wholeness and holiness. Artha pertains to the Element Earth.

Wikipedia

Artha... is a Sanskrit term meaning "purpose, cause, motive, meaning, notion".

It refers to the idea of material prosperity. In Hinduism, artha is one of the four goals of life, known as purusharthas. It is considered to be a noble goal as long as it follows the dictates of Vedic morality. The concept includes achieving widespread fame, garnering wealth and having an elevated social standing. It is the second of the four purusharthas, the other three being dharma (righteousness), kama (physical or emotional pleasure) and moksha (liberation). Artha is one of the dharmas (duties) of a person in the second stage of life, the householder stage, and during this a person must accumulate as much wealth as possible, without being greedy, to help and support his family.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

Artha is wealth only when wealth becomes meaningful in its instrumentality to make one happy.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Artha, or wealth, is a legitimate goal of pursuit at a certain stage of man's life. It is, with most people, an effective mode of self-expression and an important means of establishing fellowship with others. But wealth must be acquired according to dharma, righteousness; otherwise, instead of serving a spiritual purpose, it will aggravate greed and lust for power and ultimately be a cause of misery.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

artha — ... from the verb root arth = “ to request the sense, to point out”.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Artha (from the root arth, to strive to obtain, desire, wish)

Related words

Kama

Dharma

Moksha

Purushartha, the four goals of human life

Sanskrit

Artha — अर्थ

artha - अर्थ

Artha-Vada

Variant spellings

artha-vada

arthavāda

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Artha-vāda — ... eulogistic meaning; corroborative sentence; supplemental texts which are explanatory to injunctive texts; nones-sential statements

1. Sentences in the Vedas which, occurring in context, may either describe existing things, praise, or denounce some deed of an injunction. They are held to be subordinate to injunctive sentences, according to the Mīmāṃsakas. They indicate their meaning only as syntactically connected with the injunctive sentences.
2. They are of three kinds: figurative statements (guṇa-vāda); statements which reiterate what is already known (anu-vāda); and a statement of a fact which is not already known and which is not contradictory to known facts (bhūtārtha-vāda).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

arthavāda -

explanation of the meaning (of any precept);
praise, eulogium

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

... the well-known division of the Veda broadly into two parts, viz. vidhi or 'injunction' and artha-vāda or 'explanatory passage.' The latter, consisting of statements describing things as they are or were, have accordingly no independent logical status and are to be understood as complementary to what is taught in the other portion, viz. vidhi. As complements of injunctions they commend what is prescribed; as complements of prohibitions, they condemn what is forbidden.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The method of interpretation of the Vedic texts used by Jaimini is best shown by an outline of the terms used at random throughout the text. For this purpose, the contents of the Vedas are classified under five heads: (1) Vidhi (Injunctions), (2) Mantra (Hymns), (3) Nāmadheya (Names), (4) Niṣedha (Prohibitions), and (5) Arthavāda (Explanatory Passages).

... ARTHAVADA—passages in praise or blame of a Vidhi or Niṣedha.

- A. Gunavāda—a statement made by the text that is contradictory to the existing state of the affair and means of proof.
- B. Anuvāda—a statement made by the text which is in keeping with the existing state of facts.
- C. Bhūtārthavāda—a statement made which is neither against the existing state of facts nor is it in conformity with it.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

The Vedas, at least in the brahmana portion, are full of taboos and obligatory injunctions in connection with what is permissible or not in sacrifices, recitations, etc. The Vedas ... are well known to be different from Vedānta which is based on artha-vāda (free philosophical criticism and exegesis) while the Vedas are based on vidhi nisheda (injunctions and prohibitions).

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

arthavāda (compounded of artha + vāda, qq.v.)

Sanskrit

Artha-vāda — अर्थवाद

arthavāda - अर्थवाद

Arya

Variant spellings

arya

ārya

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Ārya — ... the noble; loyal; faithful

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

ārya -

a respectable or honourable or faithful man, an inhabitant of āryāvarta;

one who is faithful to the religion of his country;

N. of the race which immigrated from Central Asia into āryāvarta (opposed to an-ārya, dasyu, dāsa);

in later times N. of the first three castes (opposed to śūdra);

a man highly esteemed, a respectable, honourable man;

a master, an owner;

a friend;

Buddha;

(with Buddhists... a man who has thought on the four chief truths of Buddhism ... and lives accordingly, a Buddhist priest;

behaving like an āryan, worthy of one, honourable, respectable, noble;

of a good family; excellent; wise; suitable

[Wikipedia](#)

Ārya is an Old Indic and Old Iranian language self-designator that first appears in the ancient religious literature of the Indians and of the Iranians. The adjective is significant to Hindus, Zoroastrians, Jains and Buddhists.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Aryan: Name applied vaguely by historians to tribes who crossed over the Himalaya and penetrated into the matrix of the Indian life of prehistoric times which consisted of various amorphous formations including the so-called proto-Dravidians.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Aryan (Arya). In the VEDAS, the earliest Indian texts, the SANSKRIT word Arya had the sense of noble or worthy person. It was used by the tribes or peoples who recited the Vedas to distinguish themselves from other peoples. Sometimes, in early Sanskrit the term was used to refer to the “respectable” upper three classes of the Indian tradition, to distinguish them from the disreputable classes such as the SHUDRAS and those below them, the untouchables. Most Brahmins still refer to themselves as Aryas, as do all Buddhists and Jains...

The earliest text of the Vedic tradition, the RIG VEDA, which is set in ancient India, has been dated to around 1500 B.C.E. This rough estimate refers to the time the text was compiled as an anthology. Parts of the text may thus date back some centuries earlier, an indication that the Aryas were in India as early as c. 2000 B.C.E.

Vedic references to the Aryas are thus synchronous with the theoretical migration of Indo-European-speaking peoples into India from the northwest. Much scholarship and speculation have been focused on this issue since at least the 18th century, when it was discovered that Sanskrit was an Indo-European language related to Latin and Greek, while the languages of southern India seemed unrelated. The term Arya also appears in ancient Persian texts (it is reflected in the name of the country Iran), and in Hittite inscriptions from the Middle East around 1500 B.C.E. The name Ireland may also reflect the word, which would be evidence for a simultaneous Aryan migration to Europe. Recent attempts have been made in India to refute the notion that the Aryans arrived from outside the country. It is prudent to say that the issue is not yet settled.

Within India itself there are various different understandings of the nature of the Aryans. The linguistic term Dravidian, referring to the tongues spoken in South India, was sometimes used in the 20th century to designate a people or race different and distinct from the Aryans of the north. The term Aryan was taken up in Europe in the 20th century by the Nazis to designate a person of a “superrace.”

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Aryan. This word is derived from the Sanskrit word *arya* (“noble”), which is used in the earliest Hindu sacred literature, the Vedas, to describe a certain group of people that believed the Vedas were sacred. In the beginning this word simply designated “our group” from “other people,” whom the Veda names *Dasyus* (“slaves”). These provide a description of the slaves as having flat noses and curly hair. Throughout history Hindu writers have often described themselves as “Arya,” although it is important to note that this need not be understood as a racial designation, since it could merely be intended to mean “noble.”

Who were these Aryans? Nineteenth-century European philological research discovered structural relationships between Sanskrit and classical European languages and speculated that all these languages came from a common parent. Based on further analysis, these researchers hypothesized that people speaking this parent language originated in Central Asia, somewhere near the Caspian Sea. From there, some went west to Europe, some went southwest to Turkey, and some went south toward Iran and later

to India. The conclusion that these Indian pilgrims came from Iran is based on comparisons between the Avesta and the Veda, the Iranian and Indian religious texts. These texts show broad linguistic similarities and indicate that the people speaking the languages were closely related. This entire theory is thus based solely on the observed similarities between languages and on how they changed.

For the nineteenth-century philologists, “Aryan” was a linguistic category used to designate people speaking certain languages and involved no assumptions about the speakers’ racial identity. Despite this fact, the word quickly assumed a racial connotation in European discourse, with terrible consequences.

The Aryan movement was once described as an “invasion,” but in recent years it has become more common to describe it as a “migration.” According to the accounts in the Vedas, the Aryans were a pastoral people, and although some Vedic passages mention war chariots, the majority describe herds of cattle. Given this picture of nomads following their cattle to pasture, the image of an invading army seems improbable.

The Aryan migration theory accounts for the dissemination of various languages but is not universally accepted. Many modern Indians subscribe to the Indigenous Aryan (IA) theory, which maintains that the Aryans are the original inhabitants of India and as proof points to the artifacts found in the Indus Valley civilization. Some of the people that believe the IA theory may be reacting against the Aryan migration theory’s perceived colonialist bias, since the theory was developed by Europeans and assumes that the dominant groups in modern India must have come from outside. Other supporters are the proponents of Hindutva, who claim that all Indians are “really” Hindus and thus one social group, whatever their particular religious beliefs.

This assertion has profound political implications in modern India, where Christians and Muslims are not only religious communities but social and political ones as well. By connecting Hindu identity with good Indian citizenship, Hindutva proponents are marginalizing Christians and Muslims as outsiders.

In Sanskrit literature

General

Wikipedia

In Sanskrit and related Indic languages, Arya refers to one of high birth or caste. Although Aryas were concentrated in North India, the title of Arya was used with various modifications throughout the Indian Subcontinent.

Vedic Sanskrit

The term Arya is used 36 times in 34 hymns in the Rigveda. While the word may ultimately derive from a tribal name, already in the Rigveda it appears as a religious distinction, separating those who sacrifice “properly” from those who do not belong to the historical Vedic religion, presaging the usage in later Hinduism where the term comes to denote religious righteousness or piety.

Sanskrit Epics

Arya and Anarya are primarily used in the moral sense in the Hindu Epics. People are usually called Arya or Anarya based on their behaviour.

Mahabharata

In the Mahabharata, the terms Arya or Anarya are often applied to people according to their behaviour. Dushasana, who tried to disrobe Draupadi in the Kaurava court, is called an “Anarya” (Mbh:0020600253). Vidura, the son of a Dasi born from Vyasa, was the only person in the assembly whose behaviour is called “Arya”, because he was the only one who openly protested when Draupadi was being disrobed by Dushasana. The Pandavas called themselves “Anarya” in the Mahabharata (0071670471) when they killed Drona through deception.

According to the Mahabharata, a person's behaviour (not wealth or learning) determines if he can be called an Arya [8].[9].Also the whole Kuru clan was called as Arya .

Religious use

General

Wikipedia

The term ārya is often found in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain texts. In the Indian spiritual context it can be applied to Rishis or to someone who has mastered the four noble truths and entered upon the spiritual path. The religions of India are sometimes called collectively ārya dharma, a term that includes the religions that originated in India (e.g. Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma), Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism).

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Spirituality in the religious context is permeated by the twin considerations of merit or demerit, saintly or sinful, the sacred and the profane. In the context of Sanskritist religion the corresponding expressions are arya (good or honourable) and anarya (evil or dishonourable). The racial implications may be said to have been completely effaced from these expressions as used at present. An Aryan is known for gentlemanly qualities, whatever his race. Thus arya and anarya which we have translated as "sacred" and "profane" refer to twin ambivalent aspects of personal spiritual life.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

ārya - from the verb root ṛ = "to rise upward"

Wikipedia

In its oldest recorded forms, Indo-Iranian ārya is an ethnonym, i.e. the name of the ethnic group of Indians and Iranians themselves. More precisely, it is a self-referential adjective that – from the point of view of the Indians and Iranians themselves – effectively means "pertaining to ourselves." Its antonym anārya- (Skt. anārya-, Av. anairiia-) effectively means "pertaining to the Other". These oldest forms are the Vedic Sanskrit ārya-, used as an autonym of the various Rigvedic tribes taken together, and Iranian arya- (with a short-a; Old Persian ariya, Avestan airiia) used as an autonym of the Iranian people. This significance of Indo-Iranian ārya as an autonym is uncontested, and has been known to scholarship for centuries.

The word's further etymology cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

Sanskrit

Ārya — आर्य

ārya - आर्य

Asat

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Asat — ... “nonbeing”; nonexistence; false; the world of change; unmanifested

1. It is the basis of the universe, according to Advaita Vedānta. It is falsely real and really false. Sometimes it is said to be totally nonexistent, as in the case of a square circle.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

asat -

not being, not existing, unreal;

untrue, wrong; bad;

non-existence, nonentity

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Asat. This word denotes a general category in Indian speculative thought and is often translated as “nonbeing.” It is the absolute opposite of sat and is formed by the addition of the negative prefix. If sat is “that which (really and truly) exists,” then its opposite is “that which does not exist.” Since the word sat also carries connotations of Truth—that things that exist are both “real” and “true”—asat carries connotations of falseness.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Raja Yoga

Asat. Non-being or existence. Opposite of Sat. Applied to the changing existence of the universe.

Descriptions

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

That which appears to be real, and yet, is not real—that is the Asat. Asat does not mean non-existence, like the horns of a human being. Here, the unreal is not of that category, because if a thing is totally non-existent, it will not be seen, and the question of rising from it does not arise. The rise of the consciousness from one state to another becomes necessitated on account of there being an element of the real reflected in the apparent. The world of unreality is capable of being taken for reality, and therefore one gets involved in it. Certain characters of reality are visible in the world of unreality, and so there is a mix-up of two attributes. The appearance, as we call it, is not a total non-existence. It is a confusion, a kind of muddled thinking. ... Our individualities, our bodily personalities are immediately available examples of this confusion of thought, where the real and the unreal are mixed up, and we drift from one condition to another on account of not being able to judge what is what in our own cases. We have feelings which

are combinations of two aspects—the real and the unreal, the Sat and the Asat. We have a confidence that we are existing. We never feel that we are non-existent, not also that we are a moving flow, or we are apparent, or we are in a condition of process. ... Thus, the prayer is:—Asato mā sad gamaya: ‘Lead me from the unreal to the real, from the apparent to the Absolute, so that we shall be steadfast in that which is free from entanglement in appearances—space, time, and causal relations.’

Related words

Opposite: Sat

Sanskrit

Asat — असत्

asat - असन्

Ashrama

Variant spellings

ashrama

ashram

āśrama

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Āśrama — ... a halting place; stage of life; level; hermitage; “a place of striving” or “(a place of) nonwandering”; “a place that removes the fatigue (of worldliness)”

1. Some claim the word is derived from the verb root śram meaning “to become weary, tired, exhausted” plus the prefix a meaning “not.” Others claim the word is derived from the verb root śram meaning “to labor, toil, to exert oneself.” Thus the word means either “a place which is free from weariness and exhaustion” or “a place where one exerts oneself, with an emphasis on religious exertions.” There is a third possible interpretation which derives from the root śramaṇa (meaning “to wander”) and thus, an āśrama is a “place of rest or peace.”

2. There are four stages (āśramā) of life’s journey. They delineate the individual’s vertical ascent to liberation. These four are the student stage (brahmacharya), the householder stage (gṛhastha), the forest dweller (vānaprastha), and the renunciant {sannyāsā}. These emphasize the individual aspect of one’s personal development. They are stages of strife when selfishness is slowly but steadily rooted out.

3. The abode of a guru or saint. A monastic place of retreat where spiritual seekers engage in spiritual practices and study sacred teachings.

4. See varṇa.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

āśrama -

a hermitage, the abode of ascetics, the cell of a hermit or of retired saints or sages;

a stage in the life of a Brāhman (of which there are four corresponding to four different periods or conditions, viz. 1st, Brahmachārin, 'student of the Veda'; 2nd, Gṛiha-stha, 'householder'; 3rd, Vānaprastha, 'anchorite'; and 4th, Saṁnyāsin, 'abandoner of all worldly concerns', or sometimes Bhikshu, 'religious beggar');

in some places the law-givers mention only three such periods of religious life, the first being then omitted);

a hut built on festal occasions;

a college, school; a wood or thicket

Wikipedia

Traditionally, an ashram (Sanskrit/Hindi: आश्रम) is a religious hermitage. Additionally, today the term ashram often denotes a locus of Indian cultural activity such as yoga, music study or religious instruction, the moral equivalent of a studio or dojo.

An ashram would typically, but not always, be located far from human habitation, in forests or mountainous regions, amidst refreshing natural surroundings conducive to spiritual instruction and meditation. The residents of an ashram regularly performed spiritual and physical exercises, such as the various forms of Yoga. Other sacrifices and penances, such as Yajnas were also performed. Many ashrams also served as Gurukuls or residential schools for children.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Ashram : A place of retreat for peaceful cessation of duties or ritualistic activities, where those who have become sanyasis or those who are initiates in such a path or way of life live in small self-sufficient communities, independent of the surrounding society, and with an universal outlook on life as members of an open world community. It may have been derived from A, prefix meaning up to the point of, and Shrama, effort, as Ashrams are places where all the preparatory stages to spiritual effort may be carried out in peace and seclusion.

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Ashram - A spiritual commune very much like a monastery or convent.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Sanskrit ashrama was a place for ascetics to perform austerities (practices of renouncing bodily and psychological comfort), usually at a distance from and in isolation from the larger world (shram, means to exert oneself strongly). In later times the word came to designate a place organized for spiritual practice, a refuge where devotees could pursue their paths. Most often the ashram would be under the tutelage and guidance of a particular guru or lineage of teachers. Isolation is no longer the determining factor of an ashram, though many are still deliberately sited away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Hindu tradition abounds with teachings based on the Four Elements. ... The Four Asramas, or stages and ways of life, are based on the Elements. They are Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. The first applies to the period of growth and education. The second is the period of life as householder, as pater-and materfamilias. It is the emotional stage. The third period is that which pertains to the Element Fire, the mental plane. The Vanaprastha has traditionally “to live in the forest” and “to nourish the sacrificial fires”. The forest is a symbol of the mental plane. It is “the wilderness”. The Fire has ultimately to become “the sacrificial fire”. The last stage, Sannyasa, that of renunciation, is the spiritual stage of Air. In traditional teachings, there is an intimate relationship between the symbolism, the rites, and the recommended way of life. The mental plane is symbolically “the wilderness”, where “the wild beasts” of the urges and tendencies of the “animal-man” roam about. And it is actually true that the best environment for the subjugation of those “wild beasts” is in the retreat of a forest, away from “the world”, where the mind is sweetened and harmonized by consorting with actual wild animals. In the Tevijja Sutta the Buddha characterizes the philosophizing of some learned Brahmans as a “waterless desert” and a “pathless jungle”. The terms are not used merely as vivid “figures of speech” but constitute very exact symbols as the context signifies.

Wikipedia

Ashrams have been a powerful symbol throughout Hindu history and theology. Most Hindu kings, until the medieval ages, are known to have had a sage who would advise the royal family in spiritual matters, or in times of crisis, who was called the rajguru, which literally translates to royal teacher. A world-weary emperor going to this guru’s ashram, and finding solace and tranquility, is a recurring motif in many folktales and legends of ancient India.

Sometimes, the goal of a Gita Pilgrimage to the ashram was not tranquility, but instruction in some art, especially warfare. In the Hindu epic Ramayana, the protagonist princes of ancient Ayodhya, Rama and Laxman, go to the Rishi Vishvamitra’s ashram to protect his Yajnas from being defiled by emissary-demons of Ravana. After they prove their mettle, the princes receive martial instruction from the sage, especially in the use of enchanted weapons, called Divyastras (Sanskrit Divya: enchanted + Astra: missile weapon; the Sanskrit word ‘astra’ means missile weapon, such as an arrow, as opposed to ‘shastra’, which means a hand-to-hand weapon, such as a mace.) In the Mahabharata, Lord Krishna, in his youth, goes to the ashram of Sage Sandiipani, to gain knowledge of both intellectual and spiritual matters.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

The Hindu view of life, as conceived in the Vedas, is spiritual. It has a spiritual end designated as mokṣa, or Liberation. Material enjoyments, which are necessary and legitimate at certain periods of life, should be so regulated that in the end they may lead men to the attainment of the Highest Good. ... Nevertheless, in the lower stages of evolution the appetite for material things cannot be ignored. If this appetite is suppressed or inhibited, an unhealthy condition is created affecting both man’s body and his mind. The Hindu philosophers want us gradually to transform the inclinations of the senses, will, and mind, so that they may become man’s helpers in the attainment of his spiritual end and not remain his enemies. The various divisions of individual and social life as described in the Vedas and the Puranas bear out the ideal of man’s spiritual destiny.

Let us state briefly the four stages into which the ancient Hindus divided the lifetime of the individual. The first known as brahmacharya, covered the period of the young man’s study. He was at that time called a brahmachari, a celibate student who lived with his teacher, practising such disciplines as chastity, obedience, and austerity. He studied the Vedas and particularly participated

in sacrifices and ritualistic worship. He was taught orally. Living in a forest retreat away from the complexities of the city, he led a very simple life, looking after the teacher's cattle, chopping wood for his sacrificial fire, and spending a great part of the time closely observing Nature. It was a life of detachment and aloofness from the world. The pupil committed to memory the texts of the Vedas. After completing his education, he took his leave and the teacher said to him: "Do not deviate from truth, do not deviate from the daily recitation of the Vedas."

During the second stage the youth embraced the householder's life, known as *gārhasthya*, and himself was called a *gr̥hastha*. In company with his wife he performed various sacrifices and rituals described in *Samhita* and *Brahmana* portions of the Vedas. As a citizen he performed his civic duties according to his position in the Hindu-caste system, as priest, military man, or trader. But secular duties could not keep him bound to the world for ever. As a result of experience and observation he gradually became disillusioned about the glitter of the outer world. He longed for inner peace. As the signs of old age crept in, he entrusted his worldly duties to his children and retired into the forest (*araṇya*) with his wife. He entered upon the *vānaprastha* stage and became known as a *vānaprasthi*, or forest-dweller. He was still, in the technical sense of the term, a householder and, as such, had to perform certain daily sacrifices obligatory for all but the monks. But as it was not possible for him to procure in the forest all the ingredients for such sacrifices, the Vedas laid down for him symbolic worship. He meditated on the symbolic meaning of the various phases of a sacrifice and thus reaped the fruit of its actual performance. To give an illustration: The Vedas enjoined upon all householders the daily performance of the *Agnihotra* sacrifice, which required several material ingredients. But the forest-dweller meditated on the various functions of the *prāṇa*, or life-breath, and regarded these as spiritual counterparts of the different ingredients...

The last stage of the lifetime of the individual, known as *sannyasa*, or monastic life, was entered into by those forest-dwellers who totally gave up the world in search of Truth and Freedom. They then became *bhikṣus*, wandering monks, or *sannyasis*-world-renouncers. The realization of the Supreme Truth has been described as the "flight of the Alone to the Alone". The last stage of life is to be walked singly. Relinquishing all longing for material happiness both here and hereafter, as well as the desire for self-gratification through progeny, wealth, or heavenly bliss after death, these monks practised total renunciation, both inner and outer. As the ultimate ascent is steep and the lofty air extremely rarefied, they not only left behind material possessions but also stripped themselves of ego and desires. ... They were outside all castes and beyond all social conventions. They gave up the sacrifices and ritualistic worship prescribed for the other three stages. They lived a life of freedom, which they had earned through strict observance of religious and moral laws. They were the spiritual teachers of men and were shining examples of peace and detachment. But by no means is a *sannyasi* a selfish person. His life is dedicated to the service of all, irrespective of caste or creed. The *sannyasi* studied the *Upanishads*, the concluding parts of the Vedas, which describe the Knowledge of Brahman, or the Absolute, and the disciplines for its attainment. By the spiritually-minded Hindus they were naturally held in the highest esteem for their purity, detachment, unselfishness and utter devotion to Truth. As the burning tip of the wick shows that a lamp is ablaze, so, likewise, the presence of these free souls at the top of Hindu society demonstrated that its social life was functioning well. Though in general the life of the Indo-Aryans in ancient India followed this pattern and the monastic life was the natural culmination of the three previous stages, yet an aspirant for Truth might become a monk at any stage. An injunction of the Vedas declares: "The day a man is seized with a spirit of dispassion he should forthwith renounce the world." The Vedas speak of young men and women who took the vow of renunciation without going through the stages of the householder's and the forestdweller's life. A *brahmachari* had to read all the Vedas, though the *Samhitas* really moulded his life. Likewise, the householders followed the injunctions of the *Brahmaṇās*, the forest-dwellers those of the *Āraṇyakas*, and the monks those of the *Upanishads*.

See also:

in Vairagya: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Related words

Brahmacarya
Grihastha
Matha
Sannyasa
Vanaprastha

Sanskrit

Āśrama — आश्रम

āśrama - आश्रम

Ashtavakra Gita

Title

Ashtavakra Gita
अष्टावक्रगीता
aṣṭāvakraḡitā
Ashtavakra Samhita

Descriptions

Ashtavakra Gita is a Sanskrit work on Advaita-Vedanta from the time of the younger Upanishads, it is a dialogue between Ashtavakra and his disciple Janaka.

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Ashtavakra Gita presents the traditional teachings of Advaita Vedanta with a clarity and power very rarely matched. The work was known, appreciated and quoted by Ramakrishna and his disciple Vivekananda, as well as by Ramana Maharshi, Osho and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Radhakrishnan refers to it with great respect.

The Ashtavakra Gita or the Song of Ashtavakra is an Advaita Vedanta scripture which documents a dialogue between the Perfect Master Ashtavakra and Janaka, the King of Mithila.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

... Others like Sankara, as we have seen in his Vivekachudamani condemn outright practices like pranayama as not conducive to the attainment of the Absolute. He stands for pure wisdom-understanding as the only means for the attainment of the ends of spirituality and gives his favourite example of how cooking would be impossible without fire. Superior and contemplative texts such as the Ashtavakra Gita , said to be held in high esteem by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Guru of Swami Vivekananda, tend to dismiss the duality between ends and means in spirituality and say that no kind of intense or austere regime or practice is necessary.

Authors

Ashta means 'eight' and vakra means 'bends'. Ashtavakra was so named because his body had eight deformities.

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ashtavakra - ("eight bends") In the Mahabharata, the later of the two great Hindu epics, Ashtavakra is a sage who is the son of Khagodara. According to tradition, Ashtavakra is an exceptionally precocious child, and this gets him into serious trouble. While he is still in his mother's womb, Ashtavakra corrects his father's pronunciation of a certain mantra. In response his father curses him to be bent, and when the child is born he has eight bends in his body.

Despite his unusual appearance, Ashtavakra becomes a learned sage and is widely believed to be the author of the Ashtavakragita ("Song of Ashtavakra").

Wilson. The Vishnu Purana

The story of Ashtavakra is related in the Mahabharata. He was the son of Kahoda, who, neglecting his wife, was rebuked for it by his yet unborn son. The father angrily cursed him, that he should be born bent in every part; and he was, accordingly, brought forth crooked (vakra) in eight limbs (ashtan). He became, nevertheless, a celebrated sage.

Synopsis

Raja Janaka ruled over the country of Videha. Once he had a dream in which a rival king with a large army had invaded his country. He was driven out of his palace barefooted and without any clothes covering him. Thirsty and hungry, Janaka was roaming about in a jungle. He reached a small town where he begged for food. With great difficulty he obtained some rice water. Janaka took it with intense joy and just as he put it to his lips, two large bulls tumbled fighting over him. The bowl was broken to pieces. Janaka woke up with great fear.

He was trembling violently. He could not understand, which of his two states was real. All the time he was in dream, he never thought that it was an illusion.

His only thought now was, "Which is real, this or that?" From that time he left all his work and became silent. He uttered nothing but the above words.

His ministers announced that anyone who cured the Raja will be richly rewarded and those who fail to cure the Raja will be put to prison for life. Hundreds of Brahmins well versed in the science of curing diseases were put in the state prison.

Among the prisoners was also the father of the great sage Ashtavakra. When Ashtavakra was a boy of only ten years of age, he was told by his mother that his father was a state prisoner because he failed to cure Raja Janaka. He at once started to see Janaka and offered his answer to the Raja, he whispered into the ear of Janaka, "Neither this nor that is real." Raja Janaka at once became joyful. His confusion was removed.

Raja Janaka then asked Ashtavakra, "What is real?" A long dialogue ensued between him and the sage. This is recorded in Ashtavakra Gita.

Publications

Translations

Ashtavakra Gita (Archival Special Edition). Tr. by Swami Nityaswarupananda. 2001, 1st Ed. PB , Size H, 298 pp.,1037; 81-88018-57-0

Teachings imparted by the Sage Ashtavakra to King Janaka. The facsimile edition is a copy of the book presented to Bhagavan by the Maharaja of Mysore in 1932. It contains Bhagavan's handwriting of the Sanskrit text, Kannada text and English translation.

Atharva Veda

Title

Atharva Veda — अथर्ववेद

Sanscrit: अथर्ववेद

Atharva Veda

Atharvaveda

Ātharvāṅgīrasa

Author(s)

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Atharva Veda — ... wisdom of (the sage) Atharva, one of the four Vedas.

[Wikipedia](#)

According to tradition, the Atharvaveda was mainly composed by two groups of rishis known as the Atharvanas and the Angirasa, hence its oldest name is Ātharvāṅgīrasa. In the Late Vedic Gopatha Brahmana, it is attributed to the Bhrigu and Angirasa. Additionally, tradition ascribes parts to other rishis, such as Kauśika, Vasistha and Kaśyapa.

See also:

in Veda: Author(s)

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Atharva Veda became part of the greater tradition somewhat later. It consists primarily of spells and charms used to ward off diseases or influence events. This text is considered the source document for Indian medicine (AYURVEDA). It also contains a number of cosmogonic hymns that show the development of the notion of divine unity in the tradition. A priest of the Atharva Veda was later included in all public rituals. From that time tradition spoke of four Vedas rather than three.

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The fourth collection, the Atharva-Veda, probably attained its present form considerably later than the Rg-Veda. In spirit, however, as Professor Macdonell says, "It is not only entirely different from the Rigveda but represents a much more primitive stage of thought. While the Rigveda deals almost exclusively with the higher gods as conceived by a comparatively advanced and refined sacerdotal class, the Atharva-Veda is, in the main a book of spells and incantations appealing to the demon world, and teems with notions about witchcraft current among the lower grades of the population, and derived from an immemorial antiquity. These two, thus complementary to each other in contents are obviously the most important of the four Vedas."

Wikipedia

The Atharvaveda is a sacred text of Hinduism, and one of the four Vedas, often called the "fourth Veda".

It is clear that the core text of the Atharvaveda is not particularly recent in the Vedic Saṃhitā tradition, and falls within the classical Mantra period of Vedic Sanskrit at the end of 2nd millennium BCE - roughly contemporary with the Yajurveda mantras, the Rigvedic Khilani, and the Sāmaveda.

The Atharvaveda is also the first Indic text to mention Iron (as śyāma ayas, literally "black metal"), so that scholarly consensus dates the bulk of the Atharvaveda hymns to the early Indian Iron Age, corresponding to the 12th to 10th centuries BC or the early Kuru kingdom.

During its oral tradition, however, the text has been corrupted considerably more than some other Vedas, and it is only from comparative philology of the two surviving recensions that we may hope to arrive at an approximation of the original reading.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

Atharva Veda, which is often treated as a heretical Veda, not respectable enough to be counted along with the other three Vedas, has appended to it the cream of the Upanisads, which give the substance of Advaita Vedānta. They are thirty one in number, the most significant are: Praśna, Muṇḍaka and Māndūkya. In the Madhu Brāhmaṇa of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad itself, there is an attempt to cover up the identity of Aṭharvan to whom the Atharva Veda is attributed.

Relations of Vedas to their objects, four elements, etc.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Wikipedia

The Shaunakiya text is clearly divided into four parts: Kāṇḍas 1-7 deal with healing and general black and white magic that is to be applied in all situations of life, from the first tooth of a baby to regaining kingship. Kandas 8-12 constitute early speculation on the nature of the universe and of humans as well as on ritual, and are thus predecessors of the Upanishads. They continue the speculative tradition of some Rigvedic poets. Kandas 13-18 deal with issues of a householder's life, such as marriage, death and female rivalry, as well as with the ambiguous Vratyas on the fringes of society and with the Rohita sun as an embodiment of royal power. Kandas 19 is an addition and Kanda 20 is a very late addition containing Rgvedic hymns for the use of the Atharvanic Brahmanacchamsin priest as well as for the enigmatic Kuntapa ritual of the Kuru kingdom of Parikshit. The Paippalada text has a similar arrangement into four parts (Kandas 1-15, 16-17, 18, 19-20) with roughly the same contents.

The AV is the first Indic text dealing with medicine. It identifies the causes of disease as living causative agents such as the yatudhāna, the kimīdin, the krimi or kṛmi and the durṇāma. The Atharvans seek to kill them with a variety of incantations or plant based drugs in order to counter the disease (see XIX.34.9). This approach to disease is quite different compared to the trihumoral theory of Ayurveda.

The Atharvaveda also informs about warfare. A variety of devices such as an arrow with a duct for poison (apāskambha) and castor bean poison, poisoned net and hook traps, use of disease spreading insects and smoke screens find a place in the Atharvaveda saṃhita (eg. hymns IX .9, IX.10, the trisaṃdi and nyārbudi hymns). These references to military practices and associated Kṣatriya rites were what gave the Atharvaveda its reputation.

Several regular and special rituals of the Aryans are a major concern of the Atharvaveda, just as in the three other Vedas. The major rituals covered by the AV are marriage in kāṃḍa - XIV and the funeral in kāṃḍa - XVIII. There are also hymns that are specific to rituals of the bhṛgu- aṅgirasas, vrātyas and kṣatriyas. One peculiar rite is the Viṣāsahi Vrata, performed with the mantras of the XVII kāṃḍa in a spell against female rivals. ... Finally, there are some rituals aimed at the destruction of the enemies (Abhicārika hymns and rites), particularly found in chapters 1-7. While these support traditional negative views on the AV, in content they are mirrored by several other hymns from the Rig as well as the Yajusēs. Moreover, Abhicārika rites were an integral part of Vedic culture, as is amply attested in the brāhmaṇa literature. Thus the Atharvaveda is fully within the classic Vedic fold, though it was more specific to certain Brahmān clans of priests...

Philosophical excursions are found in books 8-12. One of the most spectacular expressions of philosophical thought is seen in the hymn XII.1, the Hymn to goddess Earth or the Pṛthivī Sūkta used in the Āgrayana rite. The foundations of Vaiṣeśika Darśana is expressed in the mantra XII.1.26 in which the 'atoms' (Pāṃsu) are described forming the stone, the stones agglutinating to form the rocks and the rocks held together to form the Earth. Early pantheistic thought is seen in the hymn X.7 that describes the common thread running through all manifest and non-manifest existence as the skambha. ...The hymn also describes a pantheistic nature of the Vedic gods (X.7.38): skambha is the heat (tapaḥ) that spreads through the universe (Bhuvana) as waves of water; the units of this spreading entity are the gods even as branches of one tree. This theme is repeatedly presented in various interpretations in later Hindu philosophies.

Publications

Translations

The Shaunakiya text. Translations into English were made by Ralph Griffith (2 vols, Benares 1897), D. Whitney (revised by Lanman, 2 vols, Cambridge, Mass. 1905), and M. Bloomfield (SBE Vol XLII); also see Bloomfield, "The Atharvaveda" in "Grundriss der Indoarischen Philologie", II (Strasburg, 1899).

The Paippalāda text. Book 2 was edited and translated by Thomas Zehnder (1999) and book 5 by Alexander Lubotsky (2002), and books 6-7 by Arlo Griffiths (2004).

Bloomfield, Maurice, trans. and ed. Hymns of the Atharva-Veda. Delhi, 1964. Reprint of "Sacred Books of the East," vol. 42 (Oxford, 1897). Translations and interpretations of the most important incantations and hymns of the fourth Veda from ancient India by one of the outstanding American Sanskritists of the nineteenth century.

Related words

Mahavakya: Ayamatra- Brahma
Mandukya Upanishad
Mundaka Upanishad
Prashna Upanishad
Veda

Atman

Variant spellings

atma
atman
ātman

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ātman —... the inner Self

1. The Reality which is the substrate of the individual and identical with the Absolute (Brahman), according to Advaita Vedānta. It cannot be doubted, for it is the basis of all experience. It cannot be known by thought, as the knower cannot be the known. Yet there is no experience without it. It is the basis of all proofs, yet cannot be proved itself, though it can be experienced.
2. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika call it the substratum in which cognition inheres. It is of two kinds: supreme Soul and individual soul. It is a substance which is revealed in one's inner perceptual experience arising through the inner sense of mind, independently of the external senses.

3. Sāṅkhya and Yoga define it as an unrelated, attributeless, self-luminous, omnipresent entity which is identical with consciousness.
4. The Upaniṣads say that it denotes the ultimate essence of the universe as well as the vital breath in human beings.
5. It is the unseen basis which is the reality within the five sheaths. It is the spark of the Divine within. It is the reality behind the appearance, and universal and immanent in every entity. It is not born nor does it die. It is imperishable, according to the Upaniṣads.
6. In the Indian philosophical systems, the Self is said to be of one of three sizes: Dvaita Vedānta and Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta call it atomic (aṇu-parimāṇa); Advaita Vedānta and Sāṅkhya call it all-pervasive (vibhūparimāṇa); Jainism calls it neither atomic nor all-pervasive but of medium size (madhyama-parimāṇa).
7. Buddhism denies any reality to the Self altogether. (See anātman.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ātman -

the breath;

the soul, principle of life and sensation;

the individual soul, self, abstract individual;

essence, nature, character, peculiarity;

the person or whole body considered as one and opposed to the separate members of the body;

the body;

the understanding, intellect, mind;

the highest personal principle of life, Brahma;

effort;

firmness;

the sun;

fire;

a son

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The atman is the self or soul. The word is derived either from the root at (to move) or the root an (to breathe). It is used both for the individual self or soul and for the transcendent "Self" or "All- soul," which is all reality. Often the individual self is referred to as the jivatman, "the life self," and the transcendent Self is referred to as the paramatman, or "Ultimate Self."

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

... Atman, which properly is the exact equivalent of the english "Self". Thus Atman means that which remains if we take away from our person all that is Non-self, foreign, all that comes and passes away; it means "the changeless, inseparable essence of our own Self", and on the other hand the essence of the Self of the whole world.

Wikipedia

The Ātman is a philosophical term used within Hinduism and Vedanta to identify the soul. It is one's true self (hence generally translated into English as 'Self') beyond identification with the phenomenal reality of worldly existence.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Atma (Atman): The self (from the root “at”, meaning “to pervade”). The invisible reality or stuff that prevades any visible form. Often confused with jiva, the soul. Used in slightly altered senses according to the context. The simplest meaning of the word is “I” or “oneself”.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Upanishads and Vedanta philosophy focus on realizing the unity between the individual self and the ultimate Self, by means of various practices. When one realizes (not just intellectually knows) the unity of individual self and Ultimate Self, one breaks the bonds of KARMA and escapes from further rebirth.

Some sort of meditation or contemplation is always necessary to realize the unity of Ultimate Self and individual self. Some Indian paths emphasize “knowledge,” or transcendental realization; some paths emphasize devotion; some look to combine devotion and action, or knowledge, action, and devotion, to reach this final goal. Though ADVAITA (non-dual) Vedanta emphasizes a total identity between the individual atman and the large atman, other Indian traditions understand that there are an infinite number of totally distinct individual selves or atmans that never merge into each other at the highest level. VAISHNAVISM generally holds this view, as does SHAIVA SIDDHANTA.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

... The next word we have to examine is Atman. It is next in importance to Brahman only, and the two together may be called the two pillars on which rests nearly the whole of the edifice of Indian philosophy, more particularly of the Vedanta and Samkhya systems.

... Whenever we come across such words as Atman and Brahman we suspect Vedantic influences, whereas Purusha and PrakHti at once remind us of Sawkhya doctrines. But Atman is by no means unknown to early Samkhya philosophers, nor is Purusha entirely outside the Vedantic horizon.

... All these [Upadhis, i.e. the Manas, the central organ of perception, the Indriyas, the five senses, etc.] are not the Atman, and it is only through Avidya that the Atman has become identified with them.

... That there is in man something that can be called Atman or Self requires no proof, but if a proof were wanted it would be found in the fact that no one can say, ‘ I am not ‘ (I being the disguised Atman), for he who would say so, would himself be not, or would not be. The question then is What is really I or what is there real behind the I. It cannot be the body as influenced by our objective environment, for that body is perishable ; it cannot be the Indriyas or the Manas or the Mukhyaprima, for all these have a beginning, a growth, and therefore an end. All these, called the Upadhis, conditions, are to be treated as Not-self; and if it be asked why they should ever have been treated as Self, the only possible answer is that it was through Nescience or Avidya, but through a Nescience that is not only casual or individual, but universal. What in our common language we call the Ego or Ahamkara is but a product of the Manas and quite as unsubstantial in reality as the Manas itself, the senses and the whole body.

Wikipedia

Philosophical schools such as Advaita (monism) see the soul within each living entity as being fully identical with Brahman - the all- pervading soul of the universe, whereas other schools such as Dvaita (dualism) differentiate between the individual atma in living beings, and the Supreme atma (Paramatma) as being at least partially separate beings. Thus atman refers to the individual soul or the observer.

Within Advaita Vedanta philosophy the Atman is the universal life- principle, the animator of all organisms, and the world- soul. This view is of a sort of panentheism (not pantheism) and thus is sometimes not equated with the single creator God of monotheism. Identification of individual living beings/souls, or jiva- atmas, with the 'One Atman' is the monistic Advaita Vedanta position, which is critiqued by dualistic/theistic Dvaita Vedanta. Dvaita Vedanta calls the all-pervading aspect of Brahman Paramatman quantitatively different from individual Atman and claims reality for both a God functioning as the ultimate metaphorical "soul" of the universe, and for actual individual "souls" as such. The Dvaita, dualist schools, therefore, in contrast to Advaita, advocate an exclusive monotheistic position wherein Brahman is made synonymous with Vishnu. Aspects of both philosophies are found within the schools of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta and Achintya Bheda Abheda.

In some instances both Advaita and Dvaita schools may accommodate the others's belief as a lower form of worship or practice towards the same ultimate goal.

In the view of the Yoga school, the highest attainment does not reveal the experienced diversity of the world to be illusion. The everyday world is real. Furthermore, the highest attainment is the event of one of many individual selves discovering itself; there is no single universal self shared by all persons.

The pre-Buddhist Upanishads link the Self to the feeling "I am." Others like the post- Buddhist Maitri Upanishad hold that only the defiled individual self, rather than the universal self, thinks "this is I" or "this is mine".

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Every experience, we know, involves the three basic factors called triputi. The Reality, seen from that point of view, is the one that manifests itself as the knower, the known and the act of knowing at the same time.

Every act of knowing takes place in and is inseparable from the knower. The knower, in his turn, is an integral part of the known world. Knowing really what Reality is, therefore, in essence, is the event of the knower finding himself merged with the known, through the act of knowing, with no distinction remaining finally among the three.

This Reality, in Vedanta, is known as atma or atman. A word derived from the verb root at, meaning to pervade the being of something (ad vyapane), it signifies the Substance that pervades the being of all that has come into being. One such being is the knower himself. Therefore, the word atma denotes the self or oneself as well. Its best English equivalent is "the self."

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

You won't find the eternal by meditating on the body or the mind or any of the senses or sensory pleasures that disappear after a while.

One should turn to the pure awareness that was present even when one was in the mother's womb as a fertilized ovum, a developing fetus, and as a child who was pushing itself out through a strange kind of interaction between itself and the mother, finally to come to its own liberation. All these things are done by another awareness residing within. It is the same in the mother, the child, the father, and all the living beings all over the universe. It is a common life principle, a homogeneous principle of life, which can

remain dormant, come into a form of manifestation, and assert itself in all shades of awareness, yet it is never itself affected. It is immortal; it never dies. It is called the atman.

To meditate on it, the ancient wise ones made a formula, ayam atma brahma. It means, this atma is brahman; this self-luminous awareness that resides in all beings is the Absolute. That which is other than that which lies between the skin and all the other urges, it never perishes. When we contemplate this, when we meditate on it continuously, there comes the perfection of that awareness.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

A sannyasi asked: It is said that the Self is beyond the mind and yet the realisation is with the mind. Mano na manute, Manasa na matam, and Manasaivedamaptavyam (The mind cannot think it. It cannot be thought of by the mind and the mind alone can realise it). How are these contradictions to be reconciled?

M.: Atman is realised with mruta manas (dead mind), i.e., mind devoid of thoughts and turned inward. Then the mind sees its own source and becomes That. It is not as the subject perceiving an object.

When the room is dark a lamp is necessary to illumine and eyes to cognise objects. But when the sun is risen there is no need of a lamp, and the objects are seen; and to see the sun no lamp is necessary, it is enough that you turn your eyes towards the self-luminous sun.

Similarly with the mind. To see the objects the reflected light of the mind is necessary. To see the Heart it is enough that the mind is turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

... Mouna [silence] is said to be that state which spontaneously manifests after the annihilation of the ego. That state is beyond light and darkness, but still it is called light since no other proper word could be found for it.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

The different philosophies seem to agree that this Atman, whatever it be, has neither form nor shape, and that which has neither form nor shape must be omnipresent. Time begins with mind, space also is in the mind. Causation cannot stand without time. Without the idea of succession there cannot be any idea of causation. Time, space, and causation, therefore, are in the mind, and as this Atman is beyond the mind and formless it must be beyond time, beyond space, and beyond causation. Now if it is beyond time, space and causation, it must be infinite. Then comes the highest speculation in our philosophy. The infinite cannot be two. If the soul be infinite there can be only one soul, and all these ideas of various souls you having one soul, and I having another, and so forth are not real. The real man therefore is one and infinite, the omnipresent spirit. And the apparent man is only a limitation of that real man. In that sense all these mythologies are true, that the apparent man, however great he may be, is only a dim reflection of the real man which is beyond. The real man, the spirit, being beyond cause and effect, not bound by time and space, must therefore be free. He was never bound, and could not be bound. The apparent man, the reflection, is limited by time, space and causation, and he is therefore bound. Or in the language of some of our philosophers, he appears to be bound, but really is not. This is the reality in our souls, this omnipresence, this spiritual nature, this infinity, which we are already. Every soul is infinite, therefore there is no question of birth and death.

Atma and anatma

Nataraja. The Philosophy of a Guru

The Self and the non-Self can be treated as dialectical counterparts and both placed in one unitive context of the Absolute. ... In Vedanta it is normal to speak of atma (Self) and anatma (non-Self) as pratiyogis (counterparts) with an intimate bipolar relation (samavaya) between them, and not merely a contiguous relationship (samyoga). ..

The non-Self can be thought of in a more work-a-day sense as fitting into a horizontal world of practical values, while the purer Self with its dialectical counterparts, one ontological here, and the other of a teleological or transcendental order elsewhere in the beyond, above or the ultimate or infinity, referring to vertical value worlds, could represent all values possible for the Self to be affiliated to in contemplative life. We have already explained and justified the use of these references in previous studies.

The Self can be thought of as a big fish swimming in midstream in the direction of the current, alternately avoiding the two banks, if we may take an analogy dear the the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The two banks will represent its limits in the horizontal axis of reference while itself and its almost motionless motion would represent the Self, whether thought of as a sphere, ellipse or the tractrix that mathematicians like Lobachewsky have suggested for the structure of space tensorially understood and independent of size. The Upanishads often speak of a person, of the size of the thumb and entered into the cavity of the heart, who has his counterpart in the Sun. There is a subtle dialectical equation of these into the unitive terms of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The Self and non-Self have to be fitted into a schematic structure before what we should understand as the purpose of all scriptures such as the Upanishads can be fulfilled or justified.

Atman and manas

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 99.

A sannyasi asked: It is said that the Self is beyond the mind and yet the realisation is with the mind. Mano na manute, Manasa na matam, and Manasaivedamaptavyam (The mind cannot think it. It cannot be thought of by the mind and the mind alone can realise it). How are these contradictions to be reconciled?

M.: Atman is realised with mruta manas (dead mind), i.e., mind devoid of thoughts and turned inward. Then the mind sees its own source and becomes That. It is not as the subject perceiving an object. When the room is dark a lamp is necessary to illumine and eyes to cognise objects. But when the sun is risen there is no need of a lamp, and the objects are seen; and to see the sun no lamp is necessary, it is enough that you turn your eyes towards the selfluminous sun.

Similarly with the mind. To see the objects the reflected light of the mind is necessary. To see the Heart it is enough that the mind is turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

Bhuta and atma

See: Brahman and atman

See: Cit, atman, brahman

See: Ishvara, atman, guru

See: Karma, prakriti, atman

See: Maya and atman

See: Prajapati, brahman, atman

See: Saccidananda and atman

Etymology

General

Deussen. *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*

It is not possible, as in the case of Prajapati and Brahman, to frame a history of the word Atman. It has no regular development but we see it emerge here and there in proportion as the thinker seeks and finds a more clear-cut expression for the word Brahman to name that being which can never by any means be taken away from us, and therefore forms the only true essence of our nature, our atman, our Self. With this word we have reached the sphere of the Upanishads.

Dictionary - Grimes

ātma — “breath” (from the verb root at = “to breathe”) or (from the verb root āp - “to pervade, reach up to”)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ātman - variously derived fr. an, to breathe; at, to move; vā, to blow

Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

The etymology of Atman is again extremely obscure, probably because it belongs to a pre- Sanskrit, though Aryan stratum of Indian speech. However, there can be little doubt that in the Veda Atman, in several places, still means breath ... It then came to mean vital breath, life, and, like the spirit or breath, was frequently used in the sense of what we call soul. In some passages it is difficult to say whether we should translate it by life or by spirit. From soul there is but a small step to Self ... in other passages Atman signifies simply the inmost nature of anything, and more particularly of man, so that in the end it means much the same as what medieval philosophers would have called the quiddity, or Indian philosophers the *Idant*& of things ... In this sense Atman is afterwards used as the name of the highest person, the soul of the world (Paramatman), ... the sovereign of all beings, he is the king of all beings.

Wikipedia

The word ātman is connected with the Indo- European root *ēt-men (breath) and is cognate with Old English “æþm”, Greek “asthma”, and German “Atem” : “atmen” (to breathe).

Related words

Brahman
Cit
Jiva
Jivatman
Maya
Paramatman
Saccidananda
Saksin

Sanskrit

आत्मान् — *ātma*

ātman - आत्मन्

Muller. The Upanishads, Part 1: When Âtman occurs in philosophical treatises, such as the Upanishads and the Vedânta system which is based on them, it has generally been translated by soul, mind, or spirit. I tried myself to use one or other of these words, but the oftener I employed them, the more I felt their inadequacy, and was driven at last to adopt self and Self as the least liable to misunderstanding.

... If we translate Âtman by soul, mind, or spirit, we commit, first of all, that fundamental mistake of using words which may be predicated, in place of a word which is a subject only, and can never become a predicate. We may say in English that man possesses a soul, that a man is out of his mind, that man has or even that man is a spirit, but we could never predicate Âtman, or self, of anything else. Spirit, if it means breath or life; mind, if it means the organ of perception and conception; soul, if, like kaitanya, it means intelligence in general, all these may be predicated of the Âtman, as manifested in the phenomenal world. But they are never subjects in the sense in which the Âtman is; they have no independent being, apart from Âtman. Thus to translate the beginning of the Aitareya- upanishad, Âtmâ vâ idam eka evâgra âsît, by 'This (world) verily was before (the creation of the world) soul alone' (Röer); or, 'Originally this (universe) was indeed soul only' (Colebrooke), would give us a totally false idea. M. Regnaud in his 'Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de la philosophie de l'Inde' (vol. ii, p. 24) has evidently felt this, and has kept the word Âtman untranslated, 'Au commencement cet univers n'était que l'âtman.' But while in French it would seem impossible to find any equivalent for âtman, I have ventured to translate in English, as I should have done in German, 'Verily, in the beginning all this was Self, one only.'

Atma vidya

Variant spellings

atma-vidya
âtmavidyâ

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ātma-vidyā — ... “knowledge of the Self”

1. Realization of the reality of the Self.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ātmavidyā -

knowledge of soul or the supreme spirit

Descriptions

General

Muller. The Upanishads, Part 1

... when we read in Sanskrit, ‘Know the Self by the self,’ ātmānam ātmanā pasya, tempting as it may seem, it would be entirely wrong to render it by the Greek γνῶθι σεαυτόν. The Brahman called upon his young pupil to know not himself, but his Self, that is, to know his individual self as a merely temporary reflex of the Eternal Self. Were we to translate this so-called ātmavidyā, this self-knowledge, by knowledge of the soul, we should not be altogether wrong, but we should nevertheless lose all that distinguishes Indian from Greek thought. It may not be good English to say to know his self, still less to know our selves, but it would be bad Sanskrit to say to know himself, to know ourselves; or, at all events, such a rendering would deprive us of the greatest advantage in the study of Indian philosophy, the opportunity of seeing in how many different ways man has tried to solve the riddles of the world and of his soul.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 379.

One Tirumalpad of Nilambur, a Malayali gentleman, asked Sri Bhagavan for an explanation of Atma Vidya. (Knowledge of the Self.)

M.: Sri Bhagavan explained this short piece of 5 stanzas as follows: Chidambaram is the famous place of pilgrimage associated with Nandanar who sang that Atma Vidya is most difficult of attainment. Muruganar (a long-standing devotee of Sri Bhagavan) began however that Atma Vidya is the easiest of attainments. Ayye atisulabham is the burden of the song.

In explanation of this extraordinary statement, he argued that Atma being the Self is eternally obvious even to the least of men. The original statement and the subsequent reasoning are incompatible because there need be no attainment if the Self is the substratum of all selves and so obvious too. Naturally he could not pursue the theme further and laid the first four lines composed by him before Sri Bhagavan for completion.

Sri Bhagavan admitted the truth of the disciple’s statement and pointed out why the Self, though obvious, is yet hidden. It is the wrong identity of the Self with the body, etc.

D.: How did the wrong identity arise?

M.: Due to thoughts. If these thoughts are put an end to, the real Self should shine forth of itself.

D.: How are these thoughts to be ended?

M.: Find out their basis. All of them are strung on the single 'I-thought'. Quell it; all others are quashed. Moreover there is no use knowing all except the Self. If the Self is known all others become known. Hence is Self-Realisation the primary and sole duty of man.

D.: How to quell the 'I-thought'?

M.: If its source is sought it does not arise, and thus it is quelled.

D.: Where and how to find it?

M.: It is in fact the consciousness which enables the individuals to function in different ways. Pure Consciousness is the Self. All that is required to realise the Self is to "Be Still."

D.: What can be easier than that?

M.: So Atma Vidya is the easiest of attainment.

Related words

Brahmavidya

Sanskrit

Ātma-vidyā — आत्मविद्या

ātmavidyā - आत्मविद्या

AUM

See: OM

Avarana

Variant spellings

avarana

āvaraṇa

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Āvaraṇa — ... concealment; veil; screen; obstruction

1. The veiling power of ignorance. According to Advaita Vedānta, one of the twofold powers of ignorance (avidyā).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

āvaraṇa -

covering, hiding, concealing;

the act of covering, concealing, hiding;

shutting, enclosing;

an obstruction, interruption;

a covering, garment, cloth;

anything that protects, an outer bar or fence;

a wall;

a shield;

a bolt, lock

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Avarana: Anything which veils the vision or reality, as in the case of a thin cloth or smokescreen. A subtle and general state of ignorance is suggested, also a lazy or negative state of mind, as in the case of a cow frightened by a red cloth. Degrees of Avarana can be imagined, and the philosopher has to have a vision cleared of this smoke.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Avarana: A veil. Atman manifesting itself as the world results in not seeing atma as real, but in seeing the manifestations as real. It is as if atma, because of its own maya, puts a veil on itself resulting in seeing the unreal as real. This veiling power of maya is called avarana.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

When we see an ornament, it is as if the gold recedes from our view. Of course the jeweller sees all ornaments as gold when he weighs them and fixes their price. Likewise, to the degree that we see the world, to that degree the atma-content gets concealed. This concealment of what is real by its own assumed form is known as avarana (veil). In other words, the world as an avarana, conceals atma. The same avarana of my individuated form conceals my being atma. The same creates the impression, "I and consciousness are two", "I am the possessor of consciousness." When this avarana is removed, I and consciousness become revealed to be non-dual, the world and atma to be non-dual. So what we are looking for is the way to remove this veil.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Lessons on the Upanishads

There is a screen covering the consciousness of ... pure subjectivity in oneself. That screen is called avarana, the third defect of the mind. Dross, physical impurity, is removed by karma yoga, or the performance of unselfish action. The fickleness of the mind is subdued by upasana, or devout worship. And avarana, or the veil, is removed by jnana, or wisdom of life.

Avarana and vikshepa

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Hindu tradition distinguishes two aspects of Her Power [Power of Maya]. The first is that of Avarana Sakti, “the Veiling Power”. It is that which veils Consciousness in the Veils of the Spheres. The second is Vikshepa Sakti, “the Projecting Power”. It is the Power which projects Consciousness on to the Veils or Mirrors of the Spheres, and which tosses it to and fro in between them. All people who try to think or to meditate are well aware of the oscillating characteristic of the conscious mind. The mind jumps to and fro like a monkey. Meditation aims, among other things, at overcoming this Vikshepa or tossing of the mind, as a condition for the piercing of the Veils.

Transmutation or transfiguration is at heart a matter of a change of consciousness. Instead of a conscious identification with the physical body there comes a conscious identification with the emotional body; next with the thinking body, the lower mind; next with the spiritual body; next with the essential body; and then with Consciousness Itself. A man who has attained true Manhood knows the Source of Consciousness — not in thought, but in experience. He controls the tossing power of the mind. He just IS, naked of all veils, and unashamed, free of delusion and sin.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Ajnana has two aspects: avarana (veiling) and vikshepa (multiplicity). Of these, avarana (veiling) denotes the veil hiding the Truth. That prevails in sleep. Multiplicity (vikshepa) is activity in different times. This gives rise to diversity and prevails in waking and dream states (jagrat and svapna). If the veil, i.e., avarana is lifted, the Truth is perceived. It is lifted for a Jnani and so his karana sarira (causal body) ceases to exist. Vikshepa alone continues for him. Even so, it is not the same for a Jnani as it is for an ajnani. The ajnani has all kinds of vasanas, i.e., kartrva (doership) and bhoktrva (enjoyership), whereas the Jnani has ceased to be doer (karta). Thus only one kind of vasana obtains for him. That too is very weak and does not overpower him, because he is always aware of the Sat-Chit-Ananda nature of the Self. The tenuous bhoktrva vasana is the only remnant of the mind left in the Jnani and he therefore appears to be living in the body.

Sankara tradition

Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda

110. Maya can be destroyed by the realisation of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination of the rope. She has her Gunas as Rajas, Tamas and Sattva, named after their respective functions.

111. Rajas has its Vikshepa-Shakti or projecting power, which is of the nature of an activity, and from which this primeval flow of activity has emanated. From this also, mental modifications such as attachment and grief are continually produced.

112. Lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, spite, egoism, envy, jealousy, etc., -- these are the dire attributes of Rajas, from which the worldly tendency of man is produced. Therefore Rajas is a cause of bondage.

113. Avriti or the veiling power is the power of Tamas, which makes things appear other than what they are. It is this that causes man's repeated transmigrations, and starts the action of the projecting power (Vikshepa).

114. Even wise and learned men and men who are clever and adept in the vision of the exceedingly subtle Atman, are overpowered by Tamas and do not understand the Atman, even though clearly explained in various ways. What is simply superimposed

by delusion, they consider as true, and attach themselves to its effects. Alas ! How powerful is the great Avriti Shakti of dreadful Tamas !

115. Absence of the right judgment, or contrary judgment, want of definite belief and doubt – these certainly never desert one who has any connection with this veiling power, and then the projecting power gives ceaseless trouble.

116. Ignorance, lassitude, dullness, sleep, inadvertence, stupidity, etc., are attributes of Tamas. One tied to these does not comprehend anything, but remains like one asleep or like a stock or stone.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

When the mind's agitations (Vikshepa), are quietened through upasana, the veiling (Avarana) of the intellect also lifts and the budhi becomes quiet. As a result of mental quietude, when the intellect becomes bright, it is able to apprehend the Self. The Self is thus apprehended as, 'I am This'.

...

144. "Man's bondage has sprung forth from these two "powers". Deluded by them, he mistakes his body for the Self and wanders from life to life."

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

Because of these two powers (of veiling and agitations), man has reached his present stage of bondage and has become limited. When an individual allows himself to be confused and beguiled by these two—avarana-sakti and vikshepa-sakti, he considers himself to be his body, (gross, subtle and causal bodies). Normally everyone believes himself to be his gross body. An emotional person may consider himself to be an emotional personality. A modern rational man may think of himself as an intellectual. Thus confused they move about, satisfying their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. Each man acts in his peculiar delusion. Thus they move like mad men, from one place to another, from one time to another, from one life to another, from one cradle to one grave, and another cradle to another grave alas! continuously.

Related words

Ajnana
Avidya
Maya
Tamas
Vikshepa

Sanskrit

Avaraṇa — आवरण

āvaraṇa - आवरण

Avatar

Variant spellings

avatar
avatāra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Avatāra — ... “divine descent”; the descent of God into the world in a tangible form .

1. It is sometimes translated as “divine incarnation” but it should be noted that the term refers to the supreme Lord appearing in this physical world in His/Her own Eternal Form out of His/Her own inconceivable prerogative. Noting this, the words descent or incarnation may be employed.
2. According to the Vaiṣṇava tradition there are ten major divine descendents (avaīāra) of Viṣṇu: Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nara-simha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāmacandra, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Kalki. A variation of this list replaces Balarāma with Buddha.
3. They are of two types: principal and subordinate. The former is when Viṣṇu himself descends and the latter is the incarnation of inspired saints. The stories of the avatāras are told in the Purāṇas.
4. Some accounts describe twenty-six descents of Viṣṇu: Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana, Sanatkumāra, Varāha, Nārada, Nara, Kapila, Dattātreyā, Yajña, Ṛṣabhadeva, Pṛthu, Matsya, Mohinī, Kūrma, Garuda, Dhanvantari, Narasimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Vyāsa, Rāmacandra, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Kalki.
5. Though Siva is usually depicted without incarnations, there is a school of thought which describes His twenty-eight incarnations (who are depicted as the twenty-eight revealers of the Śaiva Āgamas).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

avatāra -

descent (especially of a deity from heaven), appearance of any deity upon earth (but more particularly the incarnations of Vishnu in ten principal forms, viz. the fish tortoise, boar, man lion, dwarf, the two Rāmas, Kṛishṇa, Buddha, and Kalki; any new and unexpected appearance; a Tirtha or sacred place

Wikipedia

In Hinduism, Avatar or Avatāra ... refers to a deliberate descent of a deity from heaven to earth.

The term is most often associated with Vishnu, though it has also come to be associated with other deities. Varying lists of avatars of Vishnu appear in Hindu scriptures, including the ten Dashavatara of the Garuda Purana and the twenty-two avatars in the Bhagavata Purana, though the latter adds that the incarnations of Vishnu are innumerable. The avatars of Vishnu are a primary component of Vaishnavism. An early reference to avatar, and to avatar doctrine, is in the Bhagavad Gita.

Shiva and Ganesha are also described as descending in the form of avatars. The various manifestations of Devi, the Divine Mother principal in Hinduism, are also described as avatars or incarnations by some scholars and followers of Shaktism. The avatars

of Vishnu carry a greater theological prominence than those of other deities, which some scholars perceive to be imitative of the Vishnu avatar lists.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Avatar: Manifestation of divinity in human form, implying descent from above, and associated primarily with Vaishnavite religion. The ten avatars of Vishnu are (1) Matsya, the Fish; (2) Varaha, the Boar; (3) Kurma, the Tortoise; (4) Narasimha, the Man-Lion; (5) Vamana, the Dwarf-Brahmin (q.v.); (6) Parasu-Rama, Rama-of-the-Axe; (7) Rama (q.v.); (8) Balarama; (9) Buddha, and (10) Kalki, the avatar yet to come. Avidya: Nescience; equivalent of Maya (q.v.) or darkness, and the opposite of Vidya (q.v.)

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Avatar is a modern Hindi word from the SANSKRIT word avatara, which means “one who has descended to the earthly realm.” The word in both its Sanskrit and its Hindi forms is used in VAISHNAVISM to refer to the incarnations of Vishnu, which usually number 10. Technically, Shiva never becomes an avatar. In recent times, the word avatar has come to be used for any enlightened teacher. It is, in effect, an honorific bestowed upon the teacher by his or her disciples or the larger community.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Avatar (“descent”). In Hindu mythology, the descent (of a deity), but more colloquially the incarnation, of a deity on earth. The concept of avatars has been best developed by the devotees (bhakta) of the god Vishnu, who perceive him as taking a specific form to help the world. Examples of avatars can be found for other divinities as well.

Hindus draw a distinction between full avatars, which have the complete power of the deity, and partial incarnations, or anshavatars. Vishnu has ten full avatars, each of whom has appeared to restore the cosmic balance when the world has fallen out of equilibrium. The root cause of such disequilibrium is usually a demon (asura) who has grown too strong and uses that power to oppress others. This imbalance prompts Vishnu to take form as an avatar, destroy the evildoers, and definitively restore the cosmic balance.

Although there is some variation in the list of Vishnu’s avatars, the generally accepted list is as follows: Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Vamana (dwarf), Parashuram, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki. This list of avatars follows an “evolutionary” sequence—the first three are animals, the fourth a hybrid man-animal, and the ones after that mythic heroes and sages; the exception is the Buddha, a real person who has been incorporated into the Hindu pantheon. The tenth form, Kalki avatar, is yet to come, and his coming will herald the end of the age. Vishnu’s partial avatars—as sages, saints, and gods—are countless and potentially limitless, providing a ready-made way for new Hindu movements to ascribe divine authority to their founders.

Although the avatar concept is most commonly associated with Vishnu, it has been applied to other Hindu gods as well. One example of partial avatars can be seen in the Mahabharata, the later of the two great Hindu epics, in which all five of the Pandava brothers are partial incarnations of various gods. In addition, devotees of the god Shiva have developed a list of his twenty-one avatars, who are saints, sages, and minor deities. This list was probably developed in response to the Vaishnava doctrine of ava-

tars, but Shiva's forms are far less important than Vishnu's; Vishnu's avatars include Rama and Krishna, who are major objects of worship in their own right.

For the Vaishnavas, the avatar doctrine is generally seen as a way to assimilate existing cults into the pantheon by claiming that various deities are merely different manifestations of Vishnu. The Shaiva avatars were developed much later, essentially so that Shiva would also have these forms.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

WHAT IS A DIVINE INCARNATION?

703. An Avatara (Incarnation) is a human messenger of God, He is like a viceroy of a mighty monarch. As the king sends the viceroy when there is any disturbance in some far-off province, to quell it, so whenever there is waning of religion in any part of the world, God sends there His Avatara to guard virtue and to foster its growth.

704. Think not that Rama and Sita, Krishna and Radha, are mere allegories and not historical personages, or that the scriptures are true only in their inner or esoteric meaning. Nay, they were human beings of flesh and blood just as you are; but because they were divinities, their lives can be interpreted both historically and allegorically. The Avataras are to Brahman as waves are to the ocean. 705. The Avatara is always one and the same. Having plunged into the ocean of life, the one God rises up at one point and is known as Krishna, and when after another plunge, He rises up at another point, He is known as Christ.

706. On the tree of Sachchidananda (Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) there hang innumerable bunches of Ramas, Krishnas, Buddhas, Christs, etc. Out of these, one or two now and then come down into this world and produce mighty changes and revolutions.

707. The Avataras are born with Divine powers and Divine qualities. They can go into, and stay in, any state of realisation from the highest to the lowest. In a king's palace a stranger can go only to the outer quarters, but the king's own child, the prince of the house, is free to go to every corner.

Avatar in Bhagavad Gita

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

On close examination of these verses we find that what is stated in verse 7, where the word srija (emanate) occurs, is not the same as stated in verse 8 where the phrase sambhavami (I become) is used. The opposition between the two has just been explained under verse 6. To say, as has often been stated, that there is a reference to Krishna as an avatar in the Gita would be wrong. The word avatar does not occur in the Gita at all. It is foreign to the spirit in which the Gita is written, in which both ascent and descent are equally implied and cancelled against each other in the neutrality of the Absolute.

See also:

in Vishnu: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

avatara - from the verb root tṛī = “to cross” + preposition ava = “down”.

Wikipedia

Avatāra - Sanskrit “descent” [viz., from heaven to earth].

The Sanskrit noun avatāra is derived from the verbal root tṛī “to cross over”, joined with the prefix ava “off , away , down”. The word doesn’t occur in the Vedas, but is recorded in Pāṇini (3.3.120). Avatāra was initially used to describe different deities, then around the 6th century CE it began to be used primarily to describe the manifestations of Vishnu. While earlier texts mention deities taking on different forms, the Bhagavad Gita (4.5-9) is the first text to discuss the doctrine associated with the term even though the word avatāra itself is not mentioned.

Sanskrit

Avatāra — अवतार

avatāra - अवतार

Wikipedia: ... is mostly translated into English as “incarnation”, but more accurately as “appearance” or “manifestation”.

The common translation “incarnation” due to its christological implications is somewhat misleading as the concept of avatar corresponds more closely to the view of Docetism in Christian theology, as different from the idea of God ‘in the flesh’ in mainstream Christology.

Avidya

Variant spellings

avidya

avidyā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Avidyā — ... ignorance; nescience

1. It is the key concept in the Advaita Vedānta system. It serves as the cornerstone for Advaita Vedānta metaphysics, epistemology, and ethical disciplines; thus its role cannot be belittled. It is characterized by six marks: it is beginningless (anādi); it is removed by right knowledge (jñāna-nivartya); it is a positive entity of the nature of an existent (bhāvarūpa); it is indescribable (anirvacanīya);

it has the two powers of concealment and projection which respectively represent the truth and suggest the false (āvarana and vikṣepa); and its locus is either in the individual self (jīva) or in the Absolute (Brahman).

2. One of the twelve links in the causal chain of existence. ... It is the root of all and the primary cause of existence according to Buddhism.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

avidyā -

ignorance, spiritual ignorance;

(in Vedānta phil.) illusion (personified as Māyā);

ignorance together with non-existence

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Avidya - ("lack of [true] knowledge") Avidya is the absence of true understanding and is the fundamental problem in almost all Hindu philosophical and religious thought. The presence of avidya leads people to misperceive the true nature of reality and to act based on these misperceptions.

The most fundamental of these false perceptions is to identify the eternal Self (atman) with the body. As a result of this misidentification, egoism leads one to try to protect and advance the Self (in its particular embodied state) and incites feelings and actions of greed, lust, and hatred. These feelings create bondage for the soul and entrap it in samsara, the cycle of rebirth.

In most Hindu philosophical schools, the avidya tends to be conceived in epistemological rather than metaphysical terms-that is, it is not an actual thing in its own right but exists as a function of how one comes to know things, insofar as that knowledge is inaccurate or incomplete. Once one's deficient awareness has been corrected, the cause of bondage is removed, resulting in the final liberation of the soul (moksha).

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Avidya - ignorance, especially in the spiritual sense; (in Vedanta) caused by the operation of Maya.

Wikipedia

Avidyā is a Sanskrit word that means "ignorance", "delusion", "unlearned", "unwise" and that which is not, or runs counter to, vidya. It is used extensively in Hindu texts, including the Upanishads and as well in Buddhist thought.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Avidya: Nescience or ignorance. That because of which the unreal is taken as the real, and the real as the unreal. The root cause of illusions and sufferings.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

When a person is seeing silver where there is only shell, he certainly does not know it to be false. On the other hand, he then feels convinced that it is quite as valid as any other knowledge.

... avidyā, which is only another word for ajnāna, implies, like jnāna, some person to whom it belongs (āśraya) and some object to which it refers (viṣaya). ... the person that mistakes the shell for silver is its āśraya, and the shell is its viṣaya. It is avidyā [This avidyā should not be confounded with the one described above as the radical adjunct of the jiva. That is constitutive of the jiva; this is only a passing characteristic of it. The one continues till mokṣa is attained; the other disappears with the error it has occasioned.] thus determined that is described as the cause of silver; and it operates in a double manner. It conceals the fact of shell and shows up silver in its place. To see silver where there is only shell, a necessary condition is the concealment of the shell. Suppression precedes substitution. These two aspects of it are respectively termed āvaraṇa or 'veiling' and vikṣepa or 'revealing.' As the avidyā does not put the shell entirely out of sight, it is not lack of apprehension—a mere gap in thought—but misapprehension and is therefore described as positive (bhāva-rūpa). It is the contrary of vidyā, not its contradictory; and the condition for the resulting error to disappear is the removal of avidyā which happens when vidyā arises in the self-same person in regard to the self-same object.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

It might seem sometimes as if Avidya too, which is answerable for the whole of this phenomenal world, had to be taken as the result of acts far back before the beginning of all things. But this is never clearly stated. On the contrary, this primeval Avidya is left unexplained, it is not to be accounted for as little as Brahman can be accounted for. Like Brahman it has to be accepted as existent ; but it differs from Brahman in so far as it can be destroyed by Vidya, which is the eternal life-spring of Brahman. The merit which can be acquired by man even in this state of Avidya is such that he may rise even to the status of a god, though for a time only, for at the end of a Kalpa even gods like Indra and the rest have to begin their career afresh. In fact it might be said with some truth that Avidya is the cause of everything, except of Brahman ; but that the cause of that primeval Avidya is beyond our powers of conception.

Wikipedia

In Advaita Vedanta

The work of avidya is to suppress the real nature of things and present something else in its place. In essence it is not different from Maya (pronounced Māyā). Avidya relates to the finite Self (Sanskrit: atman) while Maya is an adjunct of the cosmic Self. In both cases it connotes the principle of differentiation which is implicit in human thinking. It stands for that delusion which breaks up the original unity (refer: nonduality) of what is real and presents it as subject and object and as doer and result of the deed. What keeps humanity captive in Samsara is this avidya. This ignorance is not lack of erudition; it is ignorance about the nature of 'Being' (Sanskrit: Sat). It is a limitation that is natural to human sensory or intellectual apparatus. This is responsible for all the misery of humanity. Advaita Vedanta holds that the eradication of it should be humanity's only goal and that will automatically mean Realisation of the Self (Sanskrit: atman).

Adi Shankara on avidya

Adi Shankara says in his Introduction to his commentary on the Brahma Sutras, "Owing to an absence of discrimination, there continues a natural human behaviour in the form of 'I am this' or 'This is mine'; this is avidya. It is a superimposition of the attributes of one thing on another. The ascertainment of the nature of the real entity by separating the superimposed thing from it is vidya (knowledge, illumination)". In Shankara's philosophy avidya cannot be categorized either as 'absolutely existent' or as 'absolutely non-existent'.

Buddhism

Root of suffering

Avidyā plays a key role in Buddhism and Buddhist doctrine and is the primary cause of suffering in samsāra.

Avidyā is one of the three kleśas.

Avidyā is the first link of Pratītyasamutpāda.

Avidyā is the first spoke on the Bhavacakra.

As one of the kleśas, Avidyā leads to craving (trsnā) and clinging (upādāna). As the first link of Pratitya- Samutpada, all other links depend on it. As the first spoke on the Bhavacakra, all subsequent states follow in its wake.

Uprooting avidya

The antidote to avidyā is “wisdom” (Skt.: prajñā; Pali: pañña). This is achieved by practicing awareness/mindfulness (Pali: sati, Skt: smṛti), patient endurance (Skt: ksānti; Pali: khanti) and meditation (Skt: dhyāna), all three of which are incorporated in the pan- Buddhist practices of the Noble Eightfold Path and the pāramitās (“perfections”).

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Avidya is ignorance. It implies subject and object. Become the subject and there will be no object...

M.: ... People ask: “How did ignorance (avidya) arise at all?” We have to say to them: “Ignorance never arose. It has no real being. That which is, is only vidya (knowledge).”

D.: Why then do I not realise it?

M.: Because of the samskaras. However, find out who does not realise and what he does not realise. Then it will be clear that there is no avidya (ignorance)...

D.: Is there avidya?

M.: For whom is it?

D.: For the ego-self.

M.: Yes, for the ego. Remove the ego; avidya is gone. Look for it, the ego vanishes. The real Self alone remains. The ego professing avidya is not to be seen. There is no avidya in reality.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Avidya and pramanas

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

The avidyā cannot be perceived by senses, therefore it is not available for pratyaksa-pramāna, perception. Since it is not available for perception there is no liṅga from which it can be inferred. So neither anumāna, inference nor arthāpatti, postulation is going to be useful. Again, there is nothing like avidyā, so it is not available for any kind of upamāna, comparison. Avidyā cannot be known by anupalabdhi, a pramāna giving the knowledge of absence of a thing, because it has some kind of existence as it causes problems.

Auidyā is not available for the sabda-pramāna, words also. If you analyse it will be seen that the sabda-prarnāna is interested only in showing you the purusārtha, pursuits. Sabda is going to talk about something that is hita, beneficial to you.

See: Manas and avidya

See: Maya, avidya, ajnana

See: Vidya and avidya

See also:

Sakshin and sushupti

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

avidyā— from ihe verb root vid = “to know” a = “not”

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Avidya from neg. part, a + vidya, knowing < root vid, to know.

[Wikipedia](#)

The word avidyā is derived from the Proto-Indo- European root *weid-, meaning “to see” or “to know”. It is a cognate of Latin vidēre (which would turn to “video”) and English “wit”.

Related words

Ajnana

Avarana

Jnana

Maya

Moha

Vidya

Vikshepa

Sanskrit

Avidyā -- अविद्या

avidyā - अवदिया

Chinese: 無明 - wú míng
Japanese: 無明 - Mummyō
Pali: Avijjā

Avyakta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Avyakta — ... unmanifest

1. Sāṅkhyan term for primal Nature (prakṛti).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

avyakta -

(in Sāṅkhya phil.) 'the unevolved (Evolver of all things)', the primary germ of nature, primordial element or productive principle whence all the phenomena of the material world are developed

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Avyakta: That which is not specific and definable. The opposite of vyakta.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

The ancient teachers define Avyaktam, as the 'equilibrium of the three forces,' one of which is called sattva, the second rajas and the third tamas. Tamas, the lowest force, is that of attraction; a little higher is rajas, that of repulsion; and the highest is the control of these two, sattva; so that when the two forces, attraction and repulsion, are held in perfect control or balance, by the sattva, there is no creation, no modification; but as soon as this equilibrium is lost, the balance is disturbed and one of these forces gets stronger than the other. Then change and motion begin and evolution of all these goes on. This state of things is going on cyclically, periodically; that is to say, there is a period of disturbance of the balance, when all these forces begin to combine and recombine, and this universe is projected; and there is also a period when everything has a tendency to revert to the primal state of equilibrium, and the time comes when a total absence of all manifestations is reached. Again, after a period, this state is disturbed, the forces tend to project outward and the universe slowly comes out in the form of waves; for all motions in this universe are in the form of waves, in successive rises and falls.

Descriptions

General

Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

The commentator [Sankhya] begins by asking, 'Now what are the eight Prakritis?' and he answers, again in technical terms which will have to be explained :

'1. The Avyakta (chaos), 2. Buddhi (light or perception), 3. Ahamkâra (subjectivity), and 4-8, the five Tanmâtras (transcendental elements).'

He then continues : 1. 'Here then the Avyakta, neuter (the undeveloped), is explained. As in the world various objects such as water-jars, cloth, vases, beds, &c, are manifest, not so is the Avyakta manifest. It is not apprehended by the senses, such as the ear, &c. And why? Because it has neither beginning, middle, nor end, nor has it any parts. It is inaudible, intangible, invisible, indestructible, eternal, without savour and odour. The learned declare it to be without beginning and middle, to be beyond what is great, unchanging, pre-eminent. And again, this Avyakta is subtle, without attributes, without beginning or end, producing (Prasûta), but alone of all the eight Prakritis unproduced (Aprasûta), without parts, one only, but common to all. And these are its synonyms, that is to say, words applicable to the Avyakta, under certain circumstances : Pradhâna (principal), Brahman, Pura (abode), Dhruva (unchanging), Pradhânaka (chief), Akshara (indestructible), Kshetra (field, object), Tamas (darkness), Prasûta (productive).'

Radhakrishnan. *Philosophy of Upanishads*

The idea of an avyakta or prakrti, the source of all differentiation, is distinctly suggested in the Upaniṣads. "Beyond the senses are the rudiments of its objects; beyond these rudiments is the mind; beyond the mind is Ātman known as mahat (great), beyond the mahat is avyakta, the unmanifested; beyond the avyakta is the puruṣa, beyond the puruṣa there is nothing." (Katha, III, 10, 11.) "By tapas Brahman increases in size and from it food is produced, from food life, mind, the elements, the worlds, karma, and with it its fruits." (Muṇḍaka, I, 1.) Food or annam in this passage is interpreted by Śankara as the unmanifested (avyākṛtam).

See also: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. *Hindu philosophy*

Avyakta (fr. neg. part, a + prep, vi, apart + akta, anointed, perf. pass, participle of the root añj, to anoint), 'unmanifest matter', another name for prakrti.

Related words

Prakriti

Opposite: Vyakta

Ayamatma- Brahma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ayam-ātmā brahma — ... “this Self is the Absolute (Brahman)”

1. A Great Saying (mahā-vākya) which occurs in the Māṇḍūkya Upanisad of the Atharva Veda.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ayamatma Brahman (“This Self is Brahman”). In the Hindu philosophical tradition, one of the “great utterances” (mahavakyas) expressing ultimate truth. The truth here is the identity of atman (the individual Self) and Brahman (Ultimate Reality); this identity is the heart of the mystical texts called the Upanishads. Aside from their importance in a philosophical context as fundamental truths, four mahavakyas were also appropriated as symbols by the four divisions of the Dashanami Sanyasi ascetics. Each division had its own mahavakya, just as each had a different Veda, a different primary sacred center, and a different ascetic quality. Ayamatma Brahman is the mahavakya associated with the Anandawara division of the Dashanami Sanyasis.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

To meditate on it [atman], the ancient wise ones made a formula, ayam atma brahma. It means, this atma is brahman; this self-luminous awareness that resides in all beings is the Absolute. That which is other than that which lies between the skin and all the other urges, it never perishes. When we contemplate this, when we meditate on it continuously, there comes the perfection of that awareness.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

To say “ I am the body,” is relativistically true, of course. We can see there are other bodies and that we are not pulsating within them as we are within this one. Our own body does have something special in a relative sense, but in the greater search this conception is an error to be corrected.

... For this correction another great dictum was given by the Upanishads: ayam atma brahman, “ this Self of mine is the Absolute.” Narayana Guru has already defined the Self as “ that which remains in darkness and makes things known to us, that is the Self.” Now we say that Self is the Absolute. The light which is within us, which is Self-founded, which makes it known to us that we exist and also makes it known to us that other things exist, that is the Self. It is not contaminated with any relativistic notion such as “

I am the body,” or “ I am in pain,” “ I am happy,” “ I am unhappy.” These are colorations. If the colorations are removed and you understand the Absolute, the pure notion, then you have a very infallible measuring rod to discern what is true and what is not. This does not happen in a single day, because your mind is already colored with many preconditioned prejudices. To experience ayam atma brahman, this Self is the Absolute, many accretions of the mind have to be rubbed off and removed, many prejudices have to fall. You have developed many likes and dislikes because of your physical sense of pain and pleasure, the kind of food you have been given since childhood, the manners you were taught and the social values on which you were nurtured. Hundreds and hundreds of colorations have come into your life, constraining it and directing it in so many arbitrary ways, that to remove all these and know what the pure Self is is not an easy thing. But it is a great necessity if you want to adopt a correct methodology for the rest of your life, to make correct appraisals, and to not mistake the right for the wrong. Once you have that correct method, you have a testimony to measure the truth of things.

See: Mahavakyas as used for instruction

Related words

Atharva Veda

Maha-Vakya

Mandukya Upanishad

Sanskrit

Ayam-ātmā brahma — अयमात्मा ब्रह्म

ayam ātmā brahma -अयमात्मब्रह्म

B

Badarayana

See: Vyasa

Bhagavad Gita

Title variants

भगवद्गीत

Bhagavad Gīta

Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavad Gītā

Bhagavadgītā

Bhagavat Geetā

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhagavad Gītā — ... “song of God”

One of the essential scriptures of Hinduism, a portion of the Mahābhārata, in which Kṛṣṇa, on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, instructs Arjuna about the nature of God, the universe, and the Self; on the different forms of Yoga; and on the way to attain God.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

bhagavadgītā -

(sometimes with upaniṣad);

... ‘Kṛishṇa’s song’, N. of a celebrated mystical poem (interpolated in the MBh. where it forms an episode of 18 chapters from vi, 830-1532, containing a dialogue between Kṛishṇa and Arjuna, in which the Pantheism of the Vedānta is combined with a tinge of the Sāṃkhya and the later principle of bhakti or devotion to Kṛishṇa as the Supreme Being

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhagavad Gita means “Song about God.” It is a segment, dating from around 200 B.C.E., of the MAHABHARATA, the classic Sanskrit epic traditionally ascribed to VYASA. It has 18 chapters totaling approximately 700 verses. In the framework of a legendary battle, the poem presents a philosophy of life and states principles guiding the practices of YOGA.

Wikipedia

The Bhagavad Gita (“Song of God”) is one of the most important Hindu scriptures. It is revered as a sacred scripture of Hinduism, and considered as one of the most important philosophical classics of the world. The Bhagavad Gita comprises 700 verses, and is

a part of the Mahabharata. The teacher of the Bhagavad Gita is Krishna, Who is revered by Hindus as a manifestation of the Lord Himself, and is referred to within as Bhagavan—the Divine One.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Bhagavad Gita - A philosophical dialogue expounding the science of the Self occurring in the Bhishma Parva section of the great Indian epic Mahabharata.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Ramana Smrti

... Another devotee complained that it was difficult to keep all its seven hundred verses in mind and asked if there was not a verse that could be remembered as the gist of the whole Gita. Bhagavan immediately mentioned Verse twenty of Chapter ten:

Aham Atma, Gudakesa, Sarvabhutashayasthitah Aham

Adischa Madhyam cha bhutanam anta eva cha.

I am the Self, O Gudakesa, dwelling in the hearts of all beings.

I am the beginning, and the middle and the end of all beings.

Date and text

Wikipedia

The Bhagavad Gita occurs in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata and comprises 18 chapters from the 25th through 42nd and consists of 700 verses. Its authorship is traditionally ascribed to Vyasa, the compiler of the Mahabharata. Because of differences in recensions the verses of the Gita may be numbered in the full text of the Mahabharata as chapters 6.25–42 or as chapters 6.23–40. According to the recension of the Gita commented on by Shankaracharya, the number of verses is 700, but there is evidence to show that old manuscripts had 745 verses. The verses themselves, using the range and style of Sanskrit meter (chandas) with similes and metaphors, are written in a poetic form that is traditionally chanted.

The Bhagavad Gītā is later than the great movement represented by the early Upanishads and earlier than the period of the development of the philosophic systems and their formulation. The date and the author of the Gītā is not known with certainty and scholars of an earlier generation opined that it was composed between the 5th and the 2nd century BCE. Radhakrishnan, for example, asserted that the origin of the Gītā is definitely in the pre-Christian era. More recent assessments of Sanskrit literature, however, have tended to bring the chronological horizon of the texts down in time. In the case of the Gītā, John Brockington has now made cogent arguments that it can be placed in the first century CE.

Based on claims of differences in the poetic styles some scholars like Jinarajadasa have argued that the Bhagavad Gītā was added to the Mahābhārata at a later date.

Within the text of the Bhagavad Gītā itself, Krishna states that the knowledge of Yoga contained in the Gītā was first instructed to mankind at the very beginning of their existence.

Although the original date of composition of the Bhagavad Gita is not clear, its teachings are considered timeless and the exact time of revelation of the scripture is considered of little spiritual significance by scholars like Bansi Pandit, and Juan Mascaro. Swami Vivekananda dismisses concerns about differences of opinion regarding the historical events as unimportant for study of the Gita from the point of acquirement of Dharma.

Scripture of Yoga

Wikipedia

The Gita addresses the discord between the senses and the intuition of cosmic order. It speaks of the Yoga of equanimity, a detached outlook. The term Yoga covers a wide range of meanings, but in the context of the Bhagavad Gita, describes a unified outlook, serenity of mind, skill in action and the ability to stay attuned to the glory of the Self (Atman) and the Supreme Being (Bhagavan). According to Krishna, the root of all suffering and discord is the agitation of the mind caused by selfish desire. The only way to douse the flame of desire is by simultaneously stilling the mind through self-discipline and engaging oneself in a higher form of activity.

However, abstinence from action is regarded as being just as detrimental as extreme indulgence. According to the Bhagavad Gita, the goal of life is to free the mind and intellect from their complexities and to focus them on the glory of the Self by dedicating one's actions to the divine. This goal can be achieved through the Yogas of meditation, action, devotion and knowledge. In the sixth chapter, Krishna describes the best Yogi as one who constantly meditates upon him - which is understood to mean thinking of either Krishna personally, or the supreme Brahman - with different schools of Hindu thought giving varying points of view.

Krishna summarizes the Yogas through eighteen chapters. Three yogas in particular have been emphasized by commentators:

Bhakti Yoga or Devotion,

Karma Yoga or Selfless Action

Jnana Yoga or Self Transcending Knowledge

While each path differs, their fundamental goal is the same - to realize Brahman (the Divine Essence) as being the ultimate truth upon which our material universe rests, that the body is temporal, and that the Supreme Soul (Paramatman) is infinite. Yoga's aim (moksha) is to escape from the cycle of reincarnation through realization of the ultimate reality. There are three stages to self-realization enunciated from the Bhagavad Gita:

Brahman - The impersonal universal energy

Paramatma - The Supreme Soul sitting in the heart of every living entity.

Bhagavan - God as a personality, with a transcendental form.

Major themes of yoga

The influential commentator Madhusudana Sarasvati (b. circa 1490) divided the Gita's eighteen chapters into three sections, each of six chapters. According to his method of division the first six chapters deal with Karma Yoga, which is the means to the final goal, and the last six deal with the goal itself, which he says is Knowledge (Jnana). The middle six deal with bhakti. Swami Gambhirananda characterizes Madhusudana Sarasvati's system as a successive approach in which Karma yoga leads to Bhakti yoga, which in turn leads to Jnana yoga.

Bhakti Yoga

In the introduction to Chapter Seven of the Gita, bhakti is summed up as a mode of worship which consists of unceasing and loving remembrance of God. As M. R. Sampatkumaran explains in his overview of Ramanuja's commentary on the Gita, "The point is that mere knowledge of the scriptures cannot lead to final release. Devotion, meditation and worship are essential."

As Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita:

"And of all yogins, he who full of faith worships Me, with his inner self abiding in Me, him, I hold to be the most attuned (to me in Yoga)."

“After attaining Me, the great souls do not incur rebirth in this miserable transitory world, because they have attained the highest perfection.”

“... those who, renouncing all actions in Me, and regarding Me as the Supreme, worship Me... For those whose thoughts have entered into Me, I am soon the deliverer from the ocean of death and transmigration, Arjuna. Keep your mind on Me alone, your intellect on Me. Thus you shall dwell in Me hereafter.”

“And he who serves Me with the yoga of unswerving devotion, transcending these qualities [binary opposites, like good and evil, pain and pleasure] is ready for liberation in Brahman.”

“Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer service to Me, bow down to Me, and you shall certainly reach Me. I promise you because you are My very dear friend.”

“Setting aside all meritorious deeds (Dharma), just surrender completely to My will (with firm faith and loving contemplation). I shall liberate you from all sins. Do not fear.”

Jnana Yoga

Jnana Yoga is a process of learning to discriminate between what is real and what is not, what is eternal and what is not. Through a steady advancement in realization of the distinction between Real and the Unreal, the Eternal and the Temporal, one develops into a Jnana Yogi. This is essentially a path of knowledge and discrimination in regards to the difference between the immortal soul (atman) and the body.

In the second chapter, Krishna’s counsel begins with a succinct exposition of Jnana Yoga. Krishna argues that there is no reason to lament for those who are about to be killed in battle, because never was there a time when they were not, nor will there be a time when they will cease to be. Krishna explains that the self (atman) of all these warriors is indestructible. Fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, and wind cannot dry it. It is this Self that passes from body to another body like a person taking worn out clothing and putting on new ones. Krishna’s counsel is intended to alleviate the anxiety that Arjuna feels seeing a battle between two great armies about to commence. However, Arjuna is not an intellectual. He is a warrior, a man of action, for whom the path of action, Karma Yoga, is more appropriate.

“When a sensible man ceases to see different identities due to different material bodies and he sees how beings are expanded everywhere, he attains to the Brahman conception.”

“Those who see with eyes of knowledge the difference between the body and the knower of the body, and can also understand the process of liberation from bondage in material nature, attain to the supreme goal.”

Karma Yoga

Karma Yoga is essentially Acting, or doing one’s duties in life as per his/her dharma, or duty, without concern of results - a sort of constant sacrifice of action to the Supreme. It is action done without thought of gain. In a more modern interpretation, it can be viewed as duty bound deeds done without letting the nature of the result affecting one’s actions. Krishna advocates Nishkam Karma (Selfless Action) as the ideal path to realize the Truth. Allocated work done without expectations, motives, or thinking about its outcomes tends to purify one’s mind and gradually makes an individual fit to see the value of reason and the benefits of renouncing the work itself. These concepts are vividly described in the following verses:

“To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction”(2.47)

“Fixed in yoga, do thy work, O Winner of wealth (Arjuna), abandoning attachment, with an even mind in success and failure, for evenness of mind is called yoga”(2.48)

“With the body, with the mind, with the intellect, even merely with the senses, the Yogis perform action toward self-purification, having abandoned attachment. He who is disciplined in Yoga, having abandoned the fruit of action, attains steady peace...”
In order to achieve true liberation, it is important to control all mental desires and tendencies to enjoy sense pleasures. The following verses illustrate this:

“When a man dwells in his mind on the object of sense, attachment to them is produced. From attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger.”(2.62)

“From anger arises bewilderment, from bewilderment loss of memory; and from loss of memory, the destruction of intelligence and from the destruction of intelligence he perishes”(2.63)

Eighteen Yogas

In Sanskrit editions of the Gita, the Sanskrit text includes a traditional chapter title naming each chapter as a particular form of yoga. These chapter titles do not appear in the Sanskrit text of the Mahabharata.[63] Since there are eighteen chapters, there are therefore eighteen yogas mentioned, as explained in this quotation from Swami Chidbhavananda:

All the eighteen chapters in the Gita are designated, each as a type of yoga. The function of the yoga is to train the body and the mind.... The first chapter in the Gita is designated as system of yoga. It is called Arjuna Vishada Yogam - Yoga of Arjuna’s Dejection.

In Sanskrit editions, these eighteen chapter titles all use the word yoga, but in English translations the word yoga may not appear. For example, the Sanskrit title of Chapter 1 as given in Swami Sivananda’s bilingual edition is arjunaviṣādayogaḥ which he translates as “The Yoga of the Despondency of Arjuna”. Swami Tapasyananda’s bilingual edition gives the same Sanskrit title, but translates it as “Arjuna’s Spiritual Conversion Through Sorrow”. The English-only translation by Radhakrishnan gives no Sanskrit, but the chapter title is translated as “The Hesitation and Despondency of Arjuna”. Other English translations, such as that by Zaehner, omit these chapter titles entirely.

Swami Sivananda’s commentary says that the eighteen chapters have a progressive order to their teachings, by which Krishna “pushed Arjuna up the ladder of Yoga from one rung to another.” As Winthrop Sargeant explains, In the model presented by the Bhagavad Gītā, every aspect of life is in fact a way of salvation.

Author(s)

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Bhagavad Gita - ... written by Veda Vyasa.

Etymology

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhagavad Gita - “song of God” (from the verb root bhaj = “to love, revere” + gā = “to sing”)

Synopsis

General

Wikipedia

The content of the Gita is the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna taking place on the battlefield before the start of the Kurukshetra war. Responding to Arjuna's confusion and moral dilemma about fighting his own cousins, Krishna explains to Arjuna his duties as a warrior and prince and elaborates on different Yogic and Vedantic philosophies, with examples and analogies. This has led to the Gita often being described as a concise guide to Hindu theology and also as a practical, self-contained guide to life. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi describes it as a lighthouse of eternal wisdom that has the ability to inspire any man or woman to supreme accomplishment and enlightenment. During the discourse, Krishna reveals His identity as the Supreme Being Himself (Svayam Bhagavan), blessing Arjuna with an awe-inspiring vision of His divine universal form.

In summary the main philosophical subject matter of the Bhagavad-gita is the explanation of five basic concepts or "truths":

Ishvara (The Supreme Controller)

Jiva (Living beings/the individualized soul)

Prakrti (Nature/Matter)

Dharma (Duty in accordance with Divine law)

Kaala (Time)

Overview of chapters

The Gita consists of eighteen chapters in total:

1. Arjuna requests Krishna to move his chariot between the two armies. When Arjuna sees his relatives on the opposing army side of the Kurus, he loses courage and decides not to fight.
2. After asking Krishna for help, Arjuna is instructed that only the body may be killed as he was worried if it would become a sin to kill people (including his gurus and relatives), while the eternal self is immortal. Krishna appeals to Arjuna that as a warrior he has a duty to uphold the path of dharma through warfare.
3. Arjuna asks why he should engage in fighting if knowledge is more important than action. Krishna stresses to Arjuna that performing his duties for the greater good, but without attachment to results is the appropriate course of action.
4. Krishna reveals that he has lived through many births, always teaching Yoga for the protection of the pious and the destruction of the impious and stresses the importance of accepting a guru.
5. Arjuna asks Krishna if it is better to forgo action or to act. Krishna answers that both ways may be beneficent, but that acting in Karma Yoga is superior.
6. Krishna describes the correct posture for meditation and the process of how to achieve samadhi.
7. Krishna teaches the path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga).
8. Krishna defines the terms brahman, adhyatma, karma, atman, adhibhuta and adhidaiva and explains how one can remember him at the time of death and attain his supreme abode.
9. Krishna explains panentheism, "all beings are in me" as a way of remembering him in all circumstances.
10. Krishna describes how he is the ultimate source of all material and spiritual worlds. Arjuna accepts Krishna as the Supreme Being, quoting great sages who have also done so.
11. On Arjuna's request, Krishna displays his "universal form" (Viśvarūpa), a theophany of a being facing every way and emitting the radiance of a thousand suns, containing all other beings and material in existence.
12. Krishna describes the process of devotional service (Bhakti Yoga).

13. Krishna describes nature (prakṛti), the enjoyer (puruṣa) and consciousness.
14. Krishna explains the three modes (gunas) of material nature.
15. Krishna describes a symbolic tree (representing material existence), its roots in the heavens and its foliage on earth. Krishna explains that this tree should be felled with the “axe of detachment”, after which one can go beyond to his supreme abode.
15. Krishna tells of the human traits of the divine and the demonic natures. He counsels that to attain the supreme destination one give up lust, anger and greed, discern between right and wrong action by evidence from scripture and thus act rightly.
16. Krishna tells of three divisions of faith and the thoughts, deeds and even eating habits corresponding to the three gunas.
17. In conclusion, Krishna asks Arjuna to abandon all forms of dharma and simply surrender unto him. He describes this as the ultimate perfection of life.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

TEACHER: Let me introduce the Gita to you.

STUDENT: What is the Gita?

Do you know the Mahābhārata? ... an epic called the Mahābhārata ... reflects the life and ideals of the people who lived in India around 1000 B.C. ...We can easily call it an encyclopedia of psychological types and a compendium of Upaniṣadic thoughts and ideals.

Who wrote this epic?

It is believed that Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed the Mahābhārata The name Vyāsa literally means a compiler or editor.

How is Vyāsa related to the Gita?

In Vyāsa’s Mahābhārata there is a section called Bhīṣmaparva. In it there is a sub-section consisting of seven hundred verses beginning with verse 830. This sub-section is called the Bhagavad Gita...

Is the Gita a holy book?

Many people look upon it as an object of worship. Some carry it with them as a talisman, others touch it to ward off evil. These are very crude and childish ways of expressing appreciation for the Gita. Actually the Gita teaches us to go beyond the idea of the holy and the unholy, so it is not right to look upon the Gita as a holy book. You should evaluate it as a book of great wisdom, and approach it in the right manner.

What do you mean by the right manner?

If you want to understand, appreciate, and critically evaluate a book, you should first be qualified to read it. This is called, in Sanskrit, having adhikāra, competency. Secondly, you should know with what subject the book is dealing. In other words, you should know the epistemology of the book. In Sanskrit the subject matter is called viśaya. Thirdly, you should know the method employed in the book to arrive at its conclusive teaching. The methodology adopted in a book is called its samhandha. Fourthly, you should know the purpose of the book, and how you are going to be benefited by its study. In Sanskrit this is called the prayojana of the book, its axiology. Thus, if you are competent to read a book with reference to its epistemology, methodology, and axiology, you would make a correct evaluation of it. Only in that case can you claim to have the right kind of appreciation. ...

What is the subject-matter of the Gita?

In one word we can describe it as brahmavidyā, the Science of the Absolute. By Absolute we mean here that supreme knowledge which is Self-founded and by which alone everything exists and everything is known. Until you realize this truth, you know only

relative factors. One who feels the pangs of life and does not know how to get out of them is called a visādi. Visāda means the sadness generated by conflict. Conflict arises out of paradoxical situations, and life bristles with paradoxes. The enigmas and paradoxes of life can be resolved only by knowing the Absolute.

The Bhagavad Gita, in a very comprehensive manner, deals with the riddles of life. In the first chapter is presented a typical seeker confronted by a grave enigma which he cannot get over by mere ratiocination. A carping seeker, questioning everything in a state of agony, is called a pūrvapakṣin, an anterior skeptic. The whole of the first chapter and the first nine verses of the second chapter consist of the presentation of the anterior skeptic, Arjuna.

The second chapter explains the stand of the wisdom teacher, Kṛṣṇa. In contrast to the notions of a skeptic who is in conflict, the wise one always sees the omnipresence of the Absolute as the true foundation of everything, and as the indwelling spirit in everyone. Knowing the Absolute as one's own imperishable Self is described in the second chapter as Sāṃkhya Yoga.

A man who is afflicted by world-consciousness, even after realizing that he is none other than the Absolute, will find it hard to keep away from the necessary demands of his biological and psychological urges. It is these urges that necessitate action. Hence it is necessary to discuss the implications of action in the context of wisdom. The third chapter of Gita, therefore, describes how action can be unitively treated so that it will not bind the agent to the consequent result.

What is unitive action?

That will be explained later. Brute action is to be differentiated from action guided by wisdom. Comprehensive knowledge and unitive action are counterparts of a situation. Each has its own discipline and is to be understood separately. The secret of being wise and also acting accordingly is taught in the fourth chapter called Jñāna Yoga.

The fifth chapter is Karma Saṁnyāsa Yoga. In this chapter it is shown how the necessary aspects of life can be unitively treated. Finding peace in one's own Self and sharing it with others is made the chief goal of life; and following the dictates of the Absolute in every situation is treated as most natural to the realized person.

The sixth chapter is called Dhyāna Yoga. This chapter describes Yoga more as a discipline than a philosophical vision. It is described as a sadhana (discipline undergone to achieve a specific attainment), and not as a darśana (a truth to be visualized). In this chapter it is taught how the self is raised by the higher Self, and how the lower self can be fully established in the higher Self. The self finding its natural repose in the Self is described as a true state of Yoga.

What is the higher Self?

It is the same as God. The seventh chapter is Jñāna Vijñāna Yoga. In it all values are categorized in terms of the physical, ādhibhautika, the divine, ādhidaivika, and the sacrificial, ādhiyājñika. These are graded and arranged in such a manner that one value complements the other. This chapter also teaches how the Self can be related to the non-Self without conflict.

The eighth chapter is called Akṣara Brahma Yoga. To contemplate the benign qualities of the Supreme Lord of one's own Self is the highest form of devotion. Devotion verticalizes the mind and action horizontalizes it. To fight an enemy with valour and strategic tact is undoubtedly a horizontalized attitude of the mind. In spite of the conflicting nature of these two attitudes-fighting and contemplation-Arjuna is taught in this chapter how he can contemplate the Lord as his own Self and also fight. The dialectical secret by which one can cancel out pairs of opposites is presented in this chapter.

The ninth chapter is called Rāja Vidyā Rāja Guhya Yoga.

Guhya means secret. Does this chapter deal with anything esoteric or occult? Is it open to all?

There is nothing esoteric about it. No discipline can be termed scientific, śāstra, unless it is open and universal, both in its scope and application. The Gita presents a Science of the Absolute. It does not withhold from anyone any secret whatsoever.

Then in what sense is this chapter a secret?

Einstein's Theory of Relativity can remain a secret to those who do not know higher mathematics and advanced physics. As in the study of physics, there is a methodical way in which the Gita works out its lessons. Each chapter leads to the next, and we come to its conclusive teaching in the ninth chapter. To be able to grasp the full implications of the secrets of the Gita, the student should be disciplined in its special methodology, the dialectical way of reasoning, yoga mīmāṃsā.

The type of reasoning we commonly employ is linear. When we argue from a general principle to a specific conclusion, or inductively hypothesize a general notion, our reason conforms to the pattern of linear thinking. On the other hand, when we cognize the polarization of counterparts that belong to a dialectical situation, and arrive at a unitive or integrated notion cancelling out the elements of contradiction in the opposing pairs, we are employing dialectical reasoning. In this chapter our mind is lifted to the loftiest heights of sublimity, and hence this is called the chapter of the supreme secret. This chapter is introductory to the tenth, which narrates the cosmic structure of the universe in terms of divine values.

Does each chapter deal with a separate topic? Has the Gita any inner coordination?

Truth is many-faceted, and innumerable are the possible angles of vision. Each angle permits us only a relative vision. However, each vision has its own structural secrets and functional participation with the whole. Hence it is necessary to have a separate chapter to provide each comprehensive vision with a suitable frame of reference consistent with an overall scheme of correlation. The eighteen chapters of the Gita are not disjunctly designed. Each chapter is structurally related to its adjacent chapters, and is intended to be complementary to them. The eighteen chapters are arranged as spokes on the hub of brahmavidyā, the Science of the Absolute. The method employed in each chapter has, in common with the rest, the goal of the realization of the Self through Yoga. Further, we see that the conclusive teaching given at the close of the ninth chapter is again repeated in the closing chapter. This again shows that the Gita has a consistent teaching, which can undoubtedly be described as one-pointed devotion, ekāntika bhakti.

Instead of giving the conclusive teaching only in the last chapter, why is it given in the ninth as well as the eighteenth chapter?

The author of the Gita has in his mind a structural design of his work. He uses the first half of the book to discuss fundamentals and pure principles. The second half is for applied philosophy. It is in this second half that he gives the diagnostic and symptomatic analysis of personality, which one can apply to oneself to discern one's svadharma. Svadharma is the Sanskrit term for the characteristic foundation of individual personality. Both the pure teaching of the first half and the applied teaching of the second half lead to the same teaching that one should live always in the adoration of the Absolute, feeling one's identity with the Absolute in thought, word and deed. We now go on to the second half of the book.

Our true being is the Self, ātman. Atman is described as sat-cit-ānanda. Sat means existence, cit is subsistence, and ānanda is the value-factor. Actual presences or value-factors belonging to the universe are described in this chapter as aspects of the Absolute with which we can relate ourselves. The difference between the values presented in the previous chapter and this one is negligible. Comparatively, the values given in the ninth chapter are more conceptual. This justifies the title, "Unitive Recognition of Positive Values", Vibhūti Yoga, for the tenth chapter.

Why is ānanda translated as value? If ātman is the same as the Absolute, all experiences should come within its scope. Pain, suffering, disease, poverty, and death are not at all blissful or enjoyable. Is not ānanda the opposite of misery?

We can catalogue a long list of evil items, but we cannot assign the cause of these to an agency outside the pale of the Absolute. That is why we don't want to translate ānanda as bliss. The term we use here is "value". Items of pleasure can be arranged

in terms of qualitative or quantitative units of values of an ascending or descending order. We are counting positive values when we go from indifference to the highest state of bliss. We descend in the value-scale when we go from the highest bliss to the zero point. If we go any further from the zero point we will advance in the opposite direction, which should be counted as negative values. Thus, pain and pleasure, irrespective of their accompanying modes of affectivity, come under the scale of values, positive or negative.

Earlier you said that from the tenth chapter onward we come to the application of the teachings given in the first nine chapters. The tenth chapter also appears to be theoretical rather than being applied.

In the tenth chapter we only just enter the second half of the book. Here, Kṛṣṇa has to prepare the mind of Arjuna to receive an experience which is very unusual and difficult to comprehend in its entirety, or to appreciate without sufficient instruction. Thus the tenth chapter actually marks the beginning of applied yoga in the Science of the Absolute.

How does Arjuna experience the cosmic structure of values?

The eleventh chapter is the “Unitive Vision of the Absolute”. In Sanskrit this is called Visvarūpa Darśana Yoga. We get empirical certitude by direct perception. The Absolute and spiritual values cannot be directly perceived, but they can be intuitively visualized. Spiritual vision also is direct. While direct perception in Sanskrit is called pratyakṣa, (seen by the eye), spiritual vision is called aparokṣa (not perceived by another). Arjuna gets a direct vision of the Absolute with the aid of an inner eye of spiritual vision with which he was blessed by his Guru, Sṛī Kṛṣṇa. The mere description of the Absolute gives only a theoretical understanding and intellectual appreciation. It should be followed by one’s own direct experience. This chapter is devoted to the description of Arjuna’s direct experience.

The twelfth chapter is named Bhakti Yoga. We may translate it as “Unitive Devotion and Contemplation”. The term bhakti is used here in a very specific sense. It is not just an emotional attachment or an enchantment that one feels towards the Divine. Bhakti, in Vedānta, means “continuous contemplation of one’s own true nature as the Absolute”. A true model of bhakti (devotion), and of a bhakta (devotee), is given in this chapter.

The thirteenth chapter is Kṣetra Kṣetrajña Vibhāga Yoga. Kṣetra means “the field”, Kṣetrajña is “the knower of the field”. In Bhakti Yoga we learn that it is the Divine that dwells in every being. This chapter enables us to differentiate the Self from the non-Self. It is translated as “The Unitive Understanding of the Distinction between the Actual and the Perceptual”.

Does everybody experience devotion the same way?

Peter differs from Paul. The fourteenth chapter deals with personality variations based on guṇa. It is entitled Guṇatrayavibhāga Yoga. Guṇa means “a quality”. In the present context the reference is to nature-modality. Hence this chapter is called “The Unitive Way of Transcending the Three Nature Modalities”. All of us and everything in nature are evolutes of the three modalities of nature.

The fifteenth chapter is called Puruṣottama Yoga. In the Sāṃkhyan philosophy there are two primary factors called puruṣa and prakṛti. Puruṣa is equivalent to the “Supreme Spirit”, and prakṛti is primordial matter from which nature is supposed to have evolved. The duality of puruṣa and prakṛti, spirit and matter, is transcended by coniving the “Supreme Spirit” as the highest reality. The Gita names it puruṣottama. The title of this chapter is translated as “The Unitive Approach to the Paramount Person”.

The sixteenth chapter is called Daivā Asura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga. The three guṇas mentioned in the previous chapters are said to create all conditioning impressions which are responsible for building up one’s character. Once they are formed, they persist even through several lives. In the present chapter, reference is made to two main tendencies which run vertically through one’s life, giving a contiguous character to one’s habitual choice. The higher nature is called daivi sampatti, and the lower nature is

called āsuri sampatti. Daivā means “divine”, and āsura means “demonic”. Daivi sampatti therefore means tendencies which are spiritually rich. The opposite is āsuri. To assess the value structure of your personality, you should discern these two tendencies clearly, and should see how far your thoughts, beliefs, and behaviour are influenced by each.

How does a man diagnose the influence of inherent tendencies?

The seventeenth chapter is called Sraddhātraya Vibhāga Yoga. It is very much diagnostic in character. Sraddha literally means “deep interest”. Interest is an indicator of one’s innate disposition, nature, and character. By observing symptoms, a doctor can diagnose a disease. In this chapter we get a symptomatic diagnosis of one’s basic character. The Gita teaches us how to analyze our individual self in terms of the three nature-modalities discussed earlier. It also teaches us how to take into account our higher and lower nature. It further discusses five types which are somewhat akin to the psychological types of Jung. These are the Samnyāsi, the renunciate, the Brāhmin, scholarly priest, the Kṣatriya, warrior, the Vaiśya, tradesman, and the Sūdra, the servant. We should be cautious not to treat these as social classes belonging to the stratified social system of India, indiscriminately termed as varna or jāti. The types discussed here are universal. This chapter is aptly called “The Unitive Recognition of the Three Patterns of Faith”.

The last chapter, which is the eighteenth, is called Samnyāsa Yoga. For one who seeks the highest Truth, there is no knowledge greater than brahmavidyā. Realization of the Absolute gives release from all bondage. It is preceded by renunciation resulting from proper discrimination. Correctly conceived renunciation is called samnyāsa. Hence this chapter is described as “The Unitive Way in Behaviour Patterns”.

Does the Gita teach Yoga, or the Science of the Absolute?

Each chapter of the Gita ends with a reference to brahmavidyā, yoga-śāstra, and samvāda. Each of these terms connotes a different meaning. There is no doubt the Gita is a textbook of the Science of the Absolute, brahmavidyā. The Absolute is not a thing or an event. It gives rise to many relative notions. That means it can be approached from many angles of vision. The method of discussion employed in the Gita is dialectical, not basically inferential. Hence it is called yoga- śāstra. The literary device employed by the author is in the form of a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa as teacher and Arjuna as disciple. That is why it is called a dialogue, a samvāda. The parables and dialogues in the Upaniṣads are given a more cogent and philosophically structured presentation in the Gita. For all practical purposes, the Gita can be considered the essence of the Upaniṣads.

Why is such a special device adopted?

In philosophical discussions there are bound to be anterior skepticisms, as well as finalized, conclusive teaching. Arjuna represents the anterior skeptic. He raises doubts, apprehensions, and uncritically believed dogmas. Kṛṣṇa examines the stand of Arjuna in each case, and gives Arjuna his conclusive teaching. In the Sanskrit tradition such an anterior critic is called pūrvapakṣin, and the person who gives conclusive or final teaching is called siddhāntin.

What troubles me is the description of the Gita as yoga-śāstra. Each chapter is described as a different yoga. Patañjali describes yoga as a state of the cessation of the modification of mind, citta- vrtti-nirodha. Does the Gita use the term in the same sense? If it does, why is the first chapter called Viśāda Yoga? Viśāda is a state of mental distress. Naturally a disturbed state cannot be described as yoga.

The Gita does not exclude Patañjali’s meaning of yoga. Yoga is conceived in a wider sense in the Gita. The end and means are so interlaced in yoga that they cannot be dualistically separated. Yoga literally means “union”. It is etymologically related to the English term “to yoke”. Dialectical thinking implies synthesis of a thesis and its antithesis. The Bhagavad Gita employs a type of reasoning which is more dialectical than linear or inferential. Dialectical reasoning Sanskrit is called yoga mīmāmsa. The viśāda,

or mental perturbation, of Arjuna is highlighted in the first chapter as the stand of an anterior critic who is fit to become an accomplished dialectician. The chapters which follow reject Arjuna's contentions by cancelling them out with counter-theses before Kṛṣṇa's conclusive teaching is given. The specific sense in which viśāda yoga is used will be elaborated later.

When yoga is popularly understood as a state of perfection or spiritual absorption, why do you say that Vyāsa uses the term yoga in this book only to indicate the type of methodology he has adopted?

Most people think of ends and means dualistically. When taken separately, "means" can become a painful anticipation, and can lead one ultimately even to frustration. When ends and means are unitively conceived there is a continuous and progressive realization of the end in the application of the means. For instance, when a child runs after a ball, his game is a "means" to gain the "end" of happiness. Here, ends and means have no real dichotomy between them. Happiness is not an award given at the end of the game. Right from the beginning, when the child kicks as well as misses the ball, he is in a state of happiness which is the natural end of the game. In other words, the game provides to the child a yoga of ends and means. The Bhagavad Gita treats the whole of life as a game presided over by the Supreme Lord, Íśvaraḥ. The various positions within the game offer different roles and each person is expected to approach it from a stipulated angle in a certain manner. That is why each chapter of the Gita focuses its attention on a different aspect.

Realization is not a static event; it is a continuous process. In all states and stages of life, the higher Self is to be realized in the lower self, and the lower self is to be seen as an expression of the higher Self. Arjuna is presented in the Gita as the individual mind or personal psyche, and Kṛṣṇa, as the Guru, stands for the cosmic mind or universal psyche. Arjuna is confused because of a disparity or incompatibility in his notion of the personal and the universal. The Gita attempts to avoid this implied duality by bringing Arjuna's mind in line with Kṛṣṇa's wisdom or, say, the oneness of the jīva, the individual self, and Íśvaraḥ, the Lord. Agreement in a certain approach need not necessarily imply agreement in all others. Hence, the Gita takes into account the various possible approaches to the Absolute, and establishes an abiding rapport between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna on different levels. This accounts for each chapter of the Gita being termed an Upaniṣad. In that sense we have in the Gita eighteen songs and eighteen Upaniṣads... To understand the Gita is it imperative to study the Mahābhārata also?

The Mahābhārata is a rare classic. If one can afford the time to go through it even once, there is no doubt that it will be of great help. However, it is not imperative that we should know the whole of the Mahābhārata to know the purport of the Gita. The Mahābhārata is used only as an epic-canvas upon which to paint the perennial philosophy of the Gita. The texture of the canvas should be carefully discerned from the painting. The central teaching of the Gita stands apart, complete in itself. To get the maximum benefit one should relate the teaching of the Gita to one's own life.

Publications

Commentaries

[Wikipedia](#)

Traditionally the commentators belong to spiritual traditions or schools (sampradaya) and Guru lineages (parampara), which claim to preserve teaching stemming either directly from Krishna himself or from other sources, each claiming to be faithful to the original message. In the words of Hirianna, "[The Gita] is one of the hardest books to interpret, which accounts for the numerous commentaries on it - each differing from the rest in an essential point or the other."

Different translators and commentators have widely differing views on what multi-layered Sanskrit words and passages signify, and their presentation in English depending on the sampradaya they are affiliated to. Especially in Western philology, interpretations of particular passages often do not agree with traditional views.

The oldest and most influential medieval commentary was that of the founder of the Vedanta school of extreme 'non-dualism', Shankara (788-820 A. D.), also known as Shankaracharya (Sanskrit: Śaṅkarācārya). Shankara's commentary was based on a recension of the Gita containing 700 verses, and that recension has been widely adopted by others. There is not universal agreement that he was the actual author of the commentary on the Bhagavad Gita that is attributed to him. A key commentary for the "modified non-dualist" school of Vedanta was written by Ramanujacharya (Sanskrit: Rāmānujacharya), who lived in the eleventh century A.D. Ramanujacharya's commentary chiefly seeks to show that the discipline of devotion to God (Bhakti yoga) is the way of salvation. The commentary by Madhva, whose dates are given either as (b. 1199 - d. 1276) or as (b. 1238 - d. 1317), also known as Madhvacharya (Sanskrit: Madhvācārya), exemplifies thinking of the "dualist" school. Madhva's school of dualism asserts that there is, in a quotation provided by Winthrop Sargeant, "an eternal and complete distinction between the Supreme, the many souls, and matter and its divisions." Madhva is also considered to be one of the great commentators reflecting the viewpoint of the Vedanta school.

In the Shaiva tradition, the renowned philosopher Abhinavagupta (10-11th century CE) has written a commentary on a slightly variant recension called Gitārtha-Samgraha.

Other classical commentators include Nimbarka (1162 AD), Vallabha(1479 AD)., while Dnyaneshwar (1275- 1296 AD) translated and commented on the Gita in Marathi, in his book Dnyaneshwari.

In modern times notable commentaries were written by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi, who used the text to help inspire the Indian independence movement. Tilak wrote his commentary while in jail during the period 1910-1911, while he was serving a six- year sentence imposed by the British colonial government in India for sedition. While noting that the Gita teaches possible paths to liberation, his commentary places most emphasis on Karma yoga. No book was more central to Gandhi's life and thought than the Bhagavadgita, which he referred to as his "spiritual dictionary". During his stay in Yeravda jail in 1929, Gandhi wrote a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita in Gujarati. The Gujarati manuscript was translated into English by Mahadev Desai, who provided an additional introduction and commentary. It was published with a Foreword by Gandhi in 1946. Mahatma Gandhi expressed his love for the Gita in these words:

I find a solace in the Bhagavadgītā that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavadgītā. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies - and my life has been full of external tragedies - and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of Bhagavadgītā.

Three translations: Bhagavad Gita As It Is, a Gujarati translation by Gita Press, and another English one published by Barnes & Noble.

Other notable modern commentators include Sri Aurobindo, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Swami Vivekananda, who took a syncretistic approach to the text.

Swami Vivekananda, the follower of Sri Ramakrishna, was known for his commentaries on the four Yogas - Bhakti, Jnana, Karma and Raja Yoga. He drew from his knowledge of the Gita to expound on these Yogas. Swami Sivananda advises the aspiring Yogi to read verses from the Bhagavad Gita every day. Paramahansa Yogananda, writer of the famous Autobiography of a Yogi, viewed the Bhagavad Gita as one of the world's most divine scriptures. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder of

the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, wrote *Bhagavad- Gītā As It Is*— a commentary on the Gita from the perspective of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. In 1965, the modern sage Maharishi Mahesh Yogi published his own commentary of the Gita and proclaimed his technique of Transcendental Meditation to be the practical procedure for experiencing the field of absolute Being described by Lord Krishna.

Translations

English translations

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Wikipedia

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The first translation of Bhagavad Gita to English was done by Charles Wilkins in 1785. In 1808 passages from the Gita were part of the first direct translation of Sanskrit into German, appearing in a book through which Friedrich Schlegel became known as the founder of Indian philology in Germany.

Another English translation is by Barbara Stoler Miller.

Related words

Bhakti Yoga

Jnana Yoga

Karma Yoga

Mahabharata

Prasthanatraya

Yoga

External links

Original text

Mahabharata 6.23–6.40 (sacred-texts.com)

Translations and Commentaries

1890 translation by William Quan Judge

1900 translation by Sir Edwin Arnold

The Gita According to Gandhi by Mahadev Desai of Mahatma Gandhi's 1929 Gujarati translation and commentary

1942 translation by Swami Sivananda

1971 translation by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada entitled Bhagavad Gita As It Is with Sanskrit text and English commentary.

1988 translation by Ramananda Prasad

1992 translation and commentary by Swami Chinmayananda

1993 translation by Jagannatha Prakasa (John of All Faith)

2001 translation by Sanderson Beck

2004 metered translation by Swami Nirmalananda Giri

Six commentaries: by Adi Sankara, Ramanuja, Sridhara Swami, Madhusudana Sarasvati, Visvanatha Chakravarti and Baladeva

Vidyabhusana (all in Sanskrit)

Essays on Gita by Sri Aurobindo

Gita Supersite Original text, with several accompanying translations or commentaries in Sanskrit, English, or Hindi

Multiple English Translations easy to navigate

Bhagavan

Variant spellings

Bhagavn
bhagavān

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhagavān — ... Lord; God; revered person; venerable; the fortunate; the powerful; blessed one

1. The Lord. The one who is glorious, illustrious, divine, venerable. A term of address for God, or saints, sages, perfected ones, denoting what is glorious, divine, venerable, and holy. He possesses six divine qualities: knowledge (jñāna), strength (bala), lordship (aiśvarya), potency (śakti), virility (vīrya), and splendor (tejas). (See Īśvara.)

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhagavan in Sanskrit means “one who is glorious, illustrious, revered, divine, or holy.” It is the most common word for “God” in Hinduism. In its sense of “holy” or “divine” it is also used as an honorific for gurus and divine personages, for example, Bhagavan Sri RAJNEESH.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhagavan (“Blessed One”). Name denoting both respect and reverence. In different contexts this name can be used as an epithet of either the god Krishna (as in the Bhagavad Gita) or the god Shiva. In modern usage, at least in northern India, it is also the word that comes closest to expressing the notion of abstract divinity, much like the word “God” in English. It is often used to denote God by Hindus who are religious but who do not worship particular deities.

Wikipedia

Bhagavan, also written Bhagwan or Bhagawan

In some traditions of Hinduism it is used to indicate the Supreme Being or Absolute Truth, but with specific reference to that Supreme Being as possessing a personality (a personal God). This personal feature indicated in Bhagavan differentiates its usage from other similar terms[3] such as Brahman, the “Supreme Spirit” or “spirit”, and thus, in this usage, Bhagavan is in many ways analogous to the general Christian conception of God.

Bhagavan used as a title of veneration is often translated as “Lord”, as in “Bhagavan Krishna”, “Bhagavan Shiva”, “Bhagavan Swaminarayan”, etc. In Buddhism and Jainism, Gautama Buddha, Mahavira and other Tirthankaras, Buddhas and bodhisattvas are also venerated with this title. The feminine of Bhagavat is Bhagawatī and is an epithet of Durga and other goddesses.

The title is also used as a respectful form of address for a number of contemporary spiritual teachers in India.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavan: The word denoting God, used in the context of devotion (bhakti). Literally, one in possession of brilliant qualities (bhagas).

Nitya. Psychology of Darsanamala

The word [bhagavān] means “that power which can remain concealed or make itself overtly manifest.” The following qualities are attributes of bhagavān: aṇima, “being atomic”; laghima, “becoming very subtle”; mahima, “becoming very gross”; garima, “to be concrete”; prāpti, “to achieve anything by mere volition”; prākāmyam, “experiencing the properties of an object without the actual presence of the object”; īśitvam, “the power to create, control, and protect”; vaśitvam, “to attract”; and finally śrīmat, “to be gracious.”

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Six Supreme Achievements of Hindu tradition are in their traditional order: All-Lordliness, Dharma, Fame, All-Prosperity, Wisdom and Renunciation. These Six Achievements, also called Bhaga, make a sage into a Bhagavan, a word implying “the glorious, the venerable, the worshipful, the victorious, the blessed Lord”. This title has been given to Buddhas, to Jain Tirthankaras and to Hindu Avatars and Jnanis.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

He who is called Brahman by the jnanis is known as Atman by the yogis and as Bhagavan by the bhaktas.

... But the Reality is one and the same. The difference is only in name. He who is Brahman is verily Atman, and again, He is the Bhagavan. He is Brahman to the followers of the path of knowledge, Paramatman to the yogis, and Bhagavan to the lovers of God.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhagavān - from the root bhag = “good fortune, wealth, splendor, power” + van “possessor, Master, having”.

Wikipedia

Bhagavan - from the Sanskrit nt-stem bhaga-vant- nominative/vocative भगवान् Bhagavān, literally means “possessing fortune, blessed, prosperous” (from the noun bhaga, meaning “fortune, wealth”, cognate to Slavic bog “god”), and hence “illustrious, divine, venerable, holy”, etc.

Related words

Ishvara

Sanskrit

Bhagavān — भगवान्

bhagavān - भगवान्

Bhajana

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Bhajana — ... devotional singing

1. Individual or group singing of devotional songs, hymns, and chants. Devotional songs in praise of the Divine. It is a form of pure and unadulterated devotion to God.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

bhajana -

the act of sharing;

possession;

reverence, worship, adoration

[Wikipedia](#)

A Bhajan is any type of Indian devotional song. It has no fixed form: it may be as simple as a mantra or kirtan or as sophisticated as the dhrupad or kriti with music based on classical ragas and talas. It is normally lyrical, expressing love for the Divine. The name, a cognate of bhakti, meaning religious devotion, suggests its importance to the bhakti movement that spread from the south of India throughout the entire subcontinent in the Moghul era.

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. Bhagavad Gita](#)

Bhajana: Popularly, to sing devotional songs. Philosophically, intense contemplation.

[Nitya. Love and Blessings](#)

Bhajan: In practice, musical recitations of scriptures and hymns, often accompanied by musical instruments. Literally it means to contemplate something consistently.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Anecdotes and episodes from scriptures, the teachings of saints and descriptions of gods have all been the subject of bhajans. The Dhrupad style, Sufi qawwali and the kirtan or song in the Haridasi tradition are related to bhajan. Nanak, Kabir, Meera, Narottama Dasa, Surdas and Tulsidas are notable composers. Traditions of bhajan such as Nirguni, Gorakhanathi, Vallabhapanthi, Ashtachhap, Madhura- bhakti and the traditional South Indian form Sampradya Bhajan each have their own repertoire and methods of singing.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

bhajana - from the root bhaj = "to love, worship, praise".

Sanskrit

Bhajana — भजन

bhajana - भजन

Bhakta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhakta — ... devotee; lover of God

1. A devotee; a lover or worshipper of God. Followers of Bhakti Yoga, the path of love and devotion.
2. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, a devotee is one type of seeker of liberation. They are those who have read the Veda together with its auxiliaries and the Upaniṣads, and who, from the knowledge of the earlier and later parts of the Mīmāṃsā, have determined the nature of the Absolute (Brahman) as different from individuals (cit) and the world (acit). They are of the nature of bliss and know Brahman as of the nature of bliss, infinitude, and unsurpassability.
3. A stage of consciousness.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

bhakta -

distributed, assigned, allotted;
divided;
forming part of, belonging to;

loved, liked;
served, worshipped;
dressed, cooked;
engaged in, occupied with, attached or devoted to, loyal, faithful, honouring, worshipping, serving;
a worshipper, votary;
food or a meal;
boiled rice;
any eatable grain boiled with water;
a vessel;
a share, portion

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhakta (“sharer”) In Hinduism, this word denotes a devotee of any particular deity. The word’s literal meaning, “sharer,” has a two-fold sense. On one hand, the devotee shares in the deity’s grace by virtue of his or her piety. On the other hand, since most Hindu devotionalism involves a community of worshipers, the devotee also gets to share in the company and community of like-minded people.

Wikipedia

Bhakta - one who practices bhakti is called a bhakta.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. Hindu Mysticism

Mysticism in Europe has a definite history. In spite of the variety of its types, it may roughly be described to refer to the belief that God is realised through ecstatic communion with Him. With the Islamic mystics, the Christian mystics, and the devotional mystics or bhaktas of India, the vision of God and His grace is attained through devotional communion or devotional rapture of various kinds. But in all these mystics, we find a keen sense of the necessity of purity of mind, contentment, ever alert striving for moral goodness, self-abnegation, and one-pointedness to God. There can be no true mysticism without real moral greatness. This mysticism should therefore be distinguished from a mere delusory faith that God often grants us a vision of Him or appears to us in dreams, or from a faith in the infallibility of the scriptures and so forth, for the latter are often but manifestations of credulity or of a tendency to believe in suggestions, and may often be associated with an inadequate alertness of critical and synthetic intellect. ... the conception of God as creator, supporter, father, lord and master, or as the ultimate philosophical principle, is subordinated to the conception of god as the nearest and dearest. The most important feature is His nearness to and His intimacy with us--not His great powers, which create a distance between Him and us. That He is the greatest of the great and the Highest of the high, that there is nothing greater and higher than Him is admitted by all. His greatness, however, does not reveal the secret of why He should be so dear to us. He may be the greatest, highest, loftiest and the most transcendent, but yet He has made His home in our hearts and has come down to our level to give us His affection and love. Indeed He is conceived as so near to us that we can look upon Him and love Him with the love of a very dear friend, or with the devotion and the intensity of love of a spouse. Love is a great leveller; the best way of realizing God is by making Him an equal partner in life by the force of intense love.

The legend of Krishna supplies a human touch to God's dealings with men. With the help of this legend the bhaktas of the new school, by a peculiar mystical turn of mind, could conceive of God as at once a great being with transcendent powers and also as an intimate friend or a dear lover maintaining human relations with his bhaktas. The episodes of Krishna's life in Brindaban are spiritualized. They are often conceived to happen on a non-physical plane where both Krishna and his partners are thought to play their parts of love and friendship in non-physical bodies. Thus they are not regarded as particular events that took place at specific points of time in the life of a particular man, Krishna. They are interpreted as the eternal, timeless and spaceless play of God with His own associates and His energies, with whom He eternally realizes Himself in love and friendship. The part that his bhaktas had to play was to identify themselves, by a great stretch of sympathy, as partners in or spectators of God's love-play, and find their fullest satisfaction in the satisfaction of God. For a true bhakta, it is not necessary, therefore, that his sense-inclinations should be destroyed. What is necessary is merely that these should be turned towards God and not towards himself, i.e., that he use his senses not for his own worldly satisfaction but to find enjoyment and satisfaction in the great love-drama of God by identifying himself with one of the spiritual partners of God in his love-play. Hence it is not essential that all desires and sense-functions, as the Gita says, be destroyed, or that the individual behave as if he had desires while yet being absolutely desireless. It was required that the bhakta have the fullest satisfaction of his sense and inclinations by participating in the joys of Krishna in his divine love-play. For such participation and vicarious enjoyment was regarded as true love (preman), while the satisfaction of one's own senses or of one's own worldly purposes was viewed as a vicious passion. Thus here we have a new scheme of life. The ideal of desirelessness and absolute self-control is replaced by that of participation in a drama of divine joy, and the desires are given full play in the direction of God. Desires are not to be distinguished; only their directions are to be changed.

... In the Narayaniya chapter of the fifth canto of the Mahabharata God is spoken of as a father, mother and teacher; and in the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali and elsewhere the idea is often expressed that God originally taught the Vedas to the sages and that He is therefore the original teacher. In all these writings, however, the love of God supercedes deep reverence. The true bhakta looked upon God as the divine dispenser; he considered all that he had-- kingdoms, riches, wife and all that he could call his own--to be God's. Love of God as the mother of the world plays an important part in the religious attitude of many bhakti worshippers. This is particularly true in the case of Ramprasad and others, notably the sage Ramakrishna of recent times. And in this attribution of motherliness to God both Ramprasad and Ramakrishna view Him as a tender mother who is always helping her child, condoning his sins and transgressions, partial to his weaknesses and concerned to better him. Nevertheless He cannot be attained by mere formal worship but only through a whole-hearted worship, with a proper control of the sense-inclinations.

... I have thus far confined myself to a description of different forms of mysticism as portrayed in Sanskrit writings. I shall now turn to the mysticism of divine love that found expression in the vernaculars of North India and of the South. But this is a vast subject and I can say only a few words.

Let me advert first to the Alvar saints of the South, the earliest of whom belonged to the second and the latest to the tenth century, A. D. They all wrote psalms or songs in Tamil, a Dravidian tongue of South India. They were inspired by the teachings of Vaishnavism when it travelled from the North to the South.

With reference to Nam Alvar, Govindacarya has said: "Briefly, Saint Nam Alvar declares that when one is overcome by bhakti exaltation, trembling in every cell of his being, he must freely and passively allow this influence to penetrate his being, and carry him beyond all known states of consciousness; never from fear or shame that bystanders may take him for a madman, ought the exhibition of this bhakti-rapture that deluges his being, to be suppressed. The very madness is the means of distinguishing him

from the ordinary mortals to whom such beatific vision is necessarily denied. The very madness is the bhakta's pride. In that very madness, the saint exhorts, "run, jump, cry, laugh and sing, and let every man witness it."

... The essence of the teachings of Namdev, as of almost all the other bhaktas of whom I shall now be speaking, is purity of mind, speech, and deed, utter disregard of castes, creeds and other social distinctions, a tendency to leave all for God, and in love and joy to live in God always, utterly ignoring all social, communal and religious prejudices, narrowness, dogmas and bigotry. It is held that God is omnipotent and omnipresent and that He cannot be identified with any particular deity or his character properly narrated by any particular legendary or mythical ways of thinking. At the same time it is contended that we may call him by any name we like, for He is always the same in all.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

This section, moreover, does not refer to bhakti (devotion) as something to be actively cultivated from the side of the devotee, but rather refers to conformity to the will of the Absolute by which the devotee is said to become dear to the Absolute, as stated in the termination of almost every verse from 13 to 19.

The reference in verse 13 to being equalized in pain and happiness does not suggest any more a bhakta than a contemplative yogi. The principal feature of the yoga of the Gita lies in the concept of samya (equalization) as recognized by Arjuna in vi 33.

There is a regular definition of yoga itself as consisting of samatvam (equanimity), in ii, 48.

Even in chapter v, wherein renunciation is the principal theme, we find in verses 19 and 20 the same idea of equanimity or equalization given due importance. Thus, whether it is action, renunciation, or devotion, this equalization of two counterparts is a common distinguishing feature of the perfected yogi, irrespective of the section of chapter where it is discussed. If we keep this in mind, the rest of this section (verses 13 to 19 inclusive) hardly needs further comment.

[Chapter 12]

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

However much a bhakta may experience physical joy and sorrow, he always has knowledge and the treasure of divine love. This treasure never leaves him. Take the Pandava brothers for instance. Though they suffered so many calamities, they did not lose their God-Consciousness even once. Where can you find men like them, endowed with so much knowledge and devotion?

... Since one cannot easily get rid of the ego, a bhakta does not explain away the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. He accepts all the states. Further, he accepts the three gunas—sattva, rajas, and tamas. A bhakta sees that God alone has become the twenty-four cosmic principles, the universe, and all living beings. He also sees that God reveals Himself to His devotees in a tangible form, which is the embodiment of Spirit.

The bhakta takes shelter under vidyamaya. He seeks holy company, goes on pilgrimage, and practises discrimination, devotion, and renunciation. He says that, since a man cannot easily get rid of his ego, he should let the rascal remain as the servant of God, the devotee of God.

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

The Sattvic devotee performs his devotions in secret. He meditates in the night in his bed inside the mosquito-curtain, and therefore rises late in the morning—a fact explained by his friends as due to want of good sleep. The care he bestows on the body ends

by providing it with plain food—perhaps a little rice and vegetables. Of luxury he has none, either in food or in dress. There is no show of fittings and furniture in his house, and he never seeks to rise in the world by flattery. The Rajasic devotee has perhaps distinctive sectarian marks on his body and beads round his neck, with perhaps a few golden ones interspersed. He is particular about outward observances such as wearing silk at the time of worship and celebrating the worship of the Deity with pomp and splendour. The Tamasic devotee has a fiery faith. He applies force to God like a robber seizing things by force. “What!” he says, “I have uttered His ‘name’ and yet I am to remain sinful! I am His son! I am duly entitled to the inheritance of His wealth I” Such is his vehement ardour.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Many visitors came on one occasion and they all saluted Sri Bhagavan with the single prayer, “Make me a bhakta. Give me moksha.” After they left Sri Bhagavan said, thinking aloud: All of them want bhakti and moksha. If I say to them, ‘Give yourself to me’ they will not. How then can they get what they want?

Bhakta and Bhakti-yoga

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

Even after attaining samadhi, some retain the ‘servant ego’ or the ‘devotee ego’. The bhakta keeps this ‘I-consciousness’. He says, ‘O God, Thou art the Master and I am Thy servant; Thou art the Lord and I am Thy devotee.’ He feels that way even after the realization of God. His ‘I’ is not completely effaced. Again, by constantly practising this kind of ‘I-consciousness’, one ultimately attains God. This is called bhaktiyoga.

See: Saguna-brahman and bhaktas

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

bhakta - from the verb root bhaj = “to love, worship, revere”.

Related words

Bhakti

Bhakti Yoga

Sanskrit

Bhakta -- भक्त

bhakta - भक्त

Bhakti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhakti — ... loving devotion

1. The path of devotion leading to union with God; the state of intense devotional love for God or guru. It is one of the paths to liberation (bhakti mār̥ga).
2. Devotion is said to be of two types: sād̥hana-bhakti (comprised of astāñga-yoga, sād̥hana-saptaka, etc.) and phala-bhakti (received by an individual through God's grace spontaneously).
3. It is also divided into nine forms: śravaṇa, kīrtana, smaraṇa, pādasevana, arcana, vandana, dāsya, sakhya, and ātma-nivedana.
4. Devotion to God can assume many forms and the devotee can be related to God in one of many attitudes. The chief ones are dasya, the attitude of a servant to his master; sakhya, the attitude of a friend to a friend; vātsalya, the attitude of a parent to a child; śānta, the attitude of a child to a parent; kānta, the attitude of a wife to a husband; rati, the attitude of a lover to the beloved; and dveṣa, the attitude of an atheist toward God.
5. Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta defines devotion as “a continuous stream of remembrance of God uninterrupted like the flow of oil from one vessel to another.”
6. Vaiṣṇavas divide perfect love of God (rāgātmika bhakti) into kāmātmika (consisting of a desire for erotic and mystical enjoyment inspired by an exclusive effort to please Kṛṣṇa) and sambandhātmika (consisting of a sense of relationship to Kṛṣṇa). The former is composed of sneha (affection wherein the heart melts); mana (affected repulse of endearment due to excess emotion); pranaya (friendly confidence); rāga (erotic transmutation of sorrow into joy); and anurāga (love as a constant freshness). Under the latter, the modes of vātsalya and sakhya involve sneha, mana, pranaya, rāga, and anurāga, while the dāsya mode includes all but anurāga and the śānta mode involves none of them.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

bhakti -

distribution, partition, separation;

a division, portion, share;

a streak, line, variegated decoration;

a row, series, succession, order;

the being a part of;

that which belongs to or is contained in anything else, an attribute;

predisposition (of body to any disease);

attachment, devotion, fondness for, devotion to (with loc., gen. or ifc.), trust, homage, worship, piety, faith or love or devotion (as a religious principle or means of salvation, together with karman, 'works', and jñāna, 'spiritual knowledge');

assumption of the form of

Wikipedia

Bhakti in practice signifies an active involvement by the devotee in divine worship. The term is often translated as “devotion”, though increasingly “participation” is being used as a more accurate rendering, since it conveys a fully engaged relationship with God. One who practices bhakti is called a bhakta, while bhakti as a spiritual path is referred to as bhakti marga, or the bhakti way. Bhakti is an important component of many branches of Hinduism, defined differently by various sects and schools.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Bhakti: Devotedness. Derived from the root bhaj, meaning “to meditate constantly on something.” It can either be fully supported by wisdom (jnana) or be in the form of full surrender to God with no understanding as such. The latter form is known as prapatti. A devotee is called bhakta.

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Bhakti - The state as well as the act of devotion, In theistic schools, bhakti is defined as intense love of God. In monistic Vedanta, it is the continuous contemplation of one’s true being or Self.

Nitya. Love and Blessings

Bhakti: Devotion. In conventional usage this refers to religious practices in which emotions have a predominant place. Bhakti was revalued by Sankara and Narayana Guru as “continuous contemplation on the true nature of the self.”

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. Hindu Mysticism

The theory of bhakti seems to have its original source in the Pancaratra school of Vaishnavism. However, the doctrine of supreme self-surrender to Narayana, Hari or Krishna as the one and only God in disregard of all other mythical gods, represents a teaching of the Gita, the chief work of the Ekanti school of Vaishnavas; and this doctrine forms the universal basis of all kinds of bhakti worship, though among the Shaktas or Shaivas the supreme deity went by the name of Shakti or Shiva. The Gita plainly teaches, as we have already pointed out in our previous lecture, that there is no other God but Narayana or Krishna, that He alone is great and that we should lay aside all other modes of religious worship and take refuge in Him. In Chaitanya this devotion to God developed into a life-absorbing passion; yet in all advanced forms of bhakti the chief emphasis is on supreme attachment to God. The sort of bhakti which Prahlada asked as a boon from Hari was such an attachment for Him as worldly persons have for the objects of their senses. Such a bhakti, as described in the Bhagavata or the Shandilya sutra, is not worship out of a sense of duty or mere meditation on God or mere singing of His name, but it is deep affection (anurakti). It is therefore neither knowledge nor any kind of activity, but is a feeling. And the taking of refuge (prapatti) in God is also not motivated by knowledge but by a deep affection which impels the individual to take his first and last stay in Him. But though a feeling, this bhakti does not bind anyone to the world. For the world is but a manifestation of God’s maya, and God so arranges for those who love Him that His maya cannot bind His bhakta to the world.

But how is such a bhakti possible? For this also we have ultimately to depend on God. There is a passage in the Upanishads (Katha II. 23) which states that He can be attained by him whom He (God) chooses. This text has often been cited to indicate that

it is only the chosen man of God who has the privilege of possessing a special affection for God. Vallabha declares this special favor (pushti) of God indispensable for the rise of such an affection for God. He further holds that according to the different degrees of the favor of God one may have different degrees of affection for Him, though by avoiding the commission of sinful actions, by cleansing the mind of the impurities of worldly passions, and by inclining the mind towards God, one may go a great way in deserving His special favor. It is only by the highest special favor of God that one's affection or attachment for Him can become an all-consuming and all-engulfing passion (vyasana--see the Prameyaratnarnava). True devotion to God, affection or love for Him, must always be an end in itself and never a means to any other end, not even salvation or liberation, so much praised in the classical systems of philosophy. This all-absorbing passion for God is the bhakta's eternal stay in God, and dearer to him than liberation or any other goal of religious realization.

It is not out of place here to mention that among various Hindu sects it was held that an engrossing passion of any kind may so possess the whole mind that all other mental functions may temporarily be suspended, and that gradually, through the repeated occurrence of such a passion, the other mental functions may be altogether annihilated. Thus, absorption in a single supreme passion may make the mind so one-pointed that all other attachments are transcended and the individual attains Brahmahood (see the Spandapradipika). In the Upanishads (Brihadaranyaka IV. 3.21) we find that the bliss of Brahman is compared with the loving embrace of a beloved woman. To love one's husband and to serve him as a god was regarded from very early times as the only spiritualizing duty for a woman. Hence the idea that ordinary man-and-woman love may be so perfected as to become a spiritual force easily won acceptance in certain circles. This man-and-woman love developed an absorbing and dominant passion, completely independent and unaided by other considerations of marital and parental duties. In its non-marital forms, it was considered to be capable of becoming so deep as to become by itself a spiritualizing force. Moreover, it was thought that the transition from human love to divine love was so easy that a man who had specialized in the experience of deep man-and-woman love of a non-marital type could easily change the direction of his love from woman to God, and thus indulge in a passionate love for God. The story is told that in his early career the saint Bilvamangala became so deeply attached to a courtesan named Cintamani that one night he swam across a river supported by a floating corpse, then scaled a high wall by holding on to the tail of a serpent, and finally well-nigh broke his limbs in jumping down from the wall into the yard of Cintamani. The woman, however, rebuked him, saying that if he entertained toward God a little of the love that he had for her he would be a saint. This produced such a wonderful change in Bilvamangala that he forthwith became a God-intoxicated man. Later, in his saintly life, when he once again felt attracted by a woman, he plucked out his eyes so that external forms and colors might not further tempt him. This blind saint became one of the best-reputed among all the saints, devoting his life to the love of God.

Thus there grew up a school of mystics, including the great poet Candidas and others, who devoted themselves to the cultivation of the spirituality of love and the deification of human love, and who thought that more could be learned through such efforts than through any other mode of worship. "There is no god or goddess in Heaven who can teach spiritual truths more than the person whom one loves with the whole heart." The goddess Basuli whom Candidas worshipped is said to have admonished him to adhere to his love for the washerwoman Rami, saying that Rami would be able to teach him truths that no one else could, and to lead him to such bliss as not even the creator himself might do. A somewhat similar idea of the purificatory power of intense human love is found in the Vishnupurana. In describing the illicit love of a cowherd-girl for Krishna, the Vishnupurana says that at her separation from him she underwent so much suffering that all her sins were expiated, and that in thinking of him in her separation from him she had so much delight as would be equal to the collective culmination of all the happiness that she could enjoy as a reward of her virtuous actions. By the combination of the suffering and the bliss, she exhausted all the fruits of her bad and good deeds, and

thus by her thoughts of Krishna she attained her liberation. Somewhat allied with the idea of human worship, though not of the man-and-women type just mentioned, is a certain attitude sometimes adopted toward man as a religious teacher. The latter was considered in many circles as the representative of God on earth, and self-surrender, love and devotion to him was considered to lead one to God. This sort of worship was prevalent among the Hindus and the Buddhists from pretty early times. One fact should be noted. It was associated with reverence and a sense of the religious teacher's superiority, whereas the other type of worship (through romantic love) raised the man and woman by their constancy and sufferings for each other and the happiness that each enjoys in the company and thought of the other. In this latter case, love is religion, and all pain endured for the beloved, joy.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhakti (SANSKRIT bhaj, to adore, honor, worship) is a central spiritual path in Hinduism, involving devotion to and service of the chosen deity. Vedic tradition, the chief religious practice of Hinduism from around 1500 B.C.E. to roughly the start of the Common Era, relied on a ritual process of chanting and making offerings to various divinities. Compared with the later practice of bhakti, these divinities were not addressed with intimacy and a sense of connection; furthermore, they were never iconographically represented and were not generally visualized in human form; the humanity of the divinity became a very important element in later bhakti.

... The Sanskrit text the BHAGAVAD GITA, written around 200 B.C.E., was the first true bhakti text in the Indian tradition, in that case focusing on the worship of KRISHNA. It depicts a very close, personal relationship with God, one with a human form and personality. However, bhakti is still seen as a restrained, austere practice that takes the form of a YOGA.

As bhakti began to emerge with full force in the extreme south of India beginning in the third century, the devotion to the gods VISHNU and SHIVA and to the Goddess became a passionate, emotional experience. Devotees such as the poetsaints who periodically emerged until the 17th or 18th century threw themselves into bhakti with complete abandon. The quintessential devotee took pride in being considered a mad person and would be often completely lost in ecstatic song and trance. One important reason why the bhakti movement eventually swept all India and transformed the face of Hinduism was that the songs of the saints were all in the local dialects and languages, not in the Sanskrit language of the priestly elite. These works were lovingly remembered and compiled by their followers.

Bhakti often involved PILGRIMAGE to and worship at sacred places where ICONS of the chosen deity could be found. The temple tradition of India developed on the basis of devotion to deities who took iconic shape in stone in temples the length and breadth of the country. Devotees yearned to see the deity and to have audience with him or her. This audience is referred to as DARSHAN, or "viewing," and is the most special and intimate aspect of the temple visit.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhakti ("sharing") The most common word denoting devotion to God. This is one of the three traditional paths to gain final liberation of the soul (moksha), and it has been the most widespread type of religious practice for well over a thousand years. The word's literal meaning conveys the sense of relationship. On one hand, it refers to an intense and passionate love between devotee (bhakta) and deity, and on the other, it refers to separate communities of people bound together by their common love of God. Although references to bhakti can be found in such early texts as the Shvetashvatara Upanishad and the Bhagavad Gita, the bhakti propounded here is radically different from later usages. In both these texts, bhakti is presented as a form of yoga in which one contemplates God as part of a controlled and disciplined practice. This is a far cry from the abandonment and passionate involvement in later times.

The beginnings of this latter sort of bhakti arose in the Tamil country of deep southern India between the sixth and ninth centuries B.C.E. It had an intensity that was radically different from earlier notions, a devotional “heat” as opposed to the “coolness” of yoga. Tamil bhakti expressed, and continues to express, its devotion through songs sung in vernacular languages, conveying an intimate relationship with a personal god.

... Aside from egalitarianism and personal experience, bhakti worship also stressed community, based on the interconnections between devotees.

... bhakti’s regional manifestations often take on a distinct flavor marked by, if nothing else, the differing languages. The Padma Purana speaks of bhakti (a feminine noun) as a maiden who was born in southern India, attained maturity in the state of Maharashtra, and was rejuvenated in northern India. Although this is a metaphor, it accurately charts the historical diffusion of bhakti devotion, as well as its changes as it moved north. All forms of bhakti are shaped by specific times, places, and circumstances.

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

“Bhakti”, first meaning partition and participation, and next, being a part of. It is clear therefore why “Bhakti” came to mean attachment, devotion, worship and love of God.

Wikipedia

Scholarly consensus sees bhakti as a post-Vedic movement that developed primarily during the era of Indian epic poetry. The Bhagavad Gita is the first text to explicitly use the word “bhakti” to designate a religious path, using it as a term for one of three possible religious approaches. The Bhagavata Purana develops the idea more elaborately, while the Shvetashvatara Upanishad evidences a fully developed Shiva-bhakti (devotion to Shiva) and signs of guru- bhakti. An early sutra by Pāṇini (c. 5th century BCE) is considered by some scholars as the first appearance of the concept of bhakti, where the word “vun” may refer to bhakti toward “Vasudevarjunabhya” (with implied reference to Krishna Vasudeva). Other scholars question this interpretation.

The Bhakti Movement was a rapid growth of bhakti beginning in Southern India with the Saiva Nayanars (4th- 10th century CE) and the Vaishnava Alvars (6th-9th century CE) who spread bhakti poetry and devotion throughout India by the 12th-18th century CE. The Alvars (“those immersed in God”) were Vaishnava poet- saints who wandered from temple to temple singing the praises of Vishnu. They established temple sites (Srirangam is one) and converted many people to Vaishnavism. Their poems were collected in the 10th century as the Four Thousand Divine Compositions, which became an influential scripture for the Vaishnavas.

The Bhagavata Purana’s references to the South Indian Alvar saints, along with its emphasis on a more emotional bhakti, have led many scholars to give it South Indian origins, though there is no definitive evidence of this.

Like the Alvars the Saiva Nayanar poets softened the distinctions of caste and gender. The Tirumurai, a compilation of hymns by sixty-three Nayanar poets, is still of great importance in South India. Hymns by three of the most prominent poets, Appar (7th century CE), Campantar (7th century) and Cuntarar (9th century), were compiled into the Tevaram, the first volumes of the Tirumurai. The poets’ itinerant lifestyle helped create temple and pilgrimage sites and spread devotion to Shiva. Early Tamil-Siva bhakti poets quoted the Black Yajurveda specifically.

By the 12th to 18th centuries, the bhakti movement had spread to all regions and languages of India. Bhakti poetry and attitudes began to color many aspects of Hindu culture, religious and secular, and became an integral part of Indian society. Prominent bhakti poets such as Ravidas and Kabir wrote against the hierarchy of caste. It extended its influence to Sufism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Jainism. Bhakti offered the possibility of religious experience by anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Narayana Guru tradition

[Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom](#)

The highest form of devotion is called bhakti. In Vivekacudamani, Sankara defines bhakti as the continuous contemplation of one's true form. And what is our real form? That is what realization is: the apprehension of our own true beingness.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

[Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Reflection on one's own Self is called bhakti. Bhakti and Self-Enquiry are one and the same. The Self of the Advaitins is the God of the bhaktas.

...

Bhakti is being as the Self (Swarupa). One is always that. He realises it by the means he adopts. What is bhakti? To think of God. That means: only one thought prevails to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That thought is of God which is the Self or it is the Self surrendered unto God. When He has taken you up nothing will assail you. The absence of thoughts is bhakti.

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Bhakti is single-minded zeal and unswerving passion for the realization of Truth. Without this emotional urge, the aspirant often becomes lost in the wilderness of dry intellectualism or finds comfort in the ivory tower of a speculative philosophy. He fails to reach the Goal.

Types of Bhakti

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Bhakti emphasises devotion and practice above ritual. Bhakti is typically represented in terms of human relationships, most often as beloved-lover, friend-friend, parent-child, and master- servant. It may refer to devotion to a spiritual teacher (Guru) as guru-bhakti, to a personal form of God, or to divinity without form (nirguna). Different traditions of bhakti in Hinduism are sometimes distinguished, including: Shaivas, who worship Shiva and the gods and goddesses associated with him; Vaishnavas, who worship forms of Vishnu, his avatars, and others associated with; Shaktas, who worship a variety of goddesses. Belonging to a particular tradition is not exclusive- devotion to one deity does not preclude worship of another.

Bhavas

Traditional Hinduism speak of five different bhakti bhavas or "affective essences". Bhavas are different attitudes that a devotee takes according to his individual temperament to express his devotion towards God in some form. The different bhavas are: śānta, placid love for God; dāsya, the attitude of a servant; sakhya, the attitude of a friend; vātsalya, the attitude of a mother towards her child; and madhura, the attitude of a woman towards her lover. Several saints are known to have practiced these bhavas. The nineteenth century mystic, Ramakrishna is said to have practiced these five bhavas. The attitude of Hanuman towards lord Rama is considered to be of dasya bhava. The attitude of Arjuna and the shepherd boys of Vrindavan towards Krishna is regarded as sakhya bhava. The attitude of Radha towards Krishna is regarded as madhura bhava. The attitude of Yashoda, who looked

after Krishna during his childhood is regarded as vatsalya bhava. Caitanya- caritamṛta mentions that Mahāprabhu came to distribute the four spiritual sentiments of Vraja loka: dasya, sakhya, vatsalya, and sringara. Sringara is the relationship of the intimate love.

... In Valmiki's Ramayana, Rama describes the path as ninefold (nava-vidha bhakti):

Such pure devotion is expressed in nine ways, . First is satsang or association with love- intoxicated devotees. The second is to develop a taste for hearing my nectar-like stories. The third is service to the guru (...) Fourth is to sing my kirtan (communal chorus) (...) Japa or repetition of my Holy name and chanting my bhajans are the fifth expression (...) To follow scriptural injunctions always, to practice control of the senses, nobility of character and selfless service, these are expressions of the sixth mode of bhakti. Seeing me manifested everywhere in this world and worshipping my saints more than myself is the seventh mode of bhakti. To find no fault with anyone and to be contented with one's lot is the eighth mode of bhakti. Unreserved surrender with total faith in my strength is the ninth and highest stage. Shabari, anyone who practices one of these nine modes of my bhakti pleases me most and reaches me without fail.

The Bhagavata Purana teaches nine similar facets of bhakti, as explained by Prahlada:

(1) śravaṇa ("listening" to the scriptural stories of Kṛṣṇa and his companions), (2) kīrtana ("praising", usually refers to ecstatic group singing), (3) smaraṇa ("remembering" or fixing the mind on Viṣṇu), (4) pāda-sevana (rendering service), (5) arcana (worshiping an image), (6) vandana (paying homage), (7) dāsya (servitude), (8) sākhyā (friendship), and (9) ātma-nivedana (self- surrender). (from Bhagata Purana, 7.5.23-24)

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

15 [Chapter 12]

He who does not disturb (the peace of) the world and (whose peace) is not disturbed by the world, and who is free from exaggerations of joy, haste and fear, he too is dear to Me.

The neutrality and lack of exaggeration in the attitude of the bhakta (devotee) are referred to here. We know in the Puranas (religious legends) and in the Indian scene generally that a great place is given to exaggerated emotionalism, from what might be called "Lord-Lordism" or "Krishna- Krishnaism" to ecstasies of joy, horripilation or tears, all of which pass under the name of bhakti (devotion). The Gopis (milk- maids) of Brindavan lost themselves in their love for Krishna, which is another form of popular devotion in India coming under erotic mysticism. Now, however much such types of emotion may be justified in the context of religious legends or Puranas, such exaggerated ways of devotion are not at all countenanced in the Gita, as definitely expressed in the phrase *harshamarsha bhayodvegair mukto* (free from exaggerations of joy, haste and fear).

Such emotions do have their natural place in the Puranic literature of India, and in some of the texts such as the Narada Bhakti Sutras and even in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras where there is reference to *Isvarapranidhana* (worshipping Isvara) as an alternative in yoga. In Vedantic literature however, bhakti (devotion) is referred to by writers like Sankara in the *Viveka Chudamani* (verse 31) as meditation on the Self.

All exaggerations are thus discredited in the Gita and even in the Vishnu Purana as Radhakrishnan quotes in his Introductory Essay to The Bhagavad Gita (p. 65). *Bhaktiratmanusandhanam* (devotion is constant meditation on the Self) is also found as a definition in the *Bhakti Darsana* (Reality Viewed as Devotion) of Narayana Guru's *Darsana Mala* (Garland of Visions of Reality). He adds further that *bhajatitya yadatmanam bhaktiritya bhidhiyate* (from meditating on the Self it is called devotion). Though dualism between worshipped and worshipper is recognized by Ramanuja and Madhva, they too give the wisdom of the Absolute

an important place in their writings on devotion. Even modern writers like Radhakrishnan who support the idea that the Gita is a religious classic standing for theism, misunderstand the type of bhakti (devotion) represented in this chapter, and give recognition to exaggerated forms of devotion belonging to the Puranas and to the context of the erotic mysticism of the milkmaids who fell in love with Krishna. Radhakrishnan himself admits that such bhakti (devotion) is more natural to women. He writes: “As a rule the particular qualities associated with bhakti, love and devotion, mercy and tenderness, are to be found more in women than in men. As bhakti emphasizes humility, obedience readiness to serve, compassion and gentle love, as the devotee longs to surrender himself, renounce self-will and experience passivity, it is said to be more feminine in character”etc. (p. 61, Introductory Essay to The Bhagavad Gita).

However much such forms of bhakti (devotion) might find their place in religious legends, we can confidently say that the Gita discountenances them, as is sufficiently evidenced in this chapter, and especially in this verse which condemns all forms of excitement or exaggeration. Moreover, in this verse we find the further definition of bhakti, by which it does not stand out in contrast or relief as something that disturbs the normality of human life. A true bhakta (devotee) effaces his personality to such an extent that he leaves no mark on his surroundings, and the surroundings on their part take no notice of him.

In India at least, ostentatious forms of devotion, especially collectively practised, often express themselves as disturbing elements in social life. The love of the Gopis (milkmaids) for Krishna as related in the Bhagavata, none can deny, created some stir in the life of the simple people of Brindavan judging by the descriptions given. We have only to imagine ourselves questioning Yashodha and some of the peasant husbands to find out whether the bhakti of the Gopis to Krishna was a disturbing factor to the people or not! Such devotion cannot therefore be said to fit into the requirements mentioned in this verse.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

STAGES AND ASPECTS OF BHAKTI

767. Love is of three varieties: unselfish (Samartha), mutual (Samanjasa) and ordinary or selfish (Sadharana). Unselfish love is of the highest kind. The lover here seeks only the welfare of the beloved, and does not care whether he suffers pains and hardships thereby. The second kind of love is mutual love in which the lover desires not only the happiness of his beloved, but has an eye to his own happiness also. Selfish love is the lowest. It makes a man only care for his own happiness without having any regard for the weal or woe of the beloved.

768. As there are shades of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas in worldliness, so Bhakti has its corresponding aspects. There is one type of Bhakti that partakes of the humility of Sattva, another that is characterised by the ostentation of Rajas, and a third by the brute force of Tamas.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

bhakti - from the verb root bhaj = “to love, worship, revere”.

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit noun bhakti is derived from the verb root bhaj, whose meanings include “to share in”, “to belong to”, and “to worship”. It also occurs in compounds where it means “being a part of” and “that which belongs to or is contained in anything else.”

Bhajan, or devotional singing to God, is also derived from the same root. “Devotion” as an English translation for bhakti doesn’t fully convey two important aspects of bhakti—the sense of participation that is central to the relationship between the devotee and God, and the intense feeling that is more typically associated with the word “love”. An advaitic interpretation of bhakti goes beyond “devotion” to the realization of union with the essential nature of reality as ananda, or divine bliss. Bhakti is sometimes used in the broader sense of reverence toward a deity or teacher. Bhaktimarga is usually used to describe a bhakti path with complete dedication to one form of God.

Related words

Bhakta
Bhakti Yoga

Sanskrit

Bhakti — भक्ति

bhakti - भक्ती

Nataraja Integrated Science of the Absolute: We have translated the term bhakti as “contemplation”. It is defined by Narayana Guru as Self-contemplation. Sankara in the Vivekachudamani (Verses 31-32) also defines it as contemplation of the Self. According to popular usage the term covers many forms of emotional expression and religious devotion. Agony, ecstasy, mystic trance as well as subnormal and abnormal expressions are also sometimes covered by this term. India is essentially a religious country, and such manifestations are normal.

Bhakti Yoga

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhakti Yoga — ... Yoga of devotion; path to union with God

1. One of the principal paths to liberation. It is of the nature of the supreme love of God. On attaining it, a person becomes perfect, immortal, and eternally blissful. It depicts the Divine and human relationship from the human side. (See bhakti.)
2. Vaiṣṇavites say it is of two kinds: formal (which is the lower type dependent upon external aids and depicts a step-by-step process) and real (which knows no rules, involves complete surrender, and is immediate).
3. There are four kinds of devotees: those who, being hard pressed, turn to God for relief; those who, seeking intellectual satisfaction, love God to know about God; those who love God for rewards; and those who love God for love’s sake alone.
4. There are four states or stages of liberation: sālōkya (living in land of God), sāyujya (being united with God), sāmīpya (nearness to God), and sārūpya (obtaining same form as God).

Wikipedia

The Bhagavad Gita introduces bhakti yoga in combination with karma yoga and jnana yoga, while the Bhagavata Purana expands on bhakti yoga, offering nine specific activities for the bhakti yogi. Bhakti in the Bhagavad Gita offered an alternative to two dominant practices of religion at the time: the isolation of the sannyasin and the practice of religious ritual. Bhakti Yoga is described by Swami Vivekananda as “the path of systematized devotion for the attainment of union with the Absolute”. In the twelfth chapter of the Gita Krishna describes bhakti yoga as a path to the highest spiritual attainments. In the ninth chapter, he says, Fill thy mind with Me, be My devotee, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me; thus having made thy heart steadfast in Me, taking Me as the Supreme Goal, thou shalt come to Me. (B-Gita 9.34)

Shandilya and Narada produced two important Bhakti texts, the Shandilya Bhakti Sutra and Narada Bhakti Sutra. They define devotion, emphasize its importance and superiority, and classify its forms.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Yoga for the emotional plane is Bhakti Yoga. It comprises purification of the emotional life and love urge, leading to devotion and love of God, and communion with the God of Love.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavad Gita Commentary Chapter 12

UNITIVE DEVOTION AND CONTEMPLATION

Bhakti-yoga

A general discussion of devotion on the usual lines has already been covered in the latter part of the last chapter. Here an important doubt is raised by Arjuna in regard to two possible kinds of devotion implied in what till now was just called bhakti (devotion). We know that in the rational, heterodox or Buddhistic tradition bhakti (devotion) to a personal god was greatly discredited. The Gita being a revaluation of both orthodox and heterodox tendencies in spirituality, covering both the rational and the emotional aspects, has to make it clear what importance it gives to the role of devotion in the spiritual progress of the aspirant to wisdom. Further, the variety of bipolar relationship which in the Gita is called devotion conforms more to a contemplative discipline rather than to religious worship.

We have seen that the more ordinary approaches to devotion have been revalued or superseded in xi, 48 and 53. Discredit on Vedism generally was reflected even in ii, 42, 43, 44 and 46. Brahma as a deity to be worshipped was superseded in xi, 37. There is no mistaking therefore, that when devotion is referred to in this chapter, the usual forms of upasana (devout worship through ritual, offerings of flowers, etc.) or even popular forms of devotion, are not implied. The word contemplation rather than devotion would apply more especially to the type of spirituality of the person implied in verses 13-19 inclusive.

Further a bhakta (devotee) is portrayed as a detached and dispassionate individual, and wisdom is still his higher goal, as indicated even in verse 12 of this chapter. The attitude of a devotee here shows the same traits of a yogi such as balance between opposites like pleasure-pain, etc., as also found in other parts of the Gita. The only question that is discussed in this chapter, which

is of particular interest to the author Vyasa, consists in the difference between a devotee who thinks of the Absolute as a person, which might cover even the personification of a principle; or the devotee who regards the Absolute in a more theoretical or philosophical manner.

Krishna here votes definitely for the personal, as far as a yogi is concerned, but the chapter contains verses which do recognize the superiority of a person capable of accomplishing the more difficult task of contemplating the Absolute in a more abstract philosophical manner. The attributes of the Absolute in the latter case have to attain a certain globality. Component factors must have an organic coherence, thus tending to constitute in their totality a unitive value, and such a value must be contemplated upon in a bipolar manner. This bipolarity, as we have said, is the mystical way which is not different from that of yoga or contemplation. The conditions are not consciously fulfilled by rationalists when they think of the Absolute impersonally. If their contemplation fulfils these requirements the devotion gains a superior status, as stated in verses 3 and 4. It is only just, therefore, that there is here in verse 5 an apologetic reference to the difficulty facing a man who wants to affiliate himself to the Absolute through mere abstractions.

... This verse [Chapter 12, verse 12] brings the subject of devotion further in line with the discipline of yoga or contemplation as understood in other chapters. Devotion or practice in the Gita are not to be confused with indications in such texts as the Narada Bhakti Sutras and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which should be looked upon as distinct darsanas (systematic visions of reality) of their own with very little in common with the pure contemplation of the Absolute which is implied in this chapter. These darsanas have been revalued here.

See: Bhakta and Bhakti-yoga

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhakti Yoga - from the verb root bhaj = "to share in," "to belong to," "to worship".

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit noun bhakti is derived from the verb root bhaj, whose meanings include "to share in", "to belong to", and "to worship". It also occurs in compounds where it means "being a part of" and "that which belongs to or is contained in anything else." Bhajan, or devotional singing to God, is also derived from the same root. "Devotion" as an English translation for bhakti doesn't fully convey two important aspects of bhakti—the sense of participation that is central to the relationship between the devotee and God, and the intense feeling that is more typically associated with the word "love". An advaitic interpretation of bhakti goes beyond "devotion" to the realization of union with the essential nature of reality as ananda, or divine bliss. Bhakti is sometimes used in the broader sense of reverence toward a deity or teacher. Bhaktimarga is usually used to describe a bhakti path with complete dedication to one form of God.

Related words

Bhagavat Gita

Bhakti Yoga - in Wikipedia : Bhagavat Gita

Bhakta

Yoga

Sanskrit

Bhakti Yoga — भक्तियोग

Bhakti Yoga - भक्तियोग

Bhava

Variant spellings

bhava

bhāva

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhāva — ... state of being; existence; emotion; feeling; attitude;

1. Existence: That from which everything comes.
2. One of the twelve links in the causal chain of existence, according to Buddhism.
3. Becoming or a state of flux.
4. A feeling of absorption or identification. A spiritual attitude.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

bhāva -

becoming, being, existing, occurring, appearance;

turning or transition into;

continuance (opp. to cessation; state, condition,

rank;

true condition or state, truth, reality;

manner of being, nature, temperament, character; manner of acting, conduct, behaviour;

any state of mind or body, way of thinking or feeling, sentiment, opinion, disposition, intention;

passion, emotion;

conjecture, supposition;

purport, meaning, sense;

love, affection, attachment;

the seat of the feelings or affections, heart, soul, mind;
that which is or exists, thing or substance, being or living creature;
a discreet or learned man (as a term of address = respected sir);
(in astron.) the state or condition of a planet;
an astrological house or lunar mansion;
(in gram.) the fundamental notion of the verb, the sense conveyed by the abstract noun (esp. as a term for an impersonal passive or neuter verb having neither agent nor object expressed e.g. pacyate, 'there is cooking' or 'cooking is going on');
wanton sport, dalliance;
birth;
place of birth, the womb;
the world, universe;
an organ of sense;
superhuman power;
the Supreme Being;
advice, instruction;
contemplation, meditation

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Bhava - becoming, being, existing, occurring, appeared.

Wikipedia

"Bhava" is the sanskrit word for "feeling", "emotion", "mood" or "devotional state of mind". "Bhava" denotes the mood of ecstasy and self-surrender and the channelling of emotional energies that is induced by the maturing of devotion to one's 'Ishta deva' (object of devotion). Bhava is also the Pāli word for "becoming" in the sense of 'ongoing worldly existence', from the root bhū "to become".

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Bhava - Any state, particularly of the mind. Often used to refer to the passing or fluctuating moods of emotion to which people are exposed.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Bhava - Any transient form the eternal Reality (sat) assumes. Without a bhava, sat never exists, neither can any bhava be there without sat existing.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhavas (“states”) In Indian aesthetics the bhavas are a set of nine states considered the most basic unadulterated emotions: sexual excitement, laughter, grief, anger, energy, fear, loathing, wonder, and peace. To these nine bhavas correspond the nine rasas (“tastes”), or moods transmitted by various types of artistic expression: the erotic, comic, compassionate, cruel, heroic, terrifying, loathsome, marvelous, and peaceful. Although these bhavas and rasas clearly correspond to one another, there is an important difference between them. A person’s emotive states come and go in response to circumstances that are often beyond one’s control. Because such naturally occurring emotions usually cannot be sustained, they are generally not objects of aesthetic satisfaction. This is not true in the case of rasa, since mood can be artificially generated by an artistic endeavor. Any particular rasa can thus be sustained and satisfying. The single most dominant aim in all the Indian arts, therefore, is to create such a mood or moods for the audience.

Sivananda tradition

Sivananda. All about Hinduism

A philanthropist donates big sums to social institutions. He regards this as some kind of social service only. That is all. He has not got the Bhava or mental attitude, that the whole world is a manifestation of the Lord and that he is serving the Lord. He has not got the Bhava that the Lord is working through his instruments or senses, that every act is an offering unto the Lord, and that every deed is a Yogic activity.

Nimitta Bhava (attitude that one is an instrument in the hands of God)

Sakshi Bhava (attitude that one is silent witness of the actions of the senses and of the mind).

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

“First of all one acquires bhakti. Bhakti is single-minded devotion to God, like the devotion a wife feels for her husband. It is very difficult to have unalloyed devotion to God. Through such devotion one’s mind and soul merge in Him.

“Then comes bhava, intense love. Through bhava a man becomes speechless. His nerve currents are stilled. Kumbhaka comes by itself. It is like the case of a man whose breath and speech stop when he fires a gun.”

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

bhāva - from the verb root bhū = “to become, exist”.

Related words

Abhava

Bhokta

Variant spellings

bhokta
bhoktā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhoktā — ... enjoyer; subject; experiencer

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

Nature, into which all men are born, when treated as a global datum, has two aspects. One can be characterized objectively as “made for man”, and the other, its reciprocal opposite, refers subjectively to “man as its enjoyer”. These two are distinguished respectively by the technical term often employed in Vedantic literature: Viz. bhogya (something to be enjoyed or appreciated as having value-significance), and its natural and inevitable dialectical counterpart bhokta (the enjoyer) which is the subject represented in the Self.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. A Commentary on the Upanishads

... the upanishadic verse continues: “The wise call the Self the enjoyer when he is united with the body, the senses, and the mind.” We certainly do not enjoy a great deal of our experiences in/through the body, so perhaps a better translation of bhokta is “experiencer” rather than enjoyer.

See also:

Ajnana, avarana, vikshepa

Related words

Jiva

Jnata
Karta
Kshetrajna
Purusa

Sanskrit
Bhoktā — भोक्ता
bhoktā - भोक्ता

Bhumi

Variant spellings

bhumi
bhūmi

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

bhūmi -

the earth, soil, ground;

a territory, country, district;

a place, situation;

position, posture, attitude;

the part or personification (played by an actor);

the, floor of a house, story;

the base of any geometrical figure;

(metaph.) a step, degree, stage;

Yogas (with Buddhists there are 10 or 13 stages of existence or perfection);

extent, limit;

a matter, subject, object, receptacle i.e. fit object or person for;

the tongue

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Bhumi: Another name for the Earth.

Descriptions

General

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Bhumi is the earth, the world of everyday life.

See also:

in Mahabhutas: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Related words

Prithivi

Sanskrit

Bhūmi — भूमि

bhūmi - भूमि

Bhuta

Variant spellings

bhuta

bhūta

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Bhūta — ... element; gross elemental principle

1. That is, the five elements: earth (kṣītorpṛthivī), water (ap), fire (tejas), air (vāyu), space (ākāśa).

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

bhūta -

become, been, gone, past (n. the past);

actually happened, true, real (n. an actual occurrence, fact, matter of fact, reality);

existing, present;

being or being like anything, consisting of, mixed or joined with;

purified;

obtained;

fit, proper;
a son, child;
a great devotee or ascetic;
N. of Śiva;
that which is or exists, any living being (divine, human, animal, and even vegetable), the world;
a spirit (good or evil), the ghost of a deceased person, a demon, imp, goblin;
an element, one of the 5 elements (esp. a gross element, but also a subtle element);
N. of the number 'five';
well-being, welfare, prosperity

Dictionary - Runes

Bhuta: (Skr. become) The "has-become", or the ultimate element or concrete thing as it has evolved from the abstract, metaphysical unity through a process of infinite particularization and limitation. K.F.L.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Bhuta - one of the five gross elements (mahabhutas) as perceived by the senses.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Bhuta: That which has come into being.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

In the inorganic realm, the Upanisads recognize five fundamental elements (bhutas) termed pṛthivī (earth), ap (water), tejas (fire), vāyu (air) and ākāśa (ether). All the five were not known from the beginning. 'Water' seems to have been the sole element thought of at first. The next stage of advance is marked by the recognition of three elements, earth, water and fire, as in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, which are stated to emerge from Brahman in the reverse order. They correspond roughly to the solid, fluid and gaseous phases of the material universe. The last stage in the evolution of this thought, which was final and was accepted by practically all the later philosophers of India, was reached when the number of the so-called elements was raised to five by the addition of air and ether. It is clear that in this its last form the classification is connected with the five-fold character of the sensory organs, whose distinctive objects, viz. odour, flavour, colour, temperature and sound, are respectively the distinctive features of earth, water, fire, air and ether. But these elements, it should be remembered, are subtle or rudimentary (sūkṣma-bhūta). Out of these are made the gross ones (sthūla-bhūta), each of which contains an admixture of the other four, but gets its name as a compound from the element predominating in it. The gross elements are what we find in nature; and strictly it is they that are to be understood by the terms pṛthivī, ap, etc., the corresponding subtle elements being known as pṛthvī-mātra, āpo-mātra, etc.

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

Hindu tradition calls the Elements the Bhutas or Mahabhutas. Apart from “Element”, the word Bhuta means furthermore “elemental, nature-spirit, ghost,” and is also applied to “any creature”. It also means “material substance”. All these things are indeed implied in the real meaning of “Elemental”. The Hindu Bhuta-yajna or “sacrifice to Bhutas” is traditionally said to include Gods (Devas), ancestors (Pitris), animals, birds, worms and other creatures.

... the word Bhuta has a wide meaning, including elements, elementals, nature spirits, ghosts, animals and all creatures.

Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

The five Tanmâtras (of sound, touch, light, taste, and smell) are called Bhûta (elements), and the five Mahâbhûtas (gross elements) also are called Bhûta. Then the aggregate of all these is called >S’arîra, body, and he who dwells in that body is called Bhûtâtman (the elementary Atman).

Bhuta and mahabhuta

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. *One hundred verses of Self-instruction*

Bhutas are those entities that have come to be; the mahabhutas, the great elements, is the term applied to those elements in their universal aspect as fundamental principles in the creation or phenomenal emergence of the visible world.

Bhutas and tanmatras

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. *The science and philosophy of religion*

... the grossest elements are the bhutas, but that all gross things are the results of fine ones. Everything that is gross is composed of a combination of fine things, so the bhutas must be composed of certain fine particles, called in Sanskrit the tanmaltras.

Bhuta linga

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

... bhutalingas (“elemental lingas”), a network of five southern Indian sites sacred to Shiva. In each of these sites Shiva is represented as a linga, the pillar-shaped object that is his symbolic form, and at each site the linga is believed to be formed from one of the five primordial elements (bhuta)-earth, wind, fire, water, and space (akasha).

See also: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Bhuta - past. pass, participle of the root bhū, to become, be.

Related words

Mahabhuta

Tanmatras

Sanskrit

Bhūta — भूत

bhūta - भूत

Bhutadi

Variant spellings

bhutadi

bhūtādi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Bhūtādi — ... the state where inertia (tamas) predominates over purity (sattva) and activity (rajas).

1. From this state evolve the subtle elements (tanmatra) according to Sāṅkhya.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

bhūtādi -

‘original or originator of all beings’, N. of Mahā-purusha or the Supreme Spirit;

(in Sāṅkhya) N. of āharṅ-kāra (as the principle from which the elements are evolved)

Descriptions

General

[Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy](#)

The bhūtādi ... represents only the intermediate stage through which the differentiations and regroupings of tamas reals in the mahat proceed for the generation of the tanmātras. ... Bhūtādi is absolutely homogeneous and inert, devoid of all physical and chemical characters except quantum or mass.

See also:

tamasa (bhutadi) tanmatras

Evolution of tanmatras

in Mahabhutas: [Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy](#)

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Tamas

Tanmatra

Sanskrit

Bhūtādi — भूतादि

bhūtādi - भूतादि

Brahma

Variant spellings

Brahma

brahmā

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Brahmā — ... the creator of the universe; one of the Indian trinity comprised of Brahmā, Visnu, and Rudra; priest

1. The Absolute Reality manifested as the active creator of the universe, who is personified as one of the three gods of the Hindu trinity. The other two are Viṣṇu, who represents the principle of sustenance, and Śiva, who represents the principle of destruction.

2. One of the four principal priests in a Vedic sacrifice (the others being Hotri, adhvaryu, udgātri). The brahmā priest, the most learned of the four, was required to know the three Vedas, supervise the sacrifice, and set right mistakes committed by the other priests.

Dictionary - Runes

Brahma: (Skr.) The creator or creative principle of the universe, main figure of the Hindu trinity (see Trimurti). K.F.L.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahma is the first member of the Trimurti, the “three forms” of divinity made up of the dominant male deities in the Hindu pantheon: Brahma as the creator of the universe, Vishnu as the preserver or sustainer, and Shiva as the destroyer. Brahma is usually portrayed with four heads (the fifth having been cut off by Bhairava, a wrathful form of Shiva), and his animal vehicle is the hamsa, or Indian goose.

Wikipedia

Brahma is the Hindu god (deva) of creation and one of the Trimurti, the others being Vishnu and Shiva. According to the Brahma Purana, he is the father of Mānu, and from Mānu all Hindus are descended. In the Ramayana and the Mahābhārata, he is often referred to as the progenitor or great grandsire of all human beings. He is not to be confused with the Supreme Cosmic Spirit in Hindu Vedānta philosophy known as Brahman, which is genderless. Brahmā's consort is Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī. Saraswati sits beside him, the goddess of learning. Brahmā is often identified with Prajapati, a Vedic deity.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Brahmā—The highest god, the personified Cosmic Soul.

... The Creator God; the First Person of the Hindu Trinity, the other two being Viṣṇu and Siva.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahma is a divinity who makes his appearance in the post-Vedic Indian epics (c. 700 B.C.E.-100 C.E.). He has an important role in the stories of the great gods in the epics and PURANAS. He is often listed in a trinity alongside Vishnu and Shiva, where Brahma is the creator god, Vishnu is the sustainer of the world, and Shiva is the destroyer of the world. Brahma is generally considered the creator of the universe, but there are many different accounts of this act within Indian mythology; in fact, some stories credit other divinities or entities with the creation.

Unlike the other two members of the trinity (and to a lesser extent the Great Goddess), Brahma has never had a wide following of exclusive devotees. There are only two temples in all of India devoted solely to Brahma; one is at PUSHKARA Lake near Ajmer in Rajasthan and the other is near Idar, on the border between Rajasthan and Gujarat. Brahma is born in the lotus that emerges from Vishnu's navel as he lies on the primordial MILK OCEAN. In this image he is the creator god, but still quite subsidiary to VISHNU. Iconographically Brahma's vehicle is the swan (Indian goose). Brahma's wife is SARASVATI, the goddess of the arts and learning. He is depicted carrying a vessel that pours water, prayer beads, and sometimes the VEDAS.

Brahma is always depicted as having four heads. The story is told that he was once in the midst of extended austerities in order to gain the throne of Indra, king of the gods, when the latter sent a celestial dancing girl, Tilottama, to disturb him. Not wanting to move from his meditative position, when Tilottama appeared to his right, he produced a face on his right; when she appeared behind him, he produced a face behind his head; when she appeared at his left, he produced a face on the left, and when she appeared above him he produced a face above. When SHIVA saw this five-headed Brahma he scolded him for his lust and pinched off his head looking upward, leaving Brahma humiliated and with only four heads. He did not attain the role of king of the gods. There are a great many stories about Brahma in Indian mythology. Most commonly he is known as a boon giver who was required to grant magical powers as a reward for ascetics, whether animal, human, god, or demon. Often these beings, ascetics, gods, and the like would become problems for the gods when they became too powerful.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahma is a major figure in the pantheon and is prominent in many episodes in Hindu mythology. His mythic presence often obscures the fact that he is never worshiped as a primary deity. In fact, he has only one temple devoted to him in all of India, in Pushkar. Some Hindus have attributed this lack of worship to his status as the creator. After all, since creation has been completed, why should one bother with Brahma, whose work is done? In the puranas, texts on Hindu mythology, this lack of worship is usually ascribed to a curse-sometimes by the god Shiva but in other stories by the sage Bhrgu.

Wikipedia

Attributes

At the beginning of the process of creation, Brahmā created eleven Prajapatis (used in another sense), who are believed to be the fathers of the human race. The Manusmriti enumerates them as Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratuj, Vashishta, Pracetas or Daksha, Bhrgu, and Nārada. He is also said to have created the seven great sages or the Saptarishi to help him create the universe. However since all these sons of his were born out of his mind rather than body, they are called Manas Putras or mind-sons or spirits.

Within Vedic and Purānic scripture Brahmā is described as only occasionally interfering in the affairs of the other devas (gods), and even more rarely in mortal affairs. He did force Soma to give Tara back to her husband, Brihaspati. He is considered the father of Dharma and Atri.

Creation

According to the Puranas, Brahma is self-born (without mother) in the lotus flower. Another legend says that Brahmā was born in water. A seed that later became the golden egg. From this golden egg, Brahma the creator was born, as Hiranyagarbha. The remaining materials of this golden egg expanded into the Brahm-anda or Universe. Being born in water, Brahmā is also called Kanja (born in water). Brahmā is said also to be the son of the Supreme Being, Brahman, and the female energy known as Prakrti or Maya.

The image depiction displaying the connection by lotus between Brahma and Vishnu can also be taken as a symbolism for the primordial fetus and primordial placenta. The placenta is generated upon conception, but only the fetus continues into the world afterward. Likewise, Brahma is involved in creation, but Vishnu continues thereafter.

Lack of Brahma worship in India

Although Brahmā is one of the three major gods in Hinduism, few Hindus actually worship him. Today, India has very few temples dedicated to Brahmā, as opposed to the tens of thousands of temples dedicated to the other deities in the Trimurti, namely Vishnu

and Shiva. Among the few that exist today, the most famous is the temple in Pushkar in Rajasthan. Others include one in Thirunavaya in Kerala; one in the temple town of Kumbakonam, (Thanjavur District) in Tamil Nadu; another in Kodumudi, Erode district, Tamil Nadu; Nerur village in Kudal taluka of Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra ; one in Asotra village in Balotra taluka of Barmer district in Rajasthan known as Kheteshwara Brahmādhām Tirtha; one in Brahmā-Karmali village in Sattari Taluka in Goa; one in Khedbrahma in Gujarat; and one in the village of Khokhan in the Kullu Valley, 4 km from Bhuntar. Regular pujas are held for Lord Brahmā at the temple in Thirunavaya, and during Navaratri the temple comes to life with colourful festivities. Another temple for Lord Brahmā, Sri Brahmāpureeswarar Temple is located at Thirupattur, near Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, South India. The idol of Lord Brahma is fully covered with turmeric everyday morning. This temple also has the Samadhi for Sage Patanjali and the nearby Kasi Vishwanathar Temple in the same temple complex has a Samadhi for Sage Vyakrapatha.

Various stories in Hindu mythology talk about curses that have supposedly prevented Brahmā from being worshiped on Earth. Interestingly, the Bhavishya Purana states that, certain 'daityas' or demons had begun to worship Brahma and therefore the 'devas' of heaven could not defeat them. In order to mislead the daityas from the worship of Brahma, Vishnu appeared on Earth, as Buddha and Mahavira. With various arguments he convinced the daityas to leave the worship of Brahma. Having left the worship of Brahma, the daityas lost power and were hence defeated. The Bhavishya Purana lays out that altogether, giving up the worship of Brahma, was unacceptable in Hindu religion. This is because Brahma signifies a personification of Brahman (God) or is a manifestation of Brahman (God).

According to a story in the Shiva Purana (dedicated to Lord Shiva), at the beginning of time in Cosmos, Vishnu and Brahmā approached a huge Shiva linga and set out to find its beginning and end. Vishnu was appointed to seek the end and Brahma the beginning. Taking the form of a boar, Vishnu began digging downwards into the earth, while Brahma took the form of a swan and began flying upwards. However, neither could find His appointed destination. Vishnu, satisfied, came up to Shiva and bowed down to him as a swarupa of Brahman. Brahmā did not give up so easily. As He was going up, he saw a ketaki flower, dear to Shiva. His ego forced him to ask the flower to bear false witness about Brahmā's discovery of Shiva's beginning. When Brahmā told his tale, Shiva, the all-knowing, was angered by the former's ego. Shiva thus cursed him that no being in the three worlds will worship him.

A depiction of Khambhavati Ragini, A lady worshiping Brahma

According to another legend, Brahmā is not worshiped because of a curse by the great sage Brahmārishi Bhrigu. The high priest Bhrigu was organising a great fire-sacrifice (yajna) on Earth. It was decided that the greatest among all Gods would be made the presiding deity. Bhrigu then set off to find the greatest among the Trimurti. When he went to Brahmā, the god was so immersed in the music played by Saraswati that he could hardly hear Bhrigu's calls. The enraged Bhrigu then cursed Brahmā that no person on Earth would ever invoke him or worship him again.

In the Brahma Purana and Hindu cosmology, Brahmā is regarded as the creator but not necessarily as God. Rather, He is regarded as a creation of God / Brahman. The lifespan of Brahmā is 100 Brahmā years, equivalent to 311,040,000,000,000 solar years (311 trillion and 40 billion earth years). At the end of His lifespan, there will be a gap of 100 Brahmā years, after which another Brahmā or creator will begin the process of creation anew. This cycle is thought to repeat without end.

Appearance

The complexion of Lord Brahma is red. He is clad in red clothes. Brahma is traditionally depicted with four heads, four faces, and four arms. With each head, He continually recites one of the four Vedas. He is often depicted with a white beard (especially in North India), indicating the nearly eternal nature of his existence. Unlike most other Hindu Gods, Brahma holds no weapons. One

of His hands holds a scepter in the form of a spoon, which is associated with the pouring of holy ghee or oil onto a sacrificial pyre, signifying Brahma as the lord of sacrifices. Another of His hands holds a 'kamandalu'- a jar made of metal or even coconut shell, containing water. The water in this jar signifies the initial, all-encompassing ether in which the first element of creation evolved. Brahma also holds a string of prayer beads called the 'akshamālā' (literally "garland of eyes"), which He uses to keep track of the Universe's time. He is also shown holding the Vedas and, sometimes, a lotus flower.

Another story in connection with Brahma's four heads is that when Brahmā was creating the Universe, He made a female deity known as Shatarupā (one with a hundred beautiful forms). Brahmā became immediately infatuated with Her. Shatarupā moved in various directions to avoid the gaze of Brahmā. But wherever She went, Brahmā developed a head. Thus, Brahmā developed five heads, one on each side and one above the others. In order to control Brahmā, Shiva cut off one of the heads. Also, Shiva felt that Shatarupā was Brahmā's daughter, having been created by Him. Therefore, Shiva determined it was wrong for Brahmā to become obsessed with Her. Shiva directed that there be no proper worship on earth for the "unholy" Brahmā. Thus, only Vishnu and Shiva continued to be worshiped, while Brahmā is almost totally ignored. Ever since this incident, Brahmā has been believed to be reciting the four Vedas in His attempt at repentance. However, there are many other stories in the Purānas about the gradual decrease Lord Brahmā's importance, such as in the Shiva Purana. The omission of Brahmā from most temples regarding worship is a serious concern in the orthopraxis of Hinduism. Ignoring the Supreme Creator also sidelines the importance of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, in temples.

Symbols

The Four Hands - Brahmā's four arms represent the four cardinal directions: east, south, west, and north. The back right hand represents mind, the back left hand represents intellect, the front right hand is ego, and the front left hand is self-confidence.

The Rosary - Symbolizes the substances used in the process of creation.

The Book - The book symbolizes knowledge.

The Gold - Gold symbolizes activity; the golden face of Brahmā indicates that He is actively involved in the process of creating the Universe.

The Swan - The swan is the symbol of grace and discernment. Brahmā uses the swan as his vāhana, or his carrier or vehicle.

The Crown - Lord Brahmā's crown indicates His supreme authority.

The Lotus - The lotus symbolizes nature and the living essence of all things and beings in the Universe.

The Beard - Brahmā's black or white beard denotes wisdom and the eternal process of creation.

The Four Faces - The four Vedas (Rik, Sāma, Yajuh and Atharva). The Vedas Symbolises his four faces, heads and arms.

Vehicle

Brahmā's vehicle is a divine Swan. This divine bird is bestowed with a virtue called Neera-Ksheera Viveka, or the ability to separate milk and water from a mixture of the two. The swan signifies that all creatures deserve justice, however entwined they might be in challenging situations. Also, this virtue indicates that one should learn to separate the good from the bad, accepting that which is valuable and discarding what is worthless.

Temples

Though almost all Hindu religious rites involve prayer to Brahmā, very few temples are dedicated to His worship. Among the most prominent is the Brahma temple at Pushkar. Once a year, on Kartik Poornima, the full moon night of the Hindu lunar month of Kartik (October - November), a religious festival is held in Brahmā's honour. Thousands of pilgrims come to bathe in the holy Pushkar Lake adjacent to the temple.

Temples to Brahmā also exist in Thirunavaya in Kerala; in the temple town of Kumbakonam in the Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu; in Kodumudi, Tamil Nadu; in Asotra village in Balotra taluka of Rajasthan's Barmer district, known as Kheteshwar Brahmaham Tirtha; and in Goa, in the small, remote village of Carambolim in the Sattari Taluka in the northeast region of the state. Regular pujas are held for Lord Brahmā at the temple in Thirunavaya, and during Navrathris this temple comes to life with colourful festivities. There is also a shrine for Brahmā within the Brahmapureeswarar Temple in Thirupatur, near Trichy, and a famous murti of Brahmā exists at Mangalwedha, 52 km from the Solapur district of Maharashtra. Statues of Brahmā may be found in Khedbrahma, Gujarat, and in Sopara near Mumbai. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Brahmā in the temple town of Sri Kalahasti near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. The largest and most famous shrine to Lord Brahmā may be found in Cambodia's Angkor Wat. There is a statue of Brahma at the Erawan Shrine in Bangkok. The golden dome of the Government House of Thailand also contains a statue of Phra Phrom (Thai representation of Brahma).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Dialectics

Brahma is more of a cosmological deity and is given a relativistic position only, as seated in a lotus arising from the navel of the reclining Vishnu... Brahma as a god has four (sometimes five) faces looking at the four directions (and above). As a member of this trio of divinities (Trimurti), his status would be fully absolute only if we should treat this God as representing the Vedas, or as the Golden Germ of Creation (hiranya-garbha), which is still only the lower aspect of the Absolute, with its own higher dialectical counterpart, para-brahman, which is not a deity, but is in the neuter gender and stands for the neutral Vedantic Absolute. The term sabda (verbal) Brahma is said to refer to the Vedas, but the philosopher who seeks the Absolute is said to transcend this Brahma of the Vedas by his sheer interest in pure Absolutist wisdom, as stated in the Bhagavad Gita (vi, 44), the relevant part of which verse reads:

"By merely being one desirous of yoga (dialectical wisdom) one transcends (the domain of) the articulated (Vedic) aspect of Brahma (as a god)."

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

The Indian mythological personification of the Creator is called Brahma, who gathers the dust of the feet of the mother of creation. This dust is the existence that can become manifested in the various individuated forms, and the awareness of this individuation brings about interaction between one created being and another. We see creation exemplified at many levels. At the chemical level, it may be seen in molecular functions, chemical combinations, and various forms of synthesis. At the physical level, matter is patterned and directed by gravitational and electromagnetic fields and thermodynamics. On the psychological level, creation is revealed through our mutual attractions and repulsions.

The three qualities, or gunas--sattva, rajas and tamas--are necessary for any creation. Sattva, the transparent, is the capacity to clearly represent existence. Rajas is kinetic, dynamic, activating-- the energy that does the making and unmaking. Tamas represents the inertial force that stabilizes and solidifies creation. According to the legend, the Creator uses the three gunas to create the whole world. If you philosophically understand the process, you don't have to think of any external creator. Our mind is the creator. It has the ability to present anything to itself. When something is presented and experienced, it exists. Thus, the mind creates forms of existence, one after another.

After creating the existence of something, the mind assumes the role of the seer, with the creation as the seen. An interaction is unleashed between the seer and the seen. Then the mind thinks, "I am the knower." After developing an affection for the known

or the seen, it perceives “ I am the enjoyer.” Yet it is all the same mind. There is an ego center which measures the situation, evaluates it, and says “ I am its knower, I am its enjoyer. I am seeking enjoyment. I know what is pleasurable which is not yet present. I want to actualize it.” Here the same ego assumes one more position, that of an actor. “ I am the seer; I am the actor; I am the enjoyer.” When all three of these come together, we are in a single world of interest. A world of interest remains sometimes for only five seconds, sometimes for two minutes, sometimes for the whole day, a few days, months, or even years. Its length varies, but we go from one world of interest to another in a continuous series. This is allegorically portrayed in Sankara’ s Saundarya Lahari as the several worlds created out of the three gunas by Brahma. When we understand it in our own life, our mind is a creator which goes on taking these three modalities and making world after world.

... In the Yoga Vasistha is a story of a man who had ten sons. They decided to meditate on Brahma. It is said that what you meditate on, that you become. Here, Brahma means the Creator. When the ten boys started meditating, their identification with the Creator was such that each created his own world. Another boy came and confronted one of these Brahmas. He showed a kind of maturity which was beyond his age, and he was chastising him. The Brahma wanted to know where he got the authority to come and speak so to an elder person. The boy answered, “ I know not only you as Brahma, but also all the previous Brahmas.” He added that it takes four catur yugas, four great eons of several million years each, to make one cycle of time. That one cycle is when Brahma is keeping his eyes open. When he closes his eyes there comes the great dissolution of everything. Creation starts when he again opens his eyes. One opening and one closing together make one day. Three hundred and sixty such days make a year of Brahma. Only after a thousand such years does one Brahma go. The boy was saying, “ This Brahma who is sitting here is one of the recent ones. There have been so many already!” He knew them all.

Brahma and Brahman

General

Lurker. Dictionary of Gods

[Brahmā] is properly the masculine form of the Sanskrit word brahman, and it designates the personification of Brahman in Indian religion.

... Brahman - Sanskrit neuter noun.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

We ourselves also, that is the individual souls, can be in full reality nothing but Brahman, though for a while we are divided from it, because forgetful of Brahman through Avidyā. While that state of Avklya lasts the true Brahman, neuter, may become to us Brahmā, masculine, may become the creator and ruler of the world, and, as such, receive worship from his creatures. But as soon as the cloud of Avidyā is lifted, this creator also recedes and is restored at once to his true state and dignity. He, the so-called Isvara, or Lord, or Creator, becomes what he is and always has been, the whole Brahman; and we ourselves also remember and thereby recover our true Brahmahood, or Selfhood, not as if we had ever been divided from it, but only as having been blinded for a while by Avidyā so as to forget ourselves, our true Self, that is Brahman.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

... the term Brahma is frequently used instead of Brahman. This form is the nominative neuter ending and is used to indicate the One Universal Soul or divine essence and source from which all created things emanate and to which they return. It is the Self-existent, the Absolute, the Eternal, and is not generally an object of worship, but, rather, of meditation and knowledge. The personal

form which is deified for the purpose of worship is spelt Brahmā, ending in the long “ā” which is the nominative masculine ending. This term is used when the personal spirit is intended. The mixing of the universal and individual spirit is a constant source of confusion, and it is paramount that the student learn early to differentiate between them, otherwise the philosophy will always seem to be a source of contradiction.

See also:

Semantics and pronunciation

Related words

Siva
Trimurti
Vishnu

Sanskrit

Brahmā — ब्रह्मा

brahmā - ब्रह्मा

Brahmacarin

Definitions

General

[Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Brahmacharin (“seeker of Brahman”). A term with several possible meanings depending on the context. In the dharma literature, which gives instruction on religious duties, a brahmacharin is a person in a period of religious study. This period is the first of the four ashramas (“stages of life”) of a twice-born man, that is, a man born into one of three groups in Indian society: brahmin, kshatriya, or vaishya. Such men are eligible to receive the adolescent religious initiation known as the “second birth.” According to the ideal, after his initiation and adornment with the sacred thread—the most visible sign of a twice-born man—the brahmacharin shall live in his guru’s household and study the Veda, the oldest Hindu religious text, in addition to performing other religious acts. Since brahmacharins are focused on gaining religious knowledge, this is supposed to be a very austere time of life marked by strict celibacy, hard work, service to the teacher, meticulous observance of all religious rites, and avoidance of luxuries such as beds, cosmetics, and bodily ornaments. Once this period of study is over, the student will marry and enter the second ashrama, that of the householder. The system described in the dharma literature is an idealized model, and one cannot be sure that it was ever strictly followed. Although many contemporary brahmin boys still undergo the “second birth,” other elements—such as the ascetic lifestyle and emphasis on the study of the Veda—are largely ignored in contemporary times.

Some of the term’s original meaning remains in an ascetic context. Brahmacharin can also be defined as a novice or junior monk, whose duty is to serve and learn from the senior monks, or as the name of two particular ascetic groups. One of these groups is

the prestigious Swaminarayan sect, whose members are recruited solely from the caste of brahmins. The other is an organization called the Brahmachari Sanyasis, devotees (bhakta) of the god Shiva who are distinct from the Dashanami Sanyasis. The Brahmachari Sanyasis have an ashram on Mount Girnar and in the bathing (snana) festival known as the Kumbha Mela, the Brahmachari Naga (fighting) Sanyasis have a recognized place among the other Naga groups.

Related words

Guru
Sishya

Sanskrit

brahmacarin - ब्रह्मचरन्

Brahmacarya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Brahmacarya — ... a code of conduct; dwelling in Brahman; a student; “the path that leads to Brahman” or “moving in Brahman”; abstention from incontinence; celibacy

1. The first stage of life—i.e., studentship. (See āśrama.) The foundation for the Indian hermitage (āśrama) and teacher’s school (gurukula) system of education.
2. One of the abstentions in the Yoga system.
3. One of the great vows and one of the proper modes of conduct according to Jainism.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

brahmacarya -

study of the Veda, the state of an unmarried religious student, a state of continence and chastity

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahmacharya literally means “conducting oneself in accord with BRAHMAN.” Brahmacharya itself has two important meanings. It refers to the ancient practice of celibacy for men, considered an indispensable aid for the most avid yogis and seekers who wish to break the bonds of SAMSARA, or worldly existence. Restraint of the senses has always been an important aspect of Indian YOGAS; complete restraint on sexuality is one of the most difficult and spiritually powerful restraints. Brahmacharya was also used to refer to the student stage of a man’s life, in the Brahmanical tradition of life stages or ASHRAMAS. One was expected to remain celibate during the 12 years of Vedic learning with one’s guru, from the age of 12 to the age of 24, when one was to take up the household life. These stages of life may never have been precisely practiced by most BRAHMINS, but the ideal was widely known and respected.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahmacharya (“going after Brahman”). In its most traditional sense, this word refers to the lifestyle of a young man belonging to a particular class during his life as a student (brahmacharin). This period is the first of the four ashramas (“stages of life”) of a twice-born man, that is, a man born into one of three groups in Indian society: brahmin, kshatriya, or vaishya. Such men are eligible to receive the adolescent religious initiation known as the “second birth.” His life as a student will then commence, and he will move into his guru’s household and study the sacred texts, the Vedas. This is conceived as a period of intense study, religious practice, and an austere lifestyle marked by the restraint of desires, for which the hallmark is celibacy. Although the model of the four ashramas is largely archaic in modern times, the word brahmacharya still connotes this sort of austere religious lifestyle, and it is often used as a synonym for celibacy.

Wikipedia

Brahmacharya (pronounced /ˌbrɑːməˈtʃɑrjə/; Devanagari: ब्रह्मचर्य under the tutelage of Brahman) refers to an approximate period of 14-20 years of formal education in the traditional sciences, astronomy and religious texts contained within the Vedas and Upanishads, is also characterised by the practice of strict celibacy. Alternatively, Brahmacharya also denotes life long celibacy coupled preferably with devotion to spiritual endeavours. A Brahmachari therefore is a male (and brahmacharini a female) who observes sexual abstinence unless intentionally procreating. These characteristics correspond to Western notions of the religious life as practised in monastic settings.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Brahmacarya: The state of being a brahmacharin.

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Brahmacharya - Literally, walking in the path of the Absolute. The four stages of life are (1) student, (2) married life, (3) an interim period to prepare oneself for final renunciation, and 4) living as a renunciate, in a monastery or wandering as a wayfarer. The first of these stages is called brahmacharya, followed in order by grihasthya, vaitaprostha and samnyasa.

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali’s Yoga

Brahmacarya: adhering to uprightness in life, walking in the path of the Absolute (brahman) .

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Raja Yoga

Brahmacharya - chastity in thought, word and deed.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Rainbow-Bridge is the Pathway of the Solar Hero. In it the Seven Colours of the Seven Spheres are united in beauty and harmony, the Sun on one side, and the Clouds of Heaven on the other. On this bridge Man ventures higher than the Four Ele-

ments to Realms of Glory. In the Mundaka Upanishad (II; 2, 5) it is called “the Bridge of Immortality”. In the Katha Upanishad, the Scripture which deals with Death, is written (III; 2): “May we be able to learn that Nachiketas fire-sacrifice, which is the bridge for those who perform sacrifice, which leads to the imperishable Brahman those who desire to cross over to the other shore which is beyond fear.” In the Chhandogya Upanishad (VIII; 4, 3) it is said that neither day nor night, death nor sorrow, virtue nor vice, can pass it, but such as are established in Brahmacharya can pass to and fro at will. Brahmacharya is continence and chastity. It is the Quality which has been seen to refer to Libra. It implies the overcoming of the lower form of Kama, Desire. But in a broader, higher and deeper sense it implies the overcoming of the “coveting” of Capricorn, and the realization of the very nature of Kama, in all its aspects. The more mystical aspect of Brahmacharya — which opens up only after the achievement of Brahmacharya on lower planes — is fully manifest in the etymology of the word. It means simply “the following of Truth”, or “the practice of Reality”. The root char means “to move, to act”.

Radhakrishnan. Philosophy of Upanishads

The Upanishads demand a sort of physical preparation for the spiritual fight. Cleansing, fasting, continence, solitude, etc., as purificatory of the body, are enjoined. “ May my body become fit, may my tongue become extremely sweet, may I hear much in my ears.” This is not to despise the body as a dog and an encumbrance to the human soul. Nor has this purifying of the body, freeing of the senses, development of the mind, anything in common with self-torture.

Again, in the Chandogya Upanishad we are told that the world of Brahman belongs to those who find it by brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the discipline a student has to undergo when studying under a guru. It is not an ascetic withdrawal from the world, for the same Upanishad in viii. 5 makes brahmacharya equivalent to the performing of sacrifices. It looks as if these were meant as a warning against the false interpretation of brahmacharya as aloofness from the world. The body is the servant of the soul and not its prison. There is no indication in the Upanishads that we must give up life, mind, consciousness, intelligence, etc.

Wikipedia

The term brahmacharya has a number of uses.

One common usage denotes within the Vedic ashram system the particular phase that occupies the first 20 or 25 years of life. Ancient Hindu culture divides the human lifespan into 100 years. Brahmacharya is the stage when the young child leads a student life (ideally in the Gurukula, the household of the Guru). This stage of life is preceded by the child’s Upanayanam, a ceremony in which the child is considered to take a second birth. Brahmacharya is the first of the four phases of human life, namely, Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, and finally Sannyasa, prescribed by Manusmriti for the dvija castes in the Hindu system of life. The practice of brahmacharya requires, among other codes of conduct, that one be celibate.

Traditionally, such a life involved going to live with a spiritual teacher under whom the brahmachari (celibate) or chela (student) practised strict celibacy, a life of moral restraint, dedicated to learning all aspects of “Dharma” that is learning the “Principles of Justice and Righteousness” including personal responsibilities and duties towards himself, family, society and humanity at large which included the environment/earth/nature AND devotion to meditation. In the Hindu scheme of life brahmacharya starts around the age of five, when the chela starts his/her studies. In the sramanic traditions of Buddhism and Jainism (both of which stood outside normal social convention) brahmacharya was practised generally by those who had already reached adulthood.

The word brahmacharya is also used for the vow of celibacy a Hindu sannyasi, or renunciate, may take at any age after understanding that living for material or sensual pleasures will never bring the perfect happiness the soul desires. Thus one’s life becomes centered on surrender to Guru and God, with the firm hope of God realization and the perfect divine happiness.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Brahmacarya: Adhering to Uprightness in Life

In India a person's life span is described as having four complementary aspects in the pursuit for the actualization of the higher values of life. The four stages of life are said to be: studentship, the married life of a householder, weaning away from household obligation, and, ultimately, living as a renunciate. In fact, the intrinsic values of life are such that the four aspects cannot be completely distinguished or separated from each other.

The first stage of life is designated as brahmacharya. That is a time when a person is to be fully instructed in the normative notion of life. The norms are spiritual, moral, social, obligatory, and transcendent. Dharma is the main ideal stressed during this period of self-discipline and instruction in the science of life. Dharma is that which sustains life and all its potentials in the here and now. Hence it is specific. As years pass, the horizon of value interests expands from the here and now consideration to the eternal. The expansion intends to bring within it the good of all.

At birth a person is said to be of very little knowledge (kimcitjñatva). The path to perfection is to become conversant with the omniscient (sarvajñatva), the omnipresent, and the omnipotent. Movement from the small world of little knowledge to the infinite world of omniscience is a logarithmic spiral in which the microcosm and the macrocosm become harmonized. The unbroken growth of persistently relating the individual to the Absolute is indicated by the word brahmacharya. Many have missed this point.

As brahmacharya is intended to provide an aspirant with a fully enlightened path that will ever lead one from finitude to infinitude, brahmacharya is identical with the prayer given in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: "Lead me from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality." From the first cognizance of the inflow of stimuli through the five senses to the final merger in the all-transcending imperiential unity of the Absolute, brahmacharya is the only path that one has to tread. Any deviation is vyabhicharya.

The restraints given by Patañjali include brahmacharya to caution the aspirant that there are false paths and temptations from which you should recoil. One who truly understands what brahmacharya is has already attained the highest mark of discrimination that justly qualifies one to be an enlightened person. With that wisdom-insight, one confers on oneself rishi-hood, Buddha-hood, Christ-hood, and the peace of Islam.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: Is not brahmacharya (celibacy) necessary for realisation of the Self?

M.: Brahmacharya is 'living in Brahman'. It has no connection with celibacy as commonly understood. A real brahmachari, that is one who lives in Brahman, finds bliss in the Brahman which is the same as the Self. Why then should you look for other sources of happiness? In fact the emergence from the Self has been the cause of all the misery.

... "How is Brahmacharya to be practised in order that it may be successfully lived up to?"

M.: It is a matter of will-power. Satvic food, prayers, etc., are useful aids to it.

... D.: Some young persons have taken a vow of brahmacharya. They repent of the vow after the lapse of ten or twelve years. Under these circumstances should we encourage young persons to take the vow of brahmacharya?

M.: This question will not arise in the case of true brahmacharya.

D.: Some young men take the vow of brahmacharya without knowing its full implications. When they find it difficult to carry it out in practice, they seek our advice.

M.: They need not take a vow but they may try it without the vow.

D.: Is naishthika brahmacharya (life-long celibacy) essential as a sadhana for Self-Realisation?

M.: Realisation itself is naishthika brahmacharya. The vow is not brahmacharya. Life in Brahman is brahmacharya and it is not a forcible attempt at it.

... Even Suka had no confidence in his brahmacharya whereas Sri Krishna was sure of his brahmacharya. Self-Realisation is designated by so many different names, satya, brahmacharya, etc.

See also:

in Ashrama: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Etymology

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The word brahmacharya stems literally from two components:

Brahma, the deity representing the creative force (as part of the trinity of Hindu deities of Brahma as creation, Vishnu as preservation and Shiva as destruction). The word Brahma needs to be distinguished from Brahman, the absolute, eternal, never-born godhead.

charya, which means “to be followed”. This is often translated as activity, mode of behaviour, a “virtuous” way of life.

So the word brahmacharya indicates a life lived in conformance with the creative aspects of ultimate reality or “god”.

Related words

Ashrama

Grihastha

Sannyasa

Vanaprastha

Sanskrit

Brahmacarya — ब्रह्मचर्य

brahmacharya - ब्रह्मचर्य

Brahman

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Brahman — ... the ultimate Reality; the ground of the universe; the Absolute; the Divine;

1. The Absolutely Great; that which is greater than the greatest. “That which puts an end to differences.” The Absolute Reality or all- pervasive supreme principle of the universe. It has nothing similar to it and nothing different from it, and it has no empirical distinctions from the acosmic viewpoint.
2. Vedantic term for the Absolute Reality. The Absolute or all-pervasive supreme principle of the universe. The nature of Brahman is described in the Upanisads and in Vedantic philosophy as sat (Existence absolute), cit (Consciousness absolute), and ānanda (Bliss absolute). (See satcidānanda.)
3. Advaita Vedānta says it is not possible to explain Brahman in words. It transcends all concepts and ideas and is therefore nirguṇa—beyond conceptualization. It is declared to be the only Truth. Other Vedantas explain that words may not entirely define what Brahman is, but they do describe its glorious attributes and is therefore saguṇa—”with glorious attributes.”
4. In the Upanisads it is conceived of in two modes: the Reality of which the universe is but an appearance (niṣprapañca) and the allinclusive ground of the universe (saprapañca). It is described positively as existence (sat), knowledge (cit), bliss (ānanda), and infinite (ananta) and negatively as “not this, not this” (neti neti). It has nothing similar to it and nothing different from it, and it has no empirical distinctions from the acosmic viewpoint. According to Advaita Vedānta, Brahman is known in two forms: that as qualified by limiting conditions owing to the distinctions of “name and form” and as what is free from all limiting conditions whatever. Both Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita Vedānta conceive of Brahman as endowed with auspicious qualities (saguṇa).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

brahman -

(lit. ‘growth’, ‘expansion’, ‘evolution’, ‘development’, ‘swelling of the spirit or soul’, pious effusion or utterance, outpouring of the heart in worshipping the gods, prayer;

the sacred word (as opp. to vāc, the word of man), the Veda, a sacred text, a text or Mantra used as a spell;

the Brāhmaṇa portion of the Veda;

the sacred syllable Om;

religious or spiritual knowledge (opp. to religious observances and bodily mortification such as tapas &c.);

holy life (esp. continence, chastity cf brahma-carya);

(exceptionally treated as m.) the Brahman or one self-existent impersonal Spirit, the one universal Soul (or one divine essence and source from which all created things emanate or with which they are identified and to which they return), the Self-existent, the Absolute, the Eternal (not generally an object of worship but rather of meditation and-knowledge...);

the class of men who are the repositories and communicators of sacred knowledge, the Brāhmanical caste as a body (rarely an individual Brāhman);

food;

wealth;

final emancipation;

one who Prays, a devout or religious man, a Brāhman who is a knower of Vedic texts or spells, one versed in sacred knowledge;

one of the 4 principal priests or ṛitvijas (the other three being the Hotṛi, Adhvaryu and Udgāṛi;

the Brahman was the most learned of them and was required to know the 3 Vedas, to supervise the, sacrifice and to set right mistakes;

at a later period his functions were based especially on the Atharva-veda);

Brahmā or the one impersonal universal Spirit manifested as a personal Creator and as the first of the triad of personal gods (= prajāpati, he never appears to have become an object of general worship, though he has two temples in India ..., his wife is Sarasvatī;

a lifetime of Brahmā;

an inhabitant of Brahmā's heaven;

the sun;

N. of Śiva;

the Veda;

the intellect (= buddhi).

Dictionary - Runes

Brahman, Brahma: (Skr.) The impersonal, pantheistic world-soul, the Absolute, union with which is the highest goal of the Upanishads (q.v.) and Vedic (q.v.) thinking in general. It is occasionally identified with atman (q.v.) or made the exclusive reality (cf. brahma eva idam visvam; sarvam khalv idam brahma), thus laying the foundation for a deep mystic as well as rational insight into the connaturalness of the human and divine and an uncompromising monism which gave its impress to much of Hindu thinking. K.F.L.

Wikipedia

Brahman

In the Hindu religion, Brahman is the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything beyond in this Universe. The nature of Brahman is described as transpersonal, personal and impersonal by different philosophical schools. In the Rig Veda, Brahman gives rise to the primordial being Hiranyagarbha that is equated with the creator God Brahmā. The trimurti can thus be considered a personification of Hiranyagarbha as the active principle behind the phenomena of the universe.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Brahman - The Absolute. Often described as sat-cit-ananda, (which see) where the pure awareness of cit links the beingness of the Absolute, sat, with its value dynamics, ananda.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Brahman: The Absolute. Derived from the verb root brh, "to grow constantly." Literally, "that which grows constantly."

Descriptions

General

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

Every attempt to explain this central idea of Indian philosophy must proceed from the fact that the word Brahman throughout the Rigveda in which it occurs more than 200 times, signifies without exception nothing more than “prayer”. Like Soma and other gifts, the prayer of the poet is offered to the gods; they enjoy it; they are fortified by it for their heroic deeds ; and as man stands in need of the various benefits of the gods, the gods need for their welfare the offerings and especially the prayers of mankind; “prayer is a ‘tonic’ of the gods”; “Indra for his battles is fortified by prayer” (offered to him); phrases like these occur frequently in the Rigveda; thus the idea became more and more prominent that human prayer is a power which surpasses in potency even the might of the gods. In the moments of religious devotion man felt himself raised above his own individuality, felt awakening in himself that metaphysical power on which all worlds with their gods and creatures are dependent. By this curious development (comparable to the history of the Biblical Adyoe) Brahman, the old name for prayer, became the most usual name for the creative principle of the world. An old Rigvedic question “which was the tree, which was the wood, of which they hewed the earth and heaven”? is repeated in a Brahmana text, and followed by the answer: “The Brahman was the tree, the wood from which they hewed the earth and heaven.” Here the term Brahman has become already what it has been through all the following centuries - the most common name for the eternal and changeless principle of the world.

Wikipedia

Conceptualization

Conceptualization

Brahman is the Absolute Godhead; Absolute Reality or universal substrate (not to be confused with the Creator god Lord Brah-mā) in Hinduism. It is said to be eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and ultimately indescribable in human language. The sage-seers of the Upanishads had fully realized Brahman as the reality behind their own being and of everything else in this universe. They were thus Brahmins in the true sense of the word. These rishis described Brahman as infinite Being, infinite Consciousness, and infinite Bliss (saccidananda). Brahman is regarded as the source and essence of the material universe. The Rig Veda says that by the desire of the Supreme GOD (RV 10.12.94), the initial manifestation of the material universe came into being from Hiranyagarbha (literally “golden womb”), out of which all worlds, organisms and divine beings (devas) arise:

“Great indeed are the devas who have sprung out of Brahman.” — Atharva Veda

Para Brahman corresponds to the concept of Godhead and Saguna Brahman to God as the Primordial Being.

It is said that Brahman cannot be known by material means, that we cannot be made conscious of it, because Brahman is our very consciousness. Brahman is also not restricted to the usual dimensional perspectives of being, and thus enlightenment, moksha, yoga, samādhi, nirvana, etc. do not merely mean to know Brahman, but to realise one’s “brahman- hood”, to actually realise that one is and always was Brahman. Indeed, closely related to the Self concept of Brahman is the idea that it is synonymous with jiva-atma, or individual souls, our atman (or soul) being readily identifiable with the greater soul (paramatma) of Brahman.

Generally, Vedanta rejects the notion of an evolving Brahman since Brahman contains within it the potentiality and archetypes behind all possible manifest phenomenal forms. The Vedas, though they are in some respects historically conditioned are considered by Hindus to convey a knowledge eternal, timeless and always contemporaneous with Brahman. This knowledge is con-

sidered to have been handed down by realised yogins to students many generations before the vedas were committed to writing. Written texts of the Vedas are a relatively recent phenomenon.

Connected with the ritual of pre-Vedantic Hinduism, Brahman signified the power to grow, the expansive and self-altering process of ritual and sacrifice, often visually realized in the sputtering of flames as they received the all important ghee (clarified butter) and rose in concert with the mantras of the Vedas. The term Brahmin in the Vedic period actually meant one who has realized Brahman. However, later on Brahmin came to be identified with the highest of the four castes, the Brahmins, who by virtue of their purity and priesthood held themselves as proprietors of rituals, though mostly without actual realization of Brahman, and void of Vedantic knowledge.

Among Hindu sects, Advaita Vedanta is the first instance of monism in organized religion and Hinduism is the only religion with this concept. The closest interpretation of the term can be found in the Taittiriya Upanishad (II.1) where Brahman is described as satyam jnanam anantam brahman ("Brahman is of the nature of truth, knowledge and infinity"). Thus, Brahman is the origin and end of all things, material or otherwise. Brahman is the root source and Divine Ground of everything that exists, and is the only thing that exists according to Shankara. It is defined as unknowable and Satchitananda ("Truth- Consciousness- Bliss"). Since it is eternal and infinite, it comprises the only truth. The goal of Vedanta is to realize that the soul (Atman) is actually nothing but Brahman. The Hindu pantheon of gods is said, in the Vedas and Upanishads, to be only higher manifestations of Brahman. For this reason, "ekam sat" ("Truth is one"), and all is Brahman. This explains the Hindu view that "All paths lead to the one Truth, though many sages [and religions] call upon it by different names."

Several mahā-vākyas, or great sayings, indicate what the principle of Brahman is:

prajnānam brahma "Brahman is knowledge"

ayam ātmā brahma "The Self (or the Soul) is Brahman"

aham brahmāsmi "I am Brahman"

tat tvam asi "Thou art that"

sarvam khalv idam brahma "All this that we see in the world is Brahman",

sachchidānanda brahma "Brahman or Brahma is existence, consciousness, and bliss".

In Advaita Vedanta

Georg Feuerstein summarizes the advaita realization as follows: "The manifold universe is, in truth, a Single Reality. There is only one Great Being, which the sages call Brahman, in which all the countless forms of existence reside. That Great Being is utter Consciousness, and It is the very Essence, or Self (Atman) of all beings."

The universe does not simply possess consciousness, it is consciousness, and this consciousness is Brahman. According to Adi Shankara, knowledge of Brahman springs from inquiry into the words of the Upanishads, and the knowledge of brahman that shruti provides cannot be obtained in any other way.

In Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is without attributes and strictly impersonal. It can be best described as infinite Being, infinite Consciousness, and infinite Bliss. It is pure knowledge itself, similar to a source of infinite radiance. Since the Advaitins regard Brahman to be the Ultimate Truth, so in comparison to Brahman, every other thing, including the material world, its distinctness, the individuality of the living creatures and even Ishvara (the Supreme Lord) itself are all untrue. Brahman is the effulgent cause of everything that exists and can possibly exist. Since it is beyond human comprehension, it is without any attributes, for assigning attributes to it would be distorting the true nature of Brahman. Advaitins believe in the existence of both Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman, however they consider Nirguna Brahman to be the Absolute Truth.

When man tries to know the attributeless Brahman with his mind, under the influence of an illusionary power of Brahman called Maya, Brahman becomes God (Ishvara). God is the reflection of the Brahman in the environment of illusion (Maya). Just like reflection of moon, in a pool of water. The material world also appears as such due to Maya. God is Saguna Brahman, or Brahman with attributes. He is omniscient, omnipresent, incorporeal, independent, Creator of the world, its ruler and also destroyer. He is eternal and unchangeable. He is both immanent and transcendent, as well as full of love and justice. He may be even regarded to have a personality. He is the subject of worship. He is the basis of morality and giver of the fruits of one's Karma. He rules the world with his Maya. However, while God is the Lord of Maya and she (i.e. Maya) is always under his control, living beings (jīva, in the sense of humans) are the servants of Maya (in the form of ignorance). This ignorance is the cause of all material experiences in the mortal world. While God is Infinite Bliss, humans, under the influence of Maya consider themselves limited by the body and the material, observable world. This misperception of Brahman as the observed Universe results in human emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger and fear. The ultimate reality remains Brahman and nothing else. The Advaita equation is simple. It is due to Maya that the one single Atman (the individual soul) appears to the people as many Atmans, each in a single body. Once the curtain of maya is lifted, the Atman is exactly equal to Brahman. Thus, due to true knowledge, an individual loses the sense of ego ([Ahamkara](#)) and achieves liberation, or [Moksha](#).

Relevant verses from Bhagavad-Gita which establish the Advaita position:

The indestructible, transcendental living entity is called Brahman, and its eternal nature is called adhyatma, the self. (Bhagavad Gita 8.3)

Similar to a person who is not attached to external pleasures but enjoys happiness in the Atman (soul), the person who perceives Brahman (all- pervading consciousness) in everybody feels everlasting joy. (Bhagavad Gita 5.21)

In Dvaita Vedanta

Brahman of Dvaita (substantial monism) is synonymous with Hari or Vishnu, who is the most exalted Para Brahman (Supreme Brahman), superior to liberated souls and even the impersonal Brahman. Dvaita holds that the individual soul is dependent (paratantra) on God, since it is unable to exist without the energizing support of the universal spirit, just as a tree cannot survive without its sap.

Dvaita schools argue against the Advaita concept that upon liberation one realizes Brahman as a formless God is erroneous, quoting from Vedanta Sutra:

The form of Brahman is unmanifest, but even the form of Brahman becomes directly visible to one who worships devoutly (tat avyaktam aha, api samradhane pratyaksa anumanabhyam) (Vedanta Sutra 3.2.23)

Within His divine realm, devotees see other divine manifestations which appear even as physical objects in a city (antara bhuta gramavat svatmanah). (Vedanta Sutra 3.3.36)

In Visishtadvaita Vedanta

Brahman of Visishtadvaita is synonymous with Narayana, who is the transcendent and immanent reality. Brahman or Narayana is Saguna Brahman with infinite auspicious qualities, and not the Advaita concept of attributeless Nirguna Brahman. "Sarvam khalvidam brahma, tajjalaniti santa upasita": According to Ramanuja, considering the appearance of the word "tajjalan iti" (Roots: tat + ja = born + la = dissolved), this statement from the Chandogya Upanishad does not simply mean that the universe is Brahman, but that it is pervaded by, born from and dissolves into Brahman. An analogy: fish is born in water, lives in water, and is ultimately dissolved into water; yet the fish is not water.

The concept of Brahman in Visishtadvaita is explained as an inseparable triad of Ishvara- Chit-Achit. Ishvara, the Supreme Self (Paramatman) is the indwelling spirit (Antaryami) in all. Both the Chit (sentient) and Achit (insentient) entities are pervaded and permeated by Ishvara. Brahman is the material and efficient cause of the universe. The concept of Brahman in Visishtadvaita can be seen as a hybrid of Advaita and Dvaita positions. Like all other Vaishnava schools of thought, Visishtadvaita is also panentheistic unlike the pantheism of Advaita. It also proposes a qualified attributive monism approach as opposed to the absolute monism of Advaita.

Brahman is, Antaryami, the real self of all beings. Everything other than Brahman form the Sarira (body) of Brahman. The inseparable relation between the body and the soul is similar to that of substance and attribute which are inseparable. So Brahman is the prakari and the universe is the prakara, mode of Brahman. Hence anything that describes a sentient or insentient being has its connotation only with Brahman, the real and ultimate self.

Followers of Visishtadvaita refute Advaita thought that if it is indeed true that the one undivided Brahman, whose very nature is pure spirit, is the foundation of Maya and also embodies the liberating force of knowledge, then it is illogical to say that the very same Brahman falls under the influence of the illusory power of Maya and gets covered by ignorance. Thus establishing that Jiva and Ishvara are indeed separate entities. Since both their identities and capabilities are different, the Jiva and the Lord are essentially distinct. In other words, if Brahman is indivisible, changeless, and supreme, then a force of Maya cannot appear within Brahman, modify it, and put it into ignorance.

Bhakti Yoga is the sole means of liberation in Visishtadvaita. Through Bhakti (devotion), a Jiva ascends to the realm of the Lord to become one with Him. Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga are natural outcomes of Bhakti, total surrender, as the devotee acquires the knowledge that the Lord is the inner self. A devotee realizes his own state as dependent on, and supported by, and being led by the Lord, who is the Master. One is to lead a life as an instrument of the Lord, offering all his thought, word, and deed to the feet of the Lord. One is to see the Lord in everything and everything in Him. This is the unity in diversity achieved through devotion.

In Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna is Ishvara and denotes Saguna Brahman, and the term Brahman means Nirguna Brahman:

I (Ishvara) am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness. (Bhagavad Gita 14.27)

I (Ishvara) am transcendental, beyond both kshara (the fallible, perishable world) and akshara (the infallible). (Bhagavad Gita 15.18)

Semantics and pronunciation

Semantics and pronunciation

In Vedic Sanskrit:-

Brahma (ब्रह्म) (nominative singular), brahman (ब्रह्मन्) (stem) (neuter gender) means the Great Cosmic Spirit, from root brha (growth, development, expansion, swelling).

Brahmānda (ब्रह्माण्ड) (nominative singular), from stems brha (to expand) + anda (egg), means universe as an expansion of a cosmic egg (Hiranyagarbha), or the macrocosm. Brahmānda Purana discusses cosmogenesis. Bhagavata Purana also discusses cosmogony and fundamental principles of material nature in detail.

In later Sanskrit usage:-

Brahma (ब्रह्म) (nominative singular), brahman (stem) (neuter gender) means the concept of the transcendent and immanent ultimate reality of the One Godhead or Supreme Cosmic Spirit in Hinduism; the concept is central to Hindu philosophy, especially

Vedanta; this is discussed below. Also note that the word Brahman in this sense is exceptionally treated as masculine (see the Merrill- Webster Sanskrit Dictionary). It is called “the Brahman” in English. Brahm is another variant of Brahman.

Brahmā (ब्रह्मा) (nominative singular), Brahman (ब्रह्मन्) (stem) (masculine gender), means the deity or deva Prajāpati Brahmā. He is one of the members of the Hindu trinity and associated with creation, but does not have a cult in present day India. This is because Brahmā, the creator-god, is long-lived but not eternal i.e. Brahmā gets absorbed back into Purusha at the end of an aeon, and is born again at the beginning of a new kalpa.

One must not confuse these with:

A brāhmaṇa (ब्राह्मण) (masculine, pronounced as /brɑ:h mə ŋə/ - the N being retroflex), (which literally means “pertaining to prayer”) is a prose commentary on the Vedic mantras—an integral part of the Vedic literature.

A brāhmaṇa (ब्राह्मण) (masculine, same pronunciation as above), means priest; in this usage the word is usually rendered in English as “Brahmin”. This usage is also found in the Atharva Veda. In neuter plural form, Brahmāṇi. See Vedic priest.

Ishvara, (lit., Supreme Lord), in Advaita, is identified as a partial worldly manifestation (with limited attributes) of the ultimate reality, the attributeless Brahman. In Visishtadvaita and Dvaita, however, Ishvara (the Supreme Controller) has infinite attributes and the source of the impersonal Brahman.

Devas, the expansions of Brahman/God into various forms, each with a certain quality. In Vedic Hinduism, there were 33 devas, which later became exaggerated to 330 million devas. In fact, devas are themselves regarded as more mundane manifestations of the One and the Supreme Brahman (See Para Brahman). The Sanskrit word for “ten million” also means group, and 330 million devas originally meant 33 types of divine manifestations.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

One cannot become Brahman by continuing to repeat the mantra. It means that Brahman is not elsewhere. It is your Self. Find that Self; Brahman is found. Do not attempt to reach Brahman as if it were in some far off place.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

MASTER: “A man had two sons. The father sent them to a preceptor to learn the Knowledge of Brahman. After a few years they returned from their preceptor’s house and bowed low before their father. Wanting to measure the depth of their knowledge of Brahman, he first questioned the older of the two boys. ‘My child,’ he said, ‘You have studied all the scriptures. Now tell me, what is the nature of Brahman?’ The boy began to explain Brahman by reciting various texts from the Vedas. The father did not say anything. Then he asked the younger son the same question. But the boy remained silent and stood with eyes cast down. No word escaped his lips. The father was pleased and said to him: ‘My child, you have understood a little of Brahman. What It is cannot be expressed in words.’”

See: Brahma and Brahman

Brahman and Atman

General

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

Highest Brahman is that it is one, never changing, never in contact with anything, devoid of all form, eternally pure, intelligent and free. To ascribe anything phenomenal to that Brahman or Atman would be the same error as to ascribe blue colour to the colourless ether of the sky.

... Having no qualities, this highest Brahman cannot of course be known by predicates. It is subjective, and not liable to any objective attributes. If it knows, it can only know itself, like the sun that is not lighted, but lights itself. Our knowledge of Brahman also can only be consciousness of Brahman as our own subjective Atman or Self.

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

When Bâhva was questioned by Vashkali, he expounded the nature of Brahman to him by maintaining silence-- "Teach me," said Vashkali, "most reverent sir, the nature of Brahman." Bâhva however remained silent. But when the question was put forth a second or third time he answered, "I teach you indeed but you do not understand; the Âtman is silence." The way to indicate it is thus by "neti neti", it is not this, it is not this. We cannot describe it by any positive content which is always limited by conceptual thought."

Brahman, Brahmin, Brahmana

General

Wikipedia

Brahman and Brahmin (brahman, brahmán, masculine) are not the same. Brahman (bráhman, neuter), since the Upanishads, refers to the Supreme Self. Brahmin or Brahmana (brahmán, brāhmaṇa) refers to an individual. Additionally, the word Brahma (brahmā, masculine) refers to first of the gods.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

Brahman in Sanskrit is neuter and stands for the Absolute. The true Brahmin (Anglicised version of Brahmana, is either a Brahma-jnani or knower of the Absolute, or one whose life is dedicated to Brahman.).

Brahman, Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

In the Panchadasi and other Vedantic scriptures, much is told to us about the way in which Brahman becomes Isvara, Isvara becomes Hiranyagarbha, Hiranyagarbha becomes Virat. The illustration given in the Sixth Chapter of the Panchadasi is that Brahman is like a clean cloth. Isvara is like the very same cloth stiffened with starch. The painter cannot paint directly on the cloth. The cloth must first be stiffened. Starch is applied to the cloth – that is, the cloth assumes a concretised form, as it were. It is not the pure cloth that it was, but cloth is still there as the base. Without the cloth, there cannot be the starchiness; but without the starch, the cloth cannot be a good background for any painting. Similarly, there cannot be a movie in a cinema without the screen.

Though we are not going to the cinema to see the screen, we know very well how important the screen is. The painting on the canvas is very attractive indeed and we go on looking at it, but we never think of the background on which the painting has been made. We never recognise its existence, just as we do not think of the building's foundation when we look at it.

This foundation is the cloth, and it gradually stiffens itself into a will to create, just as the cloth is stiffened by the application of starch. That stiffened form, which is the will of Brahman, as they call it, is Isvara tattva. Then what does the painter do? After the cloth is stiffened with starch, he draws an outline of the picture that he will paint; with a pencil or a slight touch of ink, he draws an outline. This outline of the universe which is not yet fully manifest is Hiranyagarbha. We have a faint idea as to what will be the character of the universe that is going to be created, even as by seeing the pencil drawing, we can know what the painter is actually going to paint. The full painting is the Virat. The drawing on the canvas is filled with ink of various colours, and then we have the beautiful picture of the painting. This is the Virat – the whole cosmos looking so beautiful, the finest and the most complete manifestation of that which was only an outline in Hiranyagarbha, and which was only the will to create in Isvara, with Brahman as the background. *Aham kritsnasya jagatah prabhavah pralayas tatha.*

The cloth can say that it is the entire painting because without it there would be no painting at all. Though we see only the painting and do not appreciate or even think of the cloth on which it is made, where would the painting be without the cloth? In the same way, Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat – this beautiful creation that we see – cannot exist if there is no universal background which is Brahman. Brahman is totally invisible, as is the cloth behind the painting, but it is very, very substantial; and without it, nothing can be. Therefore, Lord Krishna says, "I am everything. I am the origin and the sustenance of this cosmos."

See: Maya and Brahman

See: Prakriti and Brahman

See also:

[Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Brahman — from the root *br̥h* = "to expand, greater than the greatest"

[Wikipedia](#)

The word "Brahman" is derived from the verb ((*br̥h*)) (Sanskrit: to grow), and connotes greatness. The Mundaka Upanishad says: Om- That supreme Brahman is infinite, and this conditioned Brahman is infinite. The infinite proceeds from infinite. Then through knowledge, realizing the infinitude of the infinite, it remains as infinite alone.

Sanskrit *bráhmān* (an n-stem, nominative *bráhmā*) is from the root *br̥h* "to swell, grow, enlarge". *bráhmān* is a masculine derivation of *bráhmān*, denoting a person associated with *bráhmān*. The further origin of *br̥h* is unclear. It could be from PIE **bherǵh-* "to

rise, high, eminent”, cognate to Old Norse Bragi. Some, including Georges Dumézil, have said that the Latin word flāmen “priest” may also be cognate.

Related words

Apara-brahman
Atman
Cit
Maya
Nirguna-brahman
Para-brahman
Prajapati
Prakriti
Prapanca
Saccidananda
Saguna-brahman
Saksin

Sanskrit

Brahman — ब्रह्मन्

brahman - ब्रह्मन्

Brahmana

Variant spellings

brahmana
brāhmaṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Brāhmaṇa — ... a spiritual and intellectual being endowed with purity, who has understood Reality (Brahman), who fosters spirituality, and who helps others to know the Reality; a member of the priestly caste; the liturgical texts of the Vedas.

1. One of the four castes whose duty it is to study and perpetuate the Vedas. (See varna.)
2. Liturgical texts written in prose and explanatory of the significance of the different rituals found in the saṁhitas. They are the guidebooks for performing sacrificial rites. Distinct from the mantra and Upaniṣad sections, the brāhmaṇas contain rules for the employment of the mantras, or hymns, at various sacrifices, with detailed explanations of their origin and meaning and numerous

ancient legends. They are said by Sāyanācārya to contain two parts: vidhi, or rules for rites and arthavāda, or explanatory remarks. Each Veda has its own Brāhmaṇa. That of the Ṛg Veda is preserved in two works, Aitareya and Kausitaki. The White Yajur Veda has the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Black Yajur Veda has the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa. The Sāma Veda has eight Brāhmaṇas, the best known of which are the Prauḍha and the Śadvinśa. The Atharva Veda has one Brāhmaṇa called the Gopatha.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahmanas are texts that delineate the workings of the BRAHMAN in its oldest sense of the power, efficacy, or energy of Vedic ritual. They are considered SHRUTI or revelation and are part of the VEDAS. They accompany the MANTRA text of the four Vedas and are memorized along with them; the Brahmana of the Black YAJUR VEDA is interspersed with the mantras; the other three are stand alone texts. All the Brahmanas are written in prose.

The Brahmanas are designed to guide and explain the ritual sacrifice (YAJNA). Much Vedic mythology is found in the Brahmanas, explaining how particular rituals relate to the actions of particular divinities. For example, the SHATAPATHA BRAHMANA explains that goat hair is to be mixed with other ingredients for a ritual fire (AGNI), because the gods once collected Agni from among cattle. Brahmanas abound in much obscure, esoteric material that is not easy for the outsider to grasp, but that assure the efficacy and intelligibility of the Vedic ritual for practitioners.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahmana. **General** name for the second literary stratum in the Vedas, the earliest and most authoritative Hindu religious texts. Although the composition of these differing parts of the Veda is not completely linear, the Brahmanas generally come after the hymns of praise to the gods known as samhitas and precede the speculative texts known as the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. In theory, each Veda has a Brahmana as an appendix, which is intended to give further explanation of the Vedic rituals. Although the Yajur Veda is the only one for which this is actually true, this understanding gives the Brahmanas the authority of revealed scripture (shruti) and thus makes them unquestionable. There are several different Brahmanas, of which the most important are the Aiteraya Brahmana and the Shatapatha Brahmana; the latter's tone and contents (including the Isha Upanishad) clearly mark it as the most recent of the Brahmanas.

The Brahmanas are primarily ritual manuals, and they give exacting, painstaking instructions for performing these Vedic rituals. These texts indicate a fundamental shift in religious practice, from the earlier emphasis on sacrifice as a means of invoking and pleasing the Vedic gods to an importance on the power of ritual itself. This new emphasis makes the sacrificial priests the most powerful people of all, since even the gods themselves are subject to the rituals. The power of correctly performed ritual paves the way for the Aranyakas and the Upanishads, which asks more speculative questions about the rituals themselves. At times these differing religious genres are juxtaposed—as in the Shatapatha Brahmana, in which the Isha Upanishad is embedded. Such juxtapositions indicate that although the stress varied in differing types of texts, there was some overlap during the time they were composed.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Brahmana: One of the four varnas in the caturvarnya concept, referring to those who love to learn and teach.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The Brahmanas.

After the Samhitās there grew up the theological treatises called the Brahmanas, which were of a distinctly different literary type. They are written in prose, and explain the sacred significance of the different rituals to those who are not already familiar with them. “They reflect,” says Professor Macdonell, “the spirit of an age in which all intellectual activity is concentrated on the sacrifice, describing its ceremonies, discussing its value, speculating on its origin and significance.” These works are full of dogmatic assertions, fanciful symbolism and speculations of an unbounded imagination in the field of sacrificial details. The sacrificial ceremonials were probably never so elaborate at the time when the early hymns were composed. But when the collections of hymns were being handed down from generation to generation the ceremonials became more and more complicated. Thus there came about the necessity of the distribution of the different sacrificial functions among several distinct classes of priests. We may assume that this was a period when the caste system was becoming established, and when the only thing which could engage wise and religious minds was sacrifice and its elaborate rituals. Free speculative thinking was thus subordinated to the service of the sacrifice, and the result was the production of the most fanciful sacramental and symbolic system, unparalleled anywhere but among the Gnostics. It is now generally believed that the close of the Brāhmana period was not later than 500 B.C.

[Footnote 2: Weber (Hist. Ind. Lit., p. 11, note) says that the word Brāhmana signifies “that which relates to prayer brahman.” Max Muller (S.B.E., I.p. lxvi) says that Brāhmana meant “originally the sayings of Brahmanas, whether in the general sense of priests, or in the more special sense of Brahman-priests.” Eggeling (S.B.E. XII. Introd. p. xxii) says that the Brāhmanas were so called “probably either because they were intended for the instruction and guidance of priests (brahman) generally; or because they were, for the most part, the authoritative utterances of such as were thoroughly versed in Vedic and sacrificial lore and competent to act as Brahmanas or superintending priests.” But in view of the fact that the Brāhmanas were also supposed to be as much revealed as the Vedas, the present writer thinks that Weber’s view is the correct one.]

Wikipedia

The Brāhmanas (Devanagari: ब्राह्मणम्) are part of the Hindu śruti literature. They are commentaries on the four Vedas, detailing the proper performance of rituals.

Each Vedic shakha (school) had its own Brahmana, and it is not known how many of these texts existed during the Mahajanapada period. A total of 19 Brahmanas are extant at least in their entirety: two associated with the Rigveda, six with the Yajurveda, ten with the Samaveda and one with the Atharvaveda. Additionally, there are a handful of fragmentarily preserved texts. They vary greatly in length; the edition of the Shatapatha Brahmana fills five volumes of the Sacred Books of the East, while the Vamsa Brahmana can be printed on a single page.

The Brahmanas were seminal in the development of later Indian thought and scholarship, including Hindu philosophy, predecessors of Vedanta, law, astronomy, geometry, linguistics (Pāṇini), the concept of Karma, or the stages in life such as brahmacharya, grihastha and eventually, sannyasi. Some Brahmanas contain sections that are Aranyakas or Upanishads in their own right.

The language of the Brahmanas is a separate stage of Vedic Sanskrit, younger than the text of the samhitas (the mantra text of the Vedas proper) but for the most part older than the text of the Sutras. It dates to the Iron Age, or about the 9th, 8th and 7th centuries BC, with some of the younger Brahmanas (such as the Shatapatha Brahmana) overlapping with the Sutra period, dating to

about the 6th century BC. Historically, this corresponds to the emergence of great kingdoms or Mahajanapadas out of the earlier tribal kingdoms during the later Vedic period.

See also:

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Related words

Aranyaka
Brahmin
Sruti
Upanishad
Varna
Veda

Sanskrit

Brāhmaṇa — ब्राह्मण
brāhmaṇa - ब्राह्मण

Brahma-sutra

Title variants

Brahma-sūtra — ब्रह्मसूत्र

brahma-sūtra - ब्रह्मसूत्र

Badarayana Sutra

Vedanta Sutra

Vyasa Sutra

Sariraka Sutra

Vedānta Sūtras

Uttara Mīmāṃsā-sūtras

Śārīraka Sūtras

Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā-sūtras

Vaishnavas also call this the Bhikshu sūtras

Author(s)

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Brahma-sutra — ... written by Badarayana...

... It is ascribed to Vyasa [two names of the same rishi].

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

It is difficult to ascertain the time when the Brahma-sūtras were written, but since they contain a refutation of almost all the other Indian systems, even of the Sūnyavāda Buddhism (of course according to Sankara's interpretation), they cannot have been written very early. I think it may not be far from the truth in supposing that they were written some time in the second century B.C.

Dictionary - Grimes

Brahma-sūtra — ... “threads of the Absolute”; brief aphorisms written by Bādarāyaṇa harmonizing the teachings of the Upaniṣads

1. An authoritative treatise on the Vedānta philosophy dealing with the knowledge of the Absolute (Brahman). It is ascribed to Vyāsa and known by various names such as Bādarāyana Sūtra, Vedānta Sūtra, Vyāsa Sūtra, Sāṅkara Sūtra. Every founder of a Vedāntic school has to write a commentary on the book, though Sarikaracarya's is perhaps the most famous.
2. It sets forth the teachings of the Vedānta in a logical order. (See prasthāna trayā.)
3. The Bhāsyakāras or main commentators (exponents) on the Brahma-sūtra are Śaṅkara, Bhāskara, Yādava, Nimbārka, Rāmānuja, Srikaṅṭha, Madhva, Vallabha, and Baladeva.
4. Other names for the Brahma-sūtra include Vedānta-sūtra Śārīrakasūtra, Bhikṣu-sūtra, and Uttara-Mīmāṃsā-sūtra.
5. It is divided into four chapters (adhyāya), with each chapter consisting of four parts (pāda) and each part being divided into a number of sections (adhikaraṇa). Each section contains one or more sūtras depending upon the interpretation of the Bhāsyakāra thereof.
6. Its four chapters are entitled “harmony” (samanvaya)—bringing out the coherent import of the Upaniṣads by explaining apparently doubtful statements; “nonconflict” (avirodha)—presenting the Vedāntic position philosophically with regard to other systems; “the means” (sādhana)—outlining the spiritual pathway to liberation; and “the fruit” (phala)—discussing the nature of the goal itself.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

brahmasūtra -

the sacred thread worn over the shoulder;

a Sūtra work treating of the knowledge of Brahman (esp. the aphorisms of the Vedānta philosophy ascribed to Bādarāyaṇa or Vyāsa, also called bādarāyaṇa- or vedānta- or vyāsa- or śārīraka-sūtra, and uttara- or brahma-mīmāṃsā)

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

There is evidence to show that this systematization [of the teaching of the Upaniṣads] was effected in more than one way. In the Sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa there is reference to as many as seven Vedāntic teachers— whether they were his predecessors or contemporaries is not known; and he alludes to differences of view among them in respect of essential points like the nature of mokṣa and the need of samnyāsa for the spiritual aspirant. ... Differences like these on fundamental issues show that the teaching of the Upaniṣads was from very early times understood in several ways by Vedāntic teachers. Badarayana's exposition is only one; and, in all likelihood, the most influential of them. All current schools of Vedānta, though differing from one another in important matters, alike claim to represent precisely what Bādarāyaṇa himself taught. The extremely laconic form of his sūtras has rendered such va-

riety in interpretation possible. In fact, they are more cryptic than the Upaniṣads, and it is consequently much more difficult to get at their meaning than at that of those old treatises. The result is that even as regards the most essential points there is ambiguity. We do not for instance know for certain whether, according to Bādarāyaṇa, the world actually emerges from Brahman (pariṇāma) or is only a phenomenal appearance of it (vivarta). There seem to have been once commentaries on the Vedānta-sūtra upholding both these views with all their implied differences under theory as well as practical discipline; but they were all superseded by Śaṅkara's great commentary upholding the latter view and are now lost. ... There have also been purely theistic interpretations of the Sūtra, especially subsequent to Śaṅkara; and among them again we find distinctions due to the identification of the supreme God with Viṣṇu or Śiva. Thus Rāmānuja and Madhva uphold the supremacy of Viṣṇu, while Śrīkaṇṭha exalts Śiva above him. Of these various schools of Vedānta, we shall consider here only two - one, that of Śaṅkara to represent the philosophic interpretation and the other, that of Rāmānuja to represent the theistic.

Wikipedia

The Brahma sūtras, also known as Vedānta Sūtras, constitute the Nyāya prasthāna, the logical starting point of the Vedānta philosophy (Nyāya = logic/order). No study of Vedānta is considered complete without a close examination of the Prasthāna Traya (Prasthanatrayi), the texts that stand as the three starting points. The Brahma Sutras are attributed to Badarayana.

While the Upanishads (Śruti prasthāna, the starting point of revelation) and the Bhagavad-Gītā (Smṛiti prasthāna, the starting point of remembered tradition) are the basic source texts of Vedānta, it is in the Brahma sūtras that the teachings of Vedānta are set forth in a systematic and logical order.

,,, The Brahma Sūtras attempt to reconcile the seemingly contradictory and diverse statements of the various Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā, by placing each teaching in a doctrinal context. The word sūtra means thread, and the Brahma sūtras literally stitch together the various Vedanta teachings into a logical and self-consistent whole.

However, the Brahma Sūtras are so terse that not only are they capable of being interpreted in multiple ways, but they are often incomprehensible without the aid of the various commentaries handed down in the main schools of Vedānta thought.

The Vedānta Sūtras supply ample evidence that at a very early time, i.e. a period before their own final composition, there were differences of opinion among the various interpreters of the Vedānta. Quoted in the Vedānta Sūtras are opinions ascribed to Audulomi, Kārshnāgni, Kāśakṛtsna, Jaimini and Bādari, in addition to Vyasa.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Brahma-Sutras: Original aphorisms of canonical rank, which, together with the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads are known as the Prasthanatrayas or the three bases of belief. The Sutras sometimes called Vedanta Sutras, are attributed to Badarayana, sometimes identified with Vyasa (q.v.) or Veda Vyasa. Their importance is enhanced as Sankara commented upon them, as also Madhva and Ramanuja. Their study thus gives a thorough grounding for a Brahmachari in Vedanta in its anterior and posterior forms, as re-stated by Sankara.

Commentaries

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Brahma-sutra — ,,,

3. The Bhasyakaras or main commentators (exponents) on the Brahma-sutra are Sarikara, Bhaskara, Yadava, Nimbarka, Ramanuja, Srikantha, Madhva.Vallabha, and Baladeva.

Wikipedia

Many commentaries have been written on this text, the earliest extant one being the one by Adi Shankara. His commentary set forth the non-dualistic (Advaita) interpretation of the Vedānta, and was commented upon by Vācaspati and Padmapāda. These sub-commentaries, in turn, inspired other derivative texts in the Advaita school.

Ramanuja also wrote a commentary on the Brahma sutra, called Sri Bhasya, which lays the foundations of the Vishishtadvaita tradition. In this, he firmly refutes the Advaita view as proposed by Adi Shankara in his commentary.

Other commentators on the Brahma Sūtras, belonging to other schools of Vedānta, include Bhāskara, Yādavaprakāśa, Keśava, Nīlakaṇṭha, Madhvacharya, Vallabha, Vijñanabhikṣu, Nimbarka, and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa.

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

A SUTRA is a short aphoristic line of text; Vedanta Sutra can thus be translated as “lines relating to the VEDANTA.” There are about 560 lines in this text.

The work was composed to resolve difficulties in the interpretation of the UPANISHADS and to refute the views of certain opposing schools. Chapter I systematically and with great specificity discusses the Upanishad passages dealing with BRAHMAN (the universal reality) and ATMAN (the soul or self). Chapter II is devoted to a refutation of the other interpretations, as presented by the schools of SAMKHYA, YOGA, NYAYA, VAISHESHKA, MIMAMSA, CHARVAKA, Buddhism, and JAINISM. Chapter III discusses the PRAMANAS, the valid methods of obtaining knowledge (such as perception, inference, or scripture) in order to understand the brahman and atman. The fourth and final chapter discusses the results of brahman realization.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The Sutra consists of about 560 sutras divided into four books as follows:

1. Book one discusses the theory of Brahma, and the ultimate principle, reconciling all previous views.
2. Book two discusses all the objections against the viewpoint and shows the relationship of the world and soul with the ultimate principle, and how all eventually merge into it.
3. Book three discusses the theory of ways and means of attaining knowledge of the ultimate principle, that is, Brahavidya.
4. Book four discusses the theory of the departure of the soul after death.

Each book is divided into four-parts called padas; the sutras of each section are related by what are called adhikaranas.

The sutras are so concise and recondite that without commentary they are scarcely to be understood. They refuse to be caught in any definite interpretation. It is thought that Badarayana wrote them in this manner so that they would have universal appeal and not be limited to any definite time or place, thereby serving as the source of knowledge for all peoples during all ages.

Wikipedia

The Brahma Sūtras consist of 555 aphorisms or sūtras, in four chapters (adhyāya), each chapter being divided into four quarters (pāda). Each quarter consists of several groups of sūtras called Adhikaraṇas or topical sections. An Adhikaraṇa usually consists of several sūtras, but some have only one sūtra.

The first chapter (Samanvaya: harmony) explains that all the Vedānta texts talk of Brahman, the ultimate reality, which is the goal of life. The very first sūtra offers an indication into the nature of the subject matter. VS 1.1.1 athāto brahma jijñāsā - Now: therefore the inquiry (into the real nature) of Brahman.

The second chapter (Avirodha: non-conflict) discusses and refutes the possible objections to Vedānta philosophy. The third chapter (Sādhana: the means) describes the process by which ultimate emancipation can be achieved. The fourth chapter (Phala: the fruit) talks of the state that is achieved in final emancipation.

These sūtras systematize the jñānakāṇḍa (path of wisdom, as opposed to Karmakāṇḍa, the path of action) of the Veda, by combining the two tasks of concisely stating the teaching of the Veda and argumentatively establishing the specific interpretation of the Veda adopted in the sūtras.

The sūtras also discuss the role of karma and God and critically address the various doctrines associated with Buddhism, Jainism, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaisheshika, Shaiva, Shakta, Atheism, and Sankhya philosophies.

Publications

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Related words

Prasthanatraya

Sutra

Vedanta

Vyasa

External links

http://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/ebene_1/fiindolo/gretil.htm#Brahm

Brahmavidya

Variant spellings

brahmavidya
brahmavidyā

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

brahmavidyā -

knowledge of 'the one self-existent Being', knowledge of Brahman, sacred knowledge; N. of an Upanishad

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Brahmavidya: The science of the Absolute. Another name for Vedanta.

[Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction](#)

Brahma-Vidya: The Science of the Absolute as understood in the Vedantic context of non-dual wisdom.

Descriptions

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Indian philosophy of Advaita Vedanta explains that we suffer as a result of our avidya (ignorance) and maya (misconceived, misinterpreted views of Reality). According to this philosophy, acquiring the awareness of Brahmavidya (direct perception or awareness of Reality) alleviates this deep source of suffering. Only this awareness directly leads us to moksha (liberation).

Brahmavidya is an ancient system of Yoga and Philosophy. In ancient Sanskrit philosophical literature the term Brahma is used to denote the Supreme Being, which is commonly called as God, Ishwar, Bhagvan. Hence Brahmavidya is a teaching, which leads to knowledge of Brahma - God.

This system maintains that spiritual functions are related to physiological functions of ductless glands. It emphasizes the role of meditation in realizing the spiritual nature of a person and uses exercises involving breathing to support and nurture related physiological ability. The subconscious mind is assigned the central role in bringing about physiological and spiritual transformation. Exercises related to the subconscious mind are therefore also crucial to this system.

Brahma-Vidya is knowledge given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna at Krukshetra Ground in Dwapur Yuga (around 5112 years back). The same knowledge (GYAN) is given by his other Incarnations in every Yuga. The same knowledge (gyan) was given by Lord Shri Chakradhar Swami to his followers during period 1265-1273 A.D. in Paithan, Domegram (along the river godavari) Maharashtra. At present the same Gyan is being taught to the followers of this incarnation (Shri Chakradhar Swami) in various Ashrams of this sect known as "Mahanubhav Panth". The ancient hand written scriptures are taught in 700 years old Lipi (coded language)

to the individuals. This vidya, knowledge, Gyan is known as Brahavidya. It teaches about achieving MOKSHA (salvation) thru worship of GOD (his various incarnations). The same Brahma-Vidya knowledge was given to King Yaduraj by Lord Shri Duttatreya Prabu in Treta Yuga popularly known as 24-guru vayakhan.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

What is the subject-matter of the Gita?

In one word we can describe it as brahavidya, the Science of the Absolute. By Absolute we mean here that supreme knowledge which is Self-founded and by which alone everything exists and everything is known. Until you realize this truth, you know only relative factors.

... The eighteen chapters are arranged as spokes on the hub of brahavidya, the Science of the Absolute. The method employed in each chapter has, in common with the rest, the goal of the realization of the Self through Yoga.

... Does the Gita teach Yoga, or the Science of the Absolute?

Each chapter of the Gita ends with a reference to brahavidya, yoga-sastra, and samvada. Each of these terms connotes a different meaning. There is no doubt the Gita is a textbook of the Science of the Absolute, brahavidya. The Absolute is not a thing or an event. It gives rise to many relative notions. That means it can be approached from many angles of vision. The method of discussion employed in the Gita is dialectical, not basically inferential. Hence it is called yoga-sastra. The literary device employed by the author is in the form of a dialogue between Krsna as teacher and Arjuna as disciple. That is why it is called a dialogue, a samvada.

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

In the Vedànta of India with its textbooks such as the Bhagavad Gâtà and the large body of literature called the Upaniùads, we have already stated that these books claim to be a Science of the Absolute called brahma-vidyà. It is a mistake commonly made to treat this part of wisdom literature as belonging to Hindu religion. By its dynamic and open outlook such literature refuses to be fitted into any orthodox context of a closed and static religious set-up.

... In India brahma-vidyà is referred to as the science (vidyà) which is the foundation of all sciences. It deals not merely with `truth' but with the Truth of truths, the Light of lights, or the Value of all values. The Absolute is a natural and normative notion around which this science was built. When stated in such a wholesale fashion the Science of the Absolute becomes repugnant to the spirit of modernism because it appears as a seemingly totalitarian discipline. Totalitarianism in politics and religion has left a bad taste in the mouth of most Europeans, who prefer a humbler piecemeal approach to truth. In spite of such an understandable objection, this is in itself another form of prejudice not necessarily justified with equal force in other contexts, outside religion or politics.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Drg-Drshya-Viveka

It is a matter of general knowledge that a Hindu not infrequently exclaims, when he finds anything supremely difficult to achieve or understand, "It is like Brahavidya!" This Brahmavidya, or knowledge of Brahman, the attainment of which is thought to be so hard, is acquired only gradually, the steps being those of religion, theology including scholasticism, mysticism and philosophy including science. All these are comprehended by the term Vedanta.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mundaka Upanishad

Mantra No. 1: Brahma was the first among the divine beings. This Lord of all, the protector of all, imparted to his eldest son Atharva this Brahma-Vidya which is the basis of all sciences. Brahma-Vidya is the fundamental science because it is the explanation and the very substance of all knowledge, the different aspects and branches of which are all lower forms of knowledge.

... Brahma-Vidya is not a knowledge which excludes other kinds of knowledge, but that which transmutes into itself all kinds of knowledge. Spiritual knowledge means the direct experience arrived at through the fusion of the essence of the object of knowledge into the essence of the subject of knowledge. Hence spiritual knowledge is indivisible experience, not divisible like intellectual knowledge. It is intuition which does not function on the basis of duality, but is essentially a self-identical, integral experience. Spiritual Knowledge means the essence of the knowledge of everything that exists in generality as well as in particularity. It is the Knowledge of the highest cause, the knowledge of which means the knowledge of all its effects also.

... Brahma-Vidya is the technique or the science enabling one to reach Absolute Experience. This Knowledge is attained through great effort in the forms of Viveka, Vichara, Vairagya and Abhyasa.

Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

God knew only Himself; nothing else. Not anything other than He was there, and, therefore, no chance of knowing anything other than He could be there. Brahma-Vidyā. is the knowledge of God, the science of Brahman, the Absolute. But it is not knowledge of something. The word 'of' is to be eliminated in this sentence. Our language is inadequate to the purpose. We cannot express this knowledge in language, because our sentences are split into the subject and the predicate. There is a subject connected by the verb to its predicate. There is no such possibility here of describing this knowledge by the subject-object connection through a verb. There is no verb in the sentence if we are to use a sentence for describing what God knew. When we say, God knew Himself, it is not that God as the subject knew Himself as the object; hence a sentence is not apt for the purpose of describing what the state of affairs was then. It was not someone knowing something, or something knowing something else. It was not the state where one can use a sentence with a transitive verb. There was no object for the verb in the sentence, 'It knew Itself'. It was a union of the knower and the known. It was Awareness of Being. It was Being which became aware that It was. The Being that was, became aware that it was. It was Being-Consciousness, or the Awareness of Being Itself may be said to be God-Consciousness. That is Absolute-Consciousness; and this is the meaning of 'God knew Himself', 'It knew Itself', 'tad ātmānam evāvet'. It knew Itself only, and if we, too, can know only the Self in the way It knew Itself, that would be the greatest knowledge that we can have. But, we must know ourselves in the same way as 'It knew Itself', not as we think that we are, in the present state of individuality, because that is a knowledge of the Subject of knowledge, which included within Its Existence every object that It has to know, so that the usual process of knowledge does not exist in this act of knowing the object. There is no process of knowing between the Pramātā (knower) and the Prameya (known). As they say, there is no Pramāṇā (knowing) linking the two together. It is at once, a simultaneous Being-Consciousness. This is what the Vedānta terminology often designates as Satchidānanda, i.e., Pure Existence-Consciousness-Blis.

... Brahma-Vidyā is the science of liberation. It liberates by the very fact of its presence, and not by any other process that takes place in the rise of that knowledge than just its existence.

Related words

Atma vidya
Vidya

Sanskrit

brahmavidyā -ब्रह्मविद्या

Brahmin

Variant spellings

brahmin
brahman
Brāhmaṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Brahmin — ... member of the priestly caste; priest

1. The first caste of Hindu society. The members of this caste or class are, by tradition, priests and scholars.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

brahmin -

belonging or relating to Brahman or Brahmā;

‘possessing sacred knowledge’;

N. of Viṣṇu

Wikipedia

A Brahmin (also Brahman; Brāhmaṇa, ब्राह्मण) is a member of the priestly class in the Indian subcontinent. According to ancient Hindu texts including the Manusmṛti, there are four “varnas”, or social classes, into which Hindu society is divided: the Brahmins (teachers, scholars and priests), the Kshatriyas (kings and warriors), the Vaishyas (agriculturists, artisans and merchants), and the Shudras (service providers and laborers). Brahmins are charged with performing religious duties as priests and preaching Dharma as “one who prays, a devout or religious man, a Brāhmaṇa who is well versed in Vedic texts, one versed in sacred knowledge”. The Brahmins held authority of interpretation of Vedic and Puranic spiritual texts like the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Brahmin: One who conforms to the religion of the Vedas and initiated or confirmed by the bestowal of the sacred thread which causes him to be known as a “twice-born” (dwija) and fit thereby to assist at ceremonies of burnt offerings to the Gods of the

Vedas. Socially he is the highest of the types of castes statically viewed in the Indian world of caste hierarchies, the others being Kshatriya (warrior), Vaishya (merchant) and Shudra (servant). Vedic learning and ritual accompanied the Brahmin as priest in the formation of society as it stratified with the penetration of the Aryans into the Indian matrix, about 1500 B.C.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahmin (Brahman)

A Brahmin is a member of the hereditary priestly class of India. ... In Sanskrit the same Vedic word designates prayer and the one who prays, the overseer of the Vedic ritual and its MANTRAS. In the ancient VARNA or class system the Brahmin was said to emerge from the mouth of the divine being, the warrior from his arms, the ordinary people from his thighs, and the servants from his feet.

Originally, Brahminical status was ensured by Vedic authority. Brahmins were responsible for the transmission of the VEDAS over the centuries via oral tradition within Brahminical families. This assured Brahminical authority over all ritual, since it was only through knowledge of the Vedas that the rituals could be performed. All public rituals had to be supervised by Brahmins and all private rituals could be learned only from Brahmins.

... If there is a stereotypical or ideal role for a Brahmin in the modern world it is teaching. Transmission of knowledge is the traditional role of the Brahmin and remains so today. Brahmins continue to perform the rituals at all the great temples in India, but the role of ritualist is now viewed as less important for Brahmins than the role of teacher or preceptor.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brahmin

In the traditional Hindu theory of the four major social groups (varnas), the brahmins are the group with the highest status, based on the belief that they are purer than all others. This belief is based on the creation story known as the Purusha Sukta, in which the brahmins are created from the Primeval Man's mouth. The mouth is part of the head and thus the highest part of the body, and it is also associated with speech, one of the definitively human faculties. From the earliest Hindu recorded history, brahmins have been associated with speech and the sacred word; they were the scholars, priests, ritual technicians, and protectors of sacred learning. This is still true in modern times, although there are also many brahmins who have other occupations, such as trade, business, and government service.

Aside from their traditional association with sacred learning, their other source of social status is their ritual purity, which is believed to be greater than that of all other human beings. This ritual purity is inherent, conferred by birth. According to tradition, even an uneducated brahmin should be considered a "god on earth," whereas a learned brahmin is more sacred still. This ritual purity makes brahmins preferable for service to many of the gods of the Hindu pantheon, since they are considered the best intermediaries to "insulate" the deities from ordinary people. Although brahmins as a whole have the highest status, within the brahmin community there are highly defined subgroups (jatis), which are often defined by region of origin.

Wikipedia

The history of the Brahmin community in India begins with the Vedic religion of early Hinduism, now often referred to by Hindus as Sanatana Dharma. The Vedas are the primary source of knowledge for brahmin practices. Most sampradayas of Brahmins take

inspiration from the Vedas. According to orthodox Hindu tradition, the Vedas are apauruṣeya and anādi (beginning-less), but are revealed truths of eternal validity.

... Brahmins are also called Vipra “inspired”, or Dvija “twice-born”.

Due to the diversity in regional, religious traditions and the Vedic schools which they belong to, Brahmins are further divided into various sub-castes. Not all Brahmins are priests; only a subset of brahmins are involved in the priestly duties, with vedic learning, ascetic and humble living. Brahmins have been practicing other professions since late Vedic ages like doctors, smiths, lawyers, engineers, warriors, writers, poets, landlords, ministers, etc. Many Brahmins have emigrated to other parts of the world in sizable numbers, particularly to the USA, UK, Canada and Australia.

... In 1931 (the last Indian census to record caste), Brahmins accounted for 4.32% of the total population. Even in Uttar Pradesh, where they were most numerous, Brahmins constituted just 12% of the recorded population. In Andhra Pradesh, they formed less than 2%; in Tamil Nadu they formed less than 3%. In Kerala, Nambudiri Brahmins make up 0.7% of the population. According to the 2001 census, Brahmins constitute less than 4.1% of the Indian population.

See also:

Semantics and pronunciation

Etymology

General

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

The term is derived from the Vedic word BRAHMAN, which means (among other things) “prayer.”

[Wikipedia](#)

The English word brahmin is an anglicised form of the Sanskrit word Brāhmana.

Related words

Brahmana

Ksatriya

Sanskrit

Brahmin — ब्रह्मिन्

brahmin- ब्रह्मन्नि

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Title variants

Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad — बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद्

Brhadāranyaka upaniṣad - बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद्

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad name is literally translated as “great-forest- teaching”.

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Br̥hadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad — ... “sitting down nearby (the scripture of) the great forest”

1. This Upaniṣad belongs to the Śatapatha Br̥hmaṇa of the Śukla Yajur Veda. The theme of this Upaniṣad is the nondifference of the Absolute (Brahman) and the individual (Ātman). It is the largest Upaniṣad and is considered great (br̥had) due both to its length and its profundity. It consists of three sections (kāṇḍa), each having two chapters. The Madhu Kāṇḍa expounds the basic identity of the individual self with the Universal Self. The Muni Kāṇḍa (Yājñavalkya Kāṇḍa) provides the philosophical justification of the teaching. The Khila Kāṇḍa deals with certain modes of worship and meditation (upāsana, śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana) and contains much information per meditation. This Upaniṣad also contains the mahāvākya, aham brahmasmi. Noble personages found in this Upaniṣad include Maitreyī, Gārgī, Janaka, and Yājñavalkya.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (c. 700 B.C.E.) The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is a classical UPANISHAD connected to the White YAJUR VEDA. It is probably the oldest of the classical Upanishads and retains much material on ancient Vedic ritual, which the later classical Upanishads ignore.

Wikipedia

The Br̥hadāraṇyaka Upanishad is one of the older, “primary” (mukhya) Upanishads. It is contained within the Shatapatha Brahmana, and its status as an independent Upanishad may be considered a secondary extraction of a portion of the Brahmana text. This makes it one of the old texts of the Upanishad corpus, dating to roughly the 8th to 5th centuries BCE. It is largely the oldest Upanishad, excluding some parts which were composed after the Chandogya and the largely neglected Jaminiya Upanishad Brahmana. It is associated with the Shukla Yajurveda. It figures as number 10 in the Muktika canon of 108 Upanishads and was notably commented upon by Adi Shankara.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Author(s)

[Brihadaranyaka Upanishad] is ascribed to Yajnavalkya.

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The work opens with a meditation on the ashva medha, or HORSE SACRIFICE, seeing the horse itself as universal reality in all its particulars. This is a feature that is well established in the earlier BRAHMANA literature, which focused on the deeper meaning of ritual.

The Upanishad contains a cosmogony of the Ultimate Self or ATMAN as it differentiates into worldly reality. It also preserves several ancient dialogues about the nature of the universe, the atman, and the BRAHMAN. Particularly, it contains the disquisitions or answers of the famous sage YAJNAVALKYA to these questions.

In the course of this Upanishad, the doctrine of the two forms of brahman, the formed and the formless, is outlined (Bri. 2.3. 1-6). This doctrine is repeated in later Upanishads and is a central issue in the thought of later VEDANTA. Brihadaranyaka also presents for the first time the image of the divine reality as a spider and the worldly reality its spun web or threads (Bri. 2.1.20). In the course of one of Yajnavalka's dialogues, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad also outlines, perhaps for the first time, the three levels of consciousness: waking (jagarita), dreaming sleep (svapna), and deep sleep (sushupti). (The fourth level appears to be a later development: turiya, the transcendent state of consciousness.) The work also outlines (Bri. 4.4. 3-6) the first extended discourse on REINCARNATION and KARMA, as well as the karmic paths of the Sun and Moon: liberation is the path via the Sun and reincarnation is the path via the Moon (Bri. 6.2. 16). Finally, it introduces the negative description of the brahman as being "Not thus, not thus" (NETI NETI) (Bri. 4.5.15.).

Wikipedia

[Brihadaranyaka Upanishad] includes three sections, namely, Madhu Kanda, Muni Kanda (or Yajnavalkya Kanda) and Khila Kanda. The Madhu Kanda explains the teachings of the basic identity of the individual or jiva and the Atman. Muni Kanda includes the conversations between the sage Yajnavalkya and his wife, Maitreyi. Various methods of worship and meditation are dealt in the Khila Kanda. The doctrine of "neti neti" ("neither this, nor that") and a often quoted verse, "Asato Maa" is found in this Upanishad.

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Related words

Mahavakya: Aham Brahma Asmi

Upanishads

Yajur Veda

Buddhi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Buddhi — ... intellect; the discriminative faculty

1. The ascertaining intelligence and the impersonal or superpersonal state of consciousness of a limited individual.
2. The first evolute of primordial Nature (prakṛti). It is the basis of the intelligence of the individual. It is the determinative faculty and by it one resolves upon a course of action. (See antaḥkaraṇa.)
3. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, it is of two kinds: recollection (smṛti) and experience (anubhava).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

buddhi -

the power of forming and retaining conceptions and general notions, intelligence, reason, intellect, mind, discernment, judgement; perception (of which 5 kinds are enumerated, or with manas 6; cf. indriya, buddhindriya);

comprehension, apprehension, understanding;

(with ātmanaḥ, or buddhir brāhmī) knowledge of one's self. psychology;

(in Sāṃkhya phil.) Intellect (= adhy-avasāya, the intellectual faculty or faculty of mental perception, the second of the 25 Tattvas; cf. buddhi-tattva);

presence of mind, ready wit;

an opinion, view, notion, idea, conjecture;

thought about or meditation on (loc. or comp.), intention, purpose, design;

impression, belief. notion;

right opinion, correct or reasonable view;

a kind of metre;

N. of the 5th astrol. mansion;

Intelligence personified (as a daughter of Daksha and wife of Dharma and mother of Bodha)

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Buddhi is a technical term in the SAMKHYA YOGA system that refers to discriminative intellect. Ultimately, one seeks to calm the mind so that the discriminative intellect or buddhi will be able to discern the clear division between the self or soul and the whirling world of phenomena. This discernment is a crucial step in the liberation of the self from the cycle of birth and rebirth. The buddhi is considered to have the greatest predominance of sattva (purity) of anything in existence. Ultimately, however, liberation can occur only when buddhi, too, is transcended (in consciousness), as it too is part of the world of phenomena and, in its own way, a hindrance to the highest spiritual realization.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

INTELLIGENCE (buddhi) is the power of forming and retaining conceptions and general notions, the faculty of the mind to discern, judge, comprehend, apprehend, and understand the meaning of right knowledge. It is that power of man which enables him to contemplate the eternal.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Buddhi This word refers to the mental faculty often translated as “intellect,” but it carries connotations beyond mere knowledge. The buddhi is the intellectual capability for awareness, mental perception, and decision-making, and as such it is the basis for all cognitive thought. In the account of evolution found in the Samkhya philosophical school, buddhi is one stage in the evolution of the human personality and the external world. In the Samkhya account, buddhi is the first faculty to emerge from prakrti, or “primal matter,” and is also known by the name mahat (the “great one”). The mental processes facilitated by buddhi spur the development of the next stage of evolution, ahamkar, or “subjective consciousness.” In more colloquial language, buddhi describes the overall quality of a person’s mind, whether it is wholesome or unwholesome, sound or unsound.

Wikipedia

Buddhi is that faculty of mind, discriminative in nature (बुद्धिनिश्चयात्मिका चित्त-वृत्ति), which is able to discern truth from falsehood and which makes wisdom possible.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Buddhi - Understanding. Also denotes the reasoning faculty of mind.

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The first stage of this synthetic unit called Mind (Citta) is buddhi, derived from budh> “to wake up, recover consciousness, observe.” Here the term is used to mean the seat of intelligence, the intuitive capacity of the individual, his means of direct perception. It accounts for the capacity of illumination, abstraction, determination, certainty. It is the seat of virtue, non-attachment and wisdom. It manifests itself through determination, resolution in thought and action, formation and retention of concepts and generalizations. It is the last to act in all cognitional, affectional, and volitional processes of the ego (ahamkara), mind (manas), and senses (indriyas). It is the sole basis for knowing, willing, feeling and resolving. It is the background or mere awareness, without thought of “I.” When the mind (manas) is registering the objects of thought, it is the intelligence (buddhi) that discriminates, determines, and recognizes. In contemplation, the mind (manas) raises the objects of thought, and the intelligence (buddhi) dwells upon them.

Wikipedia

It corresponds to the Platonic conception of nous and just as that faculty plays a central role in salvation within Orthodox Christianity within Buddhism, Yoga and orthodox Hinduism Buddhi plays a central role in the attainment of liberation (moksha) or enlightenment (bodhi).

Buddhi makes its first scriptural appearance in the Katha Upanisad (1,3) where it is compared in a famous simile to the driver of a horse and carriage, where the reins held by the driver represent the lower mind (manas); the horses represent the five senses and the carriage itself - the body. Ontologically, buddhi is equivalent to hiranyagarbha and is to individual living souls - jivas - as hiranyagarbha is to the insentient phenomena of the universe. Buddhi is that dimension (or pole) of the heart/mind (chitta) which is attracted to Brahman. The other 'pole' of chitta is called manas and is characterised by an attraction to form and ego- construction (ahamkara). Manas, through identification with matter and desire for sensual pleasures (kama) causes the incarnation of Brahman into material existence as an individual soul. Buddhi, through wisdom (prajña) and discernment (vitarka), leads an incarnate soul in the opposite direction dissolving identification with material phenomena with cessation of corresponding worldly desires (vairagya) and eventually attaining liberation (moksha).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

Buddhi, or intellect, is that special aspect of consciousness originating from purusa, the pure Spirit. It becomes conjoined with mind, which is an evolute of the ego, acted upon by the three gunas: sattva, rajas, and tamas. This conjunction of intelligence and mind works for the good when the mind becomes subservient to intelligence. On the other hand, when intelligence becomes a tool in the hands of the mind, which is already vitiated by the colourations of past impressions, it loses its efficacy to release the lower self from bondage and becomes durmati, perverted intelligence. In this state the individual, who is helplessly caught in the imperativeness of action and cannot recognize it as merely belonging to the field, mistakes it for the action of the Self.

Why is the intelligence of such a person qualified as akṛta buddhi, unfinished intelligence?

The proper function of buddhi, intelligence, is to discern right from wrong, the Self from the non- Self, and the eternal from the transient. If buddhi fails to do this it is akṛta buddhi, unfinished intelligence.

Some people, like John Locke, think that when a child is born it comes into the world with a mind as blank as a clean slate, a tabula rasa. // this is true, the power to discern must come as an acquired or learned skill. Also, the scope to train intelligence being unlimited, shouldn't all people be considered to have unfinished intelligence?

This is not the view of present-day scientists and psychologists. Sir Karl Popper writes:

This idea [of tabula rasa] is not merely mistaken, but grotesquely mistaken: we have only to remember the ten thousand million neurons of our cerebral cortex, some of them (the cortical pyramidal cells) each with an "estimated total of ten thousand" synaptic links. These may be said to represent the material traces of our inherited and almost entirely unconscious knowledge, selected by evolution. Although there is really no method of comparing the two (this is so in general with the nature versus nurture problem) I should be intuitively inclined to say that the huge amount of information we can acquire in a lifetime through our senses is small compared with the amount of this inherited background of potentialities.*

What is referred to as "inherited and almost entirely unconscious knowledge" is treated by the Vedantin as superconsciousness coming from the Ground, sat-cit-ānanda. It is the continuation of life. It reaches its teleologic goal only when the awareness of the individual is brought to its final fruition of total emancipation. Until this is achieved it is akṛta buddhi, unfinished intelligence.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

There is another aspect of our consciousness which comes to a decision: "This is such-and-such." The part making the decision is called the intellect. In Malayalam it is mati. In Sanskrit grammar we have nirdesika, pratigrahika and sambandhika. Nirdesika is that which integrates, pratigrahika is that which you grasp or learn or understand, and sambandhika is that which relates one thing

to another. Corresponding to these three in Vedanta are three categories of mind: the questioning aspect, manas; the recalling aspect, citta; and the deciding aspect, buddhi. In logic, these are called the subject, the copula and the predicate: the subject is interrogative or suggestive, the copula is relative, and the predicate is the decisive.

...

Now, just what kind of decision is the intellect making? It is deciding what name should be given to what form. It is coordinating a name and a form, a mental image and a corresponding word symbol. When you say "this is a pot," there is an image of a pot, which is a concept. 'Pot' is a sound which revives an image from your consciousness. The image is then conjoined with the sound. The intellect is finalizing, out of a series of concepts, one which is most appropriate for each situation. This is then underlined and promoted as "the" concept.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: How to get peace?

M.: That is the natural state. The mind obstructs the innate peace. Our investigation is only in the mind. Investigate the mind; it will disappear.

There is no entity by name mind. Because of the emergence of thoughts we surmise something from which they start. That we term mind. When we probe to see what it is, there is nothing like it. After it has vanished, Peace will be found to remain eternal.

D.: What is buddhi (intellect)?

M.: The thinking or discriminating faculty. These are mere names. Be it the ego, the mind or the intellect, it is all the same. Whose mind? Whose intellect? The ego's. Is the ego real? No. We confound the ego and call it intellect or mind.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

65. Intellect (Buddhi) is that modification of the internal instrument (Antahkarana) which determines [the real nature of an object].

See: Antahkarana, manas, citta, buddhi, ahankara

Buddhi and purusha

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

[Sankhya]... what is the soul that can be thought of as the subject of experience in this system? We have the puruṣa, no doubt, but it really remains external to everything and cannot therefore stand for the subject of experience. There is another element that serves as an important aid in the process of knowing, viz. mahat or buddhi; but that is equally unsuited to be the subject though for quite a different reason. It is non-sentient (jada) being derived from prakṛti, and experience cannot therefore be ascribed to it. Though neither by itself can serve as the subject, it is stated, they do so together, the buddhi contributing all the activity involved in it and the puruṣa the element of awareness (caitanya). The puruṣa illumines or is reflected in the buddhi, which though physical is fine enough to receive the reflection; and, thus illumined, it serves as the conscious subject. The buddhi may therefore be viewed

as the physical medium for the manifestation of spirit. We may call their unity in this sense the empirical self to distinguish it from the puruṣa or the transcendental self. Owing to such association, each of the two elements in the empirical self appears completely transmuted—nonsentient buddhi becoming sentient, as it were, and passive puruṣa, active. The illustration commonly given in this connection is the ‘red-hot iron ball’ where the formless glow of fire appears spherical and cold iron, hot. Every jñāna is a state of this blend. When we consider its two parts separately, the modification of the buddhi which such a state involves is called a vṛtti and the reflection of the puruṣa in it jñāna. Owing to the felt identity of the two elements, the vṛtti also is sometimes designated jñana.

See: Sushupti and Buddhi

See also:

Evolution of prakṛiti (Sankhya)

in Manas and avidya: [Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji](#)

in Vijnanamaya kosha: [Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani](#)

in Sadhana: [Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

buddhi - ... from the verb root budh = “to enlighten, to know”

[Wikipedia](#)

buddhi is a feminine Sanskrit noun derived from the same root (budh – to be awake; to understand; to know) as its more familiar masculine form Buddha.

Related words

Antahkarana

Cit

Citta

Manas

Vijnanamaya kosha

Sanskrit

***Buddhi* — बुद्धि**

buddhi - बुद्धि

Buddhi-yoga

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The primary sense of the word yoga in the Gita is derived from the root yujir yoge or yuj, to join, with which is connected in a negative way the root yuj in the sense of controlling or restricting anything to that to which it is joined. Joining, as it means contact with something, also implies disjunction from some other thing. When a particular type of mental outlook or scheme of action is recommended, we find the word buddhi-yoga used, which simply means that one has intimately to associate oneself with a particular type of wisdom or mental outlook.

...

The word buddhi-yoga is also used at least three times, in II. 49, x. 10 and XVIII. 57 [Gita].

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

(Bhagavadgita, Ch.X, 10)

To such established in unbroken union (with) affectionate adoration, I grant that kind of unitive understanding by which they attain to Me.

The result or reward of this dedication is not anything of the order of a siddhi (spiritual attainment) as usually mentioned in books on yoga, including such respectable treatises as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. This and the next verse refer to an award which might appear too simple or plain. It is of the order of Self-realization or what is here called buddhi-yoga (unitive understanding).

This is a special phrase which runs throughout the Gita and is employed and extolled as early as ii, 49, where it is contrasted with mere karma (action, ritual, works) which is condemned there as very inferior. In vi, 43 the term again appears, where it is employed in a more technical sense, suggesting that one fallen from yoga re-establishes a link with it through the medium of intelligence or reason.

Here in this verse we find the expression used, it would seem, with the same intended precision. The same expression is used in xviii, 57 in summing up the whole teaching, which is sufficient support for its importance as a significant phrase. Moreover in x, 4 we find buddhi (reason) occupying premier place among the unique values whose source is the Absolute. The gift of intelligence or reason is the greatest which God could confer on man, according to the teaching of the Gita.

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

The division made in the Bhagavad-Gita (III.3) refers to the kind of principle of classification of the two kinds of Yoga and conforms and justifies the same when it says that the Yoga of wisdom of the Sankhyans and the Yoga of action of the Patanjali yogins, are the two main disciplines found in this world since ancient times. The Yoga of wisdom has also other descriptive titles applied to it, such as jnana- yajna (the wisdom-sacrifice), Sankhya-yoga (meditation based on reason), tyaga (renunciation), sannayasa (more mature renunciation), buddhi (discrimination), buddhi yoga (meditation based on discrimination), akarma (non-ritualism), naiu-karmya (non-activity), and kevala-jnana (plain and simple wisdom).

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

The Reality sought is one that appears as all phenomena both subjective and objective, the former pertaining to mind and the latter to matter. Of the Reality, these two aspects alone are recognizable. Hence these alone are the references available to lead the seeker to the Reality. Reality as such, remains imperceptible and, therefore, unreferable. The only way therefore to attain the core of the Reality is pointing out the two referable aspects to the seeker and leaving to him or her the job of intuitively perceiving what lies hidden in between. This must be accomplished on one's own. The way could well be compared to knowing what the content and value of a coin is, by making use of both its sides. Neither of the sides reveals the total content and value of the coin. Yet without both the sides the coin would be no coin, nor could it be recognized as a coin. The real value and content of it is bracketed by the two sides. Brahman, likewise, is a coin which has the subjective and objective aspects of appearance for its two sides or references. This subjective-objective duality is apparent both in the being of oneself and of the world as a whole. Realizing that which is in between the two, that remains always as if bracketed by the two, is our goal. The two apparent aspects, in the present enquiry, are to be treated as two counterparts of a dialectical situation, somewhat like the two poles of a single magnet. Pointing out these two counterparts correctly and leaving the job of seeking and meditatively perceiving what is between those poles, which is to be done by the seeker on his or her own, is the only way open to a guide or master. This method has always been relied upon by all seers and gurus, even from the time of the Upanisads. Narayana Guru is no exception.

Subject and object are not the only discernible dialectical pairs; micro-cosm (anu) and macro-cosm (akhandam) form yet another pair, and so do many others.

... Intuitively perceiving the unitive Reality by making use of its own two manifest aspects of opposite nature, is the only method helpful in seeking brahman, and it is called yoga- buddhi in the Bhagavad Gita. The one who is fully conversant with its application and its result is called yoga- yukta, literally the one already united through yoga. The implication is that the effective using of the method results in the effacement of the seeker, who becomes merged in what is sought. The same method in the West has been well known as "dialectics" even from the time of Plato.

Summary of Above

The Reality searched for is cit in essence; the seeking mind is cit in essence; the seeker knowing Reality therefore means, cit knowing cit. There being no two cit-s, this knowing, in effect, is none other than the knower becoming merged in the known, or the knower becoming the known or the other way around. It is simply an intuitive experience of the transparency of mere beingness.

The method relied on by the Guru in the search for Reality or atma thus apparently is that of interiorizing one's perception, and then resorting to dialectical reasoning, rather than to linear logical reasoning.

Peculiarity of the Method

An all-comprehensive science has to have an all comprehensive method of enquiry or rather methodology of its own. An absolutist science has to have an absolutist method of its own. No method that works with any of the ordinary sciences we are familiar with will cope with an absolutist science that has to be a Science of all sciences.

Relying on no "other", interiorized perception is not relative, and hence is absolutist in nature. The self is the most certain of all entities that one is undeniably sure, exists. Therefore, knowing oneself is the surest means of knowing what Reality is.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Bhagavad Gita

“Now learn this buddhi yoga, declared to you in the Sankhya philosophy. By the yoga of the buddhi [or: by uniting the buddhi in yoga], you shall rid [free] yourself of the bondage of karma.” (2:39)

...

Buddhi yoga

Buddhi is the intellect, understanding, and reason. It is not just the thinking mind, it is the understanding mind, the seat of intelligence and wisdom. Buddhi Yoga, then is the Yoga of Intelligence which later came to be called Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of Knowledge. We have four levels of being, and the buddhi—also called the jnanamaya kosha—is one of the highest. So a buddhi yogi has his consciousness centered in the higher levels of his being. And he uses his buddhi to extend that yoga even higher into that level which is virtually indistinguishable from spirit. From then on Self-realization is assured. Yoga and Sankhya are inseparable, so buddhi yoga involves meditation as its paramount aspect. A Buddha is a successful buddhi yogi. Unprejudiced reading of the Pali Sutras of Buddhism will reveal that Buddha was not only an Aryan, he was a classical Sankhya philosopher, a buddhi yogi. Anyone who wishes to follow Buddha must be the same. (Just as anyone who wishes to follow Christ must follow Sanatana Dharma as found in the Gita. Then he, too, will be a follower of Sankhya and a practitioner of Yoga.)

“Yoga” comes from the Sanskrit root yuj, which means to join or connect or even to unite in the sense of making many into one. It can also mean to bring together. But in the scriptures of India it always is applied in a spiritual sense, meaning both union with God and the way by which that union is effected. Yoga, then is both spiritual life and the culmination of spiritual life. Yoga is union with the Supreme Being, or any practice that makes for such union.

According to Krishna, the direct effect of buddhi yoga is the dissolving of karmic bonds created by past actions (karmas) and the freeing of the yogi from the compulsion to future karmas—binding actions. So we should look at karma itself.

...

Buddhi yoga is the state in which desire can no longer arise, being eclipsed by awareness of the spirit-Self. These are high ideals virtually beyond our present comprehension, but not beyond our attainment.

...

Buddhi Yoga is the Yoga of Intelligence which later came to be called Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of Knowledge.

...

Krishna does not bother with short-sighted strategies, but tells us to literally “shoot for the top,” saying: “Seek refuge in buddhi!” In this instance buddhi means in the state of consciousness that is attained through—and is—buddhi yoga. (Actually the Sanskrit word is buddhau, which means the consciousness that is the buddhi.)

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

Buddhi-Yoga = the state of steady restraint of the mind. Resorting to that Buddhi-Yoga and surrendering to none else, you fix your heart ever on Me.

See also:

Yoga and dialectics

Related words

Jnana Yoga

Sanskrit

buddhi-yoga - बुद्धियोग

C

Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Variant spellings

catuspada
catushpada
catuṣpada

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

catuṣpada -
4 padas;
4 partitions or divisions;
quadruped;
consisting of 4 Padas;
consisting of 4 words;
comprising 4 partitions or divisions;
tetranomial;
a quadruped;
a kind of coitus;
certain zodiacal signs;
N. of a shrub;
N. of a particular Karaṇa

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

In the course of one of Yajñavalkya's dialogues, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad also outlines, perhaps for the first time, the three levels of consciousness: waking (jagarita), dreaming sleep (svapna), and deep sleep (sushupti). (The fourth level appears to be a later development: turiya, the transcendent state of consciousness.)

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The four tier theory is presented in the Māndūkya Upanisad and the Māndūkya Kārikā of Gaudapada. Śankara, being the grand disciple of Gaudapada, subscribes to the theory of the surface consciousness as Jāgrat, dream consciousness as svapna and deep sleep as susupti. There is a transcendence where the consciousness is unwound so it has homogeneity and remains with the fourth, the turiya. In all the other Upanisads, including the Brhadaranyaka, the fourth state is not mentioned.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: ... when you identify yourself with the body as in jagrat you see gross objects; when in subtle body or in mental plane as in svapna, you see objects equally subtle; in the absence of identification as in sushupti you see nothing. The objects seen bear a relation to the state of the seer. The same applies to visions of God.

By long practice the figure of God, as meditated upon, appears in dream and may later appear in jagrat also.

...

M.: There are different methods of approach to prove the unreality of the universe. The example of the dream is one among them. Jagrat, svapna and sushupti are all treated elaborately in the scripture in order that the Reality underlying them might be revealed. It is not meant to accentuate differences among the three states. The purpose must be kept clearly in view.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Hindu tradition teaches that there are four states of consciousness. These are indicated by the names of the waking state, the dream state, the deep sleep state, and the fourth state. The waking state represents the consciousness of the physical plane and body, the dream state the consciousness of “the middle region”, consisting of feelings and lower mind, the deep sleep state the spiritual consciousness, and “the fourth state” the “essential” consciousness. In other words, the four states represent consciousness in the Five Elements, the Elements Water and Fire being taken together.

As the West views consciousness, the three states of waking, dreaming and sleep are actual physical phenomena, but from the point of view of Hinduism the states, as described, are symbols for psychological realities rather than the actualities themselves. Emotion and thought are forms of “dreaming” both from the point of view of the consciousness of the physical world and brain and from the angle of vision of “superconsciousness”; and spiritual activity is as mysterious as sleep to the conscious mind.

It is clear that modern conceptions of “consciousness” are very different from the traditional conceptions of old. The “waking state of consciousness” is what modern thinkers call “consciousness”. What is now called “super-consciousness”, the men of old, who thought and lived in terms of Tradition, called “consciousness” proper. The word “proper” is most appropriate, for it means natural, genuine and pure, — and consciousness, as it is in its true state, is natural and genuine, pure and undefiled. ...

Hindu tradition teaches that when Consciousness comes down into the Elements, it assumes various veils. It veils itself consecutively in material of the Element Air, of the Element Fire and of the Element Water. Finally, in the physical brain, the outer cover, it manifests as waking consciousness.

Traditionally these veils are conceived either as “vehicles” or “bodies”, in an objective sense, as meant above, or in a subjective sense, in which they indicate elements that hide pure consciousness and bare truth.

... The “deep sleep” which the Lord God caused to fall upon man, symbolizes “spiritual consciousness”. From the point of view of “the waking consciousness”, that is, the ordinary consciousness of the world and the body, spiritual consciousness is something dark and mysterious, hence it is associated with sleep. It is placed in the unconscious, in other words. It is possible to trace thought and follow it up in its sequence of causes and effects and associations, but it is not possible to trace the working of spiritual consciousness, at least rationally. The function of intuition, which belongs to “spiritual consciousness”, works in a moment of

time, in a manner which must simply be accepted by the rational function. The function of faith and insight, which is one higher than intuition, works even more mysteriously, symbolized generally by “in a flash”. To the waking consciousness intuition and inspiration appear to come from the unconscious. Hence spiritual consciousness is symbolized by “deep sleep”. The symbolism also implies the perfect peace and restfulness of the spiritual function, to which all the problems and complexes of the emotional plane and the lower mind are foreign.

Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

... we come across an original idea of Indian philosophy, the doctrine of the four states, the state of being awake, the state of dreaming, the state of deep and dreamless sleep, to which is added as the fourth, the state of death. In the first state the Atman is supposed to be perceiving and acting by means of the Manas and the Indriyas. In the second the Indriyas cease to act, but the Manas remains active, and the Atman, joined to the Manas, moves through the veins of the body and sees dreams made out of the remnants of former impressions (Vasanas). The third state arises from a complete separation of Atman from Manas and Indriyas. While these are absorbed in the vital spirit, which remains in full activity, the Atman in the heart is supposed to have for a time become one with Brahman, but to return unchanged at the time of awakening. In the fourth or disembodied state the Atman with the Sukshma-sarira is supposed to escape from the heart through a vein in the head or through the hundred veins of the body, and then to take, according to merit and knowledge, different paths into the next life.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. *Psychology of Darsanamala*

The four states of consciousness according to Vedānta can also be superimposed on the coordinate axes. Waking consciousness, jāgrat, corresponds to the horizontal positive, while the dream state, svapna, is placed at the horizontal negative. Susupti, the deep sleep state, is placed at the vertical negative, and turiya, the transcendental, is represented by the vertical positive. Thus the horizontal covers the range of perceptual values from objectivity on the plus side to subjectivity on the negative, and the vertical comprises conceptual values which rise from the alpha to the omega in a graded series. Such is the frame of reference which comprises the core of the Science of the Absolute, of which Darsanamālā is a textbook.

Nitya. *Saundaryalahari of Sankaracarya*

In the Mandukya Upanisad the Absolute is described as catuspada, the four-limbed. The Absolute that is symbolized with aum also has four quarters. They are the four aspects of consciousness: the wakeful or objective, the dream or subjective, the unconscious, and the transcendental.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. *Maharshi's Gospel*

M: You exist in sushupti without being associated with the body and the mind, but in the other two states you are associated with them. If you were one with the body, how could you exist without the body in sushupti? You can separate yourself from what is external to you but not from that which is one with you. Hence the ego cannot be one with the body. This must be realised in the waking state. The three states are studied in order to gain this knowledge.

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

There are five states for the individual. They are: (1) Jagrat, (2) Swapna, (3) Sushupti, (4) Turiya, (5) Turyatita. Of these the jagrat is the waking state. In it the jiva in the Visva aspect and the Lord in the Virat aspect, abiding together in the eight petals of the Heart lotus, function through the eyes and enjoy novel pleasures from various objects by means of all the senses, organs, etc. The five gross elements which are widespread, the ten senses, the five vital airs, the four inner faculties, the twenty-four fundamentals - all these together form the gross body. The jagrat state is characterised by satva guna denoted by the letter A and presided over by the deity Vishnu. The swapna is the dream state in which the jiva in the Taijasa aspect and the Lord in the Hiranyagarbha aspect, abiding together in the corolla of the Heart-Lotus, function in the neck and experience through the mind the results of the impressions collected in the waking state. All the principles, the five gross elements, the will and the intellect, seventeen in all, together form the subtle body of the dream which is characterised by the rajo guna denoted by the letter U and presided over by the deity Brahma, so say the wise.

The sushupti is the state of deep sleep in which the jiva in the Prajna aspect and the Lord in the Isvara aspect, abiding together in the stamen of the Heart-Lotus, experience the bliss of the Supreme by means of the subtle avidya (nescience). Just as a hen after roaming about in the day calls the chicks to her, enfolds them under her wings and goes to rest for the night, so also the subtle individual being, after finishing the experiences of the jagrat and swapna for the time being, enters with the impressions gathered during those states into the causal body which is made up of nescience, characterised by tamo guna, denoted by the letter M and presided over by the deity Rudra.

Deep sleep is nothing but the experience of pure being. The three states go by different names, such as the three regions, the three forts, the three deities, etc. The being always abides in the Heart, as stated above. If in the jagrat state the Heart is not relinquished, the mental activities are stilled and Brahman alone is contemplated, the state is called the Turiya. Again when the individual being merges in the Supreme it is called the turyatita. The vegetable kingdom is always in sushupti; the animals have both swapna and sushupti; the gods (celestials) are always in jagrat; man has all the three states; but the clear-sighted yogi abides only in turiya, and the highest yogi remains in turyatita alone.

The three states alternate involuntarily for the average man. The last two (turiya and turyatita) are however the results of practice and form clear aids to liberation. Of the other three states (Jagrat, swapna and sushupti) each one is exclusive of the other two and limited by the conditions of time and space. They are therefore unreal.

Our very experience of the jagrat and the swapna states proves that the Consciousness as the Self underlies all the five states, remains perfect all along and witnesses all of them. But with regard to similar consciousness in the deep sleep, every person is known to say "I was not aware of anything; I slept soundly and happily". Two facts emerge from the statement (unawareness of anything and the happiness of sound sleep). Unless these existed and were experienced in sleep they could not find expression by the same person in the waking state. Inference also leads to the same conclusion. Just as the eye sees the darkness which remains enveloping all objects, so also the Self sees the darkness of nescience which remained covering the phenomenal world. This darkness was experienced when it (the Self) emerged in dots of supreme bliss, shone a trice and fled away in such fine subtlety as the rays of the moon which peer through the waving foliage. The experience was however not through any media (such as the senses of the mind), but bears out the fact that consciousness does exist in deep sleep. The unawareness is owing to the absence of relative knowledge, and the happiness to the absence of (seething) thoughts.

If the experience of bliss in deep sleep is a fact, how is it that no one among all the human beings recollects it? A diver who has found the desired thing under water cannot make his discovery known to the expectant persons on the shore until he emerges

from the water. Similarly the sleeper cannot express his experience because he cannot contact the organs of expression until he is awakened by his vasanas in due course. Therefore it follows that the Self is the light of Sat, Chit, Ananda. The Self is the basis of all the experiences. It remains as the witness and the support of them all. The Reality is thus different from the three states, the waking, the dream and the deep sleep.

...

M.: Whatever state one is in, the perceptions partake of that state. The explanation is that in the waking state (jagrat) the gross body perceives gross names and forms; in swapna (the dream state) the mental body perceives the mental creations in their manifold forms and names; in the sushupti (deep dreamless sleep), the identification with the body being lost, there are no perceptions; similarly in the Transcendental state identity with Brahman places the man in harmony with everything, and there is nothing apart from his Self.

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The perceiver in the jagrat and svapna states who always experiences subject-object relationship, finds its absence in susupti.

...

That the Atman is the witness of the three states is known from the perception of the change of one state into another. The Atman is the witness not only of the three states but also of their cognizers, viz., Visva, Taijasa and Prajna. In this body and in the Jagrat-state alone, the three states as well as their cognizers are perceived.

Catuspada and Atman

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

This Subject, this Ātman, whose investigation we are to make now, is regarded as fourfold for the purpose of this analysis, - so'yamātmā chatuṣhpāt. ... The four quarters of the Ātman described in the Māndūkya Upaniṣhad are the four aspects in the study of the Ātman, and not four distinguishable, partitioned quarters of the Ātman. These quarters, these four aspects in the study of the nature of the Ātman, which are the main subject of the Māndūkya Upaniṣhad, are also a process of self-transcendence.

... we transcend ... the universal physical for the sake of the attainment of the universal psychic or the astral; transcend that also, later, and then reach the universal causal; and transcend that, too, further, and reach the Universal Spiritual ... So, we have the physical, the subtle, the causal and the Spiritual. These are the four feet of the Ātman, or rather, four aspects of the study of the nature of the Ātman, four stages of self-transcendence described in the Upaniṣhad. These four stages are called jāgrat, svapna, suṣhupti and turīya, - the waking state, the dreaming state, the sleeping state, and the transcendent spiritual state. There are the four states of Consciousness, and a study of Consciousness is the same as the study of the Absolute or Brahman, because Brahman is Consciousness. ... So, we have to take, one by one, the stages of waking, dream, sleep and the pure Spirit, or the Absolute, for the sake of attaining this self-transcendence.

Catuspada and OM

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

II. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY SANKARA

Though the name and the object signified by the name are one and the same, still the explanation¹ has been given (here) by giving prominence [N's Note (Nikhilananda's Note). Prominence—Because Aum is the first word of the first Upanisad. The purport of the sentence is that Aum is the symbol, the most universal, for all the phenomena of the world. Therefore prominence is given to Aum.] to the name (Aum). Though in the Upanisadic passage—'Aum, this word, is all this'— explanation has been furnished by giving prominence to the name (Aum), the same thought is again expounded by giving prominence to the thing signified by the name. The object is to realise the knowledge of the oneness of the name and the thing signified by it. Otherwise, (the explanation) that the knowledge of the thing is dependent on the name, might suggest that the oneness of the name and the thing is to be taken only in a figurative sense. The purpose of the knowledge of the unity (of the name and the thing signified by it) is to simultaneously remove, by a single effort. (the illusion of) both the name and the thing and establish (the nature of) Brahman which is other than both. Therefore the Sruti says, 'The quarters (Padas) are the letters of Aum (Matra) and the letters are the quarters'.

Therefore it says:

All this is verily Brahman. This Atman is Brahman. This Atman has four quarters.

SANKARA'S COMMENTARY

All this is verily Brahman. All that has been said to consist merely of Aum (in the previous text, See OM) is Brahman. That Brahman which has been described [N's Note. By the Sruti.] (as existing) inferentially [N's Note. i.e., we cannot directly perceive its presence but we can infer it. It is opposed to Aparokshajnana which refers to the knowledge of a thing that is not directly perceived but about the existence of which one becomes absolutely certain by means of what is known as realization] - is now pointed out, as being directly known [N's Note. The word Pratyaksha, nowadays, is applied, especially in the Nyaya Philosophy, to the knowledge of the objects of sense-perception. But occasionally it is used, in the Upanisad and the Vedantic text, in the sense of Aparoksha], by the passage, 'This Self is Brahman'. The word this, meaning that which appears divided into four quarters [N's Note. Namely, Visva (the waking state), Taijasa (dream state), Prdjna (Susupti or the state of dreamless sleep) and Turiya which is same as Brahman or Atman. These four quarters correspond to the three Matras of Aum and the Amatra of Aum. A, U, and M are the three Matras. The fourth, which is known as Amatra or without a letter, has no corresponding letter or sound. This is silence or Atman corresponding to Turiya. The idea of sound suggests the idea of soundlessness or silence from which sound may be said to proceed.], is pointed out as the innermost Self, with a gesture (of hand) [N's Note. I.e., by placing the hand on the region of the heart which, in popular belief, is the seal of Atman.] by the passage, 'This is Atman'. That Atman indicated by Aum, signifying both the higher and the lower Brahman, has four quarters (Padas) [N's Note. The four quarters are imagined in Atman to facilitate the understanding of the pupil], not indeed, like the four feet (Padas) of a cow [N's Note. Because cow has actually four feet which are unrelated with one another], but like the four quarters (Padas) of a coin known as Karshapana [N's Note. Karshapana is a coin made up of four quarters. A quarter-Karshapana is merged in the half-Karshapana; the half is merged in the three-fourth-Karshapana and the three-quarters ultimately is merged in the full Karshapana.]. The knowledge of the fourth (Turiya) is attained by merging the (previous) three, such as Visva etc., in it in the order of the previous one in the succeeding one [N's Note. Visva is merged in Taijasa, Taijasa in Prajna and finally Prajna is merged in Turiya.] Here the word 'Pada' or 'foot' is used in the sense of instrument. The word 'Pada' is again used in the sense of an object when the object to be achieved is the fourth (Turiya) [N's Note. It is

because the 'fourth' pada is realized by means of merging the three slates in it, and the attention is here drawn to the fourth pada which is the object of the enquiry].

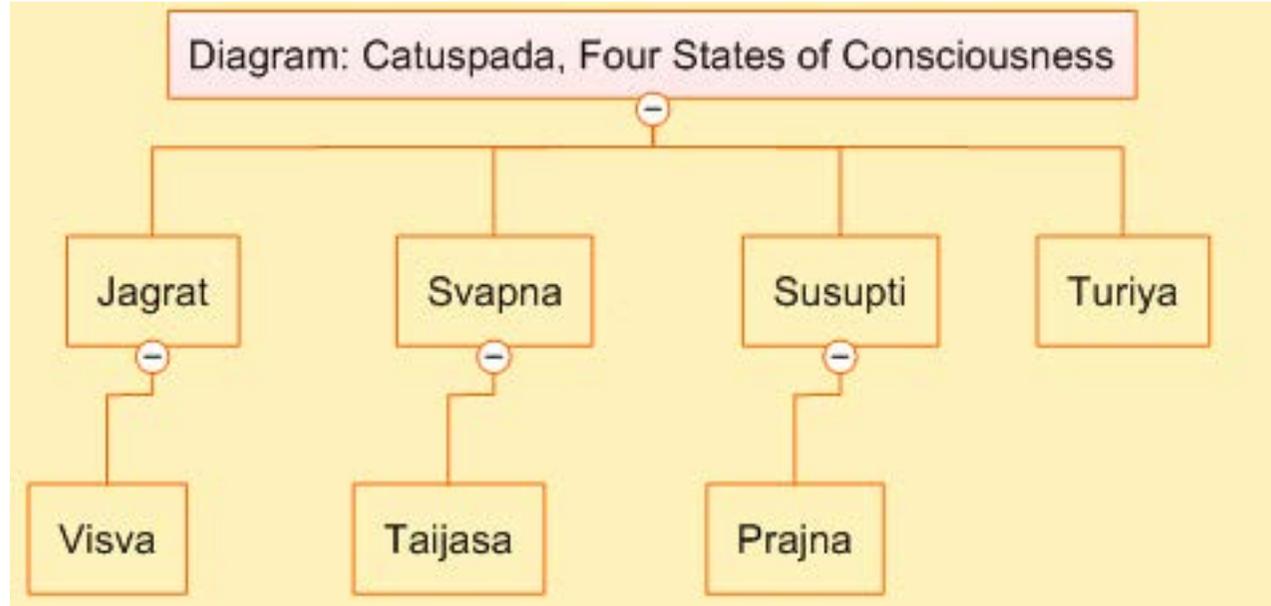
See also:

OM

Sanskrit

catuspada - चतुष्पद

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness



Cetana

Variant spellings

ceana

chetana

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Cetana — ... consciousness; volition; intelligence (see cit)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

cetanā -

consciousness, understanding, sense, intelligence;
the state of a sentient or conscious being, intelligence

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Cetana: The life principle that animates beings. Cit in its functional state.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

A car needs energy to make it run; the cosmos, on the other hand, lives on its own. This vitality that keeps both the cosmos and individuals alive is called cetana. The cosmos being changeful, this cetana has also necessarily to be likewise. Of presumed existence, cetana the subtlest of the constituent factors, is known as “soul” in theology.

See: Cit, chaitanya, cetana

See: OM (Pranava) and cetana

Related words

Chaitanya

Cit

Citta

Opposite: Jada

Sanskrit

Cetana — चेतन

cetana - चेतन

Chaitanya

Variant spellings

chaitanya
caitanya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Caitanya — ... consciousness; intelligence; spirit; awareness; Pure Consciousness

1. The fundamental Consciousness which has absolute freedom of knowing (jhana sakti) and doing (kriya sakti). According to Kashmir Saivism, it is the Absolute Reality, and is essentially, one and nondual, Pure Illumination (Suddha prakasa), self-luminous, and self-revealed.

2. Krsna Caitanya (1486-1533) was the name of a Bengali saint who is considered the founder of the Vedanta school called Acintya Bhedabheda. He is also considered the founder of the Hah Krishna sect of Vaisnavism and responsible for a great revival of Krsna devotion in the sixteenth century.

3. Stages of consciousness: vyahjanavagraha, arthavagraha, iha, avaya, dharana.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

caitanya -

(fr. ce'tana) consciousness;

intelligence, sensation, soul, spirit;

the Universal Soul or Spirit;

N. of a reformer of the Vaishṇava faith (born about 1485 A.D.)

Dictionary - Runes

Caitanya: (Skr.) Consciousness, "superconsciousness", a quality near the in-it-self aspect of the Absolute Spirit, and hence sometimes a synonym for it. K.F.L.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Chaitanya - Consciousness that is illuminating the conscious mind of an individuated organism and also governing it as its unconscious self. It has the potential to transform itself into various mental functions, ranging from simple sensation to the highest form of self-awareness.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

Chaitanya - Pure intelligence. Name of a great Hindu sage (born 1485) who is regarded as a Divine Incarnation.

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The technical term used to describe the eternal substance in which all things inhere is Caitanya, which means the changeless aspect of pure consciousness, the Universal Intelligence or Spirit. It is technically defined as Sat-Cit-Ananda, that is, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This does not mean that Being is a Consciousness of Bliss, but that Being is Conscious and Bliss as such. This represents the perfect condition of the supreme ideal, when Nature rests in Herself, when there is no feeling of a want to be satisfied, when there is no feeling of a need to go forth. It is the transcendental condition of universal potentiality.

Caitanya is, therefore, pure consciousness and can be defined as the boundless plenum in which the universe is born, grows, and dies; the continuum of experience that pervades, sustains, and vitalizes all existence; the source of all things; the spiritual substance of all things; the foundation upon which all things appear; the one and only reality. It is by definition without parts (Niṣkala), and, therefore, unproduced, indestructible, and motionless, for all these necessitate the displacement of parts. It must also be eternal and allpervading, and therefore, with no inside or outside; it is without attributes (Nirguṇa), and, therefore, beyond time and space; it is beyond the mind, and, therefore, not a subject of knowledge. It is a principle of pure experience and can be realized only by the ecstasy of spiritual illumination.

[Kāśmīr Śaivism]

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

Caitanya is a sort of matter and mind, and is an evident reality in common life as when we say an animal has lost its caitanya. Consciousness has not attained any degree of richness or purity as when we use the expressions cit or samvit which refer to pure consciousness where duality is further resolved into absolute unity. This concept therefore corresponds to the élan vital of Bergson.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Vedantins have a theory of perception which is very different from those of behavioral psychologists, for instance. As the behaviorists see it, the object outside is a stimulant causing energy to flow through the senses, in the manner of light falling on the eye or sound vibrating the eardrum. But to the Vedantin there is only one reality, called akhanda caitanya, unbroken consciousness. The unbroken consciousness circumlimits itself and says aham, "I am." This broken fragment thinking of itself as a personal self is said to have pramatra caitanya, the consciousness of an observer or seer. The object towards which this observer is turned is also a circumlimitation within the same field of consciousness. The observer and the observed have both become fragments in the totality of consciousness. These are united by sensory acts such as looking or listening. Whether you are seeking enjoyment in the field of your own fantasy or with actual objects, it is always nothing more than a play in consciousness.

... In Sanskrit the looking side is called pramata caitanya, and the seeing side is prameya caitanya. The criterion by which you relate the looking to the seeing is called pramana caitanya. In these three is a common factor, caitanya or consciousness. The objective and subjective aspects of consciousness taken together with the criterion of consciousness, give you what you think of as a valid experience.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

The Hindu says the karma is jada (non intelligent) and not chaitanya (intelligent), therefore some chaitanya is necessary to bring this cause to fruition. Is it that chaitanya is necessary to bring the plant to fruition? If I add water and plant the seed, no chaitanya is necessary. You may say there was some original chaitanya, but the souls themselves were the chaitanya, none else is necessary.

... If there is a yogi among you, he knows himself as chaitanya, for him the body has vanished. An ordinary man thinks of himself as a body; the idea of spirit has vanished.

See: Cit, chaitanya, cetana

See also:

Buddhi and purusha

Related words

Abhasa

Cetana

Cit

Citta

Opposite: Jada

Samvit

Sanskrit

Caitanya -- चैतन्य

caitanya - चैतन्य

Chakra

Variant spellings

chakra

cakra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Cakra — ... “wheel or circle”; center; disc; plexus; centers in the body (from the verb root car = “to move”)

1. In the human body, there are seven major energy centers or nerve plexes called cakras. A cakra is a center of energy located in the subtle body where the channels (nādī) converge, giving the appearance of a lotus. Energy is said to flow in the human body through three main channels (nādīs), namely, sushumnā, pingalā, and ida. Sushumnā is located inside the spinal column while the pingalā and ida start respectively from the right and left nostrils, move up to the crown of the head and course downwards to the base of the spine. These two nādīs intersect with each other and also with the sushumnā. These junctions of the nādīs are known as cakras or the fly-wheels which regulate the body mechanism. There are six main cakras located in the sushumnā (the subtle central channel). The cakras are centers of consciousness within the human being which control the functions of all the nerves of the body. One’s cosmic energy (Kundalinī) lies dormant, coiled at the base of the sushumnā in the mūlādhāra cakra. When awakened, either by yogic practices or by guru’s grace, Kundalinī begins to ascend through the sushumnā piercing all the cakras until She enters the sahasrāra, the topmost spiritual center.

2. The six main cakras are (1) Mūlādhāra, a four-petaled lotus located at the base of the spinal column where Kundalinī lies coiled up; (2) Svādhīsthāna, a six-petaled lotus located at the root of the reproductive organs; (3) Manipūra, a ten-petaled lotus located in the naval region; (4) Anāhata, a twelve-petaled lotus located in the region of the heart; (5) Visuddhi, a sixteen-petaled lotus located at the base of the throat; and (6) Ājñā, a two-petaled lotus located between the two eyebrows, a seat of the guru. Other cakras include sūrya (sun) situated in the region between the navel and the heart; soma (moon) situated in the center of the brain; and lalāta (forehead) situated at the top of the forehead.

3. See chart no. 13.

Chart 13

CAKRAS								
cakra	location	principle	tattva	sense	animal	Goddess	bija	number of petals
mūlādhāra	bottom of spine	anna	earth	smell	elephant	ḍākinī	lam	4
svādhīsthāna	generative organ	prāṇa	water	taste	crocodile	rākinī	vam	6
maṇipūra	navel	manas	fire	sight	ram	lākinī	ram	10
anāhata	heart	vijñāna	air	touch	antelope	kākinī	yam	12
viśuddhi	throat	ānanda	ether	hearing	white elephant	śākinī	ham	16
ājñā	between eyebrows	cit	mahat	mind	swan	hākinī	om	2
sahasrāra	crown of the head	sat	—	—	—	—	—	1000

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

cakra -

the wheel (of a carriage, of the Sun’s chariot);

a potter's wheel;
a discus or sharp circular missile weapon (esp. that of Viṣṇu);
an oil-mill;
a circle;
an astronomical circle;
a mystical circle or diagram, Tantr.;
a cycle, cycle of years or of seasons;
a form of military array (in a circle);
circular flight (of a bird);
a particular constellation in the form of a hexagon;
a circle or depression of the body (for mystical or chiromantic purposes ; 6 in number, one above the other, viz. 1. mūlādhāra, the parts about the pubis ; 2. svādhiṣṭhāna, the umbilical region ; 3. maṇipūra, the pit of the stomach or epigastrium ; 4. anāhata, the root of the nose ; 5. vizuddha, the hollow between the frontal sinuses ; 6. ājñākhyā, the fontanelle or union of the coronal and sagittal sutures ; various faculties and divinities are supposed to be present in these hollows);
N. of a metre;
a circle or a similar instrument (used in astron.);
a troop, multitude;
the whole number of;
a troop of soldiers, army, host;
a number of villages, province, district;
range, department;
the wheel of a monarch's chariot rolling over his dominions, sovereignty, realm;
(pl.) the winding of a river;
a whirlpool;
a crooked or fraudulent device;
N. of a medicinal plant or drug;
N. of a people;
N. of a man;
of a ṇāga;
of a mountain

[Wikipedia](#)

Chakra is a concept referring to wheel-like vortices which, according to traditional Indian medicine, are believed to exist in the surface of the etheric double of man. The Chakras are said to be "force centers" or whorls of energy permeating, from a point on the physical body, the layers of the subtle bodies in an ever-increasing fan-shaped formation. Rotating vortices of subtle matter, they are considered the focal points for the reception and transmission of energies. Different systems posit a varying number of chakras, the most well known system in the West is that of 7 chakras.

It is typical for chakras to be depicted as either flower-like or wheel-like. In the former, a specific number of “petals” are shown around the perimeter of a circle. In the latter, a certain number of spokes divide the circle into segments that make the chakra resemble a wheel (or “chakra”). Each chakra possesses a specific number of segments or petals.

Texts describing the chakras go back as far as the later Upanishads, for example the Yoga Kundalini Upanishad.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

Each chakra ... represents a psychophysical point of equilibrium, attained at various levels of the dynamism between the Self and the non-Self.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Chakra, literally, “wheel” or “discus,” is a term used in KUNDALINI yoga to designate energy centers along the spine. These centers do not reside in the gross body, at the physical level, but in what is termed the “subtle body.” Though they have a physical position, they have no definite physical adjuncts or precise nervous system connections as in the case of the Chinese system of meridians in acupuncture. They are instead believed to be connected to a network of channels in the subtle body called NADIS. The chakras are usually visualized as being lotus flowers with differing numbers of petals. Each of the chakras is a center of consciousness of sorts, playing a role in the makeup of the full human being (including his or her transcendent aspect).

There are six basic chakras found in almost every kundalini system with a seventh “highest chakra” that technically is beyond the chakras, but is often called “chakras” nonetheless. The names of these chakras vary in different systems. The most common system lists the following chakras, moving from the base of the spine to a place above the head: MULADHARA, SVADHISHTHANA, MANIPURA, ANAHATA, VISHUDDHA, AJNA. In this system the seventh level is usually called SAHASRARA, the transcendent level, which is not in most systems actually a chakra, but for convenience is sometimes designated as such.

Some accounts include an additional chakra, the LALATA or soma chakra, between ajna and sahasrara. In kundalini yoga one raises the kundalini, which is seen to be a coiled serpent, through breath control and/or MEDITATIONS so that it pierces in succession each of the chakras, giving the adept control or mastery over them. This movement results in complete personal transformation and, ultimately, access to the transcendent state.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Chakra (“wheel”). In Hindu iconography the chakra is the discus-weapon carried by several of the Hindu deities. It is often associated with the god Vishnu and is one of the four objects he invariably carries, along with the club (gada), lotus (padma), and conch shell (shankha). The discus was an actual weapon in the Indian military arsenal, and its sharp edges made it fearsome in close combat. Vishnu’s discus (named Sudarshana) is even more fearsome in its power. According to tradition it was fashioned by the divine craftsman, Vishvakarma, from pieces trimmed off of the sun; thus it carries the power of the sun’s blazing energy. The discus is also carried by certain powerful forms of the Goddess. In her charter myth, she was formed from the collected radiance of all the gods and received duplicates of all their weapons.

In the esoteric ritual tradition known as tantra, a chakra is a psychic center in the subtle body. The subtle body is an alternate physiological system that corresponds to the material body but is believed to reside on a different plane of existence. The subtle body is visualized as a set of chakras, or psychic centers, that are arranged in a column from the base of the spine to the top of the head and connected by three vertical channels. Each chakra is pictured as a multipetaled lotus flower. All tantric traditions speak of six chakras: muladhara, svadhishtana, manipura, anahata, vishuddha, and ajna; some traditions name additional ones. Each of these chakras has important symbolic associations- with a different human physiological capacity, subtle element (tanmatra), and with differing seed syllables (bijakshara) formed from the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, together encompassing all sacred sounds.

Wikipedia

Although there are various different interpretations as to what exactly a chakra is, the following features are common in all systems:

They form part of a subtle energy body, along with the energy channels, or nadis, and the subtle winds, or pranas.

They are located along a central nadi, Sushumna, which runs either alongside or inside the spine.

Two other nadis, Ida and Pingala, also run through the chakras, and alongside Sushumna. They occasionally cross Sushumna at the location of the chakras.

They possess a number of 'petals' or 'spokes'. In some traditions, such as the Tibetan, these spokes branch off into the thousands of nadis that run throughout the human body.

They are generally associated with a mantra seed-syllable, and often with a variety of colours and deities.

Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda describes a chakra as:

...[a] powerhouse in the way it generates and stores energy, with the energy from cosmos pulled in more strongly at these points.

The main nadis, Ida, Pingala and Shushumna (sympathetic, parasympathetic, and central nervous system) run along the spinal column in a curved path and cross one another several times. At the points of intersection they form strong energy centers known as chakras. In the human body there are three types of energy centers. The lower or animal chakras are located in the region between the toes and the pelvic region indicating our evolutionary origins in the animal kingdom. The human chakras lie along the spinal column. Finally, the higher or divine Chakras are found between the top of the spine and the crown of the head.

Anodea Judith (1996: p. 5) provides a modern interpretation of the chakras:

A chakra is believed to be a center of activity that receives, assimilates, and expresses life force energy. The word chakra literally translates as wheel or disk and refers to a spinning sphere of bioenergetic activity emanating from the major nerve ganglia branching forward from the spinal column. Generally, six of these wheels are described, stacked in a column of energy that spans from the base of the spine to the middle of the forehead, the seventh lying beyond the physical world. It is the six major chakras that correlate with basic states of consciousness...

... The study of the Chakras is a central part of many esoteric traditions, as well as to many different therapies and disciplines. In the east, the theory of chakras is a central part of the Hindu and Buddhist tantra, and they play an important role in attaining deep levels of realisation. Yoga, Pranayama, Acupuncture, shiatsu, tai chi and chi kung focus on balancing the energetic nadis or meridians that are an integral part of the chakra system. Within the West, subtle energy is explored through practices such as aromatherapy, mantras, Reiki, hands-on healing, flower essences, radionics, sound therapy, colour/light therapy, and crystal/gem therapy, to name a few.

Separate chakras

Sahasrara chakra

[Wikipedia](#)

Sahasrara (Sanskrit: सहस्रार, Sahasrāra) Crown Chakra (Top of the head; 'Soft spot' of a newborn) .



Sahasrara is either located at the top of the head in the crown area, or a little way above it (see Sahasrara system of minor chakras below).

Sahasrara is described with 1000 multi-coloured petals which are arranged in 20 layers each of them with 50 petals. The pericarp is golden, and inside of it is a circular moon region, inside of which is an downward pointing triangle.

Sahasrara chakra symbolizes detachment from illusion; an essential element in obtaining supramental higher consciousness of the truth that one is all and all is one.

Often referred as thousand-petaled lotus, it is said to be the most subtle chakra in the system, relating to pure consciousness, and it is from this chakra that all the other chakras emanate. When a yogi is able to raise his or her kundalini, energy of consciousness, up to this point, the state of Samādhi, or union with God, is experienced.

Meditating on this point is said to bring about the siddhis, or occult powers, of transforming into the divine, and being able to do whatever one wishes.

Ajna chakra

[Wikipedia](#)

Ajna (Sanskrit: अज्जा, Ājñā, meaning 'command') Brow or Third Eye Chakra (pineal gland or third eye).



The Ajna chakra is positioned in the brain, directly behind the eyebrow centre, while its kshetram or superficial activation site is at the eyebrow region, in the position of the 'third eye'.

Ajna is white in colour, with 2 white petals. Inside of the pericarp is the Shakti Hakini, who is moon white, with 6 faces, and 6 arms, holding a book, a skull, a drum, a rosary, and making the gestures of granting boons and dispelling fears. Above her is a downward pointing triangle, within which is a moon-white lingam. In some systems the deity Ardhanarishvara a hermaphrodite form of Shiva-Shakti, symbolising the primordial duality of subject and object, resides within the lingam. Above the triangle is another smaller triangle, within which is the bija mantra Aum.

The seed syllable is Aum, or “Pranava Om”, the supreme sound.

Ajna has two white petals, said to represent the psychic channels, Ida and Pingala, which meet here with the central Sushumna nadi (channel) before rising to the crown chakra, Sahasrara. Written upon them in white are the letters ‘Ham’ on the left petal, and ‘ksham’ on the right petal, representing Shiva and Shakti, respectively. These petals also represent the manifest and unmanifest mind, and are said by some to represent the pineal and pituitary glands.

Ajna translates as ‘command’, and is considered as the eye of intuition. When something is seen in the mind’s eye, or in a dream, it is being ‘seen’ by Ajna. It is a bridge that links gurus with disciples, allowing mind communication to occur between two people. The sense organ and action organ associated with Ajna is the mind in both cases.

Hindus believe that spiritual energy from the external environments enter their body through this gateway and hence take utmost precaution in protecting it with spiritually positive protecting forces. The various religious marks one sees on the foreheads of men and women belonging to the Hindu faith (like holy ash, namam, vermilion etc.) are thus the blessed spiritual prasadam of their respective form of the Hindu gods.

Meditation upon Ajna supposedly grants the following siddhis or occult powers; to quickly enter another’s body at will; to become omniscient; he realizes unity with Brahman; and he has the ability to create, preserve and destroy the 3 worlds.

Vishuddha chakra

[Wikipedia](#)

Vishuddha (Sanskrit: वशिद्ध, Viśuddha) Throat Chakra (throat and neck area).



Vishuddha is positioned at the neck region near the spine, with its kshetram or superficial activation point in the pit of the throat. This chakra is white with 16 purple or smoke coloured petals, and within the pericarp is a sky-blue downward pointing triangle, within which is a circular region which is white like the full-moon, representing the element of akasha or ether. This region is represented by the deity Ambara, who is white in colour, with four arms, holding a noose and a goad, making the gestures of granting boons and dispelling fear, and seated upon a white elephant.

The bija mantra (seed sound) is the syllable हं haṃ, and is written in white upon the chakra. In the bindu or point above the mantra resides the deity Sadashiva, who has 5 faces and 10 arms. The right side of his body is a white Shiva, and the left half of the body is a golden Shakti. He is holding a trident, chisel, sword, vajra, fire, a great snake, a bell, a goad, and a noose, and is making the gesture of dispelling fear. He is clad in a tiger skin. His Shakti is Shakini, who is shining white, with five faces, three eyes each, and four armed, with a bow and arrow, noose, and goad, and seated on a red lotus.

Vishuddha chakra is known as the purification centre. Here the nectar amrit that drips down from the Bindu chakra, and is split into a pure form and a poison. In its more abstract form, it is associated with higher discrimination, and it is associated with creativity and self-expression. When Vishuddha is closed, we undergo decay and death. When it is open, negative experience is transformed into wisdom and learning. The success and failure in one's life depends upon the state of this chakra (polluted/clean). Guilty feeling is the most prominent reason for this chakra; to block the Kundalini Energy moving upwards. It is associated with the element Akasha, or ether, and the sense of hearing, as well as the action of speaking. Meditation upon this chakra is said to bring about the following siddhis or occult powers; vision of the three periods, past, present and future; freedom from disease and old age; destruction of dangers; and the ability to move the three worlds.

Anahata chakra

[Wikipedia](#)

Anahata (Sanskrit: अनाहत, Anāhata) Heart Chakra (heart area).



The Anahata chakra is positioned in the central channel behind the spine at the heart region, with its kshetram or superficial activation site actually in the heart region between the two breasts.

Anahata is represented by a smoke grey lotus flower, with 12 vermillion petals. Inside of it is a smoke-coloured region that is made from the intersection of 2 triangles, creating a shaktona. The Shatkona is a symbol used in Hindu yantra that represents the union of both the male and feminine form. More specifically it is supposed to represent Purusha (the supreme being), and Prakriti (mother nature, or causal matter). Often this is represented as Shiva - Shakti. The deity of this region is Vayu, who is smoke coloured, four-armed, holding a kusha and riding upon an antelope, the animal of this chakra.

The seed syllable is the mantra 'Yam', dark-grey in colour. Within the bindu or dot above the syllable resides the deity Isha (Lord in an all pervading form), who is either shining white or blue in colour, with either 1 or 5 faces, 3 eyes on each face, with either 2, 4 or 10 arms, clad in a tiger skin, holding a trident and a drum, or making gestures of granting boons and dispelling fear. His shakti is Kakini, who is shining yellow or rose in colour. She has a number of variations, having either 1, 3 or 6 faces, 2 or 4 arms, and holding a variety of implements, occasionally a sword, shield, skull and trident. She is seated on a red lotus.

The twelve petals are vermillion coloured, and upon them are inscribed the syllables kam, kham, gam, gham, ngam, cham, chham, jam, jham, nyam, tam and tham in sanskrit. They match the vrittis of lust, fraud, indecision, repentance, hope, anxiety, longing, impartiality, arrogance, incompetence, discrimination and defiance.

Anahata is considered the seat of the Jivatman, and Para Shakti. In the Upanishads, this is described as being like a tiny flame that resided inside the heart. Anahata is so called because it is in this place that sages hear that sound (Anahata – Shabda) which comes without the striking of any two things together.” [2]. It is associated with the element of air, the sense of touch, and with actions of the hands.

Anahata is associated with the ability to make decisions outside of the realm of karma. In Manipura and below, man is bound by the laws of karma, and the fate he has in store for him. In Anahata, one is making decisions, ‘following your heart’, based upon one’s higher self, and not from the unfulfilled emotions and desires of lower nature.

It is also associated with love and compassion, charity to others, and forms of psychic healing.

Meditation on this chakra is said to bring about the following siddhis, or occult powers; he becomes a lord of speech; he is dearer than the dearest to women; his senses are completely under control; and he can enter at will into another’s body.

Manipura chakra

[Wikipedia](#)

Manipura (Sanskrit: मण्डपिर, Maṇipūra) Solar Plexus Chakra (navel area).



Manipura is located at the spine directly behind either the navel or the solar plexus, depending on the system, while its kshetram or superficial activation point is located directly on the navel (or solar plexus).

Manipura is represented by a downward pointing red triangle, the fire region, within a bright yellow circle, with 10 dark-blue or black petals, like heavily laden rain clouds. The triangle has a t-shaped swastika on each of its sides. The fire region is represented by the god Vahni, who is shining red, with 4 arms, holding a rosary and a spear, and making the gestures of granting boons and dispelling fear. He is seated on a ram, the animal that represents this chakra.

The seed mantra is the syllable ‘Ram’. Within the bindu or dot above this mantra resides the deity Rudra, who is red or white, with 3 eyes, of ancient aspect with a silver beard, and smeared with white ashes. He makes the gestures of granting boons and dispelling fear. He is either seated upon a tiger skin, or upon a bull. His Shakti is the goddess Lakini. She is black or dark-blue vermilion, with 3 faces with 3 eyes each, and four-armed, holding a thunderbolt, the arrow shot from the bow of Kama, fire, and making the gesture of granting boons and dispelling fear. She is seated upon a red lotus.

The ten petals are dark-blue or black, like heavily laden rainclouds, with the syllables dda, ddha, nna, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa, and pha upon them in a dark-blue colour. They correspond to the vrittis of spiritual ignorance, thirst, jealousy, treachery, shame, fear, disgust, delusion, foolishness and sadness.

Manipura is considered the centre of dynamism, energy, willpower and achievement (Itcha shakti.), which radiates prana throughout the entire human body. It is associated with the power of fire, and digestion. It is also associated with the sense of sight, and the action of movement. Manipura is “the center of etheric-psychic intuition: a vague or non-specific, sensual sense of knowing; a vague sense of size, shape, and intent of being.” As such, some psychics recommend “listening” to it since it may help in making better decisions in one’s life on many different levels.

Through meditating on Manipura, one is said to attain the siddhi, or occult power, to create and destroy the world.

Svadhishthana chakra

[Wikipedia](#)

Svadhishthana (Sanskrit: स्वाधिष्ठान, Svādhiṣṭhāna) called ‘One’s own abode’, Sacral Chakra (last bone in spinal cord, the coccyx).



Svadhishthana is positioned at the tailbone, two finger-widths above Muladhara. It has six petals which match the vrittis of affection, pitilessness, feeling of all-destructiveness, delusion, disdain and suspicion. Its corresponding point in the front of the body (i.e. its kshetram) is at the pubic bone.

Svadhishthana is described as a black lotus, with 6 vermillion coloured petals. Inside of this lotus is a white crescent moon, formed by two different sized inner circles, one inside of the other. The crescent moon is the water region, whose deity is Varuna, white in colour, four-armed, holding a noose and seated on a crocodile. The two inner circles also have petals, the larger one has 8 outward facing petals, and the smaller one has 8 inward facing petals.

The seed mantra, located in the innermost circle, is a moon-white Vam. Within the bindu, or dot, above the mantra is the deity Vishnu. He is shining dark blue, wearing a yellow dhoti, and holds a conch, a mace, a wheel and a lotus. He wears the shriwatsa mark, and the koustabha gem, and is seated either on a pink lotus, or on the divine eagle Garuda. His Shakti is the goddess Rakinini (or Chakini). She is dark black, dressed in a red or white sari, seated on a red lotus, and she is either one faced and two armed, holding a sword and a shield, or two faced and 4 armed, holding either a trident, lotus, drum and vajra, or an arrow, skull, drum and axe.

The 6 petals are vermillion, and have the following syllables written on them in the colour of lightning; bam, bham, mam, yam, ram and lam. They represent the vrittis of affection, pitilessness, feeling of all-destructiveness, delusion, disdain and suspicion.

Swadhisthana is associated with the unconscious, and with emotion. It is closely related to Muladhara in that Swadhisthana is where the different samskaras (potential karmas), lie dormant, and Muladhara is where these samskaras find expression. It is associated with the element of water, the sense of taste, and the action of reproduction.

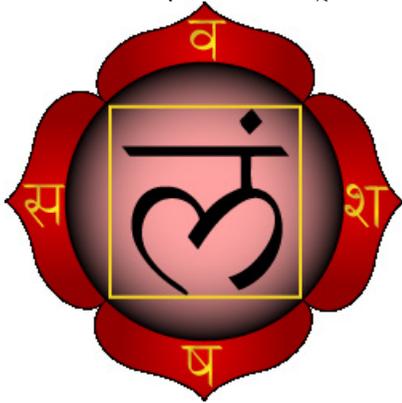
Swadhisthana contains unconscious desires, especially sexual desire, and it is said that to raise the kundalini shakti (energy of consciousness) above Swadhisthana is extremely difficult for this reason. Many saints have had to face the sexual temptations associated with this chakra.

Through meditation on Swadhisthana, the following siddhis or occult powers are said to be obtained. One is freed from all his enemies, and becomes a lord among yogis. His words flow like nectar in well-reasoned discourse. One gains loss of fear of water, awareness of astral entities, and the ability to taste anything desired for oneself or others.

Muladhara chakra

[Wikipedia](#)

Muladhara (Sanskrit: मूलाधार, Mūlādhāra), meaning “root place”, Base or Root Chakra (ovaries/prostate).



Muladhara is said to be located at the base of the spine in the vicinity of the coccygeal plexus beneath the sacrum, while it's kshetram, or superficial activation point, is located on the perineum.

Muladhara is described as a yellow, square lotus, surrounded by 8 shining spears on the sides and corners, and with 4 red petals. The deity of this region is Indra, who is yellow in colour, 4-armed, holding a vajra and blue lotus in his hands, and mounted upon the white elephant Airawata, who has seven trunks, denoting the seven elements vital to physical functioning. Occasionally, instead of Indra, the deity is Ganesha, with coral orange skin, wearing a lemon yellow dhoti with a green silk scarf draped around his shoulders. In his 3 of his hands he holds a ladu, a lotus flower, a hatchet, and the fourth is raised in the mudra of dispelling fear. The seed mantra syllable is 'Lam'. Within the bindu, or point that forms a part of the letter, just above it, is Brahma, who is deep red, with 4 faces and 4 arms, and holding a staff, a sacred vase of nectar, a rosary and making the gesture of dispelling fear (alternatively instead of the staff and rosary he is holding a lotus flower and the sacred scriptures). He is seated on a swan. His Shakti is a goddess called Dakini. She is seated on a red lotus, and is shining red or white, a beautiful face with 3 eyes, with 4 arms, holding a trident, a skulled staff, a swan, and a drinking vessel (instead of a swan and drinking vessel, she sometimes is holding a sword and a shield).

In the centre of the square, below the seed syllable, is a deep red inverted triangle. Within this resides/sleeps the kundalini shakti, the great spiritual potential, waiting to be aroused and brought back up to the source from which it originated, Brahman. She is represented as a snake wrapped 3 and a half times around a smokey grey lingam.

The 4 petals are red, with the sanskrit syllables Va, Scha, Sha and Sa written in gold upon them, representing 4 vrittis of greatest joy, natural pleasure, delight in controlling passion, and blissfulness in concentration, or alternatively; dharma (psycho-spiritual longing), artha (psychic longing), kama (physical longing) and moksha (longing for spiritual liberation).

Muladhara is the base from which the three main psychic channels or nadis emerge: the Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. It is also believed that Muladhara is a subtle abode of the Hindu God, Ganapati. And in the highest revered prayer for Ganapati, the Ganapati Atharvashirsha, it is mentioned that 'one who worships Lord Ganapati would easily grasp the concept and realize Brahman.

Muladhara is considered the 'root' or 'foundation' chakra, and is the transcendental basis of physical nature. It is also the seat of kundalini awakening, which begins its ascent here. Alternatively it is called the seat of the 'red bindu', or subtle drop, which is caused to rise up to the 'white bindu' in the head in order to unite the female and masculine energies of Shakti and Shiva.

It is associated with the element of earth, and the sense of smell, and the action of excretion.

Through concentration on muladhara, one is said to attain various siddhis or occult powers; one is said to become a Lord of Speech and king among men, with the luster of 10 million suns, and adept in all kinds of learning. He is ever free of disease, and his inmost spirit is full of gladness.

The Minor Chakras

[Wikipedia](#)

In addition to the 7 major chakras, there are a number of other chakras which have importance within different systems. For example, Woodroffe describes 7 head chakras (including Ajna and Sahasrara) in his other Indian text sources. Lowest to highest they are: Talu/Talana/Lalana, Ajna, Manas, Soma, Brahma, Sri (inside Sahasrara), Sahasrara. In addition, the chakra Hrit known as the wish-fulfilling tree is often included below the heart, which may be the same as a chakra known as Surya located at the solar plexus. Some models also have a series of 7 lower chakras below muladhara that go down the legs.

Hrit chakra or Surya chakra

This chakra is a minor chakra located just below the heart at the solar plexus, and is known as the wish-fulfilling tree. Here, the ability to determine your destiny becomes a reality. It is also known as the Surya chakra. It supports the actions of Manipura chakra by providing it with the element of heat, and is responsible for absorbing energy from the sun.

In Tibetan buddhism, a similar chakra called the Fire Wheel is included in the scheme, but this is located above the heart and below the throat.

Lalana/Talumula

A chakra known as Lalana is situated in one of two places, either in the roof of the mouth, between Visuddhi and Ajna, or on the forehead, above Ajna. The Lalana chakra on the roof of the mouth is related to Bindu and Vishuddhi. When the nectar amrit trickles down from Bindu, it is stored in lalana. This nectar can fall down to Manipura and be burned up, causing gradual degeneration, or through certain practices it can be passed to Visuddhi and purified, becoming a nectar of immortality.

Manas

A chakra known as Manas (mind) is located either between the navel and the heart, close to Surya, or is located above Ajna on the forehead. The version on the forehead has 6 petals, connected to the 5 sense objects plus the mind. In Tibetan buddhism, the chakra located on the forehead is called the Wind wheel, and has 6 spokes.

Bindu Visarga/Indu/Chandra

Bindu visarga, is located either at the top back of the head, where some Brahmins leave a tuft of hair growing, or in the middle forehead. It is symbolised by a crescent moon. This chakra secretes an ambrosial fluid, amrit, and is the seat of the white bindu (compare with the white bodhicitta drop in the crown chakra in the Vajrayana system).

Brahmarandra/Nirvana

In some systems, Sahasrara is the chakra that is on the crown of the head. However, other systems, such as that expounded by Shri Aurobindo, state that the real Sahasrara is located some way above the top of the head, and that the crown chakra is in fact Brahmarandra, a sort of secondary Sahasrara with 100 white petals.

Shri/Guru

This is a minor chakra located slightly above the top of the head. It is an upward facing 12 petalled lotus, and it is associated with the Guru, that higher force that guides us through our spiritual journey.

Lower Chakras

There are said to be a series of 7 chakras below muladhara going down the leg, corresponding the base animal instincts, and to the Hindu underworld patala. They are called atala, vitala, sutala, talatala, rasatala, mahatala and patala.

Atala

This chakra is located in the hips, it governs fear and lust.

Vitala

Located in the thighs, it governs anger and resentment.

Sutala

Located in the knees, it governs jealousy.

Talatala

Translated as 'under the bottom level', it is located in the calves, and it is a state of prolonged confusion and instinctive wilfulness.

Rasatala

Located in the ankles, it is the centre of selfishness and pure animal nature.

Mahatala

Located in the feet, this is the dark realm 'without conscience', and inner blindness.

Patala

Located in the soles of the feet, this is the realm of malice, murder, torture and hatred, and in Hindu mythology it borders on the realm of Naraka, or Hell.

Others

There are said to be 21 minor chakras which are reflected points of the major chakras. These 21 are further grouped into 10 bilateral minor chakras that correspond to the foot, hand, knee, elbow, groin, clavicular, navel, shoulder and ear. The spleen may also be classified as a minor chakra by some authorities despite not having an associated coupled minor chakra.

See also:

in Sadhana: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Etymology

General

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Unlikely though it looks, etymologists have traced the relationship of the word “wheel” to the Greek word “kuklos”, whence comes “cycle”, and also to the Sanskrit word “chakra”.

Sanskrit

Cakra — चक्र

cakra - चक्र

Chandogya Upanishad

Title

Chāndogya Upaniṣad — छान्दोग्योपनिषद् .

Chāndogya Upanisad - छान्दोग्योपनिषद्

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Chāndogya Upaniṣad — ... “Singer of the Sāman”

1. This Upaniṣad belongs to the Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa of the Sāma Veda. Broadly speaking, one can divide the Chāndogya Upaniṣad into two parts. The first five chapters deal with ritualistic worship (upasana) with an emphasis on meditation. The second five chapters deal with three fundamental Vedāntic doctrines: Tat tvam asi, doctrine of infinity, and doctrine of Ātman. Along with the Brhadaranyaka Upaniṣad, it is considered one of the oldest of the Upaniṣads. Some noble personages in this Upanisad include Satyakāma Jabālā, Nārada, Gautama, Aruni, Sanatkumara, Prajāpati, Uddālaka, and Śvetaketu.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Chandogya Upanishad The classical Chandogya Upanishad is part of the Chandogya Brahmana, which is attached to the SAMA VEDA. It is one of the oldest UPANISHADS. It retains much of the character of the BRAHMANA from which it comes, in that it is largely devoted to delineating the deeper meaning and significance of the elements of the Vedic sacrifice or YAJNA.

Wikipedia

The Chandogya Upanishad is one of the “primary” (mukhya) Upanishads. Together with the Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad it ranks among the oldest Upanishads, dating to the Vedic Brahmana period (probably before mid-first millennium BCE).

It is associated with the Samaveda. It figures as number 9 in the Mukhtika canon of 108 Upanishads. It is part of the Chandogya Brahmana, which has ten chapters. The first two chapters of the Brahmana deal with sacrifices and other forms of worship. The other eight constitute the Chandogya Upanishad. Though there are more than two hundred Upanishads, ten are principal. These are called the Dashopanisads and are known for their philosophical depth, having become popular through the commentaries of Adi Shankara and Madhvacharya. Along with Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, the Chandogyopanishad is an ancient source of principal fundamentals of Vedanta philosophy. A number of references made to this Upanishad in Brahma sutras indicate the special importance of this Upanishad in Vedantic philosophy. Important Upasana's such as Dahara vidya and Shandilya vidya are its speciality.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Much of the Chandogya Upanishad is devoted to the true meaning of the Udgitha, the loud chant of the Sama Vedic priest at the sacrificial ritual. The Udgitha is said to be tantamount to OM (Ch. 1.1.1- 10) and is identified with the breath (Ch. 1.2.1-14). The esoteric meaning of each of the syllables in the word Udgitha is explicated (Ch. 1.3.1-12). The Udgitha is also identified with the Sun, with space as the ultimate, and with divinities.

The Chandogya Upanishad goes on to coordinate the sounds of the fuller Sama Vedic chant with cosmic and human entities. Through this process, the elements of the Sama Vedic chant are shown to encompass a wide range of human, worldly, and cosmic entities; it is much more important than a simple musical recitation. Chapter three raises the familiar Upanishadic theme of the identity of ATMAN (the individual self) and the BRAHMAN (the Ultimate Reality). The fifth chapter gives the famous teaching of Uddalaka Aruni to his son, Shvetaketu; in defining the Ultimate Reality of the brahman he tells his son, "You are THAT" (TAT TVAM ASI). This is one of the most well known MAHAVAKYAS or "Great Sayings" quoted in the VEDANTA. Chapters seven and eight relate the nature of the atman or individual self and show that it resides within the human heart. They tell the famous tale in which INDRA, king of the gods, at last learns the nature of the brahman/atman identity.

Wikipedia

Organization

The Chandogya Upanishad contains eight chapters, with each chapter divided into subchapters called Khandas.

First Chapter

The first chapter contains thirteen khanda's.

The first khanda ordains the Upasana of udgitha (or holy syllable OM). The syllable OM is called by the term udgitha since a priest designated as Udgata starts his singing of Sama's with OM in Vedic yajnas.

The second khanda ordains that udgitha should be meditated as Vital Life Force or Prana, and tells a story to explain the Holiness of Prana describing how it remained untouched by evil while all other five senses got tainted by evil.

Third khanda says that udgitha should be meditated as sun god.

Fourth khanda continues telling one more method (Upasana)for meditating upon OM as the Eternal and Ultimate Refuge (Amritam, Abhayam) and tells that one who meditates this way becomes himself an Eternal and Ultimate Refuge.

Fifth khanda tells that one who meditates on the Sun and its rays as separate from each other or Prana and its functions such as speech etc as separate from each other would beget many children.

One more Upasana of udgitha is told in Sixth khanda for obtaining all round wealth.

Seventh khanda ordains that OM (or udgitha) should be meditated as Purusha (Divine Person) present in the right eye who is nothing but another manifestation of Sun (Aditya)who in turn another manifestation of OM. Hence describes the equality of OM, Devine Person present in the Right Eye and Sun.

Another Upasana of udgitha is told in ninth and tenth khanda's which is said to result in a Superior Divine Essence (Parovareeya Satva) in the practitioner. This is told in the form of a story of Three Scholars of Sama.

Tenth and Eleventh khandas describe three parts of Sama called Prastava, udgitha and Pratihaara which are sung by priests in vedic Rituals and their respective gods through a Story of Priest Ushasti Chakrayana.

Twelfth khanda tells about the Udgitha Sama revealed by gods in the form of Dogs. The result of singing this Sama is availability of food.

Thirteenth khanda describes the various Upasana's of Sthobha- Akshara's.

Second Chapter

There are 24 khanda's in the second chapter. After having elaborated on different Upasana's of various organs of Sama, the second chapter elaborates many Upasana's of full Sama as a whole (that is, combined Sama with all Sama organs or parts). In other words, it can be said that if first chapter describes the Upasana of different body parts separately, the second chapter describes the Upasana's of whole body (Full Sama). Worshipping Full Sama or Whole Sama is described to be yielding good character (Saadhu Dharma) to worshipper in first khanda.

Second khanda describes Five-Fold Sama or Sama with Five Organs (Pancha Vidha Sama). HIM- Kara, Prastava, udgitha, Prati-hara and Nidhana are the names of Five organs of Sama.

In second to seventh khanda's this Five-Fold Sama is ordained to be conceptualized or viewed as different worlds such as earth, heaven etc in worldview, as wind, lightning etc in view of process of raining, as cloud, rain, ocean etc in water view, as different seasons like spring etc in seasons view, as sheep etc in animal view and finally as vital airs (Prana).

Each of these conceptualizations or views of FiveFold Sama is a separate Upasana of Fivefold Sama and described to be having definite fruit or result for the practitioner.

Eighth khanda ordains Seven-Fold Sama. Two more organs Adi and Upadrava are added to Five organs described in second khanda to make Sama Seven Fold. This Seven Fold Sama is ordained to be seen or viewed in the speech in eighth khanda. Fruit of this Upasana is worshipper never faces scarcity of food and will have enough food to provide for others.

Next Upasana is to meditate or view sevenfold sama in the movement of sun in the sky. Fruit of this upasana is worshipper attains Sun's form (Aditya Swarupa). This is the content of ninth khanda.

Tenth khanda ordains Upasana of syllables of seven organs of Seven Fold Sama (Sapta Vidha Sama Namakshara Upasana).

Khanda's 11-21 describe how some famous Samas or (Sama Mantras) to viewed.

Gayatra Sama is ordained to be viewed as Mind, Speech, Eye, etc.

Rathantara Sama is ordained to be viewed as process of generating fire by rubbing two wood pieces.

Vaamya Devya Sama is ordained to be viewed as mating process between male and female human beings.

Brihat Sama is ordained to be viewed as world activity as per of movement of sun across the horizon.

Vairupa Sama is ordained to be viewed as process of raining.

Vairaja Sama is ordained to be viewed as Seasonal Cycle.

Shakvaree Sama is ordained to be viewed as different worlds.

Revati Sama is ordained to be viewed as grazing animals.

Yagnya-Yagneeya Sama is ordained to be viewed as hair, skin, meat, etc.

Rajana Sama is ordained to be viewed as Fire, Wind, Stars, etc.

Finally Complete Sama or Sarva Sama is ordained to be viewed as three veda's (Trayi Vidya) which are Rigveda, Yajurveda and Sama veda and whole world.

Each of these Upasana's are mentioned along with a distinct fruit or result to the worshipper.

Later khandas of this chapter describe various modes of singing Sama, upasana on holy syllable OM, three Savana's, their respective gods and Sama's to them.

Third Chapter

This chapter has 19 khanda's. First 11 khanda's deal with Upasana of Sun and this Upasana is known as Madhu Vidya. Khandas 12 and 13 teach Brahman through Gayatri. 14th Khanda elaborates famous meditation Shandilya Vidya, known after its revealer the seer Shandilya. 15th Khanda describes Kosha Vidya for begetting long life and valour for one's son. 16th and 17th Khandas detail Purusha Vidya which results in increased life span of practitioner. It is told that seer Mahidasa Aitareya lived for 116 years by practicing Purusha Vidya. 18th Khanda ordains that Mind should be meditated as Brahman.

Fourth Chapter

A story of king Janushruti Pautrayana and Self realized seer Raikva is told in this chapter. A meditational practice called Samvarga Vidya is described.

Fifth Chapter

An esoteric knowledge of Five Fires (Panchangi Vidya) is described in this chapter.

Sixth Chapter

This chapter contains the most important message of this Upanishad. It establishes the principle of oneness of Atman with all beings and non beings. In this chapter, the famous story of Uddalaka and his son Shvetaketu is told and the dialogue between them establishes the principle of oneness of Atman. The Mahavakya Tat Tvam Asi ("That art Thou") is found in this chapter.

Seventh Chapter

In this chapter there is a well known dialogue between sage Sanatkumara and Narada establishing that realizing the ultimate principle of universe is only way to ride over sorrows of man.

Eighth Chapter

A meditation technique of concentrating in the cave of heart about Brahman (Dahara Vidya) is told in this chapter

Commentaries

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Commentary

Of the available commentaries, the oldest was written by Adi Shankara. Adi Shankara stated that his commentary is a brief book for those who want a summary of this Upanishad. Ananda Giri mentioned in his commentary that a Dramidacharya wrote an elaborate and detailed commentary well before Adi Shakara, but little is known about this Dramidacharya and his work is now lost. Brahmanandi Tankacharya wrote a brief explanation for this upanishad and Dramidacharya wrote an elaborate and detailed commentary on the work of Brahmanandi Tankacharya. Sri Ramanuja makes many references to these two scholars in his commentaries, Vedanta Sangraha and Sri Bhasya.

Publications

Translations

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Related words

Mahavakya: Tat- tvam-asi

Sama Veda

Upanishads

Cinta

Variant spellings

cinta

cintā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Cinta — ... enquiry; thought; discussion

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

cintā -

thought, care, anxiety, anxious thought about;

consideration;

N. of a woman

See: Manana, vicara, cinta

Related words

Manana

Vicara

Sanskrit

Cintā — चिन्ता

cintā - चिन्ता

Cit

Variant spellings

cit

chit

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Cit — ... spirit; consciousness; the individual self; Reality; Siva.

1. One of the three ultimate realities (tattva- traya) according to Visistadvaita Vedanta.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

cit -

as a noun

'thinking';

thought, intellect, spirit, soul;
pure Thought
as a verb
forming a layer or stratum, piled up;
'knowing';
'giving heed to' or 'revenging' [guilt];
to perceive, fix the mind upon, attend to, be attentive, observe, take notice of;
to aim at, intend, design (with dat.);
to be anxious about, care for (acc. or gen.);
to resolve;
to understand, comprehend, know;
to become perceptible, appear, be regarded as, be known;
to cause to attend, make attentive, remind of;
to cause to comprehend, instruct, teach;
to observe, perceive, be intent upon;
to form an idea in the mind, be conscious of, understand, comprehend, think, reflect upon;
to have a right notion of, know;
'to recover consciousness', awake;
to remember, have consciousness of (acc.);
to appear, be conspicuous, shine;
to have in view, aim at, be desirous;
to care for, be anxious about;
to treat medically, cure;
to wish to appear;

Dictionary - Runes

Cit : (Skr.) Awareness. Cf. sat-cit-ananda. K.F.L.

Wikipedia

Cit is a Sanskrit word meaning awareness. It is a core principle in all ancient religions originating from the Indian subcontinent. It is the Sense of all the physical and mental senses. In Upanishads it is referred to as the Drishta or the Seer. The Sense that makes sense of all other sense experiences.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Wisdom's frame of reference

Cit: Consciousness. The second attribute of Brahman as in 'Sat-Cit- Ananda'. That which substantiates truth as well as value-dynamics.

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Chit (cit) - Primordial consciousness in its most pure and unmanifested state.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

In Hinduism it is consciousness in satchitananda.

In Sikhism it is that which is to be meditated on in “Chit Aavai Chit Avan”.

In Jainism it is the Supreme Self.

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

... there is some other principle which enlivens these knowledge-forms, by virtue of which they become conscious. This principle of consciousness (cit) cannot indeed be separately perceived per se, but the presence of this principle in all our forms of knowledge is distinctly indicated by inference. This principle of consciousness has no motion, no form, no quality, no impurity. The movement of the knowledge-stuff takes place in relation to it, so that it is illuminated as consciousness by it, and produces the appearance of itself as undergoing all changes of knowledge and experiences of pleasure and pain. Each item of knowledge so far as it is an image or a picture of some sort is but a subtle knowledge-stuff which has been illumined by the principle of consciousness, but so far as each item of knowledge carries with it the awakening or the enlivening of consciousness, it is the manifestation of the principle of consciousness.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

We have translated the word chit by “mind-stuff” as affording the nearest point of contact for the natural insertion of mind into matter or vice-versa. The word chit, as used in Vedanta, specifically refers to that aspect of clear consciousness that is capable of entering into some bipolar relation with an outside object.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

I am aware of my existence, of your existence, of the existence of the world. Thus I have an allembicing awareness that includes everything. What is not in it, I will never know. This awareness, which includes in it good and bad, far and near, one and many, big and small, irrespective of all variations, is just one knowledge, cit. So we have one all-inclusive existence and one all-inclusive knowledge.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

The Reality searched for is cit in essence; the seeking mind is cit in essence; the seeker knowing Reality therefore means, cit knowing cit. There being no two cit-s, this knowing, in effect, is none other than the knower becoming merged in the known, or the the knower becoming the known or the other way around. It is simply an intuitive experience of the transparency of mere beingness.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

... knowledge, however it manifests itself, either as ignorance or as learning, is but the manifestation of that same Chit, that essence of knowledge; the difference is only in degree, and not in kind. The difference in knowledge between the lowest worm that crawls under our feet and the highest genius that the heavens may produce, is only one of degree, and not of kind.

Cit, chaitanya, cetana

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The relation between the Self [atman] and the bodies illuminated by it is said to have three characteristics. When the Self is pure and unpolluted consciousness it is called cit. When it illuminates this world, the effulgence which is circumscribed by its exposure to a conditioned ground is called chaitanya. When the animation of the Self affects and transforms a body to be a carrier of the dictates of consciousness, it is called cetana. Thus cetana, chaitanya and cit come in an ascending gradation.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

When the vertical principle of pure consciousness, cit, gives room for horizontality, it is called chaitanya, and when it is fully horizontalized as an individual being with body consciousness, feeling and sensibilities, it is called cetana.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

chit — from the verb root cit = “to perceive, observe, think, be aware, know”

Related words

Atman
Bhava
Brahman
Buddhi
Chaitanya
Cetana
Cidabhasa
Citta
Opposite: Jada
Saccidananda

Sanskrit

Cit — चित्

Citta

Variant spellings

citta
chitta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Chitta — ... consciousness; mind; thought; apperception

In Kashmir Saivism, the limitation of the Universal Consciousness manifested in the individual mind. It is the mind of the empirical individual. In Raja Yoga, citta means mind, and in Advaita Vedanta, it refers to the subconscious.

In the Vaibhasika system, it is samskrta-dharmas, born out of the interaction of the senses with their objects.

In the Yogacara system, it is the mano-dharma. It is the primary dharma and essentially the only dharma.

In the Yoga system, the intellect (buddhi), ego (ahankara), and the senses (indriyas) are often called citta.

According to the Sankhya, the mind (citta) has five processes: pramana, viparyaya, vikalpa, nidra, and smrti.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

citta -

'noticed';

'aimed at';

'appeared', visible;

attending, observing;

thinking, reflecting, imagining, thought;

intention, aim, wish;

the heart, mind;

memory;

intelligence, reason;

(in astrol.) the 9th mansion

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

The memorizing and recalling faculty of mind. One of the antahkaranas (see).

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Chitta: Mind, mindstuff; the inert, substantial basis and store of perception and memory.

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Mind (Citta) is divided into three categories in accordance with its respective functions. They are intelligence (buddhi), ego (aham-kara), and mind (manas). Each has its distinguishing characteristics and individual function; however, they are actually a single functioning unit, and do not form separate and individual parts.

Hume. The thirteen Upanishads

Chandogya Upanishad, Ch.7, Fifth Khanda.

1. 'Thought (citta), assuredly, is more than Conception. Verily, when one thinks, then he forms a conception, then he has in Mind, then he utters Speech, and he utters it in Name. The sacred sayings (mantra) are included in Name, and sacred works in the sacred sayings.
 2. Verily, these things have Thought as their union-point, have Thought as their soul, are established on Thought. Therefore, even if one who knows much is without Thought, people say of him : " He is not anybody, whatever he knows! Verily, if he did know, he would not be so without Thought!" On the other hand, if one who knows little possesses Thought, people are desirous of listening to him. Truly, indeed, Thought is the union-point, Thought is the soul (ātman), Thought is the support of these things. Reverence Thought.
 3. He who reverences Thought as Brahma—he, verily, attains the Thought-worlds; himself being enduring, the enduring worlds; himself being established, the established worlds; himself being unwavering, the unwavering worlds. As far as Thought goes, so far he has unlimited freedom, he who reverences Thought as Brahma.'
- 'Is there, sir, more than Thought?'
- 'There is, assuredly, more than Thought.'
- 'Do you, sir, tell me it.'

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Citta has a dual function. Sensations from the external world that are carried to the inner organ are registered in the citta in terms of the information that is sought after by the questioning, doubting, or emotionally activated mind. Then citta preserves the net outcome of the encounter between the sensory system and stimulus as data for future reference. As inquiry, judgment, and affectivity are all mainly based on the registration, retention, and recall of memory, citta is considered to be the main body of consciousness. Hence yogis mainly concern themselves with the modification of this aspect that mimes the external world in every organism. It is very similar to a mirror reflecting the image of its surroundings, or the external world being mirrored in each bubble that clusters in a frothy mass of foam.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. *The Study and Practice of Yoga*

Citta is not merely the conscious mind or the mentation process, but the stuff of the mind. ... The stuff of the mind is the substance out of which the entire internal organ is constituted—what we call thinking, feeling, willing, memory or remembrance, etc. Various functions are there, including even ego.

These functions all put together are the citta, the stuff of the mind. This stuff it is that reveals itself as various functions, though it is true that the stuff itself cannot be discovered and we can know its nature only from the functions that it performs. ... the energy of the total system is to be harnessed for the purpose of encountering this total situation that is called the citta.

See: Antahkarana, manas, citta, buddhi, ahankara

Citta and vritti

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. *Raja Yoga*

... Dharana, holding the mind to certain points. What is meant by holding the mind to certain points? Forcing the mind to feel certain parts of the body to the exclusion of others. For instance, try to feel only the hand, to the exclusion of other parts of the body. When the Chitta, or mind-stuff, is confined and limited to a certain place, this is called Dharana.

...

1. Now concentration is explained.

2. Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (Chitta) from taking various forms (Vrittis).

A good deal of explanation is necessary here. We have to understand what Chitta is, and what are these Vrittis. I have this eye. Eyes do not see. Take away the brain centre which is in the head, the eyes will still be there, the retinae complete, and also the picture, and yet the eyes will not see. So the eyes are only a secondary instrument, not the organ of vision. The organ of vision is in the nerve centre of the brain. The two eyes will not be sufficient alone. Sometimes a man is asleep with his eyes open. The light is there and the picture is there, but a third thing is necessary; mind must be joined to the organ. The eye is the external instrument, we need also the brain centre and the agency of the mind. Carriages roll down a street and you do not hear them. Why? Because your mind has not attached itself to the organ of hearing. First, there is the instrument, then there is the organ, and third, the mind attachment to these two. The mind takes the impression farther in, and presents it to the determinative faculty Buddhi which reacts. Along with this reaction flashes the idea of egoism. Then this mixture of action and reaction is presented to the Purusha, the real Soul, who perceives an object in this mixture. The organs (Indriyas), together with the mind (Manas), the determinative faculty (Buddhi), and egoism (Ahamkara), form the group called the Antahkarana (the internal instrument). They are but various processes in the mind-stuff, called Chitta. The waves of thought in the Chitta are called Vritti ("the whirlpool" is the literal translation)... Now we understand what is meant by these Vrittis. The real man is behind the mind, and the mind is the instrument in his hands, and it is his intelligence that is percolating through it. It is only when you stand behind it that it becomes intelligent. When man gives it up it falls to pieces, and is nothing. So you understand what is meant by Chitta. It is the mind-stuff, and Vrittis are the waves and ripples rising in it when external causes impinge on it. These Vrittis are our whole universe.

The bottom of the lake we cannot see, because its surface is covered with ripples. It is only possible when the ripples have subsided, and the water is calm, for us to catch a glimpse of the bottom. If the water is muddy, the bottom will not be seen; if the water is agitated all the time, the bottom will not be seen. If the water is clear, and there are no waves, we shall see the bottom. That bottom of the lake is our own true Self; the lake is the Chitta, and the waves the Vrittis.

... Although this Chitta is in every animal, from the lowest to the highest, it is only in the human form that we find intellect, and until the mind-stuff can take the form of intellect it is not possible for it to return through all these steps, and liberate the soul. Immediate salvation is impossible for the cow and the dog, although they have mind, because their Chitta cannot as yet take that form which we call intellect.

... Each experience that we have comes in the form of a wave in the Chitta, and this subsides and becomes finer and finer, but is never lost. It remains there in minute form, and if we can bring this wave up again, it becomes memory.

See: Manas, buddhi, chitta

See also:

in Sadhana: [Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga](#)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

chitta - from the verb root cit = "to perceive, observe, know"

Related words

Ahankara
Antahkarana
Buddhi
Chaitanya
Cetana
Cit
Manas
Samskara
Vrtti

Sanskrit

Citta — चित्त

citta - चित्ति

D

Dakshinamurti

Variant spellings

dakshinamurti

Dakṣiṇāmūrti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Daksinamurti — ... “south-facing form”; the embodiment of wisdom

1. A name for Lord Siva as the silent teacher. He, as the guru of gurus, sat beneath a banyan tree and taught his four disciples through the elegance of silence.

Wikipedia

Dakshinamurthy or Jnana Dakshinamurti (Dakṣiṇāmūrti) is an aspect of Shiva as a guru (teacher) of all type of knowledge, particularly the jnana. This aspect of Shiva is his personification as the supreme or the ultimate awareness, understanding and knowledge. This form represents Shiva in his aspect as a teacher of yoga, music, and wisdom, and giving exposition on the shastras. He is worshipped as the god of wisdom, complete and rewarding meditation.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Dakshina-Murti: Literary “ the deity of the south.” Name applied to a form of Siva in which this god-hero is the Guru to the Vedic rishis. He is represented as seated on a stone facing the south under a spreading tree with meditative light on his features and the Jnana- Mudra or wisdom-gesture formed by his right hand. Here in this image, Siva gains ascendancy over Vedic wisdom and also triumphs in Kailas (the seat of the Vedic gods.) In the context of Guru-wisdom Dakshina-Murti affords the archetype for Guru-hood; as this same pattern of a wise man seated under a tree runs right through historic tradition in perennial philosophy down to the most ancient of periods known on the Indian soil.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. The Word That is God

Dakshinamurti: A name for Lord Shiva as the silent teacher. Vedic Religion declares that in every cycle of creation God manifests as Dakshinamurti and becomes the guru of the first human beings—those who were most spiritually evolved in the previous creation—teaching them the path to liberation (moksha).

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

In Hindu tradition the Divine Silent Guru is Dakshinamurti, the “Form facing South”, representing Siva as Initiator. One of his hands is held in the Jnana-mudra, “the posture of Gnosis”, also called Mouna-mudra, “the posture of Silence”, and Chin-mudra, “the posture of consciousness-enlightenment”. Unlike that of other Hindu Deities, his image always faces South. This Direction is symbolically associated with Capricorn..., as has been pointed out before in connection with Death. The worshipper, facing the God, looks in the Direction of the North, spiritually the Direction of the Pole of Manifestation, of Leo. As regards the South, it has been mentioned that Dakshina, besides “south”, also means “Grace and largess”, and is used for the offering symbolizing renunciation of the world.

Wikipedia

Meaning

Dakshinamurti literally means ‘one who is facing south (dakṣiṇa)’ in Sanskrit. South is the direction of Death, hence change. In every Siva temple the stone image of Dakshinamurthy is installed, facing south, on the southern circumambulatory path around the sanctum sanctorum. Perhaps, of all Hindu Gods, he is the only one sitting facing south. The great seer Ramana Maharshi, has interpreted the name as “Dakshina-amurty”, meaning one who is capable but without form.

Depiction

In his aspect as Jnana Dakshinamurti, Shiva is generally shown with four arms. He is depicted seated under a banyan tree, facing the south. Shiva is seated upon a deer-throne and surrounded by sages who are receiving his instruction. He is shown as seated with his right foot on mythical apasmara(a demon which, according to Hindu mythology, is the personification of ignorance) and his left foot lies folded on his lap. Sometimes even the wild animals, are depicted to surround Shiva. In his upper arms, he holds a snake or rosary or both in one hand and a flame in the other; while in his lower right hand is shown in vyakhyanamudra, his lower left hand holds a bundle of kusha grass or the scriptures. The index finger of His right hand is bent and touching the tip of his thumb. The other three fingers are stretched apart. This symbolic hand gesture or Mudra is the Gnana Mudra (or Jnana Mudra or Jana Mudra), a symbol of knowledge and wisdom. Sometimes, this hand is in the Abhaya Mudra, a posture of assurance and blessing.

Dakshinamurthy is portrayed as being in the yogic state of abstract meditation - and as a powerful form brimming with ever flowing bliss and supreme joy. Variations of this iconic representation include Veenadhara Dakshinamurthy (holding a Veena), Rishabhuroda Dakshinamurthy (mounted on a Rishabha - the bull) etc.

Significance

Indian tradition accords a special reverence to the Guru or the teacher. Dakshinamurthy, in the Saivite system of beliefs is regarded as the ultimate Guru - the embodiment of knowledge and the destroyer of ignorance (as represented by the demon being crushed under the feet of the deity). The Jnana Mudra is interpreted in this way:- The thumb denotes the God and the index finger denotes the man. The other three fingers stand for the three congenital impurities of man viz. arrogance, illusion and bad deeds of the past births. When man detaches himself from these impurities, he reaches God. The Abhaya Mudra, a gesture with the hand lifted above thigh with palm facing out, fingers pointing, is interpreted as His grace upon His students. The rosary or the snake signifies Tantric knowledge. The fire represents illumination, removing the darkness of ignorance.

Impact on Indian Life

The fifth day of the week, Thursday is associated with the planet Jupiter and is referred to as Guruvar (or Guruvaaram). Thursdays are considered auspicious to start any educational endeavours. It is on Thursdays that special worship services are offered to Dakshinamurthy in many Saivite temples. Some temple traditions hold full moon nights, particularly the night of the Guru Pournima as the appropriate time for worship services to Dakshinamurthy.

Temples

Even though the idol of Dakshinamurthy is installed in every Shiva temple, there are only a few temples where Dakshinamurthy is the chief deity. Only one of the twelve Jyotirlingas is Dakshinmurthy, The Mahakaleshwar in Ujjain. Being the only Dakshinmurthy Jyotirlinga, It holds special importance for Shaivites as a site of learning. Other notable temples are the Vaikom Mahadevar temple in Kerala, where the deity enshrined in the form of a Shivalingam is considered as Dakshinamurthy, and Alangudi (Kumbakonam) in Tamil Nadu. In the Sivanandeswarar temple in Thirupanthurai, (Tanjore) Tamil Nadu, He is depicted in the Ardhanari form. In Thirupulivanam, we can find Dakshinamurthy in the form of Ardhanariswara. This temple is on the Uthiramerur-Kanchipuram road, 5 km from Uthiramerur, near Chennai. In March 2007, a big temple of Lord Dakshinamurthy (the first in Maharashtra) was created in the Shrutisagar Ashram, about 30 km from Pune.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Osborne. The collected works of Ramana Maharshi

According to Hindu legends, Dakshinamurti (which means 'southward-facing') is God or Siva manifested as a youth who is the divine Guru and guides disciples older than himself through silent influence on their Heart. The name is also divided as Dakshina-amurti and taken to mean 'formless power'.

The Maharshi was Siva manifested, the divine Guru who taught through silence and was therefore identified with Dakshinamurti.

Ramana. The Silent Power

WHEN IN ANCIENT DAYS even Sri Dakshinamurti the Adiguru, guru of all gurus was able to reveal the truth of that one Self only through silence, the speechless speech, who else can reveal it through speech?

In this connection, Sri Bhagavan once told the following story to Sri Muruganar. When the four aged Sanakadi rishis first saw the sixteen-year-old Sri Dakshinamurti sitting under the banyan tree, they were at once attracted by him, understanding him to be the real Sadguru.

They approached him, did three pradakshinas around him, prostrated before him, sat at his feet and began to ask very shrewd and pertinent questions about the nature of Reality and the means of attaining it. Because of the great compassion and fatherly love (vatsalya) which he felt for his aged disciples, the young Sri Dakshinamurti was overjoyed to see their earnestness, wisdom and maturity, and hence he gave apt replies to each of their questions. As he answered each consecutive question, further doubts rose in their minds and still they asked further questions. Thus they continued to question Sri Dakshinamurti for one whole year, and he continued to clear their doubts through his compassionate answers.

Finally, however, Sri Dakshinamurti understood that if he gave more answers to their questions more doubts would rise in their minds and hence there would never be an end to their ignorance (ajnana). Therefore, suppressing even the feeling of compassion and fatherly love which was welling up within him, he merged himself into the supreme silence. Because of their great maturity (which had been ripened to perfection through their year-long association with the Sadguru), as soon as Sri Dakshinamurti thus merged himself, they too were automatically merged within, into silence, the state of Self.

Wonder-struck on hearing Sri Bhagavan narrating the story in this manner, Sri Muruganar remarked that in no book is it mentioned that Sri Dakshinamurti ever spoke anything. “But this is what actually happened” replied Sri Bhagavan. From the authoritative way in which Sri Bhagavan thus replied and from the clear and descriptive way in which he had told the story, Sri Muruganar understood that Sri Bhagavan was none other than Sri Dakshinamurti himself.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Daksinamurti — from daks = “to be able” + murti = “form”.

Sanskrit

Dakṣiṇāmūrti — दक्षिणामूर्ति

Dakṣiṇāmūrti - दक्षिणामूर्ति

Dama

Definitions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

[dama] control over the senses by which these are restrained from everything but that which aids the attainment of right knowledge.

Dictionary - Grimes

Dama — ... self-control; control of the senses; restraint.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

dama -

house, home (Lat. domus);

‘taming, subduing’;

self-command, self-restraint, self-control;

taming;

punishment, fine;

N. of a brother of Damayanti;

of a Maha-rshi

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. *One hundred verses of Self-instruction*

Dama : Checking and turning away of the mind from its distractions.

Prasad. *Bhagavad Gita*

Dama (self-restraint) is one's ability to keep one's mind and sense organs in one's own control so as to be conducive to the attainment of the final goal of life.

General

Theos Bernard. *Hindu philosophy*

Dama - self-restraint or control of conduct, restraining the senses from external actions.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

Dama, or self control: restraining the organs of both perception and action from their respective objects, and keeping them under control. The organs of perception are those of tasting, hearing, smelling, seeing, and touching. The organs of action are those of speaking, grasping, moving about, procreating, and evacuating. Endowed with this virtue, the aspirant engages only in hearing about Brahman, reasoning about it, and meditating upon it.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. *Bhagavad Gita*

dama—... The fulfillment of a pursuit, whether spiritual or mundane, is delayed and obstructed by various distractions coming from outside as well as from one's own inner restlessness. There are many evil forces prowling in the unconscious, waiting for an opportunity to take possession of our mind and senses. If a wakeful and vigilant mind can foresee all such destructive forces and ward them off from causing obstruction to the harmonious function of mind, this is an act of dama.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. *Vedantasara*, tr. Nikhilananda

Dama is the restraining of the external organs¹ from all objects except that².

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

1 External organs— These are of two kinds, viz., of action and of knowledge. The five acting organs are those of speaking, grasping, going, evacuating and generating. The five perceiving organs are those of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. Mind is called the inner-organ. Here the word Dama implies that particular function of the mind which turns away the external organs from such objects as are other than hearing etc.

2 That—Hearing etc. Hearing of the scriptures, thinking of their meaning and meditating on it.

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

dama — from the verb root dam = “to control”.

Related words

Sama

Samadhana

Broader term: Satsampatti

Sraddha

Titiksa

Uparati

Sanskrit

Dama — दम

dama - दम

Dana

Variant spellings

dana

dāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Dāna — ... “giving”; gift; charity; alms giving; self-sacrifice; donation; generosity

1. One of the ethical limbs (niyama) of Patañjali’s Yoga System.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

dāna -

the act of giving;

giving in marriage;

giving up;
communicating, imparting, teaching;
paying back, restoring;
adding, addition;
donation, gift;
oblation;
liberality;
bribery

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. Bhagavad Gita](#)

Dana: Giving, granting, teaching. A gift offered as a religious rite.

Ramakrishna tradition

[Nirmalananda. A Commentary on the Upanishads](#)

Almsgiving (dana) means giving of time and money to the welfare of others. It is also the cultivation of generosity as a trait of mind and heart. These three are discussed in the Bhagavad Gita, especially in chapter seventeen, as absolute necessities on the spiritual path, never to be abandoned—not even by the renunciate. For these are not part of worldly life, but essentials of spiritual life.

Descriptions

General

[Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Dana (“giving”). Charitable giving. This is a common religious practice, for it is believed to be a pious act that generates religious merit. Dana is especially prevalent at pilgrimage places and other sacred sites (tirthas), since the sacredness of these places is believed to magnify the consequences of any act, whether good or bad. Dana is one of the traditional paradigms for exchange, the other being dakshina (preceptor’s fee). The difference between them is that dakshina is a fee for services, whereas dana is given freely and brings one no tangible benefits. Aside from the intangible religious merit generated by dana, it is also a common way to get rid of any inauspiciousness or ill fortune, which is transferred to the receiver along with the gift. This assumption makes receiving dana karmically risky, whereas there are no such stigmas associated with dakshina. People who live solely by receiving gifts, such as beggars at pilgrimage sites, are thus in an unenviable position, since they are commonly described as “vessels” (patras) for the depositing of ill fortune. Yet this transfer of inauspiciousness is a pervasive pattern in regular society, and even within the family there are means to transfer inauspiciousness through well-established gift-giving patterns, particularly the kanyadan, or gift of a bride in marriage.

[Wikipedia](#)

Gifts in the Hindu Dharmaśāstras

Hindu law breaks the giving and receiving of gifts down by caste, as it does other activities. Each caste has its own rules and regulations on the topic of religious gifts. Manu explains that the reason for this is to ensure the protection of all creation, of how things

should be. Brahmins can both receive and give gifts. Kṣatriyas are allowed only to give gifts, as are the vaiśyas. Manu does not even speak of the sūdras as being related to giving gifts in this part of his text... Brahmins can accept gifts, but only under the right circumstances and from the right people. If a brahmin has enough to sustain himself and his family, he is then not to ask for gifts. If, however, he finds himself in a time of trouble and he anticipates struggling for his maintenance, he may seek gifts from the king. It is the duty of the king to supply proper livelihood for a brahmin in distress. Brahmins would not, however, seek gifts from a king that was not of the kṣatriya lineage, nor from any greedy king, or a king who disobeys the śâstras.

Manu makes it clear under his section on Accepting and Giving Gifts that the acceptance of gifts is a special occurrence, and should not be taken for granted. If a man, a brahmin, becomes accustomed to this, his vedic energy will eventually become extinguished. Kane elucidates this: “though entitled to accept gifts, a bramana should not again and again resort to that method, since the spiritual power that he acquires by vedic study is lost by accepting gifts.” It is crucially important to know the law on how to accept a gift, which is why brahmins are the only ones to be able to do so, since they are learned in the Vedas. It is said that when a man who is not learned accepts certain gifts, he is then reduced to ashes, like a piece of wood. These certain gifts have the ability to burn up different parts of the ignorant man’s life, such as his land, his sight, his offspring, and his life-force, to name a few. In this way, an ignorant man should fear any gift, for it has the ability to make him sink “like a cow in the mud”. In the same way, the donor must be weary of who really is learned and worthy of accepting his gifts.[8] It is important also that both the giver and the receiver share the same respect when giving and obtaining gifts. “When due respect is shown in accepting and in giving a gift, both the receiver and the giver go to heaven; but when the opposite happens, both go to hell.”

...

When it comes to the gifts that are being given, each item brings the donor something to his own life. For instance, he who gives sesame seeds obtains desirable offspring, he who gives food obtains inexhaustible happiness, he who gives an ox obtains bounteous prosperity, he who gives land obtains land, he who gives a bed obtains a wife, and the list goes on. The gift of the Veda, which only a brahmin would be able to give, far exceeds any other gift, however.

It is important that the giver is truthful about what he has given or how he has made a gift or sacrifice. A sacrifice is lost by telling a lie about it. In the same way, a man must not flaunt his asceticism, for by doing so this too will be lost. The Nāradaśmṛti also touches on the topic of gifts in the Dharmasâstra, but only briefly. This smṛti takes a different approach from Manu to giving and receiving gifts. It is a more concise advance on the subject. Here we find that there are specifically four kinds of gifts in legal procedures: what should and should not be given, along with legitimate and illegitimate gifts.[12] Going further into these stipulations, it says that there exist “eight kinds of things which should not be given, one kind of thing which may be given, seven kinds of legitimate gifts, and sixteen kinds of illegitimate gifts.”...

The knowledge of gifts in Hindu Law is important because gifts are used also under the topics of varṇa, food, sin and penance, duties of the king, and so on.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

dana (offering gifts) is also of three kinds: The offering of gifts made with the clear understanding that such are to be offered, to a fit person who does nothing in return, at a fit time at a fit place, is counted as sattvika...

The gift offered expecting some return benefit or motivated by its fruits, and offered with vexation, is considered rajasa...

The gift given to an unworthy person improperly and with disrespect, at a wrong place, at a wrong time, is said to be tamasa...

The Vedic ritual dana (offering free gifts) underscores the idea, “Nothing is mine; everything belongs to God or Brahman”. The riches that happen to come under one’s control, therefore, are shared with the deserving. Brahma-vadins (exponents of Brahman) alone offer gifts with the awareness of this principle, and they, as a sign of this awareness, utter the word AUM while offering gifts.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

dana — from the verb root da = “to give”.

Sanskrit

Dāna — दान

dāna - दान

Darshana

Variant spellings

darshana

darshan

darśana

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Darśana — ... “sight”; vision; to have auspicious sight of; to see a great or holy being, either human or divine; sensation; apprehension; intuition; a philosophical school.

1. Seeing or being in the presence of a revered person, sacred idol, or sacred place. It refers to both “seeing” and “being seen.”
2. According to Jainism, that stage of knowledge where there is an awareness of sensations of sense data. The specific characteristics of the objects are not noted however.
3. A standpoint or a system of thought. The various philosophical schools are known as darśanas.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

darśana -

showing;

seeing, looking at;

‘knowing’;

exhibiting, teaching;

seeing, observing, looking, noticing, observation, perception;

ocular perception;
the eye-sight;
inspection, examination;
visiting;
audience, meeting;
experiencing;
foreseeing;
contemplating;
apprehension, judgement;
opinion;
view, doctrine, philosophical system (6 in number, viz. [Pūrva-] mīmāṃsā by Jaim. ūttara-mīmāṃsā by Bādar.; Nyāya by Gotama, Vaiśeṣhika by Kaṇada, Sāṃkhya by Kap.; Yoga by Pat.);
the eye;
the becoming visible or known, presence;
appearance (before the judge);
the being mentioned (in any authoritative text);
a vision, dream;
appearance, aspect, semblance;
colour;
showing;
a sacrifice;
= dharma

Wikipedia

Darśana (Darshan, Sanskrit: दर्शन) is a Sanskrit term meaning “sight” (in the sense of an instance of seeing or beholding;... vision, apparition, or glimpse. It is most commonly used for “visions of the divine,” e.g., of a god or a very holy person or artifact. One could “receive darshana” of the deity in the temple, or from a great saintly person, such as a great guru.

In the sense “to see with reverence and devotion,” the term translates to hierophany, and could refer either to a vision of the divine or to being in the presence of a highly revered person. In this sense it may assume a meaning closer to audience. “By doing darshan properly a devotee develops affection for God, and God develops affection for that devotee.

Darshan is ultimately difficult to define since it is an event in consciousness -- an interaction in presence between devotee and guru; or between devotee and image or sculpture, which focuses and calls out the consciousness of the devotee. In either event, a heightening of consciousness or spirituality is the intended effect.

The other common use of the term ‘darshan’ is its application to the six systems of thought, dealt with under ‘[Hindu philosophy](#)’.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Darshana: Vision of certain aspect, especially as seen from the particular point of view of a given system of philosophy. Facets of truth can be strung together systematically, so as to bring out the particularity of each while revealing the truth of truth underlying

the whole. In Vedanta, darshanas are thus studied in an interrelated fashion, as in the Sarva-Darshana- Sangraha and the Sarva Darshana Siddhanta Sangraha which method finds its culminating example in modern times in the Darshana Mala (Garland of Visions) of a hundred verses in ten sections or Darshanas of ten verses each, of the Guru Narayana. The German word Anschauung corresponds to what is meant by Darshana.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Darśana: Literally, “vision.” The Indian equivalent to “philosophy.” Vision of Reality as seen from the point of view of a given system of philosophy.

Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa are the six such systems of Indian philosophy.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Our belief in the reality of diversity as such is the result of perception and is therefore immediate. So nothing but an equally immediate apprehension of unity can effectively remove it. If variety, in the reality of which we almost instinctively believe, is not to delude us, we must see the unity underlying it, not merely know it. Seeing is believing. That is why the Upanisads speak of darśana or ‘spiritual perception’ in respect of the ātman or Brahman.

... darśana, which literally means ‘sight,’ ... may be taken to indicate that what the Indians aspired after in philosophy was not a mediate knowledge of the ultimate truth but a direct vision of it. The word in that case would express what is a distinguishing feature of Indian philosophy in general—its insistence that one should not rest content with a mere intellectual conviction but should aim at transforming such conviction into direct experience.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

Our idea of a system of philosophy is different from the Indian conception of a Darsana. In its original meaning philosophy, as a love of wisdom, comes nearest to the Sanskrit Gignissi, a desire to know, if not a desire to be wise. If we take philosophy in the sense of an examination of our means of knowledge (Epistemology), or with Kant as an inquiry into the limits of human knowledge, there would be nothing corresponding to it in India. Even the Vedānta, so far as it is based, not on independent reasoning, but on the authority of the Sruti, would lose with us its claim to the title of philosophy.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

According to Indian tradition there is only one Ultimate Reality, but there are six fundamental interpretations of that Reality. These are called the Ṣad Darśanas or “six insights,” because they give man sight of the sensible verities and enable him to understand in the light of reason the super-sensible Truth attainable only through the revealed scriptures or through the experience of ṛṣis (sages). The word darśana comes from the root dṛś, “to see,” and is the Sanskrit term used for philosophy. The six darśanas constitute the classic philosophical systems of India. They are Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta. They are not the creation of any one mind nor the discovery of any single individual. The real founders are unknown, and there is considerable controversy as to when they were first reduced to writing, but neither of these conditions detracts from the value of their principles. Together they form a graduated interpretation of the Ultimate Reality, so interrelated that the hypothesis and method of each is

dependent upon the other. In no way are they contradictory or antagonistic to one another, for they all lead to the same practical end, knowledge of the Absolute and Liberation of the Soul.

They have many characteristics in common. They all grew out of the Upaniṣads, the philosophical portion of the Veda which is accepted as the supreme authority; they are delivered in the Sutra style, that is as aphorisms; as such, they are extremely concise, avoiding all unnecessary repetition and employing a rigid economy of words, making it difficult to understand them correctly in their original form without the use of commentaries, for they use many of the same terms, but each system gives its own meaning to the use of the term. They rest their conclusions on several common concepts: all accept the eternal cycle of Nature which is without beginning and end, and which consists of vast periods of creation, maintenance, and dissolution; all accept the principle of regeneration of the soul that maintains that life and death are but two phases of a single cycle to which the soul is bound and to which it clings because of ignorance of the true nature of things; all accept Dharma as the moral law of the universe that accounts for these eternal cycles of Nature, as well as the destiny of the human soul; all agree that knowledge is the path to freedom and that Yoga is the method to attain final liberation.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Each school of thought is called a darsana and aiming at the happiness of everyone is common among all of them. In other words, how can happiness in life be ensured by knowing the Reality that appears as life, is the central theme of all Indian schools of thought.

Nitya. Narayana Guru

Two Sanskrit terms which come closest in meaning to 'philosophy' are darshana and tattvajnana. Darshana means the envisioning of truth. Tattvajnana means knowledge of the fundamentals. Narayana Guru looked upon knowledge as both conditional and unconditional. In the Indian context, the epistemological inquiry into truth is identical with the search for liberation from all kinds of genetic or psychosomatic conditionings and socio-cultural colorations to which an individual is exposed in the course of his or her life. In the Western world, philosophical pursuits are mainly generated by one's curiosity to know Truth, whereas in India, philosophical pursuits also imply the disciplining of one's life in the light of one's best knowledge.

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

Darśana ... from the root dr̥ś "to see".

Related words

Hindu philosophy

Sutra

Sanskrit

Darśana — दर्शन

Deha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Deha — ... the physical body; form; shape; person.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

deha -

(from root 'dih', to plaster, mould, fashion) the body;

form, shape, mass, bulk (as of a cloud);

person, individual;

appearance, manifestation ifc. having the appearance of;

N. of a country

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Deha: Physical body. Literally, "that which grows."

Descriptions

Deha and sarira

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Root-wise, the word deha means "that which grows"; and Sarira, "that which perishes," both signifying the same.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

The body is called śarira because it is subject to disintegration, śiryamāna-svabhāvatvāt śariram. The body is also called deha as it is subject to cremation, dahana-yogya.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

deha — from the verb root dih = "to smear, annoint, mould, shape".

Muller. The Upanishads, Part 2

The body is meant, and is called deha from the root dih, to knead together.

Related words

Sarira

Sanskrit

Deha — देह

deha - देह

Deva

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Deva — ... “shining” ...; one who shines; god(s); celestial being; light giver; abode; sphere.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

deva -

heavenly, divine (also said of terrestrial things of high excellence);

a deity, god;

(rarely applied to) evil demons;

(pl.) the gods as the heavenly or shining ones; viśve devā's, all the gods ṚV. ii, 3, 4 &c., or a partic. class of deities [see under viśva], often reckoned as 33, either 11 for each of the 3 worlds ṚV. i, 139, 11 &c. [cf. tri-daśa], or 8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, and 12 Adityas [to which the 2 Aśvins must be added] Br. ; ... ; devā'nām pa'tnyas, the wives of the gods ṚV. VS. Br.

N. of the number 33 (see above);

N. of Indra as the god of the sky and giver of rain;

a cloud;

the image of a god, an idol Viṣṇu.;

a god on earth or among men, either Brāhman, priest ṚV. AV., or king, prince (as a title of honour, esp. in the voc. 'your majesty' or 'your honour') ; ... and in names as puruṣottama-d... [lit. having Viṣṇu as one's deity... ; rarely preceding the name e.g. de-

va-caṇḍamahāsena;

a husband's brother;

a fool, dolt;

a child;

a man following any partic. line or business;

a spearman, lancer;

emulation, wish to excel or overcome;
sport, play;
a sword;
N. of men;
of a disciple of Nāgarjuna;
dimin. for devadatta;
an organ of sense

Wikipedia

Deva ... is the Sanskrit word for god or deity. In modern Hinduism, it can be loosely interpreted as angel, or any benevolent supernatural beings. The devas in Hinduism are often juxtaposed to the Asuras, their half brothers. Devas are also the maintainers of the realms as ordained by the Trimurti.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

Whether Indian philosophy overlaps religion or not is a matter of how one thinks of “religion.” The majority of the early Indian philosophical systems (darsana) do not acknowledge, and in some cases explicitly deny, the existence of a supreme being or lord (isvara). All classical Indian thinking accepts gods (deva). They are viewed as unliberated, like humans; they are beings who inhabit other realms and occasionally visit ours. They eventually live out their lengthy period as gods and are reborn into lower realms as humans or even animals. This process is part of the Indian theory of karma—accepted until modern times—according to which selves are beginningless and are caused by their past actions to inhabit a series of bodies ranging from insects (or even plants) up to gods, depending on the particular portion of the stored-up results of past actions (karman) that becomes activated (prarabdha) as one enters the next birth.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Here [Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad]. the inmates of the world are classified as gods (deva), men (manuṣya) and demons (asura), and are all described as the children of Prajāpati. They approach their father seeking instruction from him as to how they should conduct themselves. The answer is brief, but it clearly indicates the necessity for grades in moral discipline according to the capacity and temperament of the persons in question. To the asuras, the commandment given is ‘Have compassion on man’ (dayadhvam); to the manuṣyas, ‘Be generous’ (datta); and to the devas, ‘Learn self-control’ (dāmyata). The first two of these prescribe regard for others as the chief principle of action. The third is unlike them and may appear to be purely individualistic; but, being addressed to the best, it should be taken to presuppose the training of the other two stages. The same Upaniṣad in another of its sections represents the gods as unwilling to allow man to withdraw from the sphere of social or relative morality, which is merely a rhetorical way of expressing that man ought not to break away from society until he has discharged his duty towards it and gained its goodwill, so to speak.

... the old Vedic view of deva—a luminous something presented as external to us.

Hume. The thirteen Upanishads

The gods (deva) and the devils (asura) were the twofold offspring of Prajāpati. Of these the gods were the younger, the devils the older. They were struggling with each other for these worlds.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The word deva literally means “shining one,” although the most common (and often most appropriate) translation is “god.” This word is an epithet for any superhuman being, although it can also be used figuratively for any person of high status, such as a king or a brahmin (priest). The notion of “gods” in Hinduism must be understood in light of the generally assumed context of reincarnation (samsara), which assumes that a person can be reborn in many different realms of reality. Some of these are realms of punishment where people atone for the effects of their bad karma, while others are realms of pleasure (the heavens) where people enjoy the results of their good karma. The devas are the inhabitants of these heavens, and are thus “gods,” since gods, by definition, live in heaven.

Yet all these gods are still subject to the vicissitudes of reincarnation—even Indra, the ruler of heaven. Birth in heaven is based on one’s good karma, which is inevitably diminished by enjoying the rewards of life in heaven, just as a savings account is depleted by continuing withdrawals. When their good karma has been exhausted, even the gods are subject to rebirth in other realms. So even though these gods are superhuman, they are still subject to the law of reincarnation. There is thus a qualitative difference between these gods (the devas) and the so-called Great gods, such as Vishnu, Shiva, and the Goddess. These latter deities are seen by their devotees (bhakta) as totally outside the realm of space, time, and the causes and effects of karma, and thus correspond more directly to the Judeo-Christian notion of “God,” as the ultimate power in the universe.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Five Kins. The most important teachings are based on the symbolism of the Five Elements. ... The Panchajana or “Five Kins” of Hindu tradition represent the various aspects of human life in the Five Elements, from Earth to Heaven. Their names are mentioned in the Aitareya Brahmana, the Brihad Devata and other scriptures.

The first kin is called either Sarpa, “Serpents”, or Uruga-Rakshasa, or Yaksha-Rakshasa. Urugas are Serpent beings, Yakshas are Gnomes. Rakshas, from which the word Rakshasas has been derived, is the Spirit of Illusion, generally taking the form of a monstrous serpent. This first Kin belongs to Earth. ... The word Rakshasas is generally rendered by “demons”; but in the myths fierce and terrible looking Rakshasas were sometimes pious in nature. ...

The second Kin is called Pitara, meaning “Fathers” or “Ancestors”. The link with the members of the family, alive and dead, is predominantly an emotional one. The Pitaras belong to the Element Water. It has been mentioned before that the “dream-state” of consciousness is connected with the Element Water. ...

The third Kin is called Manushya, “Men”, and occasionally Asura, “Not-Angels”. (The word Asura has also other etymological antecedents). These terms, belonging to a Vedic tradition, developed a different meaning in subsequent Hindu tradition. A Manushyan was originally a mental being, a thinker, a denizen of the Element Fire. Now it means a man, a human being. In the East as well as in the West, “man” derived his name from the “mind”.

The fourth Kin is called Deva, Gods, “heavenly beings”, Angels. They belong to the Element Air or Spirit. They are sensed by the Buddhi: the faculty of spiritual discrimination.

The fifth Kin is called Gandharva. To a modern Hindu it may seem strange that Gandharvas rank higher than Devas: for now Gandharvas are taken to be no more than heavenly singers and musicians in Indra’s heaven. Yet even in this conception some-

thing of the original meaning has been preserved, for Indra's heaven is the Ether. He is Lord of the Akasha. The original meaning of Gandharva is a most exalted one. In the Vedas the Gandharva was a glorious being, a "measurer of space". He is the Higher Self, the Son of God, the Lord of Ether, the Quintessence, the Lord of Light.

Wikipedia

Vedas

The Vedas, the earliest comprehensive literature, contain mantras for pleasing the Devas to obtain blessings. The Rig Veda, the earliest of the four, enumerates 33 Devas.

Some Devas represent the forces of nature and some represent moral values. The main Devas addressed in the Rig Veda are Varuna, Mitra and Indra. Agni (fire) and Soma represent modes of fire-sacrifice, called yagna, but personified are also seen as Devas. Aitareya Brahmana in its opening stanza suggests a hierarchy among Devas. All Gods taken together are worshiped as the Vishvedevas. Varuna has the dual title of Deva and Asura. There are also other Devas like Savitr, Vishnu, Rudra (later given the exclusive epithet of Shiva, "auspicious one"), Prajapati (later identified with Brahmā), and devis (Goddesses) like Ushas (dawn), Prithvi (earth) and Sarasvati (Knowledge).

Upanishads

The Upanishads distinguish between the celestial gods from the Divine forms of God. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says there are 33 devas in the celestial world, in terms of performance of yajnas. They are eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Adityas, Indra, and Prajapati.

Purana

Purana describes genealogy and histories as remembered by the teller. As per Purana, Brahmadeva had seven assumed sons (manasputra) called saptarishi. They were Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya (Kulastya), Pulaha, Kratu and Wasishtha. Marichi had a son called Kashyapa. Kashyapa had thirteen wives: Aditi, Diti, Danu, Duhita, Kadru etc. The sons of Aditi are called Aditya, the sons of Diti are called Daitya, the sons of Danu are called Danava and the sons of Duhita are called Duhev or Deva. Duhita's sons Deva were: Vishnu, Yama (Dharma) and Indra.

Nature and Hinduism

According to Vedas, the 33 devas are reflection of Nature. It means worship of devas is actually worship of nature. Primary Devas like Indra, Varuna (water), Agni (fire), Soma, Vayu (air), Sun, Earth, Hill, Van (forest) are actually symbols of Nature.

Classical Hinduism

Nature Devas are responsible for elements or objects such as fire, air, rain and trees - most of them assumed a minor role in the later religion. Certain other deities rose into prominence. These higher Devas control much more intricate tasks governing the functioning of the cosmos and the evolution of creation. Mahadevas, such as Lord Ganesha, have such tremendous tasks under their diligence that they are sometimes called themselves Gods under the Supreme One God. The Trimurti is composed of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. (Note: Mahadeva generally refers to Śiva)

There are also many other lesser celestial beings in Hinduism such as the Gandharvas (celestial musicians), or their wives, the Apsaras (celestial dancers).

Vayu, the Lord of the wind, is an example of an important Deva. Also, Death is personified as the Deva Yama.

Devas, in Hinduism, are celestial beings that control forces of nature such as fire, air, wind, etc. They are not to be confused with the One and the Supreme God or His personal form, Saguna Brahman which can be visualized as Viṣṇu or Śiva. God (see Ishvara) or Brahman (the Supreme Spirit) is the ultimate controller. A famous verse from the Katha Upanishad states: "From fear

(here, power) of Him the wind blows; from fear of Him the sun rises; from fear of Him Agni and Indra and Death, the fifth, run.” In actuality, Brahman is the only Ultimate Reality, and all Devas are simply mundane manifestations of Him.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

The word Deva (god) means bright or shining one, and corresponds to what the Christians and Mahommedans call ‘angels.’ ... The gods, the Devas, are not eternal, they have to die. In heaven they will all die. The only deathless place is Brahmaloaka., where alone there is no birth and death. In our mythology it is said—there are also the demons, who sometimes give the ‘gods chase.’ In all mythologies you read of these fights between the demons or wicked angels, and the gods, and sometimes the demons conquer the gods. In all mythologies also, you find that the Devas were fond of the beautiful daughters of men. As a Deva, the Jiva only reaps results of past actions but makes no new Karma. Karma means actions that will produce effects, also those effects or results of actions. When a man dies and becomes a Deva, he has a period of pleasure, and during that time makes no fresh Karma ; he simply enjoys the reward of his past good works. But when the good Karma is worked out then the other Karma begins to take effect.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

deva — from the verb root div = “to shine”.

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit devá- derives from Indo-Iranian *devá- which in turn descends from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) word, *deiwos, originally an adjective meaning “celestial” or “shining”, which is a PIE (not synchronic Sanskrit) vrddhi derivative from the root *diw meaning “to shine”, especially as the day-lit sky.

Sanskrit

Deva — देव

deva - देव

Devayana

Variant spellings

devayana

devayāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Devayāna — ... the “way or path of the gods”

1. It is also called the Northern Path (uttarayana), characterized by various luminous stages such as flame, day, the bright fortnight of the moon, the bright half of the year when the sun travels northward, the sun, and lightning. Those who follow this path and reach Brahmaloaka generally do not return to the earth. It is meant for those who cultivate faith and asceticism. At death, those individuals who attain liberation (moksa) by the devayāna, never return to the cycle of birth and death.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

devayāna -

leading to the gods, serving them as a way;

way leading to the gods;

the vehicle of a god

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Commentary by Prasad:

Devayana: The path of the gods. One of the two paths through which the departed souls supposedly go to the other world, from where they will not return. Literally, “the bright path.” Also called sukla-gati, the white path. Another name for arcir-marga.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The second story of Shvetaketu and Pravāhana Jaibali seems to be fairly conclusive with regard to the fact that the transmigration doctrines, the way of the gods (devayāna) and the way of the fathers (pitryāna) had originated among the Ksatriyas.

... the way of gods (devayāna), meant for those who cultivate faith and asceticism (tapas). These souls at death enter successively into flame, day, bright half of the month, bright half of the year, sun, moon, lightning, and then finally into Brahman never to return.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Ganapati and Janus, the two-headed God, supervise the Two Paths and the choice to tread them. These are called by various names. The Downward Path, that of the Fall, is called Pitri-Yana, “the Path of the Ancestors”, or Bhokti-Marga, “the Path of Pleasure (literally ‘eating’)”, or the Path of the Moon, or the Path of Death. The Return Path to God has been called the Deva-Yana, “the Path of the Gods”, or Mukti-Marga, “the Path of Liberation”, or the Path of the Sun, or the Path of Life. At every moment anew — for every moment is a new beginning — the choice of Path must be made — till the Goal is reached. In crude words, the choice must be made between materialism, selfishness and sin on the one hand, and spirituality, unselfishness and virtue (meaning true manhood) on the other.

In connection with the apparent movement of the sun the Two Paths have been called the Northward and the Southward Paths. The Spiritual Path then starts with the commencement of winter, when the sun begins to move Northwards. It is the Birth of Christ, Mitra, the Son of Man, in Capricorn. Capricorn is the House of Yama, the God of Death, who is also Lord of Life. It is in this sense that tradition teaches the spiritual striver “to go North”. Just as the South may have a meaning varying with the meaning of “dying” in the context in which it occurs, the North also may imply different and opposite things.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

The archiradi-marga, or the devayana, the Northern Path of the gods, of the celestials, the path of the liberation of the spirit from the bondage of samsara, is being described. Those who meditate like this, those who live the spiritual life of knowledge, those who have an insight into the secret mentioned here in this Upanishad, those who practise austerity (tapas), endowed with the great faith (shraddha) in the efficacy of this knowledge, they rise to the realm of the divine Agni, or the deity of fire, on departing from this world. They are carried to a higher realm by the deity of the flame, or fire, and from there they are taken up to the still higher realm of the deity of the day. There, again, the matter does not end; they go higher up to the realm of the deity which superintends over the bright half of the lunar month. From there, again, they go higher up into the realm of the deity of the six months during which the sun moves to the north. Then they go higher up to the deity which superintends over the entire year. Then, further, they go to the sun, which is a very important halting place, as it is said, in the passage of the soul to liberation. Then the soul goes higher up into the more subtle regions of experience and enjoyment of a divine nature, comparable to cool lunar radiance. Then comes the realm which the Upanishad calls the flash of lightning represented by its deity. This is not the lightning that we see in the sky, but the flash of the lightning of the knowledge of Reality. We are on the borderland of the Creator, as it were. There the light flashes and then the individuality is about to drop. Effort ceases there and some other law begins to take the soul by hand. A superhuman force begins to work there, an amanava-purusha, a superhuman being comes there. Someone comes and recognises you, “Lo, the exiled has come, the prodigal son has returned.” Such is the joy of the gods when this exiled being returns after years and years of suffering. The superhuman being catches hold of you by the hand and leads you along the path of light, higher and higher, until you are taken to the realm of the Creator Himself, the Brahma-loka. This is the path of light; this is the path of freedom; this is the path of liberation.

Devayana and pitriyana

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Ganapati is worshipped at the beginning of every religious rite, and at the beginning of every important enterprise, by the devout Hindu. For he watches over the beginning of the Path. The belief is, that no obstacles can be overcome, and no progress made, on the Spiritual Path, without the guidance, help and blessings of this God, who stands ever at the cross-roads of human choice. He is the Lord of Karmic causes-and-effects, hence he is the “Bringer and Remover of Obstacles”. Capricorn, the stage he represents, is the “crucial” stage on the Path. ... That choice lies before one and all. The opportunity traditionally suited for it comes in the time when the Cycles meet, marked by the winter solstice. Ganapati is called “the Lord of the Two Paths” which are the Pitri-yana or “Path of the Ancestors”, and the Deva-yana or “Path of the Gods”. The “Ancestors” are the symbols of the forces of Karma... The Two Paths begin from the winter solstice, leading in opposite directions. In some contexts they are associated with

both the winter and the summer solstices. When we compare the situations in the heavens of the first points of Capricorn and Cancer, with which the two solstices are connected, the one, the Path of Heaven, is high above, from the point of view of a beholder on earth, while the other, the Path of Hell, is deep underneath, in the opposite direction.

Devayana, pitriyana and the third path

General

Deussen. *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*

And now a few words about this way out of the Samsara, and first about the exoteric theory of it. In the ancient time of the hymns there was no idea of Samsara but only rewards in heaven and (somewhat later) punishments in a dark region (padam gabhiram), the precursor of the later hells. Then the deep theory of Samsara came up, teaching rewards and punishment in the form of a new birth on earth. The Vedanta combines both theories, and so it has a double expiation, first in heaven and hell, and then again in a new existence on the earth. This double expiation is different (1) for performers of good works, going the pitriyana, (2) for worshippers of the sagunam brahma, going the devayana, (3) for wicked deeds, leading to what is obscurely hinted at in the Upanishads as the tritiam sthanam, the third place, (I) The pitriyana leads through a succession of dark spheres to the moon, there to enjoy the fruit of the good works and, after their consumption, back to an earthly existence. (2) The devayana leads through a set of brighter spheres to Brahman, without returning to the earth. But this Brahman is only sagunam brahma, the object of worshipping, and its true worshippers, though entering into this sagunam brahma without returning, have to wait in it until they get moksha by obtaining samyagdarshanam, the full knowledge of the nirgunam brahma. (3) The tritiam sthanam, including the later theories of hells, teaches punishment in them, and again punishment by returning to earth in the form of lower castes, animals, and plants. All these various and fantastical ways of Samsara are considered as true, quite as true as this world is, but not more. For the whole world and the whole way of Samsara is valid and true for those only who are in the avidya, not for those who have overcome it, as we have to [show now](#).

Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

We are told there that, in the case of persons who have fulfilled their religious or sacrificial duties and have lived a good life, but have not yet reached the highest knowledge, the subtle body in which the Atman is clothed migrates, carried along by the Udana through the Murdhanya Nadi, the capital vein, following either the path of the fathers (Pitriyana) or the path of the gods (Devayana). The former is meant for good people, the latter for those who are good and have already reached the lower, if not the highest knowledge. The former leads on to smoke, night, the waning moon, the waning year, the world of the fathers, the ether, and lastly the moon. In the moon the departed souls remain for a time enjoying the rewards of their good deeds, in company with the Pitris, and then descend again, supported by the remnant of unrewarded merit due to their good works, to the ether, wind, smoke, cloud, rain, and plants. From the plants springs seed which, when matured in the womb, begins a new life on earth in such a station as the rest of his former deeds (Anusaya), Anlage, may warrant.

...

Little is said in the Upanishads of those who, owing to their evil deeds, do not even rise to the moon and descend again. But Badarayana tries to make it clear that the Upanishads know of a third class of beings (III, i, 12) who reap the fruits of their evil actions in Samyamana (abode of Yama) and then ascend to earth again. Theirs is the third place alluded to in the Khand. Upanishad V, 10, 8.

But while evil doers are thus punished in different hells, as mentioned in the Puranas, and while pious people are fully rewarded in the moon and then return again to the earth, those who have been pious and have also reached at least the lower knowledge of Brahman follow a different road. After leaving the body, they enter the flame, the day, the waxing moon, the waxing year (northern precession), the year, the world of the Devas, the world of Vayu, air, the sun, the moon, and then lightning ; but all these, we are told, are not abodes for the soul, but guides only who, when the departed has reached the lightning, hand him over to a person who is said to be not-a-man. This person conducts him to the world of Varuna, then to that of Indra, and lastly to that of Prajapati or the qualified Brahma. Here the souls are supposed to remain till they realise true knowledge or the Samyagdarsana, which does not mean universal, but thorough and complete knowledge, that knowledge which, if obtained on earth, at once frees a man from all illusion. Finally the souls, when fully released, share in all the powers of Brahman except those of creating and ruling the universe. They are not supposed ever to return to the world of Samsara (IV, 4, 17).

All this is hardly to be called philosophy, neither do the different descriptions of the road on which the souls of the pious are supposed to wander towards Brahma, and which naturally vary according to different schools, help us much towards a real insight into the Vedanta. But it would have been unfair to leave out what, though childish, is a characteristic feature of the Vedanta-philosophy, and must be judged from a purely historical point of view.

Related words

Pitryana

Pancagnividya

Sanskrit

Devayāna — देवयान

devayāna - देवयान

Dharma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Dharma — ... righteousness; merit; religious duty; religion; law; a goal of life (puruṣārtha); medium of motion (Jainism); scriptural texts (Buddhism); quality (Buddhism); cause (Buddhism); religious teaching (Buddhism); unsubstantial and soulless (Buddhism) (from the verb root dhṛ = “to uphold, to establish, to support”)

1. Literally it means “what holds together”; thus, it is the basis of all order, whether social or moral. As an ethical or moral value, it is the instrumental value to liberation (except for the Mīmāṃsaka who considers it the supreme value).
2. Varna āśrama-dharma is one’s specific duty.
3. Sanātana-dharma is the eternal religion.
4. Sva-dharma is one’s own individual duty.

5. Apad-dharma is the dharma prescribed at the time of adversities.
6. Yuga-dharma is the law of time (aeon).
7. Sādhārana-dharma is the general obligations or the common duties of each and every individual. It is comprised of virtues like self-control, kindness, truthfulness, and so on. This is based on the idea that individuals are born with a number of debts and these duties help to repay one's debts to humanity.
8. According to Jainism, it is the medium of motion and pervades the entire universe. It is one and eternal. It is neither active itself nor can it produce action in others. However, it makes the motion of all else possible by providing the movement medium for them.
9. According to Buddhism, the chief definitions of this term include cosmic order, the natural law, the teachings of the Buddha, norms of conduct, things or facts, ideas, and factors of existence.
10. According to the Mīmāṃsā school, it is what is enjoined in the Veda. It is religious duty, the performance thereof bringing merit and its neglect bringing demerit.
11. Generally dharma is twofold: sādharma, which is common to everyone, and varṇa-āśrama-dharma, which is specific to each class and stage of life.
12. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, dharma is a specific quality (vīśeṣagaṇa) that belongs to the self. However, dharma signifies merit (puṇya) rather than right. They believe that dharma is directly perceived, though it takes yogic power to do so. This is done by means of alaukika-pratyakṣa.
13. According to Sāṅkhya-Yoga, dharma is a mode of the intellect (buddhi). It is due to a confusion that one may believe that dharma belongs to the empirical sphere and that merit and demerit do not ever touch the trans-empirical individual soul.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

dharma -

that which is established or firm, steadfast decree, statute, ordinance, law;

usage, practice, customary observance or prescribed conduct, duty;

right, justice (often as a synonym of punishment);

virtue, morality, religion, religious merit, good works (dharma ind. or ...māt ind. according to right or rule, rightly, justly, according to the nature of anything; cf. below; ...mesthita mfn. holding to the law, doing one's duty) AV.;

Law or Justice personified (as Indra ŚBr. &c.; as Yama MBh.; as born from the right breast of Yama and father of Zama, Kāma and Harsha ib.; as Viṣṇu Hariv.; as Prajā-pati and son-in-law of Dakṣa Hariv. Mn. &c.; as one of the attendants of the Sun L.; as a Bull Mn. viii, 16; as a Dove Kathās. vii, 89, &c.);

nature, character, peculiar condition or essential quality, property, mark, peculiarity;

a partic. ceremony MBh.;

sacrifice;

the ninth mansion;

an Upanishad;

associating with the virtuous;

religious abstraction, devotion;

a Soma-drinker;

N. of the 15th Arhat of the present Ava-sarpiṇī;

of a son of Anu and father of Ghṛita;

other names

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Dharma is a complex and multifaceted term in Hindu tradition. It can be translated as “religious law,” “right conduct,” “duty,” and “social order.” Its root, dhri, means “to hold up.”

The social concept of dharma emerges from the VEDIC notion of RITA or “cosmic order.” In this worldview, dharma (the social order) is maintained by dharma (right conduct and the fulfillment of duty and religious law). Social activity was traditionally very much circumscribed by tradition; following dharma meant doing what was required.

Starting as early as the fourth century B.C.E., a voluminous literature in Sanskrit was created called DHARMASHASTRA (authoritative texts on dharma). These included the Dharmasutras (aphoristic texts).

Dharma later became personified as a god in mythology and literature. His son was YUDHISHTHIRA, one of the five PANDAVAS in the MAHABHARATA story.

In the Jain tradition, dharma refers to the complex of duties required of a Jain. Jains recognize 10 forms of dharma that monks are to follow. The word dharma can be used in association with any religion or faith, such as the Zoroastrian dharma.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Dharma. One of the four purusharthas, or aims of life, the others being artha (wealth, power, and prosperity), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation). The concept of dharma is so fundamental to Hindu culture that it cannot be adequately translated by any single English word— possible translations are “religious law,” “religious duty,” “duty,” “religion,” “law,” or “social order.” The root meaning for the word dharma comes from a verb meaning “to support” or “to uphold.” Dharma is thus that which supports or upholds society, which shows why all the aforementioned translations could make sense in context. Dharma provides the overall regulatory framework for life in the world and gives a sense of ultimate purpose to keep one’s life in balance. Although Hindu culture sanctions the pursuit of both power (artha) and pleasure (kama), it is always assumed that both of these will be regulated by an underlying commitment to dharma, to keep one’s life integrated and balanced.

Wikipedia

The term dharma is an Indian spiritual and religious term, that means one’s righteous duty or any virtuous path in the common sense of the term. A Hindu’s dharma is affected by a person’s age, class, occupation, and sex. In Indian languages it can be equivalent simply to religion, depending on context. The word dharma translates as that which upholds or supports, and is generally translated into English as law.

Dharma also refers to the teachings and doctrines of the founders of Buddhism and Jainism, the Buddha and Mahavira. In Buddhist philosophy, dhamma/dharma is also the term for “phenomenon”

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Dharma - The most basic quality or intrinsic property by which a thing is what it is. It is the differentia of a species that distinguishes it from all other species. In its ethical connotation, righteousness.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Dharma: Derived from the root dhr, “to support.” The universal functional system that sustains the world and life. Righteous way of life fully in harmony with the universal order.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. *Vedantasara*, tr. Nikhilananda

Dharma: (1) the course of action enjoined to each particular being by its own nature; (2) one of the four aims of human life, i.e. attaining righteousness and virtue, the other three aims being Kama (sense-enjoyment), Artha (gaining of wealth) and Moksha (liberation) as the highest; (3) a common term for righteousness, virtue and religion.

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

“Whenever unrighteousness prevails and Righteousness declines, I manifest Myself in a human form to re-establish the Righteous and to destroy the unrighteous,” says the Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (IV; 7-8). The word “Dharma”, here rendered, as is generally done, by “Righteousness”, could also have been rendered by “the Tradition”. For that is the deeper meaning of this word, much misused by Hindu conservatives and sectarians. It comes from the root “Dhr”, meaning to support, to uphold, to maintain. The Tradition is the support, the only support, of humanity. It upholds and maintains humanity, which, losing it, sinks to the level of beasts, plants and stones. This is what, according to Hindu tradition, has happened during the progressive “decadence” or “Fall away” from man’s natural state of communion with God. It is written in the Puranas that Dharma originally went in the shape of a cow on four legs, in the second age on three, in the third on two, and in the fourth only on one.

Theos Bernard. *Hindu philosophy*

According to Indian tradition there are four ages, collectively called a Mahāyuga, namely, the Satya Yuga (also called Kṛta Yuga), or golden age; the Tretā Yuga (age), in which righteousness (dharma) decreased by one-fourth; the Dvāpara Yuga (age), in which righteousness (dharma) decreased by one-half; and the present Kali Yuga (age) (lit. the age of quarrel), in which righteousness (dharma) has decreased three-fourths, considered the most evil of all ages. According to this doctrine each age has its appropriate scripture (śāstra), designed to meet the requirements and needs of men of each age in their effort to attain liberation.

Wikipedia

The various Indian religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, have all accorded a central focus to dharma and advocate its practice. Each of these religions emphasizes Dharma as the correct understanding of reality in its teachings. In these traditions, beings that live in accordance with Dharma proceed more quickly toward dharma yukam, moksha or nirvana (personal liberation). The antonym of dharma is adharma meaning unnatural or immoral.

In traditional Hindu society, dharma has historically denoted a variety of ideas, such as Vedic ritual, ethical conduct, caste rules, and civil and criminal law. Its most common meaning however regarded two principal ideals; namely, that social life should be structured through well- defined and well- regulated classes (varna), and that an individual’s life within a class should be organized into defined stages (ashrama, see dharmasastra).

Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are called Hindu Dharma, Bauddha-Dharma, Jain-Dharma and Sikh dharma, respectively.

In Hinduism

In the Rig veda, the belief (or observation) that a natural justice and harmony pervades the natural world becomes manifest in the concept of rta, which is both 'nature's way' and the order implicit in nature. Thus rta bears a resemblance to the ancient Chinese concept of tao and the Heraclitan or stoic conception of the logos.

This "power" that lies behind nature, and which keeps everything in balance became a natural forerunner to the idea of dharma as one can see in this early Vedic prayer. This idea laid the cornerstone of Dharma's implicit attribution to the "ultimate reality" of the surrounding universe, in classical Hindu.

The following verse from the Rig-Veda is an example where rta finds mention :

"O Indra, lead us on the path of Rta, on the right path over all evils." (RV 10.133.6)

The transition of the rta to the modern idea of Dharma occurs in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The Upanishads saw dharma as the universal principle of law, order, harmony, all in all truth, that sprang first from Brahman. It acts as the regulatory moral principle of the Universe. It is sat, truth, a major tenet of Hinduism. This harkens back to the conception of the Rig Veda that "Ekam Sat," (Truth Is One), of the idea that Brahman is "Sacchidananda" (Truth- Consciousness- Bliss). Dharma is not just law, or harmony, it is pure Reality. In the Brihadaranyaka's own words:

"Verily, that which is Dharma is truth.

Therefore they say of a man who speaks truth, 'He speaks the Dharma,'

or of a man who speaks the Dharma, 'He speaks the Truth.'

Verily, both these things are the same."

(Brh. Upanishad, 1.4.14) (2)

In the Mahabharata, Krishna defines Dharma as: "Dhaaranaad dharma ity aahur dharmena vidhrtaah prajaah, Yat syaad dhaara-na sanyuktam sa dharma iti nishchayah," or, "Dharma upholds both this- worldly and other- worldly affairs" (Mbh 12.110.11).

In Buddhism

For many Buddhists, the Dharma most often means the body of teachings expounded by the Buddha. The word is also used in Buddhist phenomenology as a term roughly equivalent to phenomenon, a basic unit of existence and/or experience.

In East Asia, the translation for Dharma is 法, pronounced fǎ in Mandarin, beop in Korean, hō in Japanese, and pháp in Vietnamese. However, the term Dharma can also be transliterated from its original form.

The tradition says that the Buddha spent forty- nine days in the neighborhood of the Bodhi Tree. Then the two merchants en route from Orissa passed close by and were advised by the spirit of a dead relative to make offerings to the new Buddha, who was sitting at the foot of a certain tree. They offered honey cakes and sugar cane and "took refuge in the Buddha and his Dharma, thus becoming the first Buddhists and the first lay devotees in the world."

In this case, Gautama did not preach Dharma to the two men, but merely received their reverence and offerings. Worship of holy persons is nonsectarian, and does not involve subscribing to their ideas. The Buddhist lay cult is here shown developing naturally out of pre- Buddhist practices.

In Zoroastrianism

Daena (din in modern Persian) is the eternal Law, whose order was revealed to humanity through the Mathra- Spenta ("Holy Words"). Daena has been used to mean religion, faith, law, even as a translation for the Hindu and Buddhist term Dharma, often interpreted as "duty" or social order, right conduct, or virtue. The metaphor of the 'path' of Daena is represented in Zoroastrianism by the muslin undershirt Sudra, the 'Good/Holy Path', and the 72- thread Kushti girdle, the "Pathfinder".

In Sikhism

For Sikhs, the word “Dharma” means the “path of righteousness”. What is the “righteous path”? That is the question that the Sikh scriptures attempt to answer. The main holy scriptures of the Sikhs is called the Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS.) It is considered to be more than a holy book of the Sikhs. The Sikhs treat this Granth (holy book) as a living Guru. The holy text spans 1430 pages and contains the actual words spoken by the Sikh Gurus and various other Saints from other religions including Hinduism and Islam. Sikh Dharma is a distinct religion revealed through the teachings of ten Gurus who are accepted by the followers as if they were spiritually the same. The Gurus are considered “the divine light” and they conveyed Gurbani (the word of God) in the form of the Guru Granth Sahib to the world. In this faith, God is described as both Nirgun (transcendent) and Sargun (immanent). Further, God pervades in His creation and is omnipresent, but cannot be incarnate. The principal Sikh belief lays stress on one’s actions and deeds rather than people’s religious labels, rituals or outward appearance or signs.

In Jainism

Dharma is natural. Jain Acharya Samantabhadra writes: “Vatthu sahavo dhammo” the dharma is the nature of an object. It is the nature of the soul to be free, thus for the soul, the dharma is paralaukika, beyond worldly. However the nature of the body is to seek self-preservation and be engaged in pleasures.

Thus there are two dharmas.

The two Dharmas

Acharya Haribhadra (approx. 6-7th cent.) discusses dharma in Dharma-Bindu. he writes (Translation by Y. Malaiya):

Because of the difference in practice, dharma is of two kinds, for the householders and for the monks.

Of the householder’s dharma, there are two kinds, “ordinary” and “special”

The ordinary dharma of the householder should be carried out according to tradition, such that it is not objectionable, according to one’s abilities such as wealth, in accordance with nyaya (everyone treated fairly and according to laws).

Somadeva suri (10th c.) terms the “ordinary” and “special” dharmas laukika (“worldly”) and pralaukika (“extra- worldly”) respectively:

A householder follows both laukika and the paralaukika dharmas at the same time.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Dharma is righteousness; it is the law of inner growth and the basis of man’s actions. It is in harmony with a man’s spiritual evolution. Therefore by following dharma one attains success in all actions. By negating dharma one brings confusion into one’s life and retards the clock of progress. Dharma is not a sort of duty imposed from outside, but a sense of righteousness, integrity, and honour with which one is born as a result of past actions. So every man has his own dharma, in consequence of which he reacts in his own unique way to the outside world. His education and environment give to this basic life-form only an outer shape. By fulfilling his dharma a man marches along the path of progress until he attains the supreme dharma of all beings, namely, the realization of Truth.

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

In the Rigveda, the word appears as an n- stem, dhrman- , with a range of meanings encompassing “something established or firm” (in the literal sense of prods or poles), figuratively “sustainer, supporter” (of deities), and semantically similar to the Greek ethos (“fixed decree, statute, law”). In Classical Sanskrit, the noun becomes thematic, dharma- .

It is a derivation from Proto-Indo-Iranian root *dhar- (“to fasten, to support, to hold”), in turn reflecting Proto- Indo- European root *dher- (“to hold”), which is in Sanskrit is reflected as class- 1 root √dhr. Etymologically it is related to Avestan √dar- (“to hold”), Old Persian √dar- (“to hold, have”), Latin frēnum (“rein, horse tack”), Lithuanian derėti (“to be suited, fit”) and OCS drъžati (“to hold, possess”). Classical Sanskrit word dharmas would formally match with Latin o-stem firmus < *PIE *dher- mo-s “holding”, were it not for its historical development from earlier Rigvedic n- stem.

From the Atharvaveda and in Classical Sanskrit, the stem is thematic, dhárma- (Devanāgarī: धर्म), and in Pāli, it takes the form dhamma. It is also often rendered dharam in contemporary Indian languages and dialects. It is used in most or all philosophies and religions of Indian origin—sometimes summarized under the umbrella term of Dharmic faiths—including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. It is difficult to provide a single concise definition for dharma, as the word has a long and varied history and straddles a complex set of meanings and interpretations.

Related words

Artha

Kama

Moksha

Purushartha, the four goals of human life

Rama

Rita

Opposite: Adharma

Sanskrit

Dharma — धर्म

dharma - धर्म

Dharma Sastra

Variant spellings

dharma sastra

dharma shastra

dharma-śāstra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Dharma-śāstra — ... Law Book

1. The texts codifying customary law.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Dharmashastra. The Indian literary genre of Dharmashastra (authoritative scripture prescribing the rules of right conduct) began around the fourth century B.C.E. It included the subgenre of Dharmasutras, or aphoristic works about DHARMA. Traditionally, the LAWS OF MANU (Manusmṛiti or Manavadharmashastra) is considered the first and most authoritative text, written by the legendary MANU. Dharmashastra literature prescribes the laws, norms, rules, and regulations of life for both the individual and the community. It covers social norms, ethics, and moral tenets but also includes direction on the proper performance of rituals and ceremonies. It is usually quite specific concerning diet, domestic law, the proper conduct of kings, and, most important, the proper conduct of each caste. Major Dharmashastras were written by Apastamba, Gautama, Baudhayana, and Vasishtha, among others.

Wikipedia

Dharmaśāstra... is a genre of Sanskrit texts and refers to the śāstra, or Indic branch of learning, pertaining to Hindu dharma, religious and legal duty. The voluminous textual corpus of Dharmaśāstra is primarily a product of the Brahmanical tradition in India and represents the elaborate scholastic system of an expert tradition.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Because of its sophisticated jurisprudence, Dharmaśāstra was taken by early British colonial administrators to be the law of the land for Hindus in India. Ever since, Dharmaśāstra has been linked with Hindu law, despite the fact that its contents deal as much or more with religious life as with law. In fact, a separation of religion and law within Dharmaśāstra is artificial and has been repeatedly questioned. Others have, however, argued for a distinction of religious and secular law within Dharmaśāstra. Dharmaśāstra is important within the Hindu tradition—first, as a source of religious law describing the life of an ideal householder and, second, as symbol of the summation of Hindu knowledge about religion, law, ethics, etc.

Pandurang Vaman Kane, a great Sanskritist ..., continued the earlier tradition of scholarship. His monumental work entitled the “History of the Dharmasastra”, published in five volumes in the 20th century, is an encyclopedia of ancient social laws and customs.

All Dharmaśāstras derive its authority with reference to the Vedas, though few, if any, of the contents of most Dharmaśāstra texts can be directly linked with extant Vedic texts. Traditionally, Dharmaśāstra has, since the time of the Yājñvalkyasmṛiti, been divided into three major topics: 1) ācāra, rules pertaining to daily rituals, life-cycle rites, and other duties of four castes or varṇas, 2) vyavahāra, rules pertaining to the procedures for resolving doubts about dharma and rules of substantive law categorized according the standard eighteen titles of Hindu law, and 3) prāyaścitta, rules about expiations and penances for violations of the rules of dharma.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

When examining a Dharma Sastra (code belonging to ritual commandments, injunctions and prohibitions) one has to look for the vidhi or rules to be unquestionably followed. As with the soldier on the battlefield - 'their's not to question why, their's but to do or die,' - it is final. But the obligatory nature of the Sastra changes in the Uttara (later) Mimamsa (critique) where one can discuss and question with the guru. Arthavada (discussion of implications) becomes not only permissible, but something encouraged by the guru.

Related words

Smriti

Sanskrit

Dharma-śāstra — धर्मशास्त्र

dharma-śāstra - धर्मशास्त्र

Dhyana

Variant spellings

dhyana

dhyāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Dhyāna — ... meditation, (total) concentration.

1. The mind flowing in an unbroken current toward a particular object.
2. The seventh limb of Patanjali's aṣṭāṅga-yoga.
3. One of the six virtues (pāramitā) in Buddhism.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

dhyāna -

meditation, thought, reflection, (esp.) profound and abstract religious meditation;
mental representation of the personal attributes of a deity;
insensibility, dulness;

N. of the 11th day of the light half in Brahma's month

Wikipedia

Dhyāna in Sanskrit (Devanagari: ध्यान) or jhāna (ज्ञान) in Pāli can refer to either meditation or meditative states. Equivalent terms are “Chán” in modern Chinese, “Zen” in Japanese, “Seon” in Korean, “Thien” in Vietnamese, and “Samten” in Tibetan. As a meditative state, dhyāna is characterized by profound stillness and concentration.... There has been little scientific study of the states so far.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Commentary by Nataraja:

dhyana - establishing bipolar contemplation with the higher self.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The term dhyana (meditation) is used by Jains, Buddhists, and Hindus, with somewhat different technical meanings.

The Jains may very well have been the first to practice meditation. Their tradition does not preserve a great deal of information about the early practice; there is no mention of PRANAYAMA or breath control, but dharana (focus), as known to the PATANJALI Yoga tradition, was apparently included.

Jain tradition has four types of dhyana: artadhyana (focus on things unpleasant or sorrowful), raudradhyana (focus on cruel and perverse things), dharmyadhyana (virtuous concentration), and shukladhyana (pure concentration). Most literature on the SIDDHA (perfected beings) and TIRTHANKARAS (most exalted personages) refers to the shukladhyana state, which involves intense concentration.

In the Hindu tradition, the term dhyana first appears in the Upanishads, in a handful of places, used as a rather generic term. By the time of the epics (c. seventh century B.C.E. to third century C.E.), dhyana was a well-established practice. Most later Hindu YOGA traditions derive from raja yoga or Patanjali Yoga, where dhyana is a refined meditative practice that is taken up after one has mastered pranayama, or breath control, and dharana, “mental focus.” It is a deeper concentration of the mind, eventually leading to the SAMADHI state, which involves highly concentrated focus on the highest reality (or realities).

In other yogic traditions, those practicing dhyana focus on a MANTRA (recited word or phrase); a YANTRA, or sacred diagram; or an ISHTA DEVATA, or chosen divinity.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Sixth Lesson [Gheranda Samhita] is on Dhyana or Contemplation. It applies to the Sphere of Ether, the Paradise, ruled by the Guru. The first verse is: “(1) Dhyana (contemplation) is of three kinds: gross, subtle and luminous. When a particular figure, such as one’s Guru or Deity, is contemplated, it is Sthula (gross) contemplation. When Brahma or Prakriti (Mater-Materia) is contemplated as a mass of light, it is called Jyotis (luminous) contemplation. When Brahma as a Bindu (symbolic point) and Kundali Power are contemplated, it is Sukshma (subtle) contemplation.” — The very practical hints for meditation are well worth quoting, giving ample variety of choice for people focussed on any particular plane, and providing a richness of form and a beauty which appeals to the emotional-imaginative life, combined with a methodical rational construction.

Wikipedia

According to the Hindu Yoga Sutra, written by Patanjali, dhyana is one of the eight methods of Yoga, (the other seven steps are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, and Samādhi).

In the Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali, the stage of meditation preceding dhyāna is called dharana. In Dhyana, the meditator is not conscious of the act of meditation (i.e. is not aware that s/he is meditating) but is only aware that s/he exists (consciousness of being), and aware of the object of meditation. Dhyana is distinct from Dharana in that the meditator becomes one with the object of meditation. He/she is then able to maintain this oneness for 144 inhalations and exhalations.

Dhyana, practiced together with Dharana and Samādhi constitutes the Samyama.

The Dhyana Yoga system is specifically described by Sri Krishna in chapter 6 of the famous Bhagavad Gita, wherein He explains the many different Yoga systems to His friend and disciple, Arjuna. In fact Lord Shankar described 108 different ways to do Dhyana to Mata Parvati.

In Hinduism, dhyāna is considered to be an instrument to gain self knowledge, separating māyā from reality to help attain the ultimate goal of mokṣa. Depictions of Hindu yogis performing dhyāna are found in ancient texts and in statues and frescoes of ancient Indian temples.

The Bhagavad Gītā, thought to have been written some time between 400 and 100 BC, talks of four branches of yoga:

Karma Yoga: The yoga of action in the world

Jñāna yoga: The yoga of Wisdom and intellectual endeavor

Bhakti Yoga: The yoga of devotion to God

Dhyāna Yoga: The yoga of meditation

Dhyāna in Rāja Yoga is also found in Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras. Practiced together with dhāraṇā and samādhi it constitutes the samyama.

For example, in the Jangama Dhyāna technique, the meditator concentrates the mind and sight between the eyebrows. According to Patañjali, this is one method of achieving the initial concentration (dhāraṇā: Yoga Sutras, III: 1) necessary for the mind to become introverted in meditation (dhyāna: Yoga Sutras, III: 2). In deeper practice of the technique, the mind concentrated between the eyebrows begins to automatically lose all location and focus on the watching itself. Eventually, the meditator experiences only the consciousness of existence and achieves self realization. Swami Vivekananda describes the process in the following way:

When the mind has been trained to remain fixed on a certain internal or external location, there comes to it the power of flowing in an unbroken current, as it were, towards that point. This state is called dhyana. When one has so intensified the power of dhyana as to be able to reject the external part of perception and remain meditating only on the internal part, the meaning, that state is called Samadhi.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

STUDENT: Does dhyāna mean “meditation” or “contemplation”?

TEACHER: Neither of these terms are apt to bring out the proper meaning of the Sanskrit term dhyāna. It is actually a state in which the tranquillity of consciousness is not disturbed by any specific modulation.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Raja Yoga

The mind tries to think of one object, to hold itself to one particular spot, as the top of the head, the heart, etc., and if the mind succeeds in receiving the sensations only through that part of the body, and through no other part, that would be Dharana, and when the mind succeeds in keeping itself in that state for some time it is called Dhyana (meditation).

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: What is dhyana?

M.: Dhyana is holding on to a single thought and putting off all other thoughts.

D.: What is to be meditated upon?

M.: Anything that you prefer.

D.: Siva, Vishnu, and Gayatri are said to be equally efficacious. Which should I meditate upon?

M.: Any one you like best. They are all equal in their effect. But you should stick to one.

D.: How to meditate?

M.: Concentrate on that one whom you like best. If a single thought prevails, all other thoughts are put off and finally eradicated.

So long as diversity prevails there are bad thoughts. When the object of love prevails only good thoughts hold the field. Therefore hold on to one thought only. Dhyana is the chief practice.

A little later Sri Bhagavan continued:

Dhyana means fight. As soon as you begin meditation other thoughts will crowd together, gather force and try to sink the single thought to which you try to hold. The good thought must gradually gain strength by repeated practice. After it has grown strong the other thoughts will be put to flight.

This is the battle royal always taking place in meditation.

One wants to rid oneself of misery. It requires peace of mind, which means absence of perturbation owing to all kinds of thoughts.

Peace of mind is brought about by dhyana alone.

D.: What is the need then for pranayama?

M.: Pranayama is meant for one who cannot directly control the thoughts. It serves as a brake to a car. But one should not stop with it, as I said before, but must proceed to pratyahara, dharana and dhyana. After the fruition of dhyana, the mind will come under control even in the absence of pranayama.

The asanas (postures) help pranayama, which helps dhyana in its turn, and peace of mind results. Here is the purpose of hatha yoga.

Later Sri Bhagavan continued:

When dhyana is well established it cannot be given up. It will go on automatically even when you are engaged in work, play or enjoyment. It will persist in sleep too. Dhyana must become so deep-rooted that it will be natural to one.

D.: What rite or action is necessary for the development of dhyana?

M.: Dhyana is itself the action, the rite and the effort. It is the most intense and potent of all. No other effort is necessary.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Meditation (Dhyana) is the intermittent resting of the mental state on Brahman, the One without a second.

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

[Intermittent—Because of deficiency in concentration. This shows the difference between Dhyana and Samadhi.]

See: Upasana and dhyana

Related words

Samadhi

Upasana

Sanskrit

Dhyāna — ध्यान

dhyāna - ध्यान

Dukha

Variant spellings

dukha

duḥkha

duhkha

dukham

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Duḥkha — ... pain; suffering; sorrow; grief; unhappiness; that which is unsatisfactory (because it is impermanent)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

duḥkha -

(according to grammarians properly written duṣ-kha and said to be from dus and kha [cf. su-kha'] ; but more probably a Prākṛitized form for duḥ-stha q.v.) uneasy, uncomfortable, unpleasant, difficult;

uneasiness, pain, sorrow, trouble, difficulty;

to be sad or uneasy;

to cause or feel pain

Ramakrishna tradition

[Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita](#)

Pain = dukham. Dukham is pain, suffering, misery, sorrow, grief, unhappiness, stress, or distress—also that which is unsatisfactory or produces dukha.

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Duhkha — from dur = “bad” + kha = “state”

Related words

Manomaya kosha

Opposite: Sukha

Sanskrit

Duḥkha — दुःख

duḥkha - दुःख

Dvaita

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Dvaita — ... dual; duality; dualism.

I. The name given to Madhvacarya’s system of philosophy. It is a school of Vedānta which teaches that God, the individual souls, and the world of matter are all eternally separate and real.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

dvaita -

duality, duplicity, dualism

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Dvaita (from dvi, two) is usually translated as “dualist.” In theological terms it refers to the notion that God is completely separate and different from the human soul.

Abrahamic traditions in their normative form— Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—would be seen as dvaita or dualistic because they believe that the human soul is a separate entity and reality from God. Normative Hinduism tends toward forms of ADVAITA,

non-dualism, the opposite of dvaita. But there are some Indian systems that are truly dvaita in nature. One form of VEDANTA, championed by MADHVA, a 12th-century sage, is authentically dvaita. Also, the South Indian tradition of Shaiva Siddhanta can be classified as dvaita.

Wikipedia

Dvaita ... (also known as Bheda-vâda, Tattva-vâda and Bimba-pratibimba-vâda) is a school of Vedanta founded by Shri Madhvacharya. Dvaita stresses a strict distinction between God (Brahman) and individual souls (jivas). According to Madhvacharya, souls are not 'created' by God but do, nonetheless, depend on Him for their existence.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Like Ramanuja, Madhvacharya espoused a Vaishnava theology that understands God to be endowed with attributes and a personal God. By Brahman, he referred to Vishnu, as per his statement "brahmashabdashcha vishhnaveva" that Brahman can only refer to Vishnu. Madhva states that Vishnu is not just any other deity, but rather the singularly all-important Supreme One. Vishnu is always the primary object of worship, with all others regarded as subordinate to Him. The deities and other sentient beings are graded among themselves, with Vayu, the god of life, being the highest, and Vishnu eternally above them.

Dvaita or (Indian) Dualistic philosophy is not to be confused with the Western "Dualism" that posits two 'independent' principles. Although Madhva's Dualism acknowledges two principles, it holds one of them (the sentient) rigorously and eternally dependent on the other (Vishnu/God).

Five fundamental, eternal and real differences exist in his system.

Between the individual soul (or jîva) and God (Îshvara or Vishnu).

Between matter (inanimate, insentient) and God.

Among individual souls (jîvas)

Between matter and jîva.

Among various types of matter.

These five differences are said to make up the universe. The universe is aptly called "prapancha" for this reason.

Madhva differed significantly from traditional Hindu beliefs, owing to his concept of eternal damnation. For example, he divides souls into three classes. One class of souls, which qualify for liberation (Mukti-yogyas), another subject to eternal rebirth or eternal transmigration (Nitya-samsarins) and a third class that is eventually condemned to eternal hell or andhatamas (Tamo-yogyas). No other Hindu philosopher or school of Hinduism holds such beliefs. In contrast, most Hindus believe in universal salvation; that all souls will eventually obtain moksha, even if after millions of rebirths.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

An educated visitor asked Bhagavan about dvaita and advaita.

M.: Identification with the body is dvaita. Non-identification is advaita.

Related words

Advaita Vedanta
Vedanta
Visishta-Advaita

Sanskrit

Dvaita — द्वैत
dvaita - द्वौत

Ekagrata

Variant spellings

ekagrata
ekāgrata

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Ekāgrata — ... one-pointed; close attention

1. The one-pointed mind is that which is devoted to a single object. It is a mind filled with purity, luminosity (sattva).
2. According to Buddhism, one of the five elements which comprise meditation.
3. According to the Yoga school, it is a stage of the mind (citta) in which one concentrates steadily on an object for a long time.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

ekāgratā -
intentness in the pursuit of one object, close and undisturbed attention

Wikipedia

Ekāgratā ... is translated as either “one-pointedness” or “unification”.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Ekagrata: One-pointed attention and concern, particularly with regard to the attainment of the final goal of life.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words

B.: Breath-control is also a help. It is one of the various methods that are intended to help us attain ekagrata or onepointedness of mind. Breath-control can also help to control the wandering mind and attain this one-pointedness and therefore it can be used. But one should not stop there. After obtaining control of the mind through breath-control, one should not rest content with any experiences which may accrue therefrom but should harness the controlled mind to the question, 'Who am I?' till the mind merges in the Self.

Sanskrit

Ekāgrata — एकाग्र

ekāgrata - एकाग्रत

Five elements

See: Bhutas; Mahabhutas

G

Ganesha

Variant spellings

Ganesha
gaṇeśa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Gaṇeśa — .. elephant-headed son of Siva and Pārvatī; remover of obstacles; lord of the hosts; lord of wisdom; lord of beginnings

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

gaṇeśa -

N. of the god of wisdom and of obstacles (son of Śiva and Pārvatī, or according to one legend of Pārvatī alone; though Gaṇeśa causes obstacles he also removes them; hence he is invoked at the commencement of all undertakings and at the opening of all compositions with the words namo gaṇeśāya vighneśvarāya; he is represented as a short fat man with a protuberant belly, frequently riding on a rat or attended by one, and to denote his sagacity has the head of an elephant, which however has only one tusk; the appellation Gaṇeśa, with other similar compounds, alludes to his office as chief of the various classes of subordinate gods, who are regarded as Śiva's attendants; ... he is said to have written down the MBh. as dictated by Vyāsa MBh.; N. of Śiva MBh.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ganesha, lord of beginnings and remover of obstacles, is probably the most worshipped divinity of the Hindu pantheon. With the head of an elephant and a human body that shows a protruding belly—the sign of Ganesha's fondness for sweets—the god is a central figure in the cult of SHIVA, as the elder son of Shiva and PARVATI. He is also worshipped as a deity on his own, as is shown in Ganesha PURANA. Nearly every Indian PUJA or worship service commences with verses to and adoration of Ganesha. The figure of the sitting Ganesha and his incongruous vehicle, the rat, is found near the entranceway or one of the entranceways of many, many Hindu temples.

As is usual in Hindu mythology and lore, there are many and various stories about the events of Ganesha's life. The most common story of his origin is that he was made by Parvati, who rubbed off material from her skin and formed it into a shape of a person. She set this "child" Ganesha to guard her shower or inner chamber. Shiva, unaware of this, found Ganesha at his post and

thinking that he was a lover or intruder he cut off the child's head. Scolded by an angry Parvati, Shiva hastily rushed off to find a new head for the child and returned with the head of an elephant.

In one popular story Parvati declares a race around the universe between the ponderous Ganesha and his younger brother, Skanda or KARTTIKEYA. The younger boy takes off on his swift peacock vehicle swift as lightning, leaving the slow Ganesha with his pitiful rat vehicle far behind. Thinking a moment, Ganesha realizes that his mother and father themselves constitute the entire universe. He simply walks around his mother and father and wins the race. Ganesha is also said to have written down the MAHABHARATA epic as quickly as its reciter VYASA was able to tell it. For this Ganesha broke off one of his tusks to use as a stylus. In South India Ganesha is known as a bachelor, but in other parts of India he is seen as married.

Iconographically Ganesha appears in many poses and forms, but he is most often sitting, accompanied by the rat, with one tusk broken. Most often he is shown with two arms, but he is also depicted with several pairs. In his hands are sweets, his tusk, an axe, a noose, or an elephant goad.

After his popularity had been well established in the Brahminical tradition, Ganesha appeared in Jain tradition as well, in which he was seen as a remover of obstacles. Outside India Ganesha is found in Buddhist contexts as a TANTRIC deity, with sometimes unbenign characteristics. He is found in Southeast Asian art, in Tibet, in China, and even in Japan. The cult of Ganesha is probably quite old, originating in the worship of the elephant, but its actual origin is difficult to determine.

The cult is visible in extant sources dating from the fourth century C.E. He is not mentioned at all in earlier texts such as the Mahabharata or the RAMAYANA, in which Shiva and VISHNU and their emerging cults are developing.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Deity that watches over the beginning of the Spiritual Path in Hindu tradition is the Elephant-headed God Ganapati. His Jayanthi or "victory-day of birth", symbolizing the spiritual birth, is celebrated in the period of Capricorn. The word "Ganapati" means "Lord of hosts" or "Lord of quantities". These quantities form the parallel of the "Sands of time" in the Sand-clock, which is a symbol of Saturn. Pan is also Lord of Quantities. While unity or oneness belongs to the Divine, multiplicity pertains to the Titanic world. Titanic multiplicity and Divine oneness can only meet in an Intelligence or Power who is at one and the same time Titan and God. We have seen that that is Saturn.

Ganapati or Ganesa, "the God of Ganas", is like Saturn a Sower. One Ganapati scripture has a verse: "Innumerable Universes were born from his belly, of this there is no doubt." Ganapati is worshipped at the beginning of every religious rite, and at the beginning of every important enterprise, by the devout Hindu. For he watches over the beginning of the Path. The belief is, that no obstacles can be overcome, and no progress made, on the Spiritual Path, without the guidance, help and blessings of this God, who stands ever at the cross-roads of human choice. He is the Lord of Karmic causes-and-effects, hence he is the "Bringer and Remover of Obstacles". Capricorn, the stage he represents, is the "crucial" stage on the Path. The time comes when the Titanic multiple fragments, numerous as the particles of sand or the dust of the Earth, should be reunited to Divine Union. The time comes when a soul should choose the Return Path to GOD, that is, Reality. Hercules, at the beginning of his heroic career, had to make the choice at the Cross-roads. That choice lies before one and all. The opportunity traditionally suited for it comes in the time when the Cycles meet, marked by the winter solstice. Ganapati is called "the Lord of the Two Paths" which are the Pitri-yana or "Path of the Ancestors", and the Deva-yana or "Path of the Gods". The "Ancestors" are the symbols of the forces of Karma, as we shall see later. The Two Paths begin from the winter solstice, leading in opposite directions. In some contexts they are associated with both the winter and the summer solstices. When we compare the situations in the heavens of the first points of Capricorn and Cancer,

with which the two solstices are connected, the one, the Path of Heaven, is high above, from the point of view of a beholder on earth, while the other, the Path of Hell, is deep underneath, in the opposite direction.

Ganapati shares some of his Saturnian characteristics with Siva, his Father, and some with Yama, the God of Death. All three Gods are Initiators into a higher, spiritual, mode of life.

Occasionally Ganapati is represented with five heads: one in each of the four directions and one crowning them. These symbolize, like the four angles of a pyramid, with the fifth at the top, the Four Elements Earth, Water, Fire and Air, sprung from the Fifth, the Quintessence, Ether. Images of Ganapati are found, usually in small shrines, at cross-roads and in the doorways of countless houses.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. An intelligent man's guide to the Hindu religion

GANAPATI

Ganapati comes first. The first obeisance is to him. Everything auspicious should begin with a consecration to Ganapati or Ganesha is the Lord of the Hosts (Ganas). The two ganas are the shining ones (devas) and the dead souls, ancestors, or pitris. The devas belong to the ascending path and the pitris to the descending path. The ascending path leads to the world of the intelligibles and the descending path binds us to actualities with the strings of action. Being the lord of both, Ganesha can offer us obstacles as well as release.

Ganesha in Sanskrit is etymologically related to Janus. Janus is the same as 'Yana' which means path. The Roman God Janus was symbolically representing initiation into a new mode of life. Ganapati as a Guru is the guiding principle at the crossroads of life. To stand at the crossroads not knowing the path to realization is not an uncommon experience of those who seek wisdom. Those who are wise take a hint from the finger post and proceed in the right direction. The finger post stands for the silent Guru. The Guru is truly the light that shows us the way. All those who deny the light stumble in darkness. Accepting the Guru is the same as accepting Ganapati as the Vigneshvara and denying the Guru is like getting caught in the noose of obstacles.

Ganapati as a Connecting Link

India's spiritual glory was at its climax even before the growth of Aryan society in India. The pre-Aryan civilization was essentially contemplative, but negative. Siva was the central figure in their spiritual life. He was worshipped as the supreme Guru. The departed ones were considered to be in his care. The pre-Aryan civilization at its best was one of renunciation. Tyaga (relinquishment) was its hallmark. But in its extremity it amounted to a total denial of life. This negation of possible enjoyment was not appreciated by the Aryans. In the Bhagavad Gita, when Arjuna shows his preparedness to beg in the street rather than wage war, Krishna refers to his attitude of negativism as anaryajushtam--an attitude that displeases the Aryans.

The Aryan concept of the good life is to have a happy life here and now, as well as in the hereafter, enjoying all the good things of the world. For the Aryan it was a covetable virtue to possess beautiful and chaste wives, many virtuous sons, thousands of good cows, plenty of food and reputation. The Aryan gods can smile. They even worshipped the light and fire. Yajna (sacrifice) for the shining ones was dear to them.

In the concept of Ganapati the pre-Aryan contemplative and negative traditions of India merge into the Aryan positivism. The South and North get linked in his worship. In the havana or fire sacrifice of Ganapati, the tila and coconut of South India find a place in the agnihotra which was foreign to their tradition.

According to tradition, the Mahabharata, the great epic of India written by Vyasa, the greatest reevaluator of Indian spirituality, was dictated by him to Ganapati, and Ganapati wrote it with his broken tusk, using it as a pen. This story throws light on the entire spiritual background of India. Ganapati is the son of Siva. Siva as we know was the prehistoric God-Guru of India. As a literary device Vyasa introduces the spiritual values of the happy Vedic life to the austere contemplatives who had no regard for the simple joys of life. The Bhagavad Gita, the finalized wisdom textbook, itself comes in the middle of the Mahabharata epic. From this it is evident that Ganapati's real role in Indian spiritual life is to effect a unitive integration of the diverse trends in religious understanding and practices in spite of their apparent differences.

Vyasa was the great preserver of traditions. He compiled and arranged the Vedas in their present comprehensive form. The highly profound teachings of the Upanishads were strung together by him in the Vedanta Sutras. He composed the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita. Thus he happened to be the great custodian of India's highest spiritual tradition. Ganesha sat at his feet and listened to his finalized wisdom teaching. Symbolically, Vyasa presents Ganapati as the wisdom teacher forever for the preservation of the tradition.

The Lotus-Carved Seat

Ganapati is seated on a pedestal resembling the fully opened petals of a lotus flower. The lotus is a sign of wisdom born of devotion or contemplative mysticism. To sit is to be established. To sit on a lotus seat is to be a Guru to proclaim the tradition. This symbol refers to Ganapati's Guruhood.

The Crown on the Head

To have a crown or a halo is the same as being anointed, with chrism or sanctified oil. The Christos or Christhood of Jesus refers to the same anointing. The "Anointed One" is the divinely blessed or commissioned teacher of the supreme wisdom. As a crowned king has full authority over the region he rules, so Ganapati has absolute authority over both avidya (nescience) and vidya (knowledge).

Big Ears

Being elephant-headed, Ganapati has very wide and long ears. Ears are for hearing. Wisdom never comes unsought. True wisdom is well-established in such a knowledge which is beyond the dualities of subjective-objective division. For all those who have not attained it there is the absolute necessity to sit at the feet of a Guru. Wisdom literature in India of the highest order is called shruti, which literally means that which is heard. In ancient days there were no written books to read. The tradition of India was to listen to a Guru. Listening, in Sanskrit is shravana. One who listened to many great Gurus was known as a bahu-shruta.

Listening to a Guru and learning the shruti is an essential part of brahmacharya the "treading of the path of the Absolute". Thus in any true education worth that name, the disciple has to establish a reciprocal relationship with the Guru. Both the Guru and shishya should have only one common interest. Disadoption on the part of the disciple or the Guru is the greatest tragedy in the seeker's life. In Europe unfortunately this tragedy was repeated several times. The breaking away of Aristotle from Plato was a colossal blow to the Socratic tradition. On the other hand in India even a Guru of our own time can trace back the parampara (hierarchical succession) to Adi-Narayana bringing in Brahma, Vasishtha, Sakti, Parashara, Vyasa, Suka, Gaudapada, Govinda, Sankara, Padmapada, Hastamalaka and his own Guru, all in the vertical line of succession or parampara. To be initiated into the secret of all secrets contained in the shrutis it is absolutely necessary to sit at the feet of a wisdom teacher and listen to him with one-pointed attention. The big ears of Ganapati are a symbol of shraddha, faithful attentive listening to the wisdom teaching.

Small Eyes

Eyes are to see. There are two poles. The outer organ is to contact the various and variegated objects; the inner pole brings the orientation of unitive vision. The wide opened eyes of the extrovert sees the big bewildering world around him in which he is only an insignificant individual caught in the competitive world of technology, and mechanism. To have a comprehensive vision of the cosmos with its starry heavens as a complementary counterpart of the awareness within introspection is necessary. We should turn our eyes inwards and look into our own mind to discover our real self. We live, as it were, in two worlds, the cosmological world of objective phenomena and the subjective world of values within our own being. To link these two worlds in one's own knowledge and to be non-dualistic, we have to be contemplative. Contemplative introspection is symbolically expressed by the small half-closed eyes of Ganapati.

Introspective contemplation in Sanskrit is known as manana. Svadhyaya or study of the scripture is to be followed by critical contemplation. It is not mainly for adoration that we stand before the altar of Ganapati. We should be able to read the silent language of contemplation in his symbolic features. His eyes require us to meditate and ponder on the values of life and the nature of our self.

The Long Proboscis

On hearing some intriguing news we say we smell danger. On hearing something unpleasant we screw up our nose, as if it had sensed some foul smell. A dog recognizes its master by smell. Even a pig will not care to eat something which does not give it a favorable smell. In all these instances we find the nose is associated with the function of discriminating between the pleasant and the unpleasant, the favorable and the unfavorable. This discriminative faculty at its best enables us to recognize the perennial from the falsehood. In Sankara's Vivekacudamani the first qualification of the wisdom seeker is viveka or discrimination, followed by vairagya (absolute detachment). Keeping oneself detached is a discipline. It refers to the practical aspect of spiritual life. The symbolism of the ear teaches us to listen to the wisdom teaching. The symbolism of the eye refers to its critical consideration and sympathetic appreciation. The symbolism of the nose consequently teaches us to apply that wisdom in our everyday life. In Sanskrit it is named nididhyasana.

The Broken Tusk

Ganapati is shown with a broken tusk. According to tradition this deformity was caused by Parashurama who was an advocate of pure brahmanism. Ganapati as the son of Siva was naturally his opponent. But the latter's acceptance of brahmanical values amounted to his tusk being broken. The tusk, as we know, shows his individuality. Even those who become adepts of the highest wisdom develop a spiritual ego. The story of Vishvamitra illustrates such an instance. This spiritual ego is much worse than a worldly ego. It should be broken. Narayana Guru in his Atmopadesha Satakam says:

Skin and bone and excreta,
With all those traits of inner life
Which suffering do portend;
These know, one ego wields;
The other, growing
Doth fullness attain;
From self-gratification to save
O! Grant the boon!

The pathetic humiliation of having the tusk broken is no shame to Ganapati. He requires that our egoistic horns also should be broken. That is why the hard shell of a coconut is broken before Ganapati.

The Pot-Belly

The potbelly is a sign of contentment. A beggar or a hungry man cannot settle down to peaceful meditation. Like Ganapati we should also be content. A maxim of the Chinese contemplative life is “Empty the mind and fill the belly”.

The Rice Ball and the Vedas

Ganapati has a rice ball in his left hand and the Vedas in the right. Some times instead of the Vedas a lotus or the broken tusk or a jnana-mudra (the gesture of wisdom-teaching) is shown. All these are symbols of wisdom. This is a delicate expression in the language of dialectics of yoga. With the ball of rice he wants to fill our belly and with the wisdom symbol he wants to nourish our soul. All good things of this world come under the category called preyas. The rice ball represents preyas. The Vedas, the lotus or the jnana-mudra represents shreyas which includes all spiritual values. A really wise man never gives up one for the other. He accepts both. Enjoying a good meal is not against understanding a book of wisdom like the Bhagavad Gita. Each has its respective place in our life. A woman can plait her hair and put on her best jewels without sacrificing her spiritual virtues. Most of the excesses in the name of spirituality like eating bitter leaves, or fasting to death, and all such mortifications of the body are unnecessary. This simple but profound lesson was known to all great Gurus. Jesus advised his disciples to give Caesar his dues and to give God what was God's.

The Hook with an Ax

In one of his raised upper hands, Ganapati holds a hook which has also the blade of an ax. A determined seeker has to restrain his thoughts, words and deeds from going astray through dissipating channels. According to the Gita a mind which gets bifurcated and is running in different directions seldom reaches truth. A contemplative has to bring his mind again and again back to one central issue. It is not an easy task. The mahout of the elephant controls the animal with a hook. Similarly, we should also have the hook of restraint to keep ourselves always on the path of the Absolute (brahmacharya). Like wild creepers which choke the free growth of a tree, irrational and sentimental ties prevent most of us from being free. It is with the ax of discrimination that we must chop them down.

The Noose

Ganapati has also a noose in another hand. A noose is a sign of bondage and an obstacle. Another name of Ganapati is Vigneshvara the Lord of Obstacles. One who can create an obstacle can also remove it. According to Saivite belief, to which context Ganapati also belongs, all beings are cows. Siva is the cowherd (Pashupati) and all beings are held bound by Him with a noose. He saves the stray cows from going into the wilderness by pulling the noose of destructive forces or of deliverance. Mind alone binds the mind. By knowing this we can diligently work out our deliverance.

The mouse with a little rice ball

A mouse for an elephant to ride on! Is it not ridiculous? But herein lies the beauty and dialectical subtlety of the contemplative artist of the past. In Indian religion humor is not tabooed, particularly in the South. Saint Thayamanyavar addresses Siva as the ‘Mad One’ Narayana Guru calls Subrahmanya the ‘Beggar's Son’. But beyond the humorous situation of an elephant riding on a mouse there is something which is akin to the inexpressible wonder in this dialectical picture which is referred to in the Keno Upanishad by the mere sound “Ah!” and in the Bhagavad Gita as the wonder with which one speaks of Brahman, the wonder with which one listens to Brahman.

Among the animals on dry land the elephant is the biggest and the mouse is one of the smallest. Both Ganapati and the mouse keep a ball of rice in their hands. All beings are thus linked together on the physical plane with food. The first impulse of life is the eating of food. As soon as the child is born it cries for food. It is the same with a puppy or a newly born calf. Soon after they are

born they suck from the mother's breast. The greatest wonder of the world is the provision in nature for every living being to get food and drink to suit its requirements.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad food is first equated to Brahman, the Absolute. Because the first joy of life is the joy of nourishment. Life itself is nothing but nourishment. Decay is death. The golden thread of food links all forms of life from the highest to the lowest. Psychologically viewed, the joy of taking food is as much spiritual or belonging to the Atman as the joy of meditation. It is in this joy Ganapati and the mouse get related.

The Universal is never seen but in the particular. The ideal never exists but in the actual. Even so the incomprehensible Paramatma is to be perceived in the Jiva. The allegory of the elephant riding on the mouse refers to the all-pervading Almighty God residing in the tiny heart of his devotee

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Gaṇeśa — from gaṇa = "multitude" and īśa = "lord"

Sanskrit

Gaṇeśa — गणेश

gaṇeśa - गणेश

Ganga

Variant spellings

Ganga

gaṅgā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Gaṅgā — ... the Ganges river; a Goddess; the "one who goes swiftly"

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

gaṅgā -

'swift-goer', the river Ganges (personified and considered as the eldest daughter of Himavat and Menā...; as the wife of Śāntanu and mother of Bhīshma MBh...; or as one of the wives of Dharma Padma...; there is also a Gaṅgā in the sky [Akāśa- or vyoma-g..., ... and one below the earth...; Bhagī-ratha is said to have conducted the heavenly Gaṅgā down to the earth

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ganga. In Hindu mythology, the goddess whose material form is the Ganges River. The Ganges is sacred because the river is considered to be a goddess who has the power to take away the sins of those who bathe (snana) in her. There are numerous legends to explain her origin. The best-known is the tale of King Bhagirath, who by his ascetic practice succeeds in bringing the Ganges down from heaven to earth. Bhagirath is the great-great-grandson of King Sagar, whose 60,000 sons had been burned to ash by the sage Kapila's magic power after they had erroneously accused Kapila of being a thief. Kapila later tells Anshuman, King Sagar's grandson and sole surviving descendant, that the only way to bring peace to the souls of Sagar's sons is to bring the Ganges down from heaven to earth. Anshuman strives unsuccessfully to do this, as does his son Dilip after him. Dilip's son Bhagirath takes their efforts to heart and retires to the Himalayas, where he performs asceticism until the gods finally agree to send the Ganges down to earth. Yet Bhagirath's efforts are not yet over. Next, he has to gain the favor of the god Shiva, so that Shiva will agree to take the shock of the falling river on his head. Otherwise, its force will destroy the earth. When all is finally in place, the Ganges falls to earth onto the head of Shiva. Bhagirath leads Ganga out of the mountains to the sea, where she touches his ancestors' ashes and they finally find peace. This myth highlights both the salvific touch of the Ganga and her intimate association with the last rites (antyeshti samskara) for the dead.

According to another story, the Ganges comes down to earth because of a curse pronounced during a family quarrel between Vishnu and his wives Ganga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati. When one day Ganga and Vishnu begin exchanging lustful glances in public, Saraswati gets angry and begins to beat Ganga. As Lakshmi tries to stop her, Saraswati let loose a string of curses: that Vishnu will be born as a stone (the shalagram), that Lakshmi will be born as a plant (the tulsi plant), and that Ganga will be born as a river and take the sins of the world on her. In the struggle, Saraswati is cursed to become a river. Vishnu sweetens Ganga's curse by telling her that she will be considered very holy on earth and have the power to remove people's sins. Vishnu also tells her that she will fall from heaven onto the head of the god Shiva and become his consort.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Ganges or Ganga is India's most sacred river. It is 1,557 miles long and sweeps a valley or basin 200 to 400 miles wide. Its scientific source is in glaciers on the southern slopes of the HIMALAYAS, some 10,300 feet above sea level, but its traditional source is the glacial site Gangotri. Its major flow begins where the Alaknand and Bhagirathi rivers meet at a site called Devprayag. It is joined by the YAMUNA River at ALLAHABAD (known traditionally as Prayag) in Uttar Pradesh and then flows eastward through Bihar, traversing the holy city of BENARES (Varanasi), the city of Patna, and Calcutta (Kolkata) before entering the Bay of Bengal.

Although the Ganges has long been the most sacred of Indian rivers, it is mentioned unambiguously only twice in the RIG VEDA, the oldest extant Indian text. Its prominent mention and sacred status are fully established only in the PURANAS, Indian texts of mythology. There the river is said to have descended from heaven, taken down to Earth by the prayers of the sage Bhagiratha to sanctify the ashes of the sons of his progenitor Sagara. The latter had dug out a huge hole looking for a lost horse, but the Ganges filled this vast expanse to form the ocean. Descending from Lord VISHNU's toe, the river might have inundated all the Earth,

had not SHIVA agreed to let it first flow through his topknot. Shiva has since that time been depicted with the Ganges flowing through his hair.

Ganga is considered a goddess, the eldest daughter of HIMAVAT (the Himalayas). Ganga's husband is Shantanu; their son BHISHMA plays an important role in the MAHABHARATA epic, as great uncle of both the warring factions. Ganga's water is always pure and purifying, and pilgrims take flasks and casks home for rituals and blessings. It is every Hindu's wish to have his or her ashes thrown into the Ganges after cremation. It is widely believed that such an act confers heaven or liberation on the dead person. Because of the sacredness of the Ganges and its importance to Hinduism India has made great efforts to try to clean up this very heavily polluted waterway. Activist movements have for decades agitated for cleaning up this valuable resource.

Encyclopedia of religion

Just as waters that give birth to the earth or nourish nascent life beneath its surface are often female, so also are waters flowing over the earth's surface. India is the preeminent land of sacred female watercourses; all of its rivers are goddesses, the first of them being Gangā Mātā (Mother Ganges).

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Power of Consciousness is often represented as a Kaliya. Serpent Power. In Yoga, Sakti is called Kundalini, the Serpent Power. Serpents are associated with the Goddess Kali, as also with Hekate and Hel, and it is not quite accidental that the Serpent King of the Krishna myth is called Kaliya. This Serpent lived in the river Yamuna, now called the Jumna. In Tantrik symbolism the Yamuna represents the Pingala or Sun-channel, and the river Ganga or Ganges represents the Ida or Moon-channel. These two "channels" are found, as we have seen before, at either side of the Sushumna, the central "channel" in the spine. In Yoga these two "channels" meet at the Ajna Chakra, the Centre of the Moon-Sphere. In geography the two rivers meet at the famous junction at Allahabad, where periodically "Melas" are held, at which vast numbers of pilgrims assemble to bathe at the sacred junction. Such a Mela is representative of a "gathering of fragments" on the Return Path, in one context in the Moon-Sphere, where originally the "fragments" came into existence, and in another context at the stage of Taurus and Aries, where on the Path of the Fall the fragmentation or dilaceration entered its period of culmination.

Sanskrit
Gaṅgā — गङ्गा
gaṅgā - गङ्गा

Grihasta

Variant spellings
grihasta
gr̥hasta
gārhashtya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Gr̥hasṭha — ... householder

1. The second stage in the Indian social order. (See āśrama.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

gārhasṭhya -

(sometimes wrongly spelt ...sṭha) (from gr̥ha-sṭha), fit for or incumbent on a householder MBh.; the order or estate of a householder, of the father or mother of a family

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Gr̥hasṭha (“householder”) In the dharma literature, which gives instruction on religious practice and duties, a gr̥hasṭha is a “householder.” According to the dharma literature, the gr̥hasṭha is the second of the four stages of life (ashramas) in the life of a man born into one of the three twice-born groups—brahmin, kshatriya, or vaishya—which have the highest religious and social status in Indian society. The householder stage is preceded by that of the brahmacharin or celibate student, and succeeded by the vanaprastha or forest-dweller, and the sanyasi or wandering ascetic. In practical terms, for most men the householder stage is the final stage of life, since most men do not choose to move beyond it. The householder stage begins with marriage, and leads to raising and supporting a family. This stage is an active and fruitful time of life, and the householder is indispensable to society since his labors and resources support those in the other three stages of life. This is also the only stage of life in which sexual intercourse is not explicitly forbidden, since the general fruitfulness of this stage of life is expressed through procreation. A householder is permitted to pursue three of the traditional aims of life (purushartha): wealth (artha), desire (kama), and religious duty (dharma). Given the depth and richness of the householder’s life, it is not surprising that many men have little inclination to move on to the two other stages.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: Everyone can be a devotee. Spiritual fare is common to all and never denied to anyone - be the person old or young, male or female.

D.: That is exactly what I am anxious to know. I am young and a grihini (housewife). There are duties of grihasṭha dharma (the household). Is devotion consistent with such a position?

M.: Certainly. What are you? You are not the body. You are Pure Consciousness. Grihasṭha dharma and the world are only phenomena appearing on that Pure Consciousness. It remains unaffected. What prevents you from being your own Self?

D.: Yes I am already aware of the line of teaching of Maharshi. It is the quest for the Self. But my doubt persists if such quest is compatible with grihasṭha life.

M.: The Self is always there. It is you. There is nothing but you. Nothing can be apart from you. The question of compatibility or otherwise does not arise.

See also:

in Ashrama: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Related words

Ashrama
Brahmacarya
Sannyasa
Vanaprastha

Sanskrit

Grhastha — गृहस्थ
grhastha - गृहस्थ

Gandha

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Gandha — ... smell (see tanmātra).

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

gandha -

smell, odour (nine kinds are enumerated, viz. iṣṭa, aniṣṭa, madhura, kaṭu, nirhārin, saṁhata, snigdha, rūkṣa, vizada MBh. xii, 6848;

a tenth kind is called amīa L.);

a fragrant substance, fragrance, scent, perfume (generally used in pl.);

sulphur;

pounded sandal-wood;

a sectarial mark on the forehead (called so in the south of India);

myrrh;

the mere smell of anything, small quantity, little;

connection, relationship;

a neighbour;

pride, arrogance;

Śiva MBh.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Gandha ... the subtle element (tanmātra) of odour.

Descriptions

See: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Gandha ... from gandh, to injure, hurt.

Related words

Prithivi

Tanmatra

Sanskrit

Gandha -- गन्ध

gandha - गन्ध

Gunas

Variant spellings

guna

guṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Guṇa — ... quality; attribute; characteristic; excellence; rope; constituent; subsidiary; mode

1. The three basic qualities of nature, which determine the inherent characteristics of all created things. They are sattva—purity, light, harmony; rajas—activity, passion; and tamas—dullness, inertia, and ignorance.

2. It is either composed of, or constituted of (depending on individual school's interpretations) the three aspects: sattva, which is buoyant, light, illuminating, knowledge, and happiness; rajas, which is stimulating, mobile, pain, and action; and tamas, which is heavy, enveloping, indifferent, and laziness.

3. According to Nyāya, it is that which has substance for its substratum, has no further qualities, and is not the cause of, or concerned with conjunction or disjunction. There are twenty-four qualities, some being material and others being mental: color (rūpa), taste (rasa), odor (gandha), touch (sparśa), sound (śabda), number (sañkhyā), measure (parimiti), mutual difference (pṛthaktva), connection (samyoga), separation (vibhāga), perception of long time (paratva), perception of short time (aparatva), heaviness (gurutva), fluidity (dravatva), viscosity (sneha), knowledge (buddhi), happiness (sukha), sorrow (duḥkha), will (icchā), hatred (dveṣa), effort (yatna), latent tendencies (samskāra, which is of three types: vega, sthiti-sthāpaka, and bhāvanā), righteousness (dharma), and unrighteousness (adharma).

4. According to Dvaita Vedānta, it is the first product of primordial Nature (prakṛti). It always resides in a substance. There are infinite number of qualities, mental as well as physical. Insentient entities have physical qualities while sentient beings have both physical and mental qualities.

5. According to Advaita Vedānta and Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, it is an attribute of prakṛti and is threefold. However, the two schools differ as to the ontological status of the guṇas.

6. According to Sāñkhya, guṇas, being the three constituents of prakṛti (composed on sattva, rajas, and tamas), are like a rope in that they bind the individual and they are subsidiary in that they provide enjoyment for the individuals and also serve to liberate them. They are the subtle substances or cosmic constituents which evolve into all the various categories of existence.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

guṇa -

a single thread or strand of a cord or twine ..., string or thread, rope;

a garland;

a bow-string;

(in geom.) a sinew;

the string of a musical instrument, chord ... with numerals ` fold, times ` (see catur-, tri-, daśa-, dvi-, pañca-);

a multiplier, co-efficient (in alg.);

subdivision, species, kind (e.g. gandhasya guṇāḥ, the different kinds of smell);

the 6 subdivisions of action for a king in foreign politics (viz. peace, war, march, halt, stratagem, and recourse to the protection of a mightier king) Mn.;

‘requisite’;

a secondary element, subordinate or unessential part of any action;

an auxiliary act;

a secondary dish (opposed to anna i.e. rice or the chief dish), side-dish;

the secondary or less immediate object of an action;

a quality, peculiarity, attribute or property;

an attribute of the 5 elements (each of which has its own peculiar quality or qualities as well as organ of sense; thus 1. ether has śabda, or sound for its guṇa and the ear for its organ; 2. the air has tangibility and sound for its guṇas and the skin for its organ; 3. fire or light has shape or colour, tangibility, and sound for its guṇas, and the eye for its organs; 4. water has flavour, shape, tangibility, and sound for its guṇas, and the tongue for its organ; 5. earth has the preceding guṇas, with the addition of its own peculiar guṇa of smell, and the nose for its organ);

(in Sāṃkhya phil.) an ingredient or constituent of Prakṛiti, chief quality of all existing beings (viz. sattva, rajas, and tamas i.e. goodness, passion, and darkness, or virtue, foulness, and ignorance;

a property or characteristic of all created things (in Nyāya phil. twenty-four guṇas are enumerated, viz. 1. rūpa, shape, colour; 2. rasa, savour; 3. gandha, odour; 4. sparśa, tangibility; 5. saṃkhyā, number; 6. parimāṇa, dimension; 7. pṛthaktva, severalty; 8. saṃyoga, conjunction; 9. vibhāga, disjunction; 10. paratva, remoteness; 11. aparatva, proximity; 12. gurutva, weight; 13. dravatva, fluidity; 14. sneha, viscosity; 15. śabda, sound; 16. buddhi or jñāna, understanding or knowledge; 17. sukha, pleasure; 18. duḥkha, pain; 19. icchā, desire; 20. dveṣa, aversion; 21. prayatna, effort; 22. dharma, merit or virtue; 23. adharma, demerit; 24. saṃskāra, the self-reproductive quality);

an epithet;

good quality, virtue, merit, excellence;

the merit of composition (consistency, elegance of expression, &c.);

the peculiar properties of the letters (11 in number, viz. the 8 bāhya-prayatnās ... and the 3 accents);

the first gradation of a vowel, the vowels a (with ar, al ...), e, o;

an organ of sense;

a cook

Wikipedia

Guna means 'string' or 'a single thread or strand of a cord or twine'. In more abstract uses, it may mean 'a subdivision, species, kind, quality', or an operational principle or tendency.

[In Samkhya philosophy], there are three major gunas that serve as the fundamental operating principles or 'tendencies' of prakṛti (universal nature) which are called: sattva guna, and rajas guna, tamas guna. The three primary gunas are generally accepted to be associated with creation (satva), preservation (rajas), and destruction (tamas). The entire creation and its process of evolution is carried out by these three major gunas.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Gunas - The creative dynamics of Nature, having three constituent modalities, sattva, rajas and tamas, which operate in rotation. Sattva, like a pure monad, mirrors all items of perception with dependable accuracy, and illuminates conceivable ideas with correct logical precision. It has the quality of transparency, and under its influence the mind remains calm. Rajas causes agitation and emotional turbulence. It distorts and exaggerates the meaning and significance of percepts and concepts. Under its influence the mind becomes self-centered and conceited. Tamas is the inertial aspect of nature. It is opaque and veils consciousness from the reality of the Self. Under its influence the mind becomes negative and dark.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Guna ("quality"). A fundamental concept that originated in the Samkhya philosophical school, but has become one of the key ideas in the Hindu worldview. The word guna literally means "strand," and by extension a "quality," of which there are believed to be

three: sattva (“goodness”), rajas (“passion”), and tamas (“darkness”). According to the Samkhyas, in the time before the evolution of prakṛti (primal matter), these three qualities were in perfect equilibrium. As mental activity began to disturb the balance, prakṛti evolved into the subjective self and the objective world. All things and beings in the world have these three basic qualities, but their nature and tendencies differ according to the differing proportions. The quality sattva is always positive and carries associations with goodness, truth, wholesomeness, health, cognitive thought, and deep-rooted religious life. The quality tamas is always negative and is associated with darkness, ignorance, sloth, spoilage, and death. Rajas can be either positive or negative, depending on the context. It is negative when one becomes a slave to one’s passions, blinding one to careful and conscious thought. However, one’s passions can also help to engender activity and industriousness. Although much of Samkhya metaphysics has been long discredited, the notion of all things drawing their tendencies from the differing proportion of these three gunas has become an accepted part of Indian culture.

Wikipedia

In classical Vedic literature

In classical Vedic literature (for example, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata Purana and the Bhagavad Gita), the gunas are also associated with the five elements (mahabhutas), five senses, and five associated body parts:

Akash (space), associated with the guna śabda (“sound”) and with the ear.

Vayu (air), associated with the guna sparśa (“feeling”) and with the skin.

Tejas or Agni (fire), associated with the guna rūpa (“appearance”, and thus color and tangibility) and with the eye.

Apas or Jal (water), associated with the guna rasa (“taste”, and thus also flavor and tangibility, as well as shape) and with the tongue.

Prithivi (earth), associated with all the preceding gunas as well as the guna gandha (“smell”) and with the nose.

In Sankhya philosophy

In Samkhya philosophy, a guna is one of three “tendencies”: tamas, sattva, and rajas. These categories have become a common means of categorizing behavior and natural phenomena in Hindu philosophy, and also in Ayurvedic medicine, as a system to assess conditions and diets. For this reason Triguna and tridosha are considered to be related in the traditions of Ayurveda. Guna is the tendency not action itself. For instance, sattva guna is the tendency towards purity but is not purity itself. Similarly rajas guna is that force which tends to create action but is not action itself. Each of the three gunas is ever present simultaneously in every particle of creation but the variations in equilibrium manifest all the variety in creation including matter, mind, body and spirit.

All creation is made up by a balance composed of all three forces. For creation to progress, each new stage “needs a force to maintain it and another force to develop it into a new stage. The force that develops the process in a new stage is sato guna, while tamo guna is that which checks or retards the process in order to maintain the state already produced, so that it may form the basis for the next stage”.

Sattva (originally “being, existence, entity”) has been translated to mean balance, order, or purity. Indologist Georg Feuerstein translates sattva as “lucidity”. This typically implies that aspects of creation with more of sattva have uplifting and life supporting qualities.

Rajas (originally “atmosphere, air, firmament”) is also translated to mean preservation or dynamism. (Rajas is etymologically unrelated to the word raja.)

Tamas (originally “darkness”, “obscurity”) has been translated to mean “too inactive” or “inertia”, negative, lethargic, dull, or slow. Usually it is associated with darkness, delusion, or ignorance. A tamas quality also can refer to anything destructive or entropic. In

his Translation and Commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi explains “The nature of tamo guna is to check or retard, though it should not be thought that if the movement is upward tamo guna is absent”.

In Nyaya philosophy

In Nyaya philosophy, 24 guṇas are enumerated as properties or characteristics of all created things, including śábda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa, and gandha.

rūpa: appearance (shape and color).

rasa: taste.

gandha: smell.

sparśa: feeling (touch).

sāmkhya: amount.

parimāna: dimension.

prthaktva: distinctness.

samyoga: conjunction.

vibhāga: disjunction.

paratva: remoteness.

aparatva: proximity.

gurutva: weight.

dravatva: fluidity.

sneha: viscosity.

śábda: sound.

buddhi/jñāna: enlightenment/knowing.

sukha: pleasure.

duhkha: pain.

icchā: desire.

dvesa: aversion.

prayatna: effort.

dharma: merit or virtue.

adharma: demerit.

samskāra: the self-reproductive quality;

In grammar

In Sanskrit grammatical tradition (Vyakarana), guṇa is a technical term referring to the vowels a, e, o, (for example, the full grade ablaut stages).

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

... according to the Sankhya and it has been admitted by all our sects of philosophy the body is composed of three sorts of gu-nas (materials not qualities). It is the general idea that Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are qualities. Not at all, they are not qualities but materials of this universe, and with ahara suddhi (pure food), the Sattva material becomes pure. The one aim of the Vedanta is

to get this Sattva. As I have told you, the soul is already pure and perfect but, according to the Vedanta, it is covered up by Rajas and Tamas particles. The Sattva particles are the most luminous, and the effulgence of the soul penetrates through them as easily as light through glass. So if the Rajas and Tamas particles are eliminated, leaving the Sattva particles uncovered, the powers and purity of the soul will appear, and make the soul more manifest. Therefore it is necessary to have this Sattva.

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

... the Sankhya philosophy may justly claim to have fully developed the theory of the three Gunas.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 497.

In the course of a different conversation. Sri Bhagavan said:

Satva is the light,

Rajas is the subject, and

Tamas is the object.

Even the satva light is only reflected light.

...

the advice is to keep the mind clear, and when rajas and tamas are wiped off, then the satva mind alone exists. So the 'I' vanishes in the satva (oonadhakam).

Gunas, prakriti, maya

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Māyā, or Prakṛti, is said to consist of the three guṇas, known as sattva, rajas, and tamas. The word guṇa, is usually translated into English as “quality”, which does not give the precise meaning of the original. Sattva, rajas, and tamas are not qualities of māyā in the same sense that hardness is a quality of iron, or softness of butter, or heat of fire. The three guṇas are the ingredients of māyā; they may be compared to three strands which constitute the rope of māyā, the rope by which māyā binds man to the illusory world. Māyā has no existence independent of the guṇas. The three guṇas are present, in varying degrees, in all objects, gross or subtle, including the mind, the buddhi, and ego. The food which nourishes our body, the thought which is the function of the mind, the duty which elevates a man from the animal level, charity, worship, sacrifice—in short, everything belonging to the universe of māyā—contains these three gunas.

At the end of a world cycle, when names and forms go back to the state of non-manifestation or involution, the guṇas remain in a state of non-differentiation or equilibrium. This is called the seed state of the universe; it is described as the sleep of the Cosmic Soul. Māyā, in association with Brahman, or Pure Consciousness, at that time exists as the Cause, alone, without any of its manifestation. Suddenly this equilibrium is disturbed, by the will of the Lord, and the guṇas begin to assert their individual characteristics. Different objects, subtle and gross, come into existence. The tangible universe manifests itself step by step.

Rajas and tamas have opposing characteristics, while sattva strikes the balance between the two. The principal trait of rajas is energy, and from it has emanated the “primal flow of activity”. Through its power the phenomenal universe alternates between

evolution and involution, manifestation of names and forms and their recession into the seed state. The visible effect of rajas, in a human being for instance, is a ceaseless activity through which expression is given to ambition, lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, egotism, envy, pride, jealousy, and so forth. Under its influence a man becomes violently attached to the world. Rajas is the source of suffering.

Tamas is the veiling-power that hides the true nature of a thing and makes it appear as other than what it really is. The influence of tamas is seen, in man, in his ignorance, lassitude, dullness, inadvertence, and stupidity. When tamas predominates over sattva and rajas, he goes to sleep or remains inactive. It deprives a man of right judgement or definite belief and subjects him to doubt and uncertainty. After tamas has veiled the true nature of the Self, rajas exerts its projecting-power and creates the many fantasies that constitute an unenlightened man's practical life. And alas, even scholars well versed in philosophy cannot escape its hypnotic spell. It is the mother of delusion.

Sattva is the giver of happiness and is the real friend of man in his effort to realize Truth. It manifests itself, in man, as humility, guilelessness, self-control, unselfishness, purity, contentment, truthfulness, fearlessness, faith, devotion, yearning for Liberation, and other similar spiritual attributes. When sattva predominates, a man feels detached with respect to the world, lessens his physical activities, intensifies his contemplation, and strives in various ways to attain peace and blessedness. Through the cultivation of sattva, both rajas and tamas are kept under control.

The three guṇas always exist together. There cannot be pure sattva, without rajas and tamas; or pure rajas, without sattva and tamas; or pure tamas, without sattva and rajas. The difference between one being and another lies in the varying preponderances of the guṇas.

The three guṇas, it must not be forgotten, belong to māyā, Prakṛti or ignorance, which includes everything in Nature—inorganic, organic, or psychic. They are the characteristics of relativity. As long as a man is attached to any of them he is a phenomenal being and not a free soul. Even the gods and angels are under the influence of the guṇas. The gods or superhuman beings show a preponderance of sattva; men, of rajas; and sub-human beings of tamas. Brahman, alone untouched by māyā, is beyond the guṇas. Sattva binds a man with attachment to happiness, rajas with attachment to activity, and tamas with attachment to delusion. The three guṇas may be compared to three robbers who waylay a man in a forest. Tamas, one of the robbers, wants to destroy him; but at the persuasion of rajas, the second robber, he is bound hand and foot to a tree and relieved of all his treasures. After some time sattva, the third robber, returns, frees the man from his bondage, takes him gently out of the forest, and sets him on the highway leading to his house. Then sattva takes leave of him, because he too, being a robber, does not dare accompany the man out of the forest for fear of the police. Tamas wants to destroy a man; rajas binds him to the world and robs him of his spiritual treasures; sattva sets him on the path to Freedom. Tamas is to be overcome by rajas, and rajas by sattva. But finally sattva, too, is to be given up if the aspirant seeks total Freedom. Truth lies beyond the three guṇas.

See also:

Avyakta

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Maya, avidya, ajnana

in Ahankara: [Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani](#)

in Catuspada: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

The word guṇa is derived from the Indo-European base gere, “twirl, wind.” Here the term is used to mean a single thread or strand of a cord, that is, a constituent of Prakriti (Cosmic Substance). The Guṇas are as essential to Prakriti as heat is to fire, for one cannot exist without the other.

Related words

Maya

Rajas

Sattva

Tamas

Sanskrit

Guṇa — गुण

guṇa - गुण

Guru

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Guru — ... teacher; preceptor; great; “heavy”; weighty; venerable

1. A spiritual master who has attained oneness with the Self/God and who initiates his or her disciples and devotees into the spiritual path and guides them to liberation.

2. One who removes the darkness of ignorance. A guru should be both an exemplar and articulator of Reality. Sañkara defined a guru as one who is firmly convinced that he or she is the supreme consciousness; one whose mind is rooted in the highest reality; one who has a pure and tranquil mind; one who has realized one’s identity with the Absolute (Brahman).

3. There is a tradition which says that a guru gives instruction in the Veda; an ācārya initiates one and then gives instruction; an upadhyāya is a secondary type of teacher in that they give only partial instruction and take fees for it; an adhvānka is an instructor of knowledge; a prādhyāpaka is a seasoned teacher instructing advanced students and other teachers; a pravaktā is a generic word for teacher; and a prācārya is a retired teacher.
4. A sannyāsa should know four generations of his preceptors: guru, parama guru, paramesti guru, and parāpara guru.
5. In Hinduism, the true guru is God — “guru-deva.”

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

guru -

heavy, weighty (opposed to laghu’);

heavy in the stomach (food), difficult to digest;

great, large, extended, long;

(in prosody) long by nature or position (a vowel);

high in degree, vehement, violent, excessive, difficult, hard;

grievous;

important, serious, momentous;

valuable, highly prized;

haughty, proud (speech);

venerable, respectable;

any venerable or respectable person (father, mother, or any relative older than one’s self);

a spiritual parent or preceptor (from whom a youth receives the initiatory Mantra or prayer, who instructs him in the śāstras and conducts the necessary ceremonies up to that of investiture which is performed by the ācārya;

the chief of;

‘preceptor of the gods’;

the planet Jupiter;

‘Pāṇḍu-teacher’, Droṇa;

Prabhā-kara (celebrated teacher of the mīmāṃsā, usually mentioned with Kumārila);

‘venerable’, the 9th astrological mansion;

pl. parents and other venerable persons;

a honorific appellation of a preceptor (whose N. is also put in the pl.);

‘venerable woman’, a mother;

‘great (with child)’, pregnant, a pregnant woman;

the wife of a teacher

Wikipedia

A guru is one who is regarded as having great knowledge, wisdom and authority in a certain area, and who uses it to guide others (teacher). As a principle for the development of consciousness it leads the creation from unreality to reality, from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. In its purest form this principle manifests on earth as a divine incarnation (saint), a person with supreme knowledge about God and all creation. Other forms of manifestation of this principle also include parents, school teachers, non-human objects (books) and even one’s own intellectual discipline.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Guru - Literally, remover of darkness. In a broad sense any teacher, and specifically a spiritual preceptor. The Guru is not an outside factor. As one who reveals the reality of the Self, the Guru is Brahma. As one who preserves and guards the revealed wisdom of the Absolute, the Guru is Vishnu. As one who causes the final dissolution of everything into the undifferentiated beingness of the Absolute, the Guru is Mahesvara or Siva. The implied anthropomorphism of personifying Awareness as Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara is to be treated as a poetic fancy of the Indian mind. In essence the Guru is the same as the Absolute.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The SANSKRIT word guru (“weighty” or “heavy” or “father”) is said to derive from gu (the darkness of ignorance) and ru (driving away)—thus, “the one who drives away the darkness of ignorance.” The notion of the guru began in VEDIC times; a student would live with a master for 12 years to acquire the Vedic learning. He treated the guru as his father and served his household as well.

Today, a guru is a person’s spiritual father, who is entitled to special deference, as are his wife and daughter.

The guru is a spiritual guide. Almost all traditions understand that spiritual progress and liberation from birth and rebirth cannot occur without the aid of a guru. In many contemporary Indian traditions he is seen to be God himself and is treated as such; thus, his disciples may often refer to their devotion to the “feet of the guru” or their fealty to the “sandals [paduka]” of the guru. (Touching of the feet in India is a sign of deep respect.) So important is the guru that every year a holiday, Gurupurnima, is celebrated. It takes place on the full Moon in the lunar month of Ashadha (June–July). It was dedicated originally to the sage VYASA, who compiled the VEDAS and the MAHABHARATA, but it is observed by worship or honoring of one’s teachers and gurus.

The SIKH tradition, which was founded by Guru Nanak in the 16th century, honors a line of 10 gurus whose teachings form the core of the tradition. The teachings were eventually gathered together along with the teachings of certain Indian saints into the Sikh sacred scripture, the Granth Sahib or Guru Granth. Since then the book has become the true “guru” for the Sikhs, and none other has been recognized.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Guru (“heavy”). In its most commonly accepted meaning, a guru is a spiritual teacher or religious mentor; in an extended sense the word can refer to any teacher. The term is often used in the arts, where the relationship between master and disciple is still a vital part of learning. The relationship between guru and disciple (shishya) is one of the most fundamental and enduring facets of Hinduism and is the accepted model for the transmission of religious teaching, tradition, and authority. Aside from transmitting knowledge, the guru-disciple connection also assumes a close and trusting relationship. The guru takes responsibility for the disciple’s development, based on an assessment of the disciple’s strengths, inclinations, and capacities, while the disciple faithfully follows the guru’s direction. The literal meaning of the word guru is “heavy,” indicating the impression they have on the lives of their students—weighty and marked. As a guiding presence, a guru is considered indispensable for true spiritual attainment. This is particularly true of secret traditions such as tantra, in which the guru’s transmission of authority gives the disciple the necessary adhikara or “qualifications” for practice.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The heavenly or inner Guru is represented in the world in the form of men who are Gurus to their disciples. Their function is to enlighten their disciples, till the Guru within their own soul shines forth. The relation of the function of faith and insight in the soul to the lower functions is that of a Guru to his disciples.

The very conception of “the Guru” is often misunderstood in our time, because Gurus who are truly enlightened and have subjected the lower functions within themselves, are unfortunately very rare. Nowadays, a Guru is generally supposed to be, and generally is, in fact, nothing more than an instructor of philosophy and (what is deemed to be) “Yoga”. There is no harm in this if the teacher is a man of pure and humble character. But if he has not purified himself of Ahankara, he may do more harm than good to his follower. There may be serious consequences, if the so-called or self-styled “Guru” is a man who is out for “power”, or who likes to dabble in secret rites and occult practices that increase egotism. There are also “Gurus” who impose upon others dogmas, beliefs, actions, and — worst of all — themselves. The law of supply and demand works on all planes. People obtain the type of leader or master they desire and deserve. For those who have pure spiritual aspirations, the traditional saying, “the Guru appears when the disciple is ready”, applies.

The other traditional saying, “the Guru is God”, can be understood from the fact that Guru is Zeus-Jupiter-Jehovah, the Enlightener.

The inner or divine Guru is projected in the outer world on a suitable person — for the purpose of the enlightenment of a disciple. Enlightenment is evoked in the disciple by the “participation mystique” of Guru and disciple.

It may not be out of place to remark that the emotional and intellectual links between Guru and disciple are secondary and form only reflections of the spiritual link. The purity of the Guru, that is, the lack of Ahankaric factors in his life, purifies the lives of those who live with him. The disciple who surrenders and annihilates his Ahankara at the Guru’s feet (to use the traditional expression), finds insight or enlightenment through the Guru’s grace, which is the Grace of God. It is evident that faith in the Guru is of the highest importance, for it is faith that brings insight into the mystery of life, and the bliss of harmonization.

The Guru or Enlightener is the embodied Word, born from the Voice, representing the Tradition.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Mr. Evans-Wentz continued another day: “May one have more than one spiritual master?”

M.: Who is a Master? He is the Self after all. According to the stages of the development of the mind the Self manifests as the Master externally. The famous ancient saint Avadhuta said that he had more than 24 Masters. The Master is one from whom one learns anything. The Guru may be sometimes inanimate also, as in the case of Avadhuta. God, Guru and the Self are identical. A spiritual-minded man thinks that God is all-pervading and takes God for his Guru. Later, God brings him in contact with a personal Guru and the man recognises him as all in all. Lastly the same man is made by the grace of the Master to feel that his Self is the Reality and nothing else. Thus he finds that the Self is the Master.

...

D.: When loyal to one Master can you respect others?

M.: Guru is only one. He is not physical. So long as there is weakness the support of strength is needed.

D.: J. Krishnamurti says, “No Guru is necessary?”

M.: How did he know it? One can say so after realising but not before.

...

D.: It is said that the Guru can make his disciple realise the Self by transmitting some of his own power to him? Is it true?

M.: Yes. The Guru does not bring about Self-Realisation. He simply removes the obstacles to it. The Self is always realised.

D.: Is there absolute necessity of a Guru for Self-Realisation?

M.: So long as you seek Self-Realisation the Guru is necessary. Guru is the Self. Take Guru to be the Real Self and your self as the individual self.

The disappearance of this sense of duality is removal of ignorance. So long as duality persists in you the Guru is necessary. Because you identify yourself with the body you think the Guru, too, to be some body. You are not the body, nor is the Guru. You are the Self and so is the Guru.

This knowledge is gained by what you call Self-Realisation.

D.: How can one know whether a particular individual is competent to be a Guru?

M.: By the peace of mind found in his presence and by the sense of respect you feel for him.

D.: If the Guru happens to turn out incompetent, what will be the fate of the disciple who has implicit faith in him?

M.: Each one according to his merits.

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

Question: How is one to decide upon a proper Guru? What is the swarupa of a Guru?

Bhagavan: He is the proper Guru to whom your mind is attuned. If you ask, how to decide who is the Guru and what is his swarupa, he should be endowed with tranquillity, patience, forgiveness and other virtues capable of attracting others, even by a mere look, like the magnetic stone, and with a feeling of equality towards all — he that has these virtues is the true Guru. If one wants to know the true Guru swarupa, one must know his own swarupa first. How can one know the true Guru swarupa, if one does not know one's own swarupa first? If you want to perceive the true Guru swarupa, you must first learn to look upon the whole universe as Guru rupam. One must have the Gurubhavam towards all living beings. It is the same with God. You must look upon all objects as God's rupa. How can he who does not know his own Self perceive Ishwara rupa or Guru rupa? How can he determine them? Therefore, first of all know your own real swarupam.

Question: Isn't a Guru necessary to know even that?

Bhagavan: That is true. The world contains many great men. Look upon him as your Guru with whom your mind gets attuned. The one in whom you have faith is your Guru.

...

Dattatreya is the universal Guru, isn't he? And he has said that the whole world was his Guru. If you look at evil you feel you should not do it. So he said evil also was his Guru. If you see good, you would wish to do it; so he said that good also was his Guru; both good and evil, he said, were his Gurus. It seems that he asked a hunter which way he should go, but the latter ignored his question, as he was intent upon his aim to shoot a bird above. Dattatreya saluted him, saying, 'You are my Guru! Though killing the bird is bad, keeping your aim so steadfast in shooting the arrow as to ignore my query is good, thereby teaching me that I should keep my mind steadfast and fixed on Ishwara. You are therefore my Guru.' In the same way he looked upon everything as his Guru, till in the end he said that his physical body itself was a Guru, as its consciousness does not exist during sleep and the body that does not exist should therefore not be confused with the soul — dehatmabhavana (the feeling that the body is the soul). Therefore that too was a Guru for him. While he looked upon the whole world as his Guru, the whole world worshipped him as its Guru.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

Such a person [who is fit to know the true nature of ātman] must approach the guru through whom freedom from bondage is attainable; one who is wise, well versed in the scriptures, sinless, free from desire, knowing the nature of Brahman.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

what is a Guru? Let us go back to the Srutis “He who knows the secret of the Vedas, not book-worms, not grammarians, not pandits in general, but he who knows the meaning of the Scriptures, he alone is the GURU. ... He who knows the secret of the Srutis, the sinless, and he who does not want to make money by teaching—he is the Shanta(saint), the Sādhu (Holy one), who comes as the Spring, which brings the leaves and fruits to various plants but does not ask anything from the plant, for its very nature is to do good. It does good and that is all. Such is the Guru. “Who has himself crossed this ocean of life, and without any idea of gain to himself helps others to cross the ocean also, this is the Guru, and mark that none else can be a Guru. As for others: “Themselves steeped in darkness, but in the pride of their hearts thinking they know everything, do not stop even there, but want to help others, and, blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.”

Guru-sishya relationship

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The guru-shishya tradition, lineage, or parampara, denotes a succession of teachers and disciples in traditional Indian culture and religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism. It is the tradition of spiritual relationship and mentoring where teachings are transmitted from a guru “teacher” (Sanskrit: गुरु) to a śiṣya “disciple” (Sanskrit: शिष्य) or chela. Such knowledge, whether it be Vedic, agamic, architectural, musical or spiritual, is imparted through the developing relationship between the guru and the disciple. It is considered that this relationship, based on the genuineness of the guru, and the respect, commitment, devotion and obedience of the student, is the best way for subtle or advanced knowledge to be conveyed. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the guru embodies.

Historical background

Beginning in the early oral traditions of the Upanishads (c. 2000 BC), the guru-shishya relationship has evolved into a fundamental component of Hinduism. The term “Upanishad” derives from the Sanskrit words “upa” (near), “ni” (down) and “ṣad” (to sit) — so it means “sitting down near” a spiritual teacher to receive instruction. The relationship between Krishna and Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita portion of the Mahabharata, and between Rama and Hanuman in the Ramayana are examples. In the Upanishads, gurus and disciples appear in a variety of settings (a husband answering questions about immortality, a teenage boy being taught by Yama, the Hindu Religion’s Lord of Death, etc.) Sometimes the sages are women, and the instructions may be sought by kings.

In the Vedas, the knowledge of Brahman (brahmavidya) is communicated from guru to shishya by oral lore.

Common characteristics of the guru-shishya relationship

Within the broad spectrum of the Hindu religion, the guru-shishya relationship can be found in numerous variant forms including tantra. Some common elements in this relationship include:

The establishment of a teacher/student relationship.

A formal recognition of this relationship, generally in a structured initiation ceremony where the guru accepts the initiate as a shishya and also accepts responsibility for the spiritual well-being and progress of the new shishya.

Sometimes this initiation process will include the conveying of specific esoteric wisdom and/or meditation techniques.

Gurudakshina, where the shishya gives a gift to the guru as a token of gratitude, often the only monetary or otherwise fee that the student ever gives. Such tokens can be as simple as a piece of fruit or as serious as a thumb, as in the case of Ekalavya and his guru Dronacharya.

Parampara and Sampradaya

Traditionally the word used for a succession of teachers and disciples in ancient Indian culture is parampara (paramparā). In the parampara system, knowledge (in any field) is believed to be passed down through successive generations. The Sanskrit word literally means “an uninterrupted series or succession”. Sometimes defined as “the passing down of Vedic knowledge”, it is believed to be always entrusted to the ācāryas. An established parampara is often called sampradāya, or school of thought.

Guru-shishya relationship types

Advaita Vedānta requires anyone seeking to study Advaita Vedānta to do so from a guru (teacher). The guru must have the following qualities (see Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12):

Śrotriya — must be learned in the Vedic scriptures and sampradaya

Brahmaniṣṭha — literally meaning “established in Brahman”; must have realised the oneness of Brahman in everything and in himself.

The seeker must serve the guru and submit his questions with all humility so that doubt may be removed. (see Bhagavad Gita 4.34). According to Advaita, the seeker will be able to attain liberation from the cycle of births and deaths (moksha).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

Traditionally, the aspiring youth arrives at the abode of the Guru who generally lives away from society in a forest hermitage. The future Sishya is expected to bring a token bundle of firewood as a sign of his willingness to submit to the household discipline required of him when he enters the Gurukula (the family of the Guru), He proves in this way that he is one who has sacrificed all for the wisdom that he prizes more than family and friends. He is therefore a true orphan of God or humanity; a stowaway on the cosmic ship, unwanted by society; a radical idealist by inclination. Even if he is of highly respectable parentage he is expected to take no pride in his family traditions. He has transcended and left behind that chapter in his life.

So, like a stray animal pleading for adoption, he appears of his own accord at the Guru's threshold. He is docile, of good manners and of pleasant mien. He is earnest enough and zealous to pay the utmost price for the wisdom he seeks; willing, if need be, to give the loyalty of a lifetime. He does not know wisdom in its completion, but he is aware that there is wisdom. He has, as it were, a foretaste of its value, known in a vague way, and this inkling gives him the impetus, enabling him to take the ultimate step to discover it with whole-hearted aim, come what may. All this is understood and symbolically implied when he knocks at the Guru's door. Thus he is deeply sensitive, but neither timid nor hesitant.

The Brahmacharin of tradition rises before the sun and usually has his morning dip in the nearest river or lake. There is nothing severe about this in a tropical climate. At early dawn he is ready for service at the Guru's bedside. Various kinds of service are

exacted from him in keeping with his character as a student. Begging is not taboo provided it is just as much as is needed for elementary bodily needs.

Competition with others in this connection is forbidden, as may be seen from the story of Aruni who was reprimanded by the Guru, as mentioned in the Mahabharata. Extreme tests are sometimes applied until the mutual adoption between the Sishya and the Guru becomes firmly established. It is an educative process, a drawing out, and, without the essential bi-polar adoption recognized on both sides, it must fail.

Such in outline was the practice employed traditionally, according to the sources at our disposal. The Sishya was not to question the authority of the Guru. It is clear also from the stories concerning Milarepa and others equally famous, whether from the Indian or Tibetan Guru-Sishya literature. The testing period over, and adoption complete, proved by service to the Guru or by other methods, all is ready for the instruction, which generally takes but a little time to give. The mantra (sacred syllable or word) is given to the disciple, the Maha-vakyas (Grand Aphorisms) are bestowed, and the climax of the relationship is reached.

There is glory in being a Guru, but by its own terms there is greater glory in being a Sishya. The willingness, submission, discipline and extra good breeding implied in the tender strength of the personality of the Brahmacharin is no less a marvel than that of Guruhood. The Brahmacharin is at the beck and call of the Guru. In the Guru's presence he never sits or plays pranks, but rises respectfully when the Guru enters.

In the presence of other elder Gurus he is expected to be modest and only when asked shows off his knowledge. To be requested to sit in the Guru's presence is a rare recognition, gained only in the later period of discipleship. The word 'Upanishad' which means 'to sit beside' (derived from the Sanskrit root 'shad', to sit, and 'upa', near by 2l) indicates the privileged nature of the Guru-Sishya institution. It is an instruction to be given only when ritualistic service and works have been rightly performed or transcended. After these comes wisdom (jnana) as a distinct chapter.

The understanding between the Guru and Sishya is like that of a knight-errant who takes up the gauntlet. A tacit challenge is invoked. The Guru may want something in the middle of the night. The Sishya is not to be caught napping. When the Guru speaks, the Sishya is all ears.

As in a well-bred domestic animal, his eyes follow the Guru's least movements. Subtle exchanges must be taken in good faith and in the spirit of a chivalric code of honour. Dogged pursuit of truth is demanded. No retrospective glance of regret is permissible to the strict Brahmacharin. He must gaze ever forwards. The peak has to be conquered, the citadel stormed. Moral courage dare not flag for even a minute. Ever listening, ever wakeful, ever willing to serve, and cut off from every situation irrelevant to the task in hand, the student treads the path. Such is the heroic nature of genuine Sishyahood.

...

All vital relations, such as those between father and son or husband and wife imply the same bipolarity of relationship which is the secret of contemplative reasoning...

It is in this way that the Guru becomes as important as the sishya (disciple), or vice versa...

It is the Word which stands neutral and silent between the Guru and the Sishya (Master and Disciple). Silence is the normal state of Guruhood. That normal Guru state has no message to deliver - except that of the silent Word, perhaps. Neither has it any gospel to spread, nor course of action to recommend on its own initiative. It is free from the sense of agency in the world of activities or works. These exist in the domain of necessity or restraint and take care of themselves according to natural laws of imperative urges, causal chains or obligation. Thus the Guru rests in his heart's cave of tranquillity, locked in the secret of his silence, beyond all turmoil in the peace that passeth understanding. Someone might approach a Guru with a question. The best answer and the

reply the Guru wants to give is his silence. The indifference on the surface is only seeming. The Guru really intends to honour the questioner by his silence. Indeed silence is a form of recognition given sometimes to the most intelligent of questioners. For the well-formulated question, fundamentally sound in its basic premiss, supplies in itself half at least of the desirable question-answer situation which is a dialectical situation, like a subject seeking an object or predicate...

The question can refer to one specifically possible answer, but the silence is an answer to all possible varieties of questions, even to those concerning the future. It is the crowning answer of answers, a finalized reply to the endlessness of questioning in an unexpected form which is itself paradoxically rhetorical...

What looks like reserve is only the underlining of the most effective method of conveying his meaning, which is incapable of being given by the methods usual to other kinds of knowledge. The Guru truth implies the negative approach. It is given a priori, and sounds as if it is 'dogmatic' and not reasoned in the modern sense. ... Again and again frustrated in their attempts to transmit their deepest affections, the Gurus often subside into the most intensely expressive of silences. Such loneliness - such an 'orphanage in God' - might be called their everlasting agony, crucifixion, or state of detached Nirvana - so great is the hunger of the Guru for a true disciple.

In 'the flight of the Alone to the Alone', which constitutes the Guru-state, the sympathetic call arises for winging another into the joy of this Samadhi. This constitutes the 'sad' element, for this Advaita consciousness seeks expression, final consummation and fulfilment - and that can be only by transmission somehow to the right kind of disciple.

...

Without Sishyahood, which is the counterpart of Guruhood, the latter would be meaningless. As a king cannot be without subjects; so no Guru can be without the typical 'purvapakshin' (the doubter, the one who is sceptical, who has the point of view which is anterior to finalized wisdom, the persistent critic found in all the texts of the Word-wisdom)...

The bipolar Guru-Sishya relationship requires not only a genuine Brahman-knowing Guru, but also an enthusiastic or earnest disciple. Only then can the Word of the Guru be elaborated.

...

The Guru-Sishya relational technique has to conform minutely to a science of its own, to a code which is at the same time traditional - the result of long experience - and dialectically universal. All leakages to other interests have to be blocked and a constant pressure uniformly maintained until results accrue. The nervous system has to be trained to bear the strain of the psychological search. On some occasion, suddenly, the votary may relapse into regret. The soldier has to be removed to a rest-camp. He may have tried his best, but a freer flight into the alone, into the adventure of the unknown, may be too much for his moral stamina to sustain.

...

Guru and Sishya form the two poles of a process of Self-realization that is essentially an axial relationship. The disciple seeking knowledge - at the cost of his life if need be - touches the foot of the Guru who is established in that high wisdom. In his turn, the Guru blesses the Sishya and touches him on his forehead in recognition of his aspiration. A mutual appreciation each of the other then begins, which results in their further spiritual rapprochement. Finally, all distinctions vanish. The Guru is the Sishya and the Sishya is the Guru.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

8. Therefore, the learned seeker who is striving to gain this freedom within and who has renounced all his desires for pleasures in the sense-objects, should duly approach a good and generous Master and must live attuned to the true significances of the words of the Master.

Commentary by Chinmayananda: A seeker in Vedanta ... can gain admission only when he has had a good education, not only in the market place but also in the great works discussing the theory and meaning of life. Hence the word Vidwan is used here to indicate a true seeker. When, therefore, a student having had a cursory knowledge of life and its meaning realises the futility of running after sense-objects, he comes to a certain amount of renunciation of desires and thus he approaches his Master. Sankara in this verse also lists the special qualifications necessary for a seeker on the spiritual path.

... A Guru must not only be a man of full Realisation and experience but he should be a Mahantam, a large-hearted, sympathetic, kind person. Without these qualifications of the heart, he will not be able to come down from the high seat of his experience and mingle with the imperfect seekers who come to him, and fully understand their difficulties on the path. One can be a Guru only if one has the required magnanimity, intimate personal experience of the Divine and great familiarity with the scriptures.

Even if a seeker discovers such a perfect Master, he will not be able to react favourably in the Master's presence or even to his discussions if he has not the necessary mental attitude, denoted by the word samupetya. The manner of approaching a Master is not merely a prescription for a sapless formality. It specifies, mainly, a mental attitude. If we approach a Master with the objective of judging him or evaluating his knowledge, certainly we are not going to benefit. There are some who approach a man of wisdom to make him understand how far they are men of wisdom themselves. This exhibitionism of their laboriously gathered second hand informations will choke their hearts and they will not be able to gain anything from the Master's words which rise from his own first hand experiences. Water flows only from a higher level to a lower level; so too it is with the flow of knowledge. Unless we have the meekness and the spirit of surrender, knowledge cannot reach us.

The divine attitude of full receptivity is the aroma of a heart which has reverence for and surrender to, faith in and love for, the Guru. These are, therefore, insisted upon in the Sastras, but they may seem to the modern man as arrangements set up by a team of social criminals to loot and plunder the credulous public. Such an opinion reflects the level of decadence into which modern man has fallen.

Again, even with all the prescribed qualifications if a seeker were to reach the feet of a perfect Master, the transferred knowledge cannot take root in the student unless he is himself ready to strive along the path. The instructions given here explaining how he should conduct himself in the presence of the Master are very significant indeed, especially so in our times when we are all labouring under terrible misunderstandings about this Guru-sishya relationship.

After all, a Master can only explain truths and give sufficient logic to give the seeker intellectual conviction. These ideas are, at best, prescriptions for certain values of life which cannot yield any benefit unless they are taken up and made a part of the entire scheme of our evolution. The major part of the work depends upon our own efforts to rehabilitate ourselves. Thus, it is said, the individual should try to live the deep significances of the precepts of the Master.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

guru — from the verb root gr = “to invoke or to praise”...

6. The etymological derivation of the word guru is in this verse from the Guru Gītā: “The root gu stands for darkness; ru for its removal. The removal of the darkness of ignorance in the heart is indicated by the word guru.” The meanings of gu and ru can also be traced to the Pāṇini-sūtras gu samvaraṇe and ru himsane, indicating concealment and its annulment.

Wikipedia

Guru is composed of the syllables ‘gu’ and ‘ru’, the former signifying ‘darkness’, and the latter signifying ‘the destroyer of that [darkness]’, hence a guru is one characterized as someone who dispels spiritual ignorance (darkness), with spiritual illumination (light) - as per Advaya- Tāraka Upanishad (verse 16),

The syllable gu means shadows

The syllable ru, he who disperses them,

Because of the power to disperse darkness

the guru is thus named.

– Advayataraka Upanishad 14—18, verse 5

As a noun the word means the impartor of knowledge (jnana). As an adjective, it means “heavy,” or “weighty,” in the sense of “heavy with knowledge,” “heavy with spiritual wisdom,” “heavy with spiritual weight,” “heavy with the good qualities of scriptures and realization,” or “heavy with a wealth of knowledge.” The word has its roots in the Sanskrit gri (“to invoke”, or “to praise”), and may have a connection to the word gur, meaning “to raise, “to lift up”, or “to make an effort.” Barnhart’s “Dictionary of Etymology” compares gravis (Latin: grave, weighty, serious) as cognate with the Sanskrit “guru.”

A traditional etymology of the term “guru” is based on the interplay between darkness and light. The Guru is seen as the one who “dispels the darkness of ignorance.” In some texts it is described that the syllables gu (गु) and ru (रु) stand for darkness and light, respectively.

Reender Kranenborg disagrees, stating that darkness and light have nothing to do with the word guru. He describes this as a folk etymology.

Another etymology of the word “guru” found in the Guru Gita, includes gu as “beyond the qualities” and ru as “devoid of form”, stating that “He who bestows that nature which transcend the qualities is said to be guru”. [The meanings of “gu” and “ru” can also be traced to the Sutras indicating concealment and its annulment.

In Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion, Pierre Riffard makes a distinction between “occult” and “scientific” etymologies, citing as an example of the former the etymology of “guru” in which the derivation is presented as gu (“darkness”) and ru (“to push away”); the latter he exemplifies by “guru” with the meaning of “heavy”.

Related words

Gurukula

Sishya

Gurukula

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Gurukula — ... “teacher’s school,” or “teacher’s abode”

1. Traditionally, the gurukula referred to the residence of a spiritual teacher wherein young students came to live and learn.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

gurukula -
the house of a Guru

Wikipedia

A gurukul (Sanskrit guru “teacher” or “master”; kul domain, from kula, “extended family”) is in India a type of school, residential in nature, with shishyas living in proximity to the guru, often within the same house. In a gurukul, shishyas reside together as equals, irrespective of their social standing, learn from the guru and help the guru in his day-to-day life, including the carrying out of mundane chores such as washing clothes, cooking, etc.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

The guru-shishya parampara is a hallowed tradition in Hinduism. Other religious groups in India have adapted it into different forms that fall within their religious ideology and framework such as Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Typically, a guru does not receive fees from a shishyas studying with him. At the end of his studies, a shishya offers the guru dakshina before leaving the ashram. The gurudakshina is a traditional gesture of acknowledgment, respect and thanks, which may be monetary, but may also be a special task the teacher wants the student to accomplish.

By the colonial era the gurukul system was almost dead in India excepting in a few remote regions. An exception was Kerala where the warrior Nair clan and their own military gurukulas called Kalaris.

Recently, several gurukulas have begun, both driven by monetary gain and by a desire to uphold the traditions. Examples of these new schools are Ananda Marga Gurukula established by Ananda Marga in 1990 at Anandanagar (India) with a network of branches in scores of countries around the world. It is not a religious school in Hindu tradition but rather a secular academic institution based on universal spiritual principles. Vivekananda College near Madurai is an NAAC -accredited `A` grade autonomous college that is run under a Gurukula system.

There are many Vedic Gurukulas in modern India which follow ancient tradition. Government of India provides financial and other help to Vedic teachers who establish such Vedic gurukulas for imparting Vedic education without asking for any fees from the students ; the leading government institution offering such assistance is Sândipani in Ujjain, named after the guru of Krishna, which also helps Vedic gurukulas in preparing students for examinations held by recognized Sanskrit universities.[citation needed] (Another Fact, April 2008).

In India and other parts of the world, gurukul [4] is becoming synonym for Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul, a socio-spiritual, non profit organization with over 14 branches and centers, head branch at Gurukul Rajkot.

In Andhra Pradesh, the first attempt of expanding the Gurukul Tradition was made at Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Hyderabad by Sadguru Shri Devprasaddasji Swami.

In Mayapur (West Bengal, India) an ISKCON gurukul project, which has been in operation since the 70's, is rejuvenating the ancient gurukul system and providing students with a system of traditional education and values.

Others examples of Gurukula instituts: [www.arshayoga.org] and [www.jjkgurukulam.org]

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

The word kula comes from the root kul = “to gather or group together” and, thus, refers to any manifestation from the smallest to the largest (i.e., an abode, house, body, family, school, teachings, lineage, state of being, etc.). The word guru comes from gu = “remover of darkness” + ru = “bestower of light.” Thus, the gurukula is any place where the darkness of ignorance is removed by the light of wisdom.

Related words

Guru
Sishya

Sanskrit

Gurukula — गुरुकुल

gurukula - गुरुकुल

Hatha Yoga

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Hatha yoga — ... physical exercises or postures; “sun-moon union”

1. A yogic discipline by which the unitive (samādhi) state is attained by uniting the prāṇa and apāna (ingoing and outgoing breath). Various bodily and mental exercises are practiced for the purpose of purifying the 72,000 nāḍīs and to bring about the even flow of prāṇa. When the flow of prāṇa is even, the mind becomes still. One then experiences equality consciousness and enters into the state of samādhi.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

hathayoga -

a kind of forced Yoga or abstract meditation (forcing the mind to withdraw from external objects; treated of in the Hatha-pradīpikā by Svātmaṛāma and performed with much self-torture, such as standing on one leg, holding up the arms, inhaling smoke with the head inverted

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Hatha yoga is an amalgam of yogic practices that may have emerged separately and were later comcombined. Its origins are obscure, but it is likely that the system began to develop in the early centuries of the Common Era.

Hatha yoga includes basic practices that can be found in ASHTANGA YOGA, which relies on the YOGA SUTRA of PATANJALI. It includes different arrays of postures (ASANAS), joined to various TANTRA practices. The term hatha originally meant “violent,” and it is possible that this style of YOGA originated in certain types of severe yoga that were later softened for protection of the body.

Some types of hatha yoga include or even focus on KUNDALINI practice. Here the focus of breath control is on the “serpent” or “Goddess Energy” at the base of the spine, which must be awakened and forced upward to pierce the psychic centers or chakras that run parallel to the spine. The NADIS, or subtle bodily channels, are used to guide breath into the central spinal channel to help the raising of the kundalini through the centers. Finally, the kundalini meets SHIVA at a point above the head called SAHASRARA CHAKRA. This meeting provokes absolute enlightenment.

Traditionally, hatha yoga has encompassed a wide range of practices including those of such sects as the NATH YOGIS, who sought bodily immortality through the ingestion (and transformation) of poisons such as oxides of mercury and practiced a physical alchemy. Today, in the West, hatha yoga is typically confined to postures and a simple focus on the breath; more advanced practitioners may begin to focus on the kundalini and the channeling of the breath in the nadis.

Wikipedia

Hatha Yoga, also called Hatha Vidya (हठवदिया), is a system of Yoga introduced by Yogi Swatmarama, a sage of 15th century India, and compiler of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. In this treatise Swatmarama introduces Hatha Yoga as preparatory stage of physical purification that the body practices for higher meditation. The Asanas and Pranayama in Raja Yoga were what the Hindu Yogis used to physically train their body for long periods of meditation. This practice is called shatkarma.

Hatha yoga follows the same principles as the Raaja Yoga of Patanjali including moral restraint yama and spiritual observances niyama. Hatha Yoga is what most people in the West associate with the word “Yoga” and is practised for mental and physical health throughout the West.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

... it is interesting to go through a tradition of Yoga, focussed in the Element Fire. The Gheranda Samhita is a scripture embodying such a tradition. ... The special variety of Yoga which it embodies is Hatha Yoga. This is the form of Yoga which begins with the physical body and proceeds stage by stage inwards. It always stresses the substance and form-aspect of the psyche, on one and all of the planes. ... Like all scriptures of Yoga, the Gheranda Samhita has been misunderstood and manhandled by idolatrous literalists. So-called, or rather self-styled, “Yogis”, having no eyes to see the symbolic nature of the instructions, have spent years and even life-times in practising many of the instructions verbatim. Since the mind is a powerful creator, they have had some success to book in the development of abnormal psychic powers and the admiration of misguided admirers. But they have not attained the greater powers which the Yogi Gheranda taught. They have been side-tracked and remained far distant from the Goal. The beginning of the Samhita at once reveals its profundity. “(1) Once Chanda Kapali going to the cottage of Gheranda saluted him with reverence and devotion. (2) Chanda Kapali said: O Master of Yoga! O best of Yogis! O Lord! I wish now to learn the Hatha Yoga, which leads to the realization of the essence of truth (Tattva-Jnana). (3) Gheranda replied: Well asked, indeed, O mighty-armed. I shall tell thee, O child, what thou askest me. Attend to it with diligence. (4) There are no fetters like those of Maya, there is no strength like that which comes from Yoga, there is no friend higher than Realization (Jnana), and no greater enemy than Ahankara. (5) As by learning the alphabets one can, through practice, master all the sciences, so by thoroughly practising first the Hatha Yoga, one acquires the knowledge of the True. (6) On account of good and bad deeds, the bodies of all animated beings are produced, and the bodies give rise to works (Karma which leads to rebirth) and thus the circle is continued like that of a Persian wheel. (7) As the Persian wheel in drawing water from a well goes up and down, moved by the bullocks, so the soul passes through life and death moved by its deeds. (8) Like unto an unbaked earthen pot thrown in water, the body is soon decayed (in this world). Bake it hard in the fire of Training in order to strengthen it and purify the body.” ... The average man is much like an unbaked pot, which dissolves in the troublous waters of the emotional imaginative plane. The “body”, that is to say, the composite “body” consisting of the six sheaths in the Six Spheres, should be made strong by the Fire of Tapas, implying systematic spiritual practices. It has already been remarked that Hatha Yoga stresses the substantial aspect of things. Its very nature is to prevent “the decaying in Water” and to bring about “the hardening in Fire”. The Hatha Yoga system of the Yogis Matsyendra Nath, Gorakh Nath, Gheranda, and others, has often been called the “Yoga of hardiness”. It might also very well be called “the Yoga of the backbone”, for that is what it is metaphorically and that is also what is practically its starting point physically.

... After the Introduction quoted above, Gheranda says: “(9) The Seven Exercises which appertain to this Training of the body are the following: — Purificatory, strengthening, steadying, calming, and those leading to lightness, perception, and isolation.” From the text to follow it stands out that the purificatory exercises are introductory ones, and that the Six Exercises to follow refer to the Six Spheres from Earth to the Moon. “(10—11) First: The purification is acquired by the regular performance of six practices (to be mentioned shortly); Second: Asana (body-posture) gives Dridhata (strength); Third: Mudra (organ-posture) gives Sthirati (steadiness); Fourth: Pratyahara (mind-discipline) gives Dhairyata (calmness); Fifth: Pranayama (breath-control) gives Laghima (lightness); Sixth: Dhyana (meditation) gives Pratyakshatva (perception) of Self; and Seventh: Samadhi (perfect contemplation and absorption) gives Nirliptata (detachment, isolation), which is verily Liberation.”

Wikipedia

Hatha Yoga is one of the two branches of Yoga that focuses on the physical culture, the other one being Raja Yoga. Both of these are commonly referred to as Sadanga Yoga, i.e., Yoga of six parts ('sad' meaning six and 'anga' meaning limbs). The six limbs are described below in detail. Svatmarama emphasizes many times in his Hathapradipika text that there is no Raja Yoga without Hatha Yoga and no Hatha Yoga without Raja Yoga. The main difference is that Raja Yoga uses asanas mainly to get the body ready for prolonged meditation, and hence focuses more on the meditative asana poses: Lotus Posture (padmasana), Accomplished Posture (siddhasana), Easy Posture (sukhasana) and Pelvic Posture (vajrasana). Hatha Yoga utilizes not only meditative postures but also cultural postures. Similarly, Raja Yoga's use of Pranayama is also devoid of extensive locks (bandha).

The most comprehensive text of Hatha Yoga is the Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Yogi Swatmarama. This work is nonetheless derived from older Sanskrit texts on Yoga besides Yogi Swatmarama's own yogic experiences. It includes information about shatkarma (purification), asana (postures), pranayama (subtle energy control), chakras (centers of energy), kundalini (instinct), bandhas (muscle force), kriyas (techniques; manifestations of kundalini), shakti (sacred force), nadis (channels), and mudras (symbolic gestures) among other topics.

Traditionally, Lord Shiva (आदित्य) is credited with propounding Hatha Yoga. It is said that on a lonely island, assuming nobody else would hear him, he gave the knowledge of Hatha Yoga to Goddess Parvati, but a fish heard the entire discourse, remaining still throughout. Lord Shiva took mercy on the fish (Matsya) and made him a siddha, who came to be known as Matsyendra-naatha. Matsyendra-naatha taught Hatha Yoga to Chaurangi, a limbless man who was given hands and feet by Matsyendra-naatha just by looking at him. Hatha Yoga Pradipika mentions Adinaatha, Matsyendra-naatha, Gorakhanaatha and many other yogis who became famous Hatha Yogis.

Many modern schools of Hatha Yoga derive from the school of Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya, who taught from 1924 until his death in 1989. Among his students prominent in popularizing Yoga in the West were Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, famous for popularizing the vigorous Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga style, B.K.S. Iyengar who emphasizes alignment and the use of props, Indra Devi and Krishnamacharya's son T.K.V. Desikachar who developed the Viniyoga style. Desikachar founded the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram in Chennai, with the aim of making available the heritage of yoga as taught by Krishnamacharya.

Another major stream of influence was Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh (1887- 1963) and his many disciples, including Swami Vishnu-devananda - founder of International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres, Swami Satyananda - of the Bihar School of Yoga, and Swami Satchidananda - of Integral Yoga, among others.

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Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: Is hatha yoga necessary?

M.: It is one of the aids - not that it is always necessary. It depends upon the person. Vichara surpasses pranayama. In Yoga Vasishtha Chudala advises investigation (vichara) to Sikhidvaja for killing the ego.

Reality can be reached by holding on to prana or intellect. Hatha yoga is the former; Vichara is the latter.

...

D.: A man sometimes finds that the physical body does not permit steady meditation. Should he practise yoga for training the body for the purpose?

M.: It is according to one's samskaras (predispositions). One man will practise hatha yoga for curing his bodily ills; another man will trust to God to cure them; a third man will use his will-power for it and a fourth man may be totally indifferent to them. But all of them will persist in meditation. The quest for the Self is the essential factor and all the rest are mere accessories. A man may have mastered the Vedanta philosophy and yet remain unable to control his thoughts. He may have a predisposition (purva samskara) which takes him to practise hatha yoga. He will believe that the mind can be controlled only by yoga and so he will practise it.

D.: What is most suitable for gaining facilities for steady dhyana?

M.: It depends on one's samskara. One may find hatha yoga suitable and another man nama japa, and so on. The essential point is the atma-vichara - enquiry into the Self.

...

D.: Is not hatha yoga necessary for the inquiry into the Self?

M.: Each one finds some one method suitable to himself, because of latent tendencies (purva samskara).

D.: Can hatha yoga be accomplished at my age?

M.: Why do you think of all that? Because you think it exterior to yourself you desire it and try for it. But do you not exist all along? Why do you leave yourself and go after something external?

D.: It is said in Aparoksha-anubhuti that hatha yoga is a necessary aid for inquiry into the Self.

M.: The hatha yogis claim to keep the body fit so that the enquiry may be effected without obstacles. They also say that life must be prolonged so that the enquiry may be carried to a successful end. Furthermore there are those who use some medicines (kay-akalpa) with that end in view. Their favourite example is: the screen must be perfect before the painting is begun. Yes, but which is the screen and which the painting? According to them the body is the screen and the inquiry into the Self is the painting. But is not the body itself a picture on the screen, the Self?

D.: But hatha yoga is so much spoken of as an aid.

M.: Yes. Even great pandits well versed in the Vedanta continue the practice of it. Otherwise their minds will not subside. So you may say it is useful for those who cannot otherwise still the mind.

Yoga and jnana

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Path of Jnana begins with and starts from Consciousness and Reality. The Path of Yoga, on the other hand, begins with man as he is found in his stage of ignorance and decay in the world, and lifts him up, stage by stage, by means of methodical self-discipline and spiritual practice. If Jnana begins “at the top”, Yoga begins “at the bottom”. As is clear, in actual life there can be no Jnana without some Yoga and no Yoga without some Jnana. Since life consists of cyclic recapitulations, an aspirant on the Path of Jnana is bound to recapitulate, often without his conscious intention, stages of Yoga. Similarly an aspirant on the Path of Yoga is bound to receive inspiration from previous contacts made with Jnana. Jnana is oriented on Siva, Static Divinity, and Yoga is oriented on Sakti, Dynamic Divinity, Energy, Power, Creative Activity, which takes for the Yogis the form of Kundalini, the Serpent Fire. But both traditions teach that Siva and Sakti are at heart One. Where they appear to be two by the power of Maya, the aim of the Sadhaka or spiritual striver should be to re-unite them into One within his soul and in his life. Both traditions teach this in their own terms.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

hatha yoga — from the verb root haṭh = “to oppress”

Wikipedia

Hatha Yoga, pronounced [ˈhəʈhə] in Hindi, is also known as hatha vidya or the “science of hatha” yoga. The word Hatha comes from combining the two Sanskrit terms “ha” meaning sun and “tha” meaning moon, referring to Praana and Apaana. The word “ha” refers to the solar nadi (pingala) in the subtle body and “tha” the lunar channel (ida). However, when the two components of the word are placed together, “hatha” means “forceful”, implying that powerful work must be done to purify the body. Yoga means to yoke, or to join two things together, hence hatha yoga is meant to join together sun (masculine, active) energy with the moon (feminine, receptive) energy, thus producing balance and greater power in an individual.

Related words

Yoga

Sanskrit

Hatha yoga — हठयोग

hathayoga - हठयोग

Hindu philosophy

Descriptions

Summary

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

All systems of Hindu Philosophy are in complete agreement that the purpose of philosophy is the extinction of sorrow and suffering and that the method is by the acquisition of knowledge of the true nature of things which aims to free man from the bondage of ignorance which all teachers agree is the cause of human suffering.

Hindu Philosophy does not attempt to train one to discern metaphysical truths; it offers a way of thinking which enables one rationally to understand the reality experienced by self-fulfilled personalities, and thereby to lead one to the realization of Truth. In this light, philosophy is seen as an art of life and not a theory about the universe, for it is the means of attaining the highest aspirations of man. It is not for the discovery, but for the understanding of Truth.

Chakravarti. Lectures on Hindu Religion

The Hindu philosophy ... is a part of the Hindu religion.

Systems of Hindu philosophy

Classic systems of Hindu philosophy

Sankhya

Yoga

Nyaya

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Nyāya was founded by Gotama. It is purely a system of logic, concerned with the means of acquiring right knowledge which it classifies under sixteen topics.

Vaisesika

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vaiśeṣika was founded by Kaṇāda. It classifies all knowledge of the objective world under nine realities and discusses how the various combinations of these nine basic realities bring all things into being.

Mimansa

Vedanta

Comments on the systems

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

According to Indian tradition there is only one Ultimate Reality, but there are six fundamental interpretations of that Reality. These are called the Ṣad Darśanas or “six insights”. ... Together they form a graduated interpretation of the Ultimate Reality, so interrelated that the hypothesis and method of each is dependent upon the other. In no way are they contradictory or antagonistic to one another, for they all lead to the same practical end, knowledge of the Absolute and Liberation of the Soul.

Wikipedia

In Hindu history, the distinction of these six schools was current in the Gupta period “golden age” of Hinduism. With the disappearance of Vaisesika and Mimamsa, it was obsolete by the later Middle Ages, when the various sub-schools of Vedanta (Dvaita “dualism”, Advaita “non-dualism” and others) began to rise to prominence as the main divisions of religious philosophy. Nyaya survived into the 17th century as Navya Nyaya “Neo-Nyaya”, while Sankhya gradually lost its status as an independent school, its tenets absorbed into Yoga and Vedanta.

Other classifications

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

The Hindu systems are here distinguished into six groups: (1) Samkhya and Yoga, which share a common metaphysics; (2) Nyaya and Vaisesika, which share an ontology; (3) “Mimamsa,” more properly “Purvamimamsa,” whose members share a common approach to the interpretation of the authority of the Vedas, which they view mainly as a source of prescriptions about behavior; (4) “Vedanta,” which treats the “closing sections of the Vedas” (vedanta)—the Upanishads—as authoritative; (5) a group of philosophical systems whose common ground is that their proponents are worshipers of Siva; and (6) the Grammarians (vaiyākaraṇa), who view the study of language as providing the key to liberation. Many of these approaches claim ancient authority for their standpoints.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

For the purpose of study, the six Darśanas have been classified into three divisions:

Nyāya -- Vaiśeṣika

Sāmkhya -- Yoga

Mīmāṃsā -- Vedānta

The first division lays down the methodology of science and elaborates the concepts of physics and chemistry to show how manifestation of phenomena comes into being; the second division sets forth an account of cosmic evolution on purely logical principles; and the third division critically analyses the basic principles, developing them in greater detail and furnishing arguments to substantiate, as well as making incidental contributions on points of special interest.

Astika (“orthodox”) darsanas

General

Wikipedia

Hindu philosophy is divided into six āstika (“orthodox”) schools of thought, or darshanas (literally, “views”), which accept the Vedas as supreme revealed scriptures. The other three nāstika (“heterodox”) schools, which do not accept the Vedas as supreme do not form part of Hindu philosophy. The āstika schools are:

- Sankhya, a strongly dualist theoretical exposition of mind and matter.
- Yoga, a school emphasizing meditation closely based on Sankhya

- Nyaya or logics
- Vaisheshika, an empiricist school of atomism
- Mimamsa, an anti-ascetic and anti-mysticist school of orthopraxy.
- Vedanta, opposing Vedic ritualism in favour of mysticism. Vedanta came to be the dominant current of Hinduism in the post-medieval period.

Nastika ("heterodox") darsanas

General

Wikipedia

The nāstika schools are:

- Buddhism
- Jainism
- Cārvāka, a skeptical materialist school, which died out in the 15th century and whose primary texts have been lost.

Common assumptions in Hindu philosophy

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

To understand correctly Hindu Philosophy, it is paramount that one realize that the basis of all the schools is the same. Together they form a graduated interpretation of the Ultimate Reality. Each school is based on the same metaphysical doctrine, while discussing some particular aspect of the whole. For example: Nyāya discusses the means by which knowledge may be had of the Ultimate Reality; Vaiśeṣika, the things to be known about that Ultimate Reality; Sāṃkhya, the evolution of metaphysical doctrine; Yoga, the metaphysical doctrine in relation to the individual; Mīmāṃsā, the rules and method of interpreting the doctrine; Vedānta, the relationship between God, Matter, and the world.

... They have many characteristics in common. They all grew out of the Upaniṣads, the philosophical portion of the Veda which is accepted as the supreme authority; they are delivered in the Sutra style, that is as aphorisms; as such, they are extremely concise, avoiding all unnecessary repetition and employing a rigid economy of words, making it difficult to understand them correctly in their original form without the use of commentaries, for they use many of the same terms, but each system gives its own meaning to the use of the term. They rest their conclusions on several common concepts: all accept the eternal cycle of Nature which is without beginning and end, and which consists of vast periods of creation, maintenance, and dissolution; all accept the principle of regeneration of the soul that maintains that life and death are but two phases of a single cycle to which the soul is bound and to which it clings because of ignorance of the true nature of things; all accept Dharma as the moral law of the universe that accounts for these eternal cycles of Nature, as well as the destiny of the human soul; all agree that knowledge is the path to freedom and that Yoga is the method to attain final liberation.

Srinivasa. Outlines of Indian philosophy

It was in ancient Greece and Rome so it is in modern Europe and America ; various schools of Philosophy are being propounded, each challenging every fundamental principle of the rest, Not so in India, where though the different Darsanas disagree about important questions, the ideas common to all these systems are so many and so vital that these deserve to be formulated by themselves under the name of Hindu Philosophy. These ideas are as a rule assumed and not definitely expounded in the literature of the different schools; each school being naturally anxious to explain and justify by argument, the special points of doctrine and

discipline which constitute its individuality, and differentiate it from its sister philosophies. These philosophical schools are commonly enumerated as six.

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

Commentary by Ballantyne:

Grand Aim of Hindu Philosophy. As already mentioned, Hindu philosophy arose when a pessimistic view began to be taken of life when existence was regarded as a curse, and freedom from future births was considered the highest good. All the six systems agree in this.

... This freedom from future births is called mukti or moksha, liberation. The doctrine is not found in the four Vedas ; it is a later development.

Related words

Advaita Vedanta

Darshana

Dvaita

Indian philosophy

Vedanta

Visishta-Advaita

Hiranyagarbha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Hiranyagarbha — ... “golden egg”; gold germ; the cosmic form of the self; cosmic womb; creator of the subtle universe

1. It is the thread self or the subtle vesture. It is the form of all the individuals together or the only individual. (See eka-jiva-vada.)

It is the seed of the universe. It is also known as sutratman. The Rg Veda (X.121) says, “Hiranyagarbha arose in the beginning; born, he was the one lord of things existing.”

2. A name of God, the Creator (saguna Brahman) as born from a golden egg. This egg was formed from the seed deposited in the primordial waters by the self- existent Brahman on the eve of creation. The seed took the form of a golden egg, out of which Brahman was born as Brahma, the creator. It also means the soul invested by the subtle body. Various synonyms for this term include mahat, virat, Isvara, saguna Brahman.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

hiranyagarbha -

a golden fetus;

N. of Brahmā (so called as born from a golden egg formed out of the seed deposited in the waters when they were produced as the first creation of the Self-existent; according to Mn. i, 9, this seed became a golden egg, resplendent as the sun, in which the Self-existent Brahma was born as Brahmā the Creator, who is therefore regarded as a manifestation of the Self-existent;
N. of the author of the hymn Rigveda x, 121;
of a Vedānta teacher;
of various other persons;
of Viṣṇu;
of a flamingo;
(in phil.) the soul invested with the śūkṣhma-śarīra or subtle body (= sūtrātman, prāṇātman) Vedāntas;
N. of a river;
N. of a Liṅga;
relating to Hiraṇya-garbha or Brahmā

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Hiranyagarbha ... is the Golden Embryo, Golden Egg, or Golden Womb identified in the Rig Veda (X.121) as the cause of the universe. Paradoxically, it has both a masculine and a feminine aspect. It is referred to as “he,” but it is also the “womb” of manifest reality.

From the beginning the term hiranyagarbha has had multivalent and sometimes contradictory meanings. In Rig Veda X.82 it is the cosmic egg that separates into two hemispheres, in the beginning of the world, its upper portion forming the sky and its yolk becoming the Sun. This vision is elaborated in the PURANAS, where other elements of the egg make up elements of the manifest universe: the water in the cosmic egg, for instance, becomes the ocean.

Various Hindu traditions have offered various and quite different understandings of this ancient image, even within the same tradition. Influenced by SAMKHYA concepts, some say that the PURUSHA (the transcendent divine) with the cooperation of PRAKRITI (nature) made the cosmic egg from which the world emerges. In one context BRAHMA, the creator, emerged from the egg to create the universe. In other contexts, however, Brahma is himself the hiranyagarbha; the word can be used as an epithet or alternate name of Brahma.

In Shaivite ... contexts hiranyagarbha is seen as a creation of SHIVA that embodies aspects of him. From hiranyagarbha, in turn, Brahma or the universe can emerge. In Vaishnavite ... mythology, VISHNU inspires or creates the hiranyagarbha, from which the universe derives. In the VEDANTA of SHANKARA the term takes on various meanings depending on the lineage and tradition expounding upon it. In this tradition it is often associated with a state of consciousness rather than an entity per se. For example, in Shankara's own commentaries hiranyagarbha is considered synonymous with the manifest universe, which is the product of MAYA.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Golden Embryo One of the earliest cosmological myths. It first appears in the Rg Veda (10.121), the oldest Hindu religious text. According to this account, the universe originally consisted of the Golden Embryo (Hiranyagarbha). The Golden Embryo stirred and evolved into Prajapati, the creator of all things and ruler over all creatures. In this story, as with most other accounts of Hindu cosmology, the cosmos originates from a single source and is thus an organic whole.

Wikipedia

Hiranyagarbha (... literally the 'golden womb' or 'golden egg', poetically rendered 'universal germ') is the source of the creation of the Universe or the manifested cosmos in Indian philosophy, it finds mention in one hymn of the Rigveda (RV 10.121), known as the 'Hiranyagarbha sukta' and presents an important glimpse of the emerging monism, or even monotheism, in the later Vedic period, along with the Nasadiya sukta suggesting a single creator deity predating all other gods (verse 8: *yó devésv ádhi devá éka âsīt*, Griffith: "He is the God of gods, and none beside him."), in the hymn identified as Prajapati.

The Upanishads calls it the Soul of the Universe or Brahman, and elaborates that Hiranyagarbha floated around in emptiness and the darkness of the non-existence for about a year, and then broke into two halves which formed the Swarga and the Prithvi. In classical Puranic Hinduism, Hiranyagarbha is a name of Brahma, so called because he was born from a golden egg (Manusmṛti 1.9), while the Mahabharata calls it the Manifest.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Hiranyagarbha, or th Golden Egg, is the first manifestation of Brahman, in which the future living beings remain in seed form.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

... the symbol of the most superactive principle of generation with which the world commences. It is called hiranyagarbha. Hiraṇya is the golden hue which symbolizes the delight that accompanies hope. Before the sun appears, the eastern sky gets a crimson hue. That indicates that the oriental sky is already pregnant with the golden sun.

... The best example of hiranyagarbha is the legendary golden egg. The egg has within it a thesis and an antithesis. The thesis is the enveloping mass of the yolk that is seen in an egg. The antithesis is the sperm which sits as a nucleus in the center of the yolk. It is hard to say whether the yolk is primeval or the nucleus is primeval. In all dialectical counterparts the polarized opposites have a simultaneity in their origin and a binary interaction between diem. In the case of an egg which has the program to hatch, it has the nucleus which is quantitatively far less than that of the yolk. And yet, the nucleus which is unicellular increases its hunger and the hunger is its dynamic to eat or absorb into it more and more of the yolk. Thus, qualitatively, the nucleus is superior to the voluminous yolk and the consequential synthesis changes the nucleus into a growing chicken whose enjoyment of Its feeding is continuously promulgated by its hunger. Ultimately the shell cannot contain the nucleus any longer. The shell breaks. The whole process of generation is one of the solitary act of self-beneficence.

Prasad. Three Acharyas and Narayana Guru tradition

Hiraṇya-garbha : Literally; "golden germ", "golden embryo". The Absolute treated as the seed of the universe. Also known as sūtratman (the thread-self). The creator imagined to be born from a golden egg. Various synonyms for this term include mahat, virāṭ puruṣa, Ívara, saḡuṇa-Brahman.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Holding the mind and investigating it is advised for a beginner. But what is mind after all? It is a projection of the Self. See for whom it appears and from where it rises. The 'I-thought' will be found to be the root-cause. Go deeper; the 'I-thought' disappears and there is an infinitely expanded 'I-consciousness'. That is otherwise called Hiranyagarbha. When it puts on limitations it appears as individuals.

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

Commentary by Nikilananda:

... a deity known as Hiranyagarbha (The Golden Germ) who is the first of all the evolved effects and from whom, as the matrix, the whole evolution proceeds. It is described in the Vedantic texts as the summation of all subtle bodies.

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

"Hiranyagarbha, the spirit of dreaming sentiences. The next emanation in the order of descent is Hiranyagarbha, Prana, the Threadspirit. This divine emanation is the totality of migrating souls in the state of dreaming sleep, the sum of the dreaming consciousness of the world. His body is the sum of the invisible bodies, the tenuous involucra (wrappers, sheaths) clothed in which the soul passes from body to body in the long process of metempsychosis. These invisible bodies are made up of three vestures one upon the other, the cognitional, the sensorial, and the aerial garments of soul. These three wrappers clothe Hiranyagarbha (the embryo of light.) He is called Sutratma, the Thread-spirit, as stringing together all dreaming souls clothed in the invisible bodies that accompany them in their migrations, as pearls are strung upon a thread to form a necklace.

Vedantaparibhasa. Dharmaraja

37. What is called Hiranyagarbha is the first jiva, other than the three mūrti-s (Brahmā, Visnu and Rudra) ; for there are such śruti texts as 'He verily is the first embodied one; he verily is called pīruṣa; the first creator of [all] beings, Brahmā, existed at first', 'Hiranyagarbha existed at first' (Rv.,X.121.1), etc.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

The Cosmic Mind, Hiranyagarbha, as we call it in the Vedānta, is the Cosmic 'I-Am'. It is Self-Consciousness, Pure Universality. And, here is the seed of all diversity.

See: Brahman, Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat

Hiranyagarbha and Virat

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

In the state of Isvara or Hiranyagarbha, there are no subjects and objects, and there is no seeing and seen. The seer-seen context of difference arises only after the Virat appears as a threefold reality: as adhibhuta which is the visible universe, adhyatma which

is the perceiving consciousness, and an invisible transcendent connecting link which is adhidaiva. Until this takes place, there is a total, integrated, direct consciousness which is omniscient. That omniscience which is transcendent to both the seer and the seen aspect of reality is Isvara – though He may be called by any other name.

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Katha Upanishad

Hiranyagarbha, the universal mind or intelligence, is also the support of all the worlds, the cause of all creation. The virat is an external or physical expression of that internal hiranyagarbha.

See: Taijasa and Hiranyagarbha

See also:

Evolution of Prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Hiranyagarbha (hiranya, gold; garbha, seed, egg, womb, embryo)

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Hiranyagarbha or “Golden Womb”. ... The Sanskrit “Garbha” means both “womb” and “germ”.

Related words

Ishvara

Mahat

Prajapati

Taijasa

Virat

Sanskrit

***Hiranyagarbha* — हिरण्यगर्भ**

Hiranyagarbha - हिरण्यगर्भः

Hita

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Hita — ... means to the end; beneficial; good; salutary

1. Visishtadvaita Vedanta refers to three main aspects of philosophy: tattva (reality), hita (means), and purusartha (goal of life).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

hita -

put, placed, set, laid, laid upon, imposed, lying or situated or contained in;

set up, established, fixed (as a prize);

planned, arranged (as a race or contest);

prepared, made ready;

beneficial, advantageous, salutary, wholesome, suitable, agreeing with (of ten, said of diet, regimen, medicines &c.), convenient, suitable, fit, agreeable to or for;

well-disposed, favourable, friendly, affectionate, kind;

N. of partic. veins or arteries;

anything useful or salutary or suitable or proper, benefit, advantage, profit, service, good, welfare, good advice &c.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Hita - what you like most, what you like to be or what makes you happy.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... the whole of creation is based on paradox. When you are lopsided and see only one side and not the other, you don't truly understand the game. You need to balance yourself at the neutral place where the two meet.

In the right eye is Indra, the master of the senses, and in the left eye is Viraj, the principle of sensation. They divide and then synchronize in the cavity of the heart. It is exactly like maithuna, the copulation of a man and a woman. They are so completely lost in each other that there is no separate identity of man or woman. There is no other. There is only the pure joy of oneness, union. In that union is hita, that which you like.

Hita is considered to be a system of nerves as fine as a single hair split into its thousandth part. It is very subtle, but it fills your whole system, extending in all directions like a spherical radiation of light. It goes to the east, west, north, south, above and below—in all directions. If you close off all the avenues by which you are distracted and your mind asks “what next?” you say, “Nothing next, neti, not this, not this. Never mind.” After a time you come to a stillness everywhere. On all sides you are filled with

that great stillness, that overwhelming, all-pervading stillness. Do not try to give it a name. What operates then is your hita, what you like most.

The hita is affected by the blood, where the residual karma is said to be located. I was wondering how that could be, and then I found a reference in McCullough's Embodiments of Mind to Aristotle, who had before him Hippocrates. They spoke of the same thing. From their time to 1921 it was believed that you think with your blood.

And how does it work? What you are and what you are going to be are always in your blood. This karma comes again and again to afflict your hita, causing ahita, what you don't like. Whenever ahita comes you should not let it prevail upon you, you should say neti, neti, "not that, not that." In this way you can become absolutely doubtless about your hita, in other words, what you like to be or what makes you happy. If you meditate that you are all light and all happiness, no one can keep you from it.

This combination of Viraj and Indra brings you the highest happiness, which is becoming one with the Total. Remain in it. How about your hands and legs moving, your lungs breathing and your senses functioning? These never cease, but you can just say "I am not that." You experience everything, but there is a silence in it. You are not restraining or restricting, just allowing things to be. At the same time, your mind is in a state of total reflection.

This brings you what Narayana Guru calls the state of all-knowingness. When you know everything, you are That.

Sanskrit

Hita — हित

hita - हति

Idam

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Idam — ... “this”

1. The Veda often uses this term to refer to the manifested universe.

2. Advaita Vedānta uses this term to refer to the foundation (adhiṣṭhāna) of illusions. The “this” in the perception of a snake superimposed upon a rope, is the rope which is the basis of the illusion of the snake.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

idam -

this, this here, referring to something near the speaker;

known, present;

this earthly world, this universe;

here, to this place;

now, even, just;

there;

with these words;

in this manner

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Idam: This. Stands for “this world,” the world here and now.

Descriptions

General

Muller. The Upanishads, Part 2

In English it may seem to make little difference whether we say, ‘Brahman was this,’ or ‘this was Brahman.’ In Sanskrit too we find, Brahma khalv idam vava sarvam, ‘Brahman indeed is all this’ (Maitr. Up. IV, 6), and Sarvam khalv idam Brahma, ‘all this is Brahman indeed’ (Khand. Up. III, 14, i). But the logical meaning is always that Brahman was all this, i. e. all that we see now, Brahman being the subject, idam the predicate. Brahman becomes idam, not idam Brahman.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... all knowledge begins by saying idam, this. Bertrand Russell, in his Logical Positivism, makes an analysis of what he calls atomic sentences. In them, the nuclear aspect is 'this'.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The mind is formed of thoughts only Idam (this) is the object and aham ('I') is the subject; the two together form the vijnanamaya-kosa (intellect-sheath)...

Another devotee: Is it not that the 'I' exists only in relation to a 'this' (aham - idam)?

M.: 'I', 'this' appear together now. But 'this' is contained (vyaptam) in the 'I' - they are not apart. 'This' has to merge into and become one with 'I'. The 'I' that remains over is the true 'I'.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda

18. Whatever of this world is perceived by the senses, the organs of action, the mind, reasoning and the scriptural texts, is referred to as 'this' (idam) in the Shruti text that follows.

19. "Before all this was created there was Being alone, one only, without a second; there was neither name nor form", so said Aruni.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Mandukya Upanishad

(34) This manifold plurality does not exist as identified with the Atman. Nor can it remain ever independently of itself. It is neither separate from Brahman, nor is the plurality non-separate from It. So say the realised wise men of the Upanishads.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

... Here the pluralistic world of phenomena is indicated by a beautiful expression which cannot be replaced; Idam (This). The phenomenal world is indicated by the term 'This'; all that we can perceive as 'This' and gain thereby a knowledge of them belong to the world-of-objects.

... Note that Idam (this) was used to indicate the world-of-objects (Yushmath pronoun); and Ayam (this) is used to indicate the world-of-subject (Asmath pronoun).

Related words

Aham

Vijnanamaya kosha

Sanskrit

idam — इदम्

idam - इदम्

Indian philosophy

Summary

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

Indian philosophy. The “India” in question is the Indian subcontinent— the land constituting present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and surrounding countries such as Sri Lanka to the south and Bhutan, Sikkim, Afghanistan, and Nepal to the north. And although philosophy in the sense in question covers much of what is covered by the term philosophy in its contemporary usage in English-speaking countries, it also has a specific use in the Indian context, in which it refers to the thoughts expressed in the literature relating to liberation (moksa; nirvaña). In this usage, philosophy, and the philosophical literature of India, is contrasted in Indian thinking with the literature pertaining to other matters, notably the literature concerned with political and social concerns (arthasastra), with interpersonal relations such as the sexual and aesthetic dimensions of love (kamasastra), and with morals (dharmastra), each of which has a pertinent literature of its own. The “philosophical” literature of India, then, relates to ultimate concerns, especially how to achieve liberation from rebirths and the nature of a universe in which liberation is possible and available. It is a literature that does not primarily include such Western fields of philosophy as political and social philosophy (for that is artha), aesthetics (for that is kama) and ethics (for that is dharma). It also does not include the literature concerning the natural and social sciences (although it is arguable that parts of Indian philosophy are offshoots of aspects of early Indian protoscience) or the applied sciences (agriculture, astronomy, and so on); nor does it include the domain of poetry and prose literature.

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

The philosophy of the Indians must become for every one who takes any interest in the investigation of philosophical truth, an object of the highest interest; for Indian philosophy is and will be the only possible parallel to what so far the Europeans have considered as philosophy. ... the whole of European thought from Pythagoras and Xenophanes, from Moses and Zoroaster, through Platonism and Christianity down to the Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy, forms a complex of ideas, whose elements are variously related to and dependent on each other. On the other hand Indian philosophy through all the centuries of its development has taken its course uninfluenced by West-Asiatic and European thought; and precisely for this reason the comparison of European philosophy with that of the Indians is of the highest interest.

Wikipedia

The term Indian philosophy (Sanskrit: Darshanas), may refer to any of several traditions of philosophical thought that originated in the Indian subcontinent, including Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and Jain philosophy. Having the same or rather intertwined origins, all of these philosophies have a common underlying theme of Dharma, and similarly attempt to explain the attainment of emancipation. They have been formalized and promulgated chiefly between 1,000 BC to a few centuries A.D, with residual commentaries and reformations continuing up to as late as the 20th century by Aurobindo and ISKCON among others, who provided stylized interpretations.

The characteristic of these schools is that they may belong to one “masthead” and disagree with each other, or be in agreement while professing allegiance to different banners. An example of the latter is the non- Vedic Jain and the Vedic Samkhya schools,

both of which have similar ideas on pluralism; an example of the former would be the Dvaita and the Advaita schools, both of whom are Vedic. However, every school has subtle differences.

Competition between the various schools was intense during their formative years, especially between 800 BC to 200 AD. Some like the Jain, Buddhist, Shaiva and Advaita schools survived, while others like Samkhya and Ajivika did not. The Sanskrit term for “philosopher” is dārśanika, one who is familiar with the systems of philosophy, or darśanas.

Descriptions

Periods of Indian philosophy

General

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

India falls into three parts — (1) the Panjab, (2) the plain of the Ganges, (3) the Deccan plateau. To these three geographical divisions correspond the three periods of Indian life: — (1) The domain of the Aryan Hindus in the oldest period was limited to the valley of the Indus with its five tributaries; the only literary monuments of this epoch are the 1017 hymns of the Ṛigveda. Though chiefly serving religious purposes they give by the way a lively and picturesque delineation of that primitive manner of life in which there were no castes, no âçramas (stages of life), and no Brahmanical order of life in general. The hymns of the Ṛigveda display not only the ancient Indian polytheism in its full extent, but contain also in certain of the later hymns the first germs of a philosophical view of the world. (2) It may have been about 1000 B. C. that the Aryans starting from the Panjab began to extend their conquests to the east and occupied little by little the plain extending from the Himalayas in the north and the Vindhya in the south to the mouth of the Ganges. The conquest of this territory may have been accomplished, roughly speaking, between 1000 and 500 B. C. As literary monuments of this second period of Indian life we find the Samhitâs of the Yajur-, Sâma-, and Atharvaveda, together with the Brâhmaṇas and their culmination in the Upanishads. Hand in hand with this literary development we have under the spiritual dominion of the Brahmans the establishment of that original organisation which as the Brahmanical order of life has survived in India with some modification until the present day. (3) After these two periods, which we may distinguish as “old-Vedic” and “new-Vedic”, follows a third period of Indian history — the “post-Vedic” — beginning about 500 B. C. with the rise of the heretical tendencies of Buddhism and Jainism, and producing in the succeeding centuries a large number of literary works in which, together with poetry, grammar, law, medicine and astronomy, a rich collection of philosophical works in Sanskrit permits us to trace the development of the philosophical mind down to the present time. In this period Indian, i. e., Brahmanical, civilisation makes its way round the coast of Southern India and Ceylon and penetrates conquering into the remotest districts of Central India.

Wikipedia

pre-1500 BCE - the Vedas and early prose Upanishads

pre-500 BCE - the Jaina, the Buddha, the Bhagavad Gita, the Manu Smriti

pre-300 BCE - the rise of the orthodox Darshanas

200 CE - Nagarjuna and the rise of Mahayana Buddhism

800 CE - Shankaracharya and the peak of Vedanta

post-900 CE - rise of dualistic/qualified dualistic Vedantic schools: Visishtadvaita, Dvaita, etc.

Systems of Indian philosophy

Common classification

Hindu philosophy

Jain philosophy

General

Wikipedia

Jainism came into formal being after Mahavira synthesized philosophies and promulgations, during the period around 550 BC, in the region that is present day Bihar in northern India. This period marked an ideological renaissance, in which the patriarchal Vedic dominance was challenged by various groups. Buddhism also arose during this period.

Jains however believe that the Jaina philosophy was in fact revived by Mahavira, whom they consider as the 24th and final Jain Tirthankars (enlightened seers), a line that stretches to time immemorial. The 23rd seer, Parsva may be dated to around 900 B.C. The Hindu scholar, Lokmanya Tilak credited Jainism with influencing Hinduism in the area of the cessation of animal sacrifice in Vedic rituals. Bal Gangadhar Tilak has described Jainism as the originator of Ahimsa...

A Jain is a follower of Jinas, spiritual 'victors' (Jina is Sanskrit for 'victor'), human beings who have rediscovered the dharma, become fully liberated and taught the spiritual path for the benefit of beings. Jains follow the teachings of 24 special Jinas who are known as Tirthankars ('ford- builders'). The 24th and most recent Tirthankar, Lord Mahavira, lived in c.6th century BC, which was a period of cultural revolution all over the world. Socrates was born in Greece, Zoroaster in Persia, Lao-Tse and Confucious in China and Mahavira and Buddha in India. The 23rd Thirthankar of Jains, Lord Parsvanatha is recognised now as a historical person, lived during 872 to 772 B.C. Jaina tradition is unanimous in making Rishabha, as the First Tirthankar.

One of the main characteristics of Jain belief is the emphasis on the immediate consequences of one's physical and mental behavior. Because Jains believe that everything is in some sense alive with many living beings possessing a soul, great care and awareness is required in going about one's business in the world. Jainism is a religious tradition in which all life is considered to be worthy of respect and Jain teaching emphasises this equality of all life advocating the non- harming of even the smallest creatures.

Non-violence (Ahimsa) is the basis of right View, the condition of right Knowledge and the kernel of right Conduct in Jainism. Jainism encourages spiritual independence (in the sense of relying on and cultivating one's own personal wisdom) and self-control (व्रत, vratae) which is considered vital for one's spiritual development. The goal, as with other Indian religions, is moksha which in Jainism is realization of the soul's true nature, a condition of omniscience (Kevala Jnana). Anekantavada is one of the principles of Jainism positing that reality is perceived differently from different points of view, and that no single point of view is completely true. Jain doctrine states that only Kevalis, those who have infinite knowledge, can know the true answer, and that all others would only know a part of the answer. Anekantavada is related to the Western philosophical doctrine of Subjectivism.

Buddhist philosophy

General

Wikipedia

Buddhist philosophy is a system of beliefs based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince later known as the Buddha(from Sanskrit "buddhi", enlightenment).

From its inception, Buddhism has had a strong philosophical component. Buddhism is founded on the rejection of certain orthodox Hindu philosophical concepts. The Buddha criticized all concepts of metaphysical being and non-being as misleading views caused by reification, and this critique is inextricable from the founding of Buddhism.

Buddhism shares many philosophical views with other Indian systems, such as belief in karma, a cause-and-effect relationship between all that has been done and all that will be done. Events that occur are held to be the direct result of previous events. However, a major difference is the Buddhist rejection of a permanent, self-existent soul (atman). This view is a central one in Hindu thought but is rejected by all Buddhists.

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

It is, indeed, impossible to give a finite list of Indian systems of philosophy. For one thing, new schools are being founded even now; their durability might be far from certain, but some recent ones have their adherents. For another thing, it is not always clear how to differentiate one system from another.

Common assumptions in Indian philosophy

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

All [major] systems in this survey accept at least two relevant theses: The first is that there was no absolute beginning of things, that the series of lives each of us has lived is without beginning. This doctrine of beginninglessness (anaditva) entails, of course, that there can be no God who created us ab initio or who functions as the first cause of the universe. As we shall see, this does not necessarily stop Indian philosophers talking about God (isvara); various roles are assigned to Him aside from that of ultimate creator.

The other thesis generally accepted by all systems except Carvaka is what is often referred to as the “karma theory” or the “law of karma.” Although many details about how karma works can be gleaned from the pages of the Indian philosophical literature, karma remains an assumption underlying all philosophical theories rather than a theory itself. It is infrequently defended, merely assumed.

Wikipedia

Indian thinkers viewed philosophy as a practical necessity that needed to be cultivated in order to understand how life can best be led. It became a custom for Indian writers to explain at the beginning of philosophical works how it serves human ends (puruṣārtha). They centered philosophy on an assumption that there is a unitary underlying order, which is all pervasive and omniscient. The efforts by various schools were concentrated on explaining this order. All major phenomena like those observed in nature, fate, occurrences, etc. were outcomes of this order.

The earliest mention of this appears in the Rig Veda, which speaks of the Brahman, or the universally transcendent and “ethereal” building block of all the world. It is described as dimensionless, timeless and beyond reach of the known frontiers of happiness and knowledge.

The idea of ṛta, translated as “righteousness” or “the cosmic and social order” by Gavin Flood, also plays an important role. The Indian philosophy is different from western philosophy: in their basic approach Indian philosophy is not only based on reason as the western philosophy is, instead as the word implies darshana it focuses on the real encountering of the truth and ultimate and

that's why all the Indian schools whether believe in god or not but they all have the same concepts of encountering the truth by some practical practises. The most important school of Indian philosophy is vedanta.

Modern philosophy

General

Wikipedia

Modern Indian philosophy was developed during British period (1750- 1947). The philosophers in this era gave contemporary meaning to traditional philosophy. Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Ramana Maharshi and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan interpreted traditional Indian philosophy in terms of contemporary significance. Osho and J. Krishnamurti developed their own schools of thought.

Today, there are several spiritual personalities: philosophers, teachers (gurus) or thinkers, such as Sri Sri Ravishankar, Deepak Chopra, Amma, Anadamayi and movements such as the Brahmakumaris.

Indian philosophy and religion

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

Whether Indian philosophy overlaps religion or not is a matter of how one thinks of "religion." The majority of the early Indian philosophical systems (darsana) do not acknowledge, and in some cases explicitly deny, the existence of a supreme being or lord (isvara).

Related words

Hindu philosophy

Indra

Variant spellings

Indra
Indha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Indra — ... "ruler"; "chief (of the gods in the Vedic pantheon); mighty; powerful

1. The Vedic king of heaven. The god of thunder, lightning, and rain. The Deity identified with strength. Known as the god of the atmosphere and sky as well as the god of rain, who in Vedic mythology, rules over the deities of the midregion and fights against, and conquers with his thunderbolt the demons or forces of darkness.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

indra -

the god of the atmosphere and sky;

the Indian Jupiter Pluvius or lord of rain (who in Vedic mythology reigns over the deities of the intermediate region or atmosphere; he fights against and conquers with his thunder-bolt [vajra] the demons of darkness, and is in general a symbol of generous heroism; indra was not originally lord of the gods of the sky, but his deeds were most useful to mankind, and he was therefore addressed in prayers and hymns more than any other deity, and ultimately superseded the more lofty and spiritual Varuṇa; in the later mythology indra is subordinated to the triad Brahman, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, but remained the chief of all other deities in the popular mind);

(he is also regent of the east quarter, and considered one of the twelve Adityas);

in the Vedānta he is identified with the supreme being;

best, excellent, the first, the chief (of any class of objects);

the pupil of the right eye (that of the left being called Indrāṇī or Indra's wife);

the number fourteen;

N. of a grammarian;

of a physician;

a vegetable poison;

the twenty-sixth Yoga or division of a circle on the plane of the ecliptic;

the Yoga star in the twenty-sixth Nakshatra, Pegasi;

the human soul, the portion of spirit residing in the body;

night

Lurker. Dictionary of Gods

Indra (the original meaning is 'strong', 'mighty') The supreme god in the Vedic pantheon. He brings rain, and is the heavenly representative of warriors; his weapon is the thunderbolt, which may have four or a hundred edges (vajra). He is red or gold in colour, and he is mounted on horseback or sits in a chariot drawn by horses. As Vrtrahan, Indra is the great dragon-slayer, who frees the streams obstructed by Vritra. In Hinduism, Indra is white in colour, clad in red, and he rides on the elephant Airavata which was generated by churning the ocean of milk. He is ruler of the easterly quarter. Indrāṇī or Śaci (= power) are named as his wives, and he is constantly accompanied by the Maruts. In Jainism, the word denotes the highest rank in divine hierarchies: that is to say, each class of gods has its specific Indra.

Wikipedia

Indra ... or Śakra is the King of the demi-gods or Devas and Lord of Heaven or Svargaloka in Hindu mythology. He is also the God of War, Storms, and Rainfall.

...

Indra is one of the chief deities in the Rigveda. He is celebrated as a demiurge who pushes up the sky, releases dawn (Ushas) from the Vala cave, and slays Vṛtra; both latter actions are central to the Soma sacrifice. On the other hand, he also commits (like Zeus) many kinds of mischief (kilbiṣa) for which he is sometimes punished. He has many epithets, notably vṛṣan the bull, and

vṛtrahan, slayer of Vṛtra and maghavan “the bountiful”. Indra appears as the name of an arch-demon in the Zoroastrian religion, while his epithet Verethragna appears as a god of victory.

In Puranic mythology, Indra is bestowed with a heroic and almost brash and amorous character at times, even as his reputation and role diminished in later Hinduism with the rise of the Trimurti. In Buddhist tradition, Indra is also called Śakra (Pali: Sakka). He is known in Burmese ...; in Thai ..., in Malay as Indera, in Tamil as Intiran, in Chinese as 帝释天 Dìshìtiān, and in Japanese as 帝釈天 Taishakuten.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Indra is the king of the gods in the VEDIC pantheon. He is a symbol of strength and has the character of a warrior. He is associated with the thunderstorm and is said to hold a lightning bolt in his hand. Many early Vedic hymns tell of his battle with the snake demon, Vritra, in the course of which Indra splits a mountain to release the terrestrial waters that Vritra has held back. Indra also fights a demon named Vala in order to release the “cows of the dawn,” perhaps indicating that he was the creator of daylight. Indra’s enemies are the Dasas and Dasyus; these have often been taken to refer to the indigenous tribes of India, but the context is not at all clear. At times the terms can best be translated as “enemy,” and at times they are seen to be mythological beings. In the Vedas Indra is also known as a great drinker of Soma, an intoxicant used in the Vedic ritual. SOMA itself is seen as a god. Indra is frequently invoked ritually in Vedic ritual. There are more hymns to him in RIG VEDA than to any other god. Sometimes he is invoked along with AGNI (the god of fire), probably linking the main divinity of the heavens, Indra, with a primary terrestrial deity, Agni, who is also the messenger of the gods.

The Vedic tradition often mentions Indra’s wife, Indrani. Post-Vedic mythology gives Indra the white elephant AIRAVATA as a mount to ride. Eventually Indra loses his supremacy and begins to be challenged and even ridiculed. KRISHNA protects his village from Indra by holding a mountain up as an umbrella to keep away his rains. Indra is cursed for consorting with a sage’s wife (AHALYA) and is afflicted, in one version of the story, with 1,000 vaginas, which are then changed into 1,000 eyes to justify his common Vedic epithet “thousand-eyed one.”

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In the older Vedic texts there is mention of Seven Adityas (Rig-veda IX; 114; 3 etc., Samavidhana Brahmana III; 1; 3; 3). In the later period of the Brahmanas there are Twelve Adityas (Satapatha Brahmana IV; 5; 7; 2 etc.). Actually, more than twelve names of Adityas are mentioned, therefore some names belong to alternative Gods or represent alternative functions of the same God. For reasons which will become apparent later, we shall begin with the Aditya of Pisces, following Varuna, “the King”, who represents Aquarius and is certainly the main Aditya.

Pisces is represented by the Aditya Indra or Hiranyagarbha. We have dwelt at length on the Indra or Jupiter of later Hindu tradition. His prototype existed in the Aditya Indra. This Indra is associated with gathering Clouds and Rain. Pisces is a Water-House. A Vedic hymn says that he “prepares the way for Surya”, that is, the Sun, who will rise in Aries, the Sign following on Pisces. It is further said that he “caused him to shine”. The Resurrection is presided over by the Guru in the previous House. It is said in the Rig-veda (X; 72) that “the Gods lifted Surya out of the Sea wherein he lay hidden”. The Sea represents Aquarius-Pisces or even the entire stage of the Celestial Ocean.

... Vedic hymns say about Indra: "He contains all that exists as the tyre of a wheel contains the spokes." The Wheel being the Path of the Zodiac, Jupiter, Lord of the Ether, appearing at the beginning in Pisces and at the end in Sagittarius, rules the Four Elements. "Not a hundred heavens and a hundred earths, with a thousand suns — no, not all created worlds could contain him." This is the case because heavens, earths and suns are created forms of Manifestation. The Lord of the World contains all as the tyre contains the wheel. He towers over all as the Summit over the Mountain.

Wikipedia

Origins

Aspects of Indra as a deity are cognate to other Indo-European gods; they are either thunder gods such as Thor, Perun, and Zeus, or gods of intoxicating drinks such as Dionysos. The name of Indra (Indara) is also mentioned among the gods of the Mitanni, a Hurrian speaking people who ruled northern Syria from ca. 1500BC-1300BC.

In the Rig Veda

Indra is, with Varuna and Mitra, one of the Ādityas, the chief gods of the Rigveda (besides Agni and the others such as the Ashvins). He delights in drinking Soma, and the central Vedic myth is his heroic defeat of Vṛtrá, liberating the rivers, or alternatively, his smashing of the Vala cave, a stone enclosure where the Panis had imprisoned the cows that are habitually identified with Ushas, the dawn(s). He is the god of war, smashing the stone fortresses of the Dasyu, but he is also invoked by combatants on both sides in the Battle of the Ten Kings.

The Rig-Veda frequently refers to him as Śakra: the mighty-one. In the Vedic period, the number of gods was assumed to be thirty-three and Indra was their lord. (Some early post Rigvedic texts such as the Khilas and the late Vedic Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad enumerates the gods as the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, the twelve Adityas, Indra, and Prajapati). As lord of the Vasus, Indra was also referred to as Vāsava.

By the age of the Vedanta, Indra became the prototype for all lords and thus a king could be called Mānavendra (Indra or lord of men) and Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, was referred to as Rāghavendra (Indra of the clan of Raghu). Hence the original Indra was also referred to as Devendra (Indra of the Devas). However, Sakra and Vasava were used exclusively for the original Indra. Though modern texts usually adhere to the name Indra, the traditional Hindu texts (the Vedas, epics and Puranas) use Indra, Sakra and Vasava interchangeably and with the same frequency.

Status and function

In the Rig Veda, Indra is the king of the gods and ruler of the heavens. Indra is the god of thunder and rain and a great warrior, a symbol of courage and strength. He leads the Deva (the gods who form and maintain Heaven) and the elements, such as Agni (Fire), Varuna (Water) and Surya (Sun), and constantly wages war against the opponents of the gods, the demon-like Asuras. As the god of war, he is also regarded as one of the Guardians of the directions, representing the east. As the favourite 'national' god of the Vedic Indians, Indra has about 250 hymns dedicated to him in the Rigveda.

Characteristics

In Rig Veda, Indra the solar god is sometimes described as golden-bodied ("Gora" that means golden-yellowish) with golden jaw, nails, hair, beard.

One Atharva Vedic verse reads, "In Indra are set fast all forms of golden hue."

In the RV 1.65 reads, "SAKRA, who is the purifier (of his worshipers), and well-skilled in horses, who is wonderful and golden-bodied." Rig Veda also reads that Indra "is the dancing god who, clothed in perfumed garments, golden-cheeked rides his golden

cart.” One passage calls him both brown and yellow. “Him with the fleece they purify, brown, golden-hued, beloved of all, Who with exhilarating juice goes forth to all the deities”

...

Indra’s weapon, which he used to kill Vritra, is the (Vajra), though he also uses a bow, a net, and a hook. In the post-Vedic period, he rides a large, four-tusked white elephant called Airavata. When portrayed having four arms, he has lances in two of his hands which resemble elephant goads. When he is shown to have two, he holds the Vajra and a bow. He lives in Svarga in the clouds around Mt. Meru. Deceased warriors go to his hall after death, where they live without sadness, pain or fear. They watch the Apsaras and the Gandharvas dance, and play games. The gods of the elements, celestial sages, great kings, and warriors enrich his court.

Relations with other gods

In Hindu myth, he is married to Indrani (whose father, Puloman, Indra killed), and is the father of Arjuna (by Kunti), Jayanta, Midhusa, Nilambara, Khamla, Rbhus, Rsabha. Indra is a brother to Surya. He is attended to by the Maruts (and the Vasus), children of Diti (mother of demons), and Rudra. Indra had slain Diti’s previous wicked children, so she hoped her son would be more powerful than him and kept herself pregnant for a century, practicing magic to aid her fetal son. When Indra discovered this, he threw a thunderbolt at her and shattered the fetus into 7 or 49 parts; each part regenerated into a complete individual, and the parts grew into the Maruts, a group of storm gods, who are less powerful than Indra.

Indra and Vṛtrá

In post-Vedic myth, Vṛtrá, an asura, stole all the water in the world and Indra drank much Soma to prepare himself for the battle with the huge serpent. He passed through Vṛtrá’s ninety-nine fortresses, slew the monster and brought water back to Earth. In another version of the story, Vṛtrá was created by Tvashtri to get revenge for Indra’s murder of his son, Trisiras, a pious Brahmin whose increase of power worried Indra. Vṛtrá won the battle and swallowed Indra, but the other gods forced him to vomit Indra out. The battle continued and Indra fled. Vishnu and the Rishis brokered a truce, and Indra swore he would not attack Vṛtrá with anything made of metal, wood, or stone, nor anything that was dry or wet, or during the day or the night. Indra used the foam from the waves of the ocean to kill him at twilight.

In yet another version, recounted in the Mahabharata, Vṛtrá was a Brahmin who got hold of supernatural powers, went rogue and became a danger to the gods. Indra had to intervene, and slew him after a hard fight. A horrible goddess named Brāhmanahatya (the personified sin of Brahmin murder) came from the dead corpse of Vṛtrá and pursued Indra, who hid inside a lotus flower. Indra went to Brahma and begged forgiveness for having killed a Brahmin. “Vajrayudha”, which Indra possessed, is believed to be prepared from backbone of a sage Dadhichi to kill Asuras.

In the Puranas

In post-Vedic texts, Indra is described with more human characteristics and vices than any other Vedic deity. Modern Hindus, also tend to see Indra as minor deity in comparison to others in the Hindu pantheon, such as Shiva, Vishnu, or Devi. A Puranic story illustrating the subjugation of Indra’s pride is illustrated in the story of Govardhan hill where Krishna, Avatar or incarnation of Vishnu carried the hill and protected his devotees when Indra, angered by non-worship of him, launched rains over the village.

Gautama’s curse

Indra tricked Ahalya, the wife of Gautama Maharishi, in the guise of the saint into letting him make love to her. He was punished by Gautama with a curse that one thousand vaginas would cover his body in a grotesque and vulgar display, and that his reign as

king of the gods would meet with disaster and catastrophe. The quote was something along the lines of “your body will be covered by that which you desired so much”. [13] Gautama later commuted the curse, upon the pleading of Brahma, to one thousand eyes instead. But according to Valmiki Ramayana the thousand eyed Indra was cursed by Gautama to lose his testicles. Indra later gets a new pair of testicles from a ram with the help of Agni.

Due to this sin Indra’s throne is supposed to remain insecure forever. He is repeatedly humiliated by demonic kings like Ravana of Lanka, whose son Indrajit (whose name means victory over Indra) bound Indra in serpent nooses and dragged him across Lanka in a humiliating display. Indrajit released Indra when Brahma convinced him to do so in exchange for celestial weapons, but Indra, as the defeated, had to pay tribute and accept Ravana’s supremacy. Indra realized the consequences of his sin, and was later avenged by the Avatar of Vishnu, Rama, who slew Ravana to deliver the three worlds from evil, as described in the epic Ramayana.

However, according to the tradition of the temple of Suchindrum, near Nagercoil, in Southern Tamil Nadu, Indra was promised relief from the curse, if he could manage to worship the Divine Trinity of Hinduism, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva simultaneously. This he succeeded in doing at Suchindrum, where the presiding deity is Sthanumalayan, a combined form of Shiva (Sthanu), Vishnu (Mal) and Brahma (Ayan), and was accordingly granted relief. Tradition maintains that he continues to worship each night at the temple, on account of which the priests of the temple, on appointment, are made to take a vow in Tamil “Aham kaṇḍathai puram ḥolla mattān”, meaning “I will never reveal anything I see within”. Further, part of their duty is to clean the sanctum sanctorum of the temple and leave it ready for all rituals at night before closing the temple and clean it again, when they re-open it in the morning.

Indra and the Ants

In this story from the Brahmavaivarta Purana, Indra defeats Vṛtrá and releases the waters. Elevated to the rank of King of the gods, Indra orders the heavenly craftsman, Vishvakarma, to build him a grand palace. Full of pride, Indra continues to demand more and more improvements for the palace. At last, exhausted, Vishvakarma asks Brahma the Creator for help. Brahma in turn appeals to Vishnu, the Supreme Being.

Vishnu visits Indra’s palace in the form of a Brahmin boy; Indra welcomes him in. Vishnu praises Indra’s palace, casually adding that no former Indra had succeeded in building such a palace. At first, Indra is amused by the Brahmin boy’s claim to know of former Indras. But the amusement turns to horror as the boy tells about Indra’s ancestors, about the great cycles of creation and destruction, and even about the infinite number of worlds scattered through the void, each with its own Indra. The boy claims to have seen them all. During the boy’s speech, a procession of ants had entered the hall. The boy saw the ants and laughed. Finally humbled, Indra asks the boy why he laughed. The boy reveals that the ants are all former Indras.

Another visitor enters the hall. He is Shiva, in the form of a hermit. On his chest lies a circular cluster of hairs, intact at the circumference but with a gap in the middle. Shiva reveals that each of these chest hairs corresponds to the life of one Indra. Each time a hair falls, one Indra dies and another replaces him.

No longer interested in wealth and honor, Indra rewards Vishvakarma and releases him from any further work on the palace. Indra himself decides to leave his life of luxury to become a hermit and seek wisdom. Horrified, Indra’s wife Shuchi asks the priest Brihaspati to change her husband’s mind. He teaches Indra to see the virtues of both the spiritual life and the worldly life. Thus, at the end of the story, Indra learns how to pursue wisdom while still fulfilling his kingly duties.

The 14 Indras

Each Manu rules during an eon called a Manvantara. 14 Manvantaras make up a Kalpa, a period corresponding to a day in the life of Brahma. Every Manvantara has 1 Indra that means with every Kalpa 14 Indras changes.

See also:

Hita

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Indra (the etymology is much disputed)...

Related words

Soma

Viraj

Sanskrit

Indra — इन्द्र

indra - इन्द्र

Indriyas

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Indriya — ... sense organ; “pertaining to Indra”

1. According to the Buddhists, the senses are but orbs.
2. According to the Mimamsakas, the senses are the capacities of the orbs.
3. According to Advaita Vedanta, the senses are the instruments of perception.
4. According to Dvaita Vedanta, the senses are the five external senses, the mind (manas), and the witness consciousness (sak-sin).
5. The five organs of knowledge are the ear (srotra), skin (tvak), eye (caksus), tongue (jihva), and nose (ghrana). (See jnanendriya.)
6. The five organs of action are the voice (vak), hand (pani), foot {pada), organ of excretion (payu), and the organ of generation (upastha). (See karmendriya.)
7. According to Nyaya, a sense organ is the seat of such contact with the mind which causes a cognition.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

indriya -

fit for or belonging to or agreeable to Indra;

a companion of Indra;

power, force, the quality which belongs especially to the mighty Indra;

exhibition of power, powerful act;

bodily power, power of the senses;

virile power;

semen virile;

faculty of sense, sense, organ of sense;

the number five as symbolical of the five senses. (In addition to the five organs of perception, buddhīndriyāṇi or jñānendriyāṇī, i.e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, and skin, the Hindūs enumerate five organs of action, karmendriyāṇī i.e. larynx, hand, foot, anus, and parts of generation ; between these ten organs and the soul or ātman stands manas or mind, considered as an eleventh organ ; in the Vedānta, manas, buddhi, ahaṁkāra, and citta form the four inner or internal organs, antar-indriyāṇi, so that according to this reckoning the organs are fourteen in number, each being presided over by its own ruler or niyantr ; thus, the eye by the Sun, the ear by the Quarters of the world, the nose by the two Aśvins, the tongue by Pracetas, the skin by the Wind, the voice by Fire, the hand by Indra, the foot by Viṣṇu, the anus by Mitra, the parts of generation by Prajāpati, manas by the Moon, buddhi by Brahman, ahaṁkāra by Śiva, citta by Viṣṇu as Acyuta ; in the Nyāya philosophy each organ is connected with its own peculiar element, the nose with the Earth, the tongue with Water, the eye with Light or Fire, the skin with Air, the ear with Ether ; the Jainas divide the whole creation into five sections, according to the number of organs attributed to each being.)

Wikipedia

Indriya, literally “belonging to or agreeable to Indra” is the Sanskrit and Pali term for physical strength or ability in general, and for the five senses more specifically.

In Buddhism, the term refers to multiple intrapsychic processes and is generally translated as “faculty” or, in specific contexts, as “spiritual faculty” or “controlling principle.” The term literally means “belonging to Indra,” chief deity in the Rig Veda and lord of Tāvatiṁsa heaven, hence connoting supremacy, dominance and control, attested in the general meaning of “power, strength” from the Rigveda.

In Buddhism, depending on the context, indriya traditionally refers to one of the following groups of faculties:

the “Five Spiritual Faculties”

five or six sensory faculties

22 phenomenological faculties.

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

... called Indriyas, meaning power, force or capacity. They are divided into two groups, five Abstract Knowing-Senses or powers of cognition called Jñānendriyas, and five Abstract Working-Senses or capacities for action called Karmendriyas. These powers are evolved to construct the world as a system of purposes or objects of desire. Their function is to give position to the objects.

The Jñānendriyas (Abstract Knowing-Senses) are the power to Hear (Śrota), the power to Feel (Tvak) the power to See (Cakṣus), the power to Taste (Rasana), and the power to Smell (Ghrāṇa). The Karmendriyas (Abstract Working-Senses) are the power to express (Vāk), the power to procreate (Upastha), the power to excrete (Pāyu), the power to grasp (Pāṇi), and the power to move (Pāda).

It must be kept in mind that these Abstract Sense-Powers (Indriyas) are only inherent capacities on the part of the Cosmic Mind (Manas) to cognize and act in one of five ways. They are powers which need instruments through which to function. All the Indriyas (Sense-Powers) arise simultaneously with Mind (Manas), and are classified as evolutes since they are produced, and do not produce new modes of being.

These ten-fold Abstract Sense-Powers (Indriyas) could have no real existence without objects. For example, the power to hear could have no meaning without something to hear, that is, sound. Similarly, with the other sense powers of feeling, seeing, tasting, and smelling. They must have something upon which to operate. So the moment these ten-fold Abstract Sense-Powers (Indriyas) manifest themselves, their correlated Subtle Elements (Tanmātras) come into being.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

Here is the eye, but the eye does not see. If the eyes did see, when a man is dead and his eyes are still perfect, they would still be able to see. There is some change somewhere; something has gone out of the man, and that something, which really sees and of which the eye is but the instrument, is called the organ. So this nose is an instrument, and there is an organ corresponding to it. Modern physiology can tell you what that is, a nerve centre in the brain. The eyes, ears, etc., are simply the external instruments. Thus the organs, indriyas, as they are called in Sanskrit, are the real seats of perception.

What is the use of having one organ for the nose, and one for the eyes, and so on? Why will not one serve the purpose? To make it clear to you: I am talking, and you are listening, and you do not see what is going on around you because the mind has attached itself to the organ of hearing, and has detached itself from the sight organ. If there were only one organ, the mind would see and hear and smell at the same time, and it would be impossible for it not to do all three at the same time. Therefore it is necessary that there should be separate organs for all these centres. ... It is certainly possible for us to see and hear at the same time, but that is because the mind attaches itself partially to both centres, which are the organs. What are the instruments? We see that these are external and made of the gross materials. Here they are—eyes, nose, and ears etc. Of what are the organs made? They are made of finer materials and are internal things because they are the centres. Just as this body is composed of gross material for transforming prana into different gross forces, so these finer organs behind are composed of finer materials, for the manufacture of prana into the finer forces of perception.

See: Inndriyas in Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

See also:

in Mahabhutas: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)
Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Jnanendriyas
Karmendriyas
Manas
Tanmatras

Sanskrit

Indriya — इन्द्रिय
indriya - इन्द्रिय

Isa

Variant spellings

Isa
Isha
īśa

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

īśa — ... Lord; master; ruler

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

īśa -

owning, possessing, sharing;
one who is completely master of anything;
capable of;
powerful, supreme;
a ruler, master, lord;
a husband;

a Rudra;
the number 'eleven' (as there are eleven Rudras);
N. of Śiva as regent of the north-east quarter;
N. of Śiva;
of Kuvera

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Isa: The Sanskrit equivalent to God. Literally, "one who controls." It refers to the principle that controls the integral law that sustains each entity as a particular mode of expression of the universal being.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

We may not arrive at etymological conclusions from similarity of letters or sounds, but we may, on account of a striking parallelism in the field of comparative symbolism, come to the conclusion that there has been association of ideas and words. In this light there is little doubt that there is a connection between the Isha of Genesis 2;23, the Isha of Hinduism, and the Isha who is Jesus. All three represent the spiritual stage on man's path. Furthermore, the Isha who is Jesus, is "God's Saviour", and the Isha of Hinduism represents God as Lord and Saviour, whose name, in the same or a derived form, is called upon for succour, by itself, or as suffix to another name of God. The most important of these names is Ishvara.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Experiencing the Isavasya Upanishad

Although it is a convention to call God Īśvara, we need not give an anthropomorphic God as our reference here. Īśā means that which oversees, governs and controls from within as a principle, law or intrinsic nature.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... the word isa means that which shines within you, animates you, gives you this never-ending supply of life's resources, and which functions as a definite, imperative law.

Isa and jiva

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Upadesa saram

God, the Creator, or Isa, has the attributes, 'all knowing' and 'all powerful'. The individual, or jiva, is ignorant and weak. Yet, basically, Isa and jiva are the same substance.

See also:

in Ishvara: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Related words

Isha Upanishad
Ishvara
Jiva

Sanskrit

Īśa — ईश
īśa — ईश

Isha Upanishad

Title

Īśa Upaniṣad — ईशोपनिषद्

īśa upaniṣad
Ishopanishad
īśopaniṣad
īśāvāsya upaniṣad
ईशोपनिषद्

Descriptions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

īśa Upaniṣad — ... “sitting steadfastly nearby the Lord”; the Lord Upaniṣad

1. The opening mantra of the wisdom section (Jñāna Kānda) section of the Vājasaneyī School of the Śukla Yajur Veda begins “īśāvāsyamidam sarvam . . . ,”—“all things of this world, the transitory, the evanescent, are enveloped by the Lord who is the real Reality of each,” and thus the Upaniṣad’s name. This Upaniṣad has only eighteen mantras, the first two which deal directly with the problem of liberation and the other sixteen which elaborate this solution and serve as commentaries thereon. It deals with the problem of the material causality of the world and of the human being’s relation thereto; with the nature of the highest truth; and with the difference between Reality and unreality and between knowledge and ignorance.

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

The Isha Upanishad appears in the White Yajur VEDA; it constitutes the Veda’s last chapter (unlike most Upanishads, which are found within the BRAHMANAS of the Veda). Isha literally means “lord” or “ruler,” and the Upanishad clearly has theistic overtones. It is a short Upanishad of only 18 stanzas.

Wikipedia

The Isha Upanishad ... is one of the shortest of the Upanishads, consisting of 17 or 18 verses in total; like other core texts of the vedanta, it is considered revealed scripture (Śruti) by diverse traditions within Hinduism. The name of the text derives from the incipit, Īśā, “by the Lord (Isha)”. The Upanishad appears in the final chapter (adhyāya) of the Shukla Yajurveda, but is historically one of the latest of the principal (mukhya) Upanishads, dating approximately to Mauryan times.

The short text covers a wide spectrum of philosophy, religion, ritualism and metaphysics.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Isha opens with a stanza describing the world as “indwelt by the Lord” (ishavasya). Stanza 5, frequently quoted, describes the BRAHMAN or ultimate reality: “It moves. It moves not. It is far and it is near. It is within all this; it is outside all this.” This attempts to show the incomprehensible infinitude of the ultimate. Also quoted often is verse 11, which states that the path of ritual and the path of knowledge of brahman are complementary. The cryptic verses 9, 12, 13, and 14, which speak of the relationship between higher knowledge and ignorance, have been frequently explicated by the classical commentators.

Wikipedia

The Isha Upanishad is significant amongst the Upanishads for its description of the nature of the supreme being (Ish). It presents a monist or non- dual perspective of the universe, in that it describes this being, ‘is unembodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without veins, pure and uncontaminated’ (verse 8), who ‘moves and does not move’, who is ‘far away, but very near as well’, who ‘although fixed in His abode is swifter than the mind’ (verses 4 & 5).

The text then asserts the oneness of the supreme self;

For the enlightened one all that exists is nothing but the Self and asks;

So how could any delusion or suffering continue for those who know this oneness?

The later verses take the form of a series of prayers requesting that the speaker be able to see past the supreme light or effulgence in order to understand the true nature of the Supreme Lord.

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Related words

Isa

Upanishads

Yajur Veda

Ishvara

Variant spellings

Ishvara

isvara

Īśvara

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Īśvara — ... Lord; God; the Great God ...; a quality (tattva) in Saivism

1. The Divine with form (saguna-brahman).

2. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, He is the supreme Ruler and Controller. He is full of auspicious qualities. He is both transcendent and immanent. The world of animate and inanimate entities emerge from His body. He is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. He is all-merciful and by His grace, individual souls attain liberation. He is the author of the universe, both as its material and efficient causes. He manifests himself in five forms as transcendent (parā); emanations (vyūha); incarnations (vibhava); indweller (antaryāmin); and sacred icons (area). As parā, He possesses six divine qualities: knowledge (jñāna), strength (bala), lordship (aiśvarya), potency (śakti), virility (vīrya), and splendor (tejas).

3. According to Advaita Vedānta, God (īśvara) is the Absolute (Brahman) as conditioned by ignorance or illusion (avidyā/māyā). The Absolute knows no distinctions; yet in relation to the world, the Godhead becomes its source and ground. Īśvara is both the material and efficient cause of the world. The saguṇa-brahman (īśvara) is said to be omnipotent, omniscient, and the creator, etc.

4. The fourth category (tattva) in the process of universal manifestation. In this tattva, "I" and "this" are equally prominent. The consciousness of Sadaśiva is "I am this." The consciousness of īśvara is "This am I." Knowledge (jñāna) is predominant in this tattva.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

Tīsvāra -

able to do, capable of (with gen. of Vedic inf., or with common inf.), liable, exposed to;

master, lord, prince, king, mistress, queen;

a husband;

God;

the Supreme Being;

the supreme soul (Atman);

Śiva;

one of the Rudras;

the god of love;

N. of a prince;

the number 'eleven';

N. of Durgā;

of Lakshmī;

of any other of the Śaktis or female energies of the deities;

N. of several plants

Wikipedia

Ishvara is a philosophical concept in Hinduism, meaning controller or the Supreme controller (i.e. God) in a monotheistic sense or as an Ishta-deva of monistic thought.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Isvara: The Sanskrit equivalent to "God." Literally, "one who controls everything." Isa + vara; vara, means "the highest."

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ishvara ("lord"). Primarily an epithet of the god Shiva, especially when the word is used at the end of compound names, such as Rameshvar, "the Lord of Rama," or Mahakaleshvar, "the Lord of Death." In its more general meaning as "lord," ishvara can also be part of the name taken by earthly rulers, such as the Chalukya monarch Someshvara (r. 1242–1268).

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Some have sought an etymological relationship between the Sanskrit "Ishvara" and the ancient Egyptian "Ausar", which is the true form of "Osiris". "Ishvara" is said to mean etymologically "the Ruling One, the Order-bringing One" and "Ausar" (Osiris) is said to mean "the Highest of the Powers" and "the Ruler". Osiris brought the order of the Tradition and was the offspring of Heaven and Earth

... It is clear that the saving factor in human life is the order of the Tradition as given by, and embodied in, a Man. In this connection it can be understood that Ishvara is the saving God and Osiris the saving God- Man. And Jesus is etymologically “God’s Saviour”.

Osiris being “Ausar”, Isis is “Auset”. The two form at heart the same duality as Ish and Isha, Ishvara and Ishvari, and Jesus and “the bride the soul”.

Wikipedia

In Sanskrit and in the languages of some Indianized countries that have borrowed vocabulary from Sanskrit, “Ishvara” is also used to denote a “lord” in a temporal sense, as any master or king (a dual usage also found in English). In this sense, “Ishvara” is often used in compounds, to designate the lord of some place or group. For example, “Lokesvara” is a compound of “loka” (world) and “isvara” (lord); it means “Lord of the world.” “Campesvara” is a compound consisting of “Champa” (the name of a medieval Indianized polity in central Vietnam) and “isvara” that means “lord of Champa.”

In Hinduism, the term is used as part of the compound “Maheshvara” (“great lord”) as a name for Siva. In Mahayana Buddhism it is used as part of the compound “Avalokiteśvara” (“lord who hears the cries of the world”), the name of a bodhisattva revered for his compassion. When referring to Divine as female, particularly in Shaktism, the feminine *Īśvarī* is sometimes used.

Schools of thought

Among the six systems of Hindu philosophy, early Samkhya and Mimamsa reject the concept of Ishvara, while later Samkhya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, Vedanta and Nyaya believe in the existence of an Ishvara.

Vedanta

Ishvara is a transcendent and immanent entity best described in the last chapter of the Shukla Yajur Veda Samhita, known as the Ishavasya Upanishad. It states *ishavasyam idam sarvam* which means whatever there is in this world is covered and filled with Ishvara. Ishvara not only creates the world, but then also enters into everything there is.

He created 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 unfounded, the intelligent and the unintelligent, the true and the untrue. (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.6.1)

The conception of Ishvara in Hinduism is very much dependent on the particular school of thought. While any one of five forms of a personal God can embody the concept of Ishvara in Advaita Vedanta, schools of Vaishnavism consider only Vishnu and His incarnations as the omnipotent Ishvara and all other forms of God as merely expansions or aspects of the Supreme Being.

Advaita Vedanta

Advaitism holds that when human beings think of Brahman, the Supreme Cosmic Spirit is projected upon the limited, finite human mind and appears as Ishvara. Therefore, the mind projects human attributes, such as personality, motherhood, and fatherhood on the Supreme Being. An interesting metaphor is that when the “reflection” of the Cosmic Spirit falls upon the mirror of Maya (*Māyā*; the principle of illusion, which binds the mind), it appears as the Supreme Lord. God (as in Brahman) is not thought to have such attributes in the true sense. However it may be helpful to project such attributes onto God.

Shankara

Ishvara is Saguna Brahman or Brahman with innumerable auspicious qualities. He is all- perfect, omniscient, omnipresent, incorporeal, independent, Creator of the world, its ruler and also destroyer. He is causeless, eternal and unchangeable — and is yet the material and the instrumental cause of the world. He is both immanent (like whiteness in milk) and transcendent (like a

watch-maker independent of a watch). He may be even regarded to have a personality. He is the subject of worship. He is the basis of morality and giver of the fruits of one's Karma. However, He himself is beyond sin and merit. He rules the world with his Maya — His divine power. This association with a "false" knowledge does not affect the perfection of Ishvara, in the same way as a magician is himself not tricked by his magic. However, while Ishvara is the Lord of Maya and she (ie, Maya) is always under his control, the living beings (jīva, in the sense of humans) are the servants of Maya (in the form of ignorance). This ignorance is the cause of the unhappiness and sin in the mortal world. While Ishvara is Infinite Bliss, humans are miserable. Ishvara always knows the unity of the Brahman substance, and the Mayic nature of the world. There is no place for a Satan in Hinduism, unlike Abrahamic religions. Advaitins explain the misery because of ignorance. Ishvara can also be visualized and worshipped in anthropomorphic form as deities such as Shiva, Vishnu or Devi.

Now the question arises as to why the Supreme Lord created the world. If one assumes that Ishvara creates the world for any incentive, this slanders the wholeness and perfection of Ishvara. For example, if one assumes that Ishvara creates the world for gaining something, it would be against His perfection. If we assume that He creates for compassion, it would be illogical, because the emotion of compassion cannot arise in a blank and void world in the beginning (when only Ishvara existed). So Adi Shankara assumes that Creation is a sport of Ishvara. It is His nature, just as it is man's nature to breathe.

The sole proof for Ishvara that Adi Shankara gives is Shruti's mentions of Ishvara, as Ishvara is beyond logic and thinking. This is similar to Kant's philosophy about Ishvara in which he says that "faith" is the basis of theism. However, Adi Shankara has also given few other logical proofs for Ishvara, but warning us not to completely rely on them:

The world is a work, an effect, and so must have real cause. This cause must be Ishvara.

The world has a wonderful unity, coordination and order, so its creator must have been an intelligent being.

People do good and sinful work and get its fruits, either in this life or after. People themselves cannot be the giver of their fruits, as no one would give himself the fruit of his sin. Also, this giver cannot be an unconscious object. So the giver of the fruits of Karma is Ishvara. See, Karma in Hinduism for more information.

Vishishtadvaita Vedanta

In Vishishtadvaita, Ishvara is the Supreme Cosmic Spirit who maintains complete control over the Universe and all the sentient beings, which together also form the pan-organistic body of Ishvara. The triad of Ishvara along with the universe and the sentient beings is Brahman, which signifies the completeness of existence. Ishvara is Para Brahman endowed with innumerable auspicious qualities (Kalyana Gunas). Ishvara is perfect, omniscient, omnipresent, incorporeal, independent, creator of the world, its active ruler and also the eventual destroyer. He is causeless, eternal and unchangeable — and is yet the material and the efficient cause of the world. He is both immanent (like whiteness in milk) and transcendent (like a watch-maker independent of a watch). He is the subject of worship. He is the basis of morality and giver of the fruits of one's Karma. He rules the world with His Māyā — His divine power.

Dvaita Vedanta

According to the Dvaita school, Ishvara possesses all the qualities seen in Vishishtadvaita. Ishvara is the efficient and material cause of the universe and the sentient beings and yet exists independently. Thus, Dvaitism does not separate Ishvara and Brahman, and does not believe that the highest form of Brahman is attributeless, or that Ishvara is incorporeal. Instead, Ishvara is the highest form of truth and worship of God involves belief in God as an infinite and yet personal and loving being.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

Isvara is not a personal God but the universal soul. Gough says:

“This conception of the world-projecting deity is not theistic- He is nothing else than the totality of souls in dreamless sleep, present in the heart of every living thing; himself only the first figment of the world-fiction; resolved into the characterless unity of Brahman, at the close of each age of the world, and issuing out of that unity at each palingenesia (second birth) in the eternal procession of the aeons. He is eternal, but every migrating soul is co-eternal with him, a co-eternal and only equally fictitious emanation of the one and only self. He can hardly be conceived to have any separate personality apart from the souls he permeates and vivifies; and his state is not one of consciousness, but that of the pure bliss of dreamless sleep. One with the sum of living beings in that state, he is yet said to allot to each of them their portion of weal and woe, but only in accordance with their merits in prior forms of embodied existence.... Isvara is no less unreal than the migrating soul; and both Isvara and the soul are only so far existent as they are fictitious manifestations of the one and only Self.”

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Brahman associated with the upādhi of collective ignorance is designated by Vedantists as Isvara or Saguṇa Brahman, who corresponds roughly to the Personal God of various religions. According to Non-dualistic Vedanta the Personal God is one step lower than Brahman, though He is the highest symbol or manifestation of Brahman in the relative world. Isvara is endowed with such qualities as omniscience, omnipresence, universal lordship, and unlimited power. Brahman cannot be described by any specific attribute. It is Isvara, and not Pure Brahman, who in His different aspects, is called the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe. Isvara, or Saguṇa Brahman, with the help of sattva, creates; with the help of rajas, preserves; and with the help of tamas, destroys. He is the Inner Controller of the universe. The light of Isvara that illumines the cosmic ignorance is the Light of Brahman. From the standpoint of Pure Brahman there is no creation; hence none of the attributes ascribed to Isvara applies to Brahman. As gold without dross cannot be used for ornaments, so pure Brahman, without the dross of māyā, cannot create the universe. Isvara is, as it were, a corruption or deterioration of Brahman.

See: Brahman, Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat

Ishvara and Maya

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Īshvara

Īshvara (literally, the Supreme Lord) — According to Advaita Vedanta, when man tries to know the attributeless Brahman with his mind, under the influence of Maya, Brahman becomes the Lord. Ishvara is Brahman with Maya — the manifested form of Brahman. Adi Shankara uses a metaphor that when the “reflection” of the Cosmic Spirit falls upon the mirror of Maya, it appears as the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is true only in the pragmatic level — his actual form in the transcendental level is the Cosmic Spirit.

Ishvara is Saguna Brahman or Brahman with innumerable auspicious qualities. He is all- perfect, omniscient, omnipresent, incorporeal, independent, Creator of the world, its ruler and also destroyer. He is causeless, eternal and unchangeable — and is yet the material and the instrumental cause of the world. He is both immanent (like whiteness in milk) and transcendent (like a watch-maker independent of a watch). He may be even regarded to have a personality. He is the subject of worship. He is the basis of morality and giver of the fruits of one's Karma. However, He himself is beyond sin and merit. He rules the world with his Maya — His divine power. This association with a "false" knowledge does not affect the perfection of Ishvara, in the same way as a magician is himself not tricked by his magic. However, while Ishvara is the Lord of Maya and she (ie, Maya) is always under his control, the living beings (jīva, in the sense of humans) are the servants of Maya (in the form of ignorance). This ignorance is the cause of the unhappiness and sin in the mortal world. While Ishvara is Infinite Bliss, humans are miserable. Ishvara always knows the unity of the Brahman substance, and the Mayic nature of the world. There is no place for a Satan in Hinduism, unlike Abrahamic religions. Advaitins explain the misery because of ignorance. Ishvara can also be visualized and worshipped in anthropomorphic form as deities such as Shiva, Vishnu or Devi.

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See: Jiva, samsara, Ishvara

See also:

in Virat: [Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda](#)

Evolution of Prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Íshvara — from the verb root is = "to rule".

Related words

Bhagavan

Brahman

Hiranyagarbha

Isa

Jiva

Kshetrajna

Mahat

Maya

Saguna-brahman

Virat

Sanskrit

Īśvara -- ईश्वर

Īśvara - ईश्वर

J

Jada

Variant spellings

jada
jaḍa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jaḍa — ... inert, unconscious; matter

1. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, it is a substance devoid of pure sattva. It is of two types, prakṛti and ākāśa.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jaḍa -
cold, frigid;
stiff, torpid, motionless, apathetic, senseless, stunned, paralysed;
stupid, dull;
void of life, inanimate, unintelligent;
dumb;
stunning, stupefying;
N. of Sumati (who simulated stupidity);
cold, frost;
idiocy;
dulness, apathy;
'inanimate', lifeless, matter (opposed to cetana);
water (= jala);
lead

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Jada ("inert," "insentient"). In a philosophical context, the word jada is used to designate physical matter, which is inert and devoid of cognitive functions. In a more extended sense, the word can refer to any person completely lacking religious capacities, sensibilities, or interest, and who is, thus, from a religious perspective, simply inert.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The present state is due to a mixing up of the chit (sentient) with jada (insentient).

...

D.: Is that Light like sunlight?

M.: No. The sunlight is jada (insentient). You are aware of it. It makes objects perceptible and chases away darkness, whereas consciousness is that Light which makes not only light but also darkness perceptible. Darkness cannot exist before sunlight, but it can remain in the Light of Consciousness. Similarly, this consciousness is pure Knowledge in which both knowledge and ignorance shine.

...

Another visitor asked: There is differentiation made between the sentient and the insentient (chit and jada) in the opening verse of Upadesa Sara.

M.: The Upadesa is from the standpoint of the hearer. There is no truth in the insentient (jada). One whole consciousness (chit) prevails all alone.

Related words

Opposite: Cetana

Opposite: Chaitanya

Opposite: Cit

Prakriti

Sanskrit

Jada — जड

jaḍa - जड

Jagad-Guru

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jagadguru — ... world teacher; great guru

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jagadguru -

the father of the world;

Brahmā;
Vishṇu;
Śiva;
Rāma (as Vishṇu's incarnation)

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Jagat-Guru: A Guru or preceptor as distinguished from the patriarch of a tribe or the leader of a parochial religion. What is stressed is the universal nature of the authority and the teaching here. All mystical teachers or contemplatives who identify themselves with no closed or static group may be said to be world or universal Teachers in this sense.

Sanskrit

Jagadguru — जगद् गुरु

jagadguru - जगद्गुरु

Jagat

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jagat — ... the world; cosmos

1. In Indian philosophy the world origin is traced either to a plurality of ultimate reals which are simple and atomic (as in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) or it may be derived from a single substance which is assumed to be complex and all-pervasive (as in Sāṅkhya-Yoga).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jagat -

moving, movable, locomotive, living;

composed in the Jagatī metre ṚV;

air, wind;

people, mankind;

that which moves or is alive, men and animals, animals as opposed to men, men;

the world, esp. this world, earth;

N. of a ṣāman;

heaven and the lower world;

n. pl. the worlds (= ...gat-traya);

people, mankind

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. *The philosophy of Narayana Guru*

Jagat: The world. Literally, “that which is always on the move.”

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. *Psychology of Darsanamala*

Jagat is “that which is of the nature of flux or becoming.” ... That which becomes a form and then changes into another form is jagat.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. *Drg-Drshya-Viveka*

what is ... the nature of the universe ?

... all this, consisting of the elements [Ether, air, fire, water and earth] and their products [various animate and inanimate objects] which are of the nature of the objects of enjoyment, is called Jagat (universe).

... Both Jiva and Jagat are the products of Maya; hence they are cognized so long as a man is in a state of ignorance.

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Chinmayananda

6. The world which is full of attachments, aversions, etc., is like a dream. It appears to be real, as long as it continues but appears to be unreal when one is awake (i.e., when true wisdom dawns).

7. The Jagat appears to be true (Satyam) so long as Brahman, the substratum, the basis of all this creation, is not realised. It is like the illusion of silver in the mother-of pearl.

8. Like bubbles in the water, the worlds rise, exist and dissolve in the Supreme Self, which is the material cause and the prop of everything.

9. All the manifested world of things and beings are projected by imagination upon the substratum which is the Eternal All-pervading Vishnu, whose nature is Existence- Intelligence; just as the different ornaments are all made out of the same gold.

See also:

in Namarupa and vastu: [Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani](#)

Related words

Jiva

Loka

Prapanca

Sanskrit

Jagat — जगत्

Jagrat

Variant spellings

jagrat
jagarita
jāgrat

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jāgrat — ... the waking state

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jāgrat -
waking

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

... the jagrat is the waking state. In it the jiva in the Visva aspect and the Lord in the Virat aspect, abiding together in the eight petals of the Heart lotus, function through the eyes and enjoy novel pleasures from various objects by means of all the senses, organs, etc. The five gross elements which are widespread, the ten senses, the five vital airs, the four inner faculties, the twenty-four fundamentals - all these together form the gross body. The jagrat state is characterised by satva guna denoted by the letter A and presided over by the deity Vishnu.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In Hindu tradition the first state of consciousness is known as Jagrat, or “the waking state”. It is traditionally called “the state of experience of gross objects”, hence “objective state”. It refers to consciousness on the physical plane and is associated with Vaikhari Sabda or “Sound manifested in spoken words”.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Cohen. Guru Ramana

Bh[agavan]. Patanjali's first sutras are indeed the climax of all systems of yoga. All yogas aim at the cessation of the vritti (modification of the mind). This can be brought about in the variety of ways mentioned in the scriptures through mind control, which frees consciousness from all thoughts and keeps it pure. Effort is necessary. In fact effort is itself yoga.

C. I suppose efforts have to be made in the waking state, which implies that moksha can be gained only in jagrat.

Bh. Quite so, awareness is necessary for mind control; otherwise who is to make the effort? You cannot make it in sleep or under the influence of drugs. Also mukti has to be gained in full awareness, because the Reality itself is pure awareness.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The waking consciousness is jāgaritasthānah, that consciousness which has its abode in the wakeful condition of the individual. And what is its special feature? Bahihprājñāah: It is conscious only of what is outside, not conscious of what is inside. ... Seven limbs this consciousness has, and nineteen mouths it has, and it eats the gross, - sthūlabhug. It swallows, consumes what is gross. And what is its name? Vaiśvānara is its name. This is the first foot of the Ātman. This is the outermost appearance of the Ātman...

The seven limbs of the first phase of the Ātman refer to a definition of the Cosmic Self given in one Upaniṣhad and the nineteen mouths refer to the functions of the self in its capacity as an individual, isolated from the cosmos...

There are nineteen functional apparatuses of this wakeful consciousness through which it receives vibrations from and establishes a contact with the outer world. [the fourfold antaḥkarana-catushtaya, coupled with the five jñānendriyas, five karmendriyas and five prānas, - the nineteen mouths of the jīva, the individual.]...

What do the nineteen mouths of the jīva consume? Physical objects. What do we see? Physical objects. What do we hear? Physical things. What do we taste? Physical objects. And what do we grasp with our hands? Physical objects. Where do we walk with our feet? On the physical earth. What do we think in our minds? Physical objects. All the functions of ours through these nineteen mouths are connected with the physical world. Even the ideas that we may entertain in our minds are connected with physical objects. ... This is jāgaritasthāna, the waking abode of consciousness, waking in the sense that it is wakeful to the physical world, it is aware of the physical world, and it knows nothing other than the physical world.

See: Sushupti and Jagrat

See also:

in Avarana: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

in Catuspada: [Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad](#)

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Related words

Broader term: Catuspada

Sushupti

Svapna

Turiya

Virat

Visva

Sanskrit

Jāgrat — जग्रत्

jāgrat - जाग्रत्

Japa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Japa — ... repetition; the recitation of the name of God, or of a mantra

1. Repetition of a mantra. It may be practiced orally, whispered, or mentally.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

japa -

'muttering, whispering';

muttering prayers, repeating in a murmuring tone passages from scripture or charms or names of a deity, &c., muttered prayer or spell

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Japa ("muttering," "whispering"). Individual recitation, usually the repeated utterance of a particular mantra or divine name(s), often while using a string of beads (mala) to perform a definite number of such repetitions. Such recitation is usually performed as an individual religious act, in a tone of voice audible to the reciter but not others who may be present. Japa is a particularly important practice in Hindu traditions stressing the benefits of reciting the divine name—such repetitions are believed to have gradual spiritual benefits. Japa is particularly stressed in the Gaudiya Vaishnavas community founded by the Bengali saint Chaitanya, where public recitation of the divine name is an important part of religious life.

Wikipedia

Japa ... is a spiritual discipline involving the meditative repetition of a mantra or name of God. The mantra or name may be spoken softly, enough for the practitioner to hear it, or it may be spoken purely within the recitor's mind. Japa may be performed while sitting in a meditation posture, while performing other activities, or as part of formal worship in group settings. The practice of repetitive prayer is present in varied forms within most religions in the world, although the religions of India generally give more emphasis to it as a specific discipline.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

japa: repetition of a sacred word or syllable or a name of God.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Varieties of Japa

Beads. In most forms of japa, the repetitions are counted using a string of beads known as a japa mala. Within Hindu traditions Vaishnava devotees commonly chant on beads made from the Tulsi plant (Holy Basil), held as a sacred manifestation of Tulsidevi; whereas Shaivites use Rudraksha beads. The number of beads in the japa mala is generally 108, which has great significance in both traditions. It is not uncommon for people to wear japa beads around their neck, although some practitioners prefer to carry them in a bead-bag in order to keep them clean.

Mental repetition. Independent of all beads or prayer devices, many Hindus will recite mantras, either under their breath or in mental introspection, at any given time of the day. This sort of casual chanting is said to be a way of inspiring reflection on either the self or God at all times, thereby attaining a life which, though interrupted by daily chores and concerns, is a constant flow of prayer...

Analogues in other traditions. Some Catholic prayer forms that involve repetition of prayers, such as use of the Rosary or one of various chaplets, could be classified as forms of japa, as with other Christian prayer forms... The practice of dhikr by Sufis and some other Muslims is also similar to japa, as is the practice of nembutsu in Pure Land Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhists include japa meditation as a large part of their religious practices.

Aims

The stated aim, or goal of japa may vary greatly depending on the mantra involved and the religious philosophy of the practitioner. In both Buddhist and Hindu traditions mantras may be given to aspirants by their guru, after some form of initiation. The stated goal could be moksha, nirvana, bhakti, or simple personal communion with God in a similar way to prayer. Many gurus and other spiritual teachers, and other religious leaders, especially Hindu and Buddhist, teach that these represent different names for the same transformed state of consciousness. However, this claim is not made about mantras that are not intended for spiritual growth and self-realization.

After long use of a mantra that is intended to foster self-realization or intimacy with God, an individual may reach a state of ajapa-japam. In ajapajapam, the mantra “repeats itself” in the mind. Similar states have been reached by Christians using the Jesus Prayer,[6] as well as by adherents to other major faith traditions, using prayers from their own traditions.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Japa is “continuous repetition” of the mantra, in the present case, AUM. Japa is intended to include the burning away of the dross of the mind (tapas), becoming intimate with the true nature of oneself (svadhyaya), mentally suggesting the general direction in which the revelation of the Absolute can be expected (bhavana), and establishing coordination between the conscious mind and the unconscious from where an archetypal revelation is believed to be arising (abhyasa).

When you repeatedly say the same word, it may produce monotony, which can induce a hypnotic slumber. When the mind turns into a tangent, if it is again and again brought back with deliberation to the attentiveness with which the mantra japa was started, this will help to dispel lethargy and inattentiveness. This is how tapas or the burning of the dross of the mind happens.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer, a railway officer, asked about japa.

M.: The utterance and then remembrance and later meditation are the successive stages finally ending in involuntary and eternal japa. The japakarta (doer of japa) of that kind is the Self. Of all the japas, ‘Who am I?’ is the best.

...

M.: When japa is the predominating tendency, vocal japa becomes eventually mental, which is the same as meditation.

...

M.: You are always repeating the mantra automatically. If you are not aware of the ajapa (unspoken chant) which is eternally going on, you should take to japa. Japa is made with an effort. The effort is meant to ward off other thoughts. Then the japa becomes mental and internal. Finally, its ajapa and eternal nature will be realised. For it will be found to be going on even without your effort. The effortless state is the state of realisation.

...

Another visitor asked: What should we do to make the mind still?

M.: First let the mind be caught hold of and brought here: then we shall consider ways and means of stilling it.

D.: I meant to say that it is always changing - even when we do our japa.

M.: Japa is meant only for stilling the mind.

D.: What japa is good for it?

M.: Anything suitable, such as Gayatri.

D.: Will Gayatri do?

M.: Can anything excel it? Only those who cannot do it look for others. It contains the whole range of truth in it. Chanting (japa) will lead to dhyana (meditation) and it is the means for realising the Self.

D.: Will half an hour a day do for it?

M.: It must be done always, or as long as you can.

...

D.: How is that 'I-thought' to be checked from rising?

M.: By Self-quest.

D.: I try to understand but without success. Can I find the Self by means of japa? If so, please tell me how.

M.: What japa? Why should you make artificial Japa? You can find out the eternal and natural japa always going on within you.

D.: Some upadesh will probably help me.

M.: If I say "Do - Rama, Rama" to one who has not struggled through books like you, he will do it and stick to it. If I say so to one like you who have read much and are investigating matters, you will not do it for long, because you will think, "Why should I do it? Above all, who am I that should be repeating the mantra? Let me find who I am before I proceed further"; and so you will stop japa and begin investigation.

...

A simple man, not learned, is satisfied with japa or worship. A Jnani is of course satisfied. The whole trouble is for the book-worms. Well, well. They will also get on.

...

Mr. Venkatakrishtayya, a lawyer-devotee, visited Sri Bhagavan ten years before and asked Him what he should do to improve himself. Sri Bhagavan told him to perform Gayatri Japa. The young man went away satisfied. When he returned after some years, he asked:

D.: If I meditate on the meaning of the Gayatri mantra, my mind again wanders. What is to be done?

M.: Were you told to meditate on the mantra or its meaning? You must think of the one who repeats the mantra.

Ramana. Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words

Japa, that is the use of incantations and invocations of a Divine Name, is one of the most widely practised techniques of spiritual training. It has particular affinity with the bhakti paths of love and devotion.

... The point is to keep out all other thoughts except the one thought of OM or Ram or God. All incantations and invocations help to do that. The more devotion there is behind the words the better this is accomplished, and therefore the more effective is the incantation.

... When the japa becomes continuous, all other thoughts cease and one is in one's real nature which is invocation or absorption.

... Oral incantation consists of sounds. The sounds arise from thoughts, for one must think before one expresses one's thoughts in words. The thoughts form the mind. Therefore mental invocation is better than oral.

... The repetition aloud of His name is better than praise. Better still is its faint murmur. But the best is repetition with the mind – and that is meditation

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit word japa is derived from the root jap-, meaning "to utter in a low voice, repeat internally, mutter".

Related words

Mantra
Tapas
Yajna

Sanskrit

Japa — जप
japa - जप

Jiva

Variant spellings

jiva
jiwa
jīva

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jīva — ... individual soul; life; embodied self; living entity

1. According to Jainism, the individual soul is characterized by consciousness, life, immateriality, and extension in space. Consciousness is its characteristic mark and consists in knowledge, insight, bliss, and power. The size of the individual (soul) is the same as that of the body that it occupies; expanding and contracting as the case may necessitate. It is held that there is plurality of individuals. They are of two basic kinds; stationary and mobile.
2. According to Buddhism, there is no individual (soul) apart from a cluster of factors. The individual is a mere name for a complex of changing constituents.
3. According to Nyāya, it is a noncomposite, partless, pervasive, eternal substance. There is an infinite number of individual souls.
4. According to Vaiśeṣika, it is an eternal, imperceptible, all-pervading, spiritual substance. There is an infinite number of individual souls.
5. According to Sāṅkhya, puruṣa is an eternal, immutable, conscious entity. It is nonactive and has neither birth nor death. What is subject to experience and empirical changes is the phenomenal self which is a blend of puruṣa and mind. There is an infinite number of individual souls.
6. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, individual souls are real, eternal, unborn, spiritual, have knowledge, and are of the nature of knowledge. They are atomic in size and infinite in number. They are an inseparable part of God and dependent thereupon. They are of three types: those eternally free (nitya), those liberated (mukta), and those bound (baddha). The individual soul as knowledge does not change, but bound soul's knowledge changes. The soul's knowledge is eternal and in the state of liberation is

all-knowing, but on account of empirical limitations this knowledge is diminished. The souls are both agent and enjoyer. They are a part or mode of God. Their relation is one of inseparability, with the individual soul related to and dependent upon God.

7. According to Dvaita Vedānta, individual souls are atomic in size and infinite in number. They are eternal and no two are alike. They are similar to God (Brahman) in kind, but not in degree. They are active agents dependent upon God's will. They are of three grades: the ever free (nitya), those having attained freedom (mukta), and those bound (baddha). Among the liberated souls there is an intrinsic gradation, and among the bound souls, there are three types: those fit for release (mukti-yogya), those eternally within the cycle of birth and death (nitya-samsāriri), and those fit only for hell (tamo-yogya).

8. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is a blend of the Self and not-Self with a wrong identification of each of the other. It is a complex entity consisting of the mind-body organism. It is a complex of the substrate intelligence plus the subtle body plus a reflection of consciousness therein. It is consciousness, inseparably qualified by the internal organs. It is a reflection of the consciousness (cidābhāsā) in impure sattva-predominant ignorance. It is the phenomenal, empirical ego. Intrinsically individuals are one, but phenomenally they are many; they are held to be all-pervading in size.

9. According to Vīra Śaivism, individual souls are in three stages of spiritual maturity: vīra, puruṣa, and aṅga. They are a part of Lord Śiva, eternal and essentially pure and perfect. They are also distinct from Śiva in that, though they share his essence, they do not possess his attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc. Their powers of knowledge and action are limited due to impurities. Thus, they are both identical and different from Lord Śiva. This relation is called difference-cum-nondifference (bheda-bheda).

10. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, individual souls are infinite in number, all-pervasive, and omniscient by nature, though veiled by the three impurities (mala). They are dependent upon God. They are of three types: those completely liberated (para-mukta), those liberated while living (jīvan-mukta), those craving power (adhikāra-mukta). Individual souls are also of three classes: those subject to the three malas (sakala), those subject only to āṇava- and karma-malas (pralayākala), and those subject only to āṇava-mala (vijñānākala). Individual souls are related to Lord Śiva as the body is related to the individual soul. That is, they are different, but they are not separate. In nature they are similar but in essence, as an entity, they are different. Even in release this distinctiveness remains.

11. According to Kashmir Śaivism, individual souls are called bound (paśu) due to limitations caused by impurities. Individual souls are eternal, real, identical with Lord Śiva, and essentially unlimited, allpervading, ever-conscious luminosity. Liberation comes by recognition of their real nature as being identical with Śiva. They are of four types: bound (paśu), peaceful (śānta), conceited and devoid of knowledge (pralaya-kevalin), and liberated (yijñāna-kevalin). The individual soul passes through the five elements (tatva) of the pure creation in a reverse order on its way to liberation. These stages are called mantra, mantreśa, mantra-meheśa, śaktija, and śambhava. Liberation comes when the soul remembers its identity with Lord Śiva.

12. According to Śivādvaita, individuals are a part of God (Brahman), eternal, atomic in size, infinite in number, dependent, and bound by their impurities (mala), though in essence they are pure and perfect. Liberation is being similar to, but not identical with, Lord Siva. It is the realization of one's own essential nature. This is achieved through contemplation of Lord Śiva.

13. According to Mīmāṃsā, the individual soul is one of the substances. It is eternal and distinct from the mind-body complex. It is an agent of action and the enjoyer of the fruits thereof. There is a plurality of individual souls.

14. According to the Yoga school, the individual soul is a changeless, eternal, omnipresent, conscious entity. It is entirely passive. Liberation comes when the individual soul roots out ignorance and stills the modifications of the mind.

15. The word *jīva* is derived from the root *jīv* which means “to continue breathing.” Other names for it include *bhotkā* (experient) and *kartd* (agent). It is also described as *puruṣa*, which is explained as *puriśaya* or “what lies in the citadel of the body.”

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jīva -

living, existing, alive ṚV;

healthy (blood);

living by;

causing to live, vivifying;

any living being, anything living ṚV. &c.;

life, existence MBh.;

the principle of life, vital breath, the living or personal soul (as distinguished from the universal soul see *jīvātman*) ṚV;

N. of a plant;

Bṛihaspati (regent of Jupiter);

the 3rd lustrum in the 60 years' *Bṛihaspati* cycle;

N. of one of the 8 Maruts;

Karṇa;

N. of a metre;

life;

the earth;

a bow-string;

the chord of an arc;

the sine of an arc;

N. of a plant;

the tinkling of ornaments;

Wikipedia

In Hinduism and Jainism, a *jiva* is a living being, or more specifically the immortal essence of a living being (human, animal, fish or plant etc...) which survives physical death. It has a very similar usage to 'atma', but whereas *atma* refers to 'the cosmic self', '*jiva*' is used to denote an individual 'living entity' or 'living being' specifically.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

jiva - The animating self of an individual organism, Similar to the Christian concept of the soul, except that Hindus believe that all living organisms have a *jiva*.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

In the Bhagavad Gita of Hinduism the jiva is described as immutable, eternal, and indestructible. It is said not to be a product of the material world (Prakrti), but of a higher 'spiritual' nature. At the point of physical death the jiva takes a new physical body depending on karma and the individual desires and necessities of the particular jiva in question.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

An individual living being is designated in Sanskrit by the word jiva. Derived from the root "jiv" meaning "to survive through breathing" (jiva- pranadharane), it is the Sanskrit equivalent to the modern word "organism." So I can say, "I am a jiva;"not,"I have a jiva."

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: There are six centres mentioned in the Yoga books; but the jiva is said to reside in the Heart. Is it not so?

M.: Yes. The jiva is said to remain in the Heart in deep sleep; and in the brain in the waking state. The Heart need not be taken to be the muscular cavity with four chambers which propels blood. There are indeed passages which support the view. There are others who take it to mean a set of ganglia or nerve centres about that region. Whichever view is correct does not matter to us. We are not concerned with anything less than ourselves. That we have certainly within us. There could be no doubts or discussions about that.

The Heart is used in the Vedas and the scriptures to denote the place whence the notion 'I' springs. Does it spring only from the fleshy ball? It springs within us somewhere right in the middle of our being. The 'I' has no location. Everything is the Self. There is nothing but that. So the Heart must be said to be the entire body of ourselves and of the entire universe, conceived as 'I'. But to help the practiser (abhyasi) we have to indicate a definite part of the Universe, or of the Body. So this Heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self. But in truth we are everywhere, we are all that is, and there is nothing else.

...

D.: What becomes of the jiva after death?

M.: The question is not appropriate for a jiva now living. A disembodied jiva may ask me, if convenient. In the meantime let the embodied jiva solve its present problem and find who he is. There will be an end of such doubts.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

An infinite number of jīvas fills this cosmos. All these jīvas are animated by a consciousness that is common to all. This consciousness is vaiśvānara; but, individually, when this consciousness is considered in terms of bodies, it is called jīva.

... When this consciousness [the initial state of our becoming aware of ourselves immediately after we wake up from deep sleep, [see in Sushupti] relates itself to other objects and persons, it becomes the individual, jīva.

See: Isa and jiva

Jiva and ahankara

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Narayana Guru

... in the case of a red-hot iron ball, fire and iron appear to be identified with each other. Similarly, the reflection of consciousness, coming in contact with ego, becomes completely identified with it and they cannot be separated from each other. This reflection of consciousness which identifies itself with the insentient ahankara is what is known as jiva or embodied being.

Jiva and upadhi

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

The jiva or embodied soul, is limited by three kinds of upādhis In dreamless sleep it is limited by the upādhi of the causal body; in the dream state, by that of the subtle body; and in the waking state, by the upādhi of both the gross and the subtle body. Consciousness, as it identifies itself with each of these upādhis, is technically known as prājña, taijasa and viśva.

Jiva, samsara, Ishvara

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

... externality-consciousness of the jīva binds it to what is called samsāra, and this bondage is due, not merely to its being aware of the world outside, but because of its evaluating the world, judging the world, wanting it or not wanting it in some way. There is no desire in the virāt [īsvara], while in the jīva there is desire. This is the only difference, if at all, between jīva and īsvara. Jīva, without desire, becomes īsvara; and īsvara, with desire, becomes jīva.

See: Prana and jiva

See: Sakshin and jiva

See: Samskaras and jivas

See also:

Sakshin and sushupti

in Advaita Vedanta: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

jīva — from the verb root jīv = “to live”.

[Wikipedia](#)

The word originates from the Sanskrit Jivás, with the root jīv- ‘to breathe’. It has the same Indo- European root as the Latin word Vivus: “Alive”.

Related words

Ahankara

Atman

Bhokta

Isa

Ishvara

Jagat

Kshetrajna

Moksha

Purusa

Saksin

Vaishvanara

Sanskrit

Jīva — जीव

jīva - जीव

Jivan Mukta

Variant spellings

Jivan Mukta

jivanmukta

jīvan-mukta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jīvanmukta — ... liberated while living

1. A doctrine admitted by Sāṅkhya, Advaita Vedānta, Kashmir Śaivism, and Śaiva Siddhānta, though with variations according to each system. The doctrine posits that an individual may be liberated even while living in a physical body.
2. According to Sāṅkhya, it occurs the moment there is an essential, experiential discrimination between the individual soul (puruṣa) and primordial Nature (prakṛti). The physical body continues due to past actions (karma), which had brought it about in the first place. When this action (karma) subsides, through experience thereof, the physical body falls and one is then released without the body (videhamukti).
3. According to Advaita Vedānta, liberation occurs with the destruction of ignorance (avidyā). The continuance of the physical body is in no way incompatible to liberation. Before liberation, one realizes that the physical body is only an illusory appearance. If the body were real, liberation could occur only after its destruction. However, liberation is a change of perspective. Since the physical body is not real, its continued appearance or disappearance is of no consequence. Thus, the jīvanmukta is one who lives in the world, but is not of it. Whether such an individual has a body or not is of no difference.
4. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, it is an individual soul which is freed from āṇava-, māyā-, and karma-malas and their operations. The individual enjoys bliss even while living in an embodied state.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jīvamukti -

emancipation while still alive

Descriptions

General

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

The esoteric Vedānta does not admit the reality of the world nor of the Samsara, for the only reality is Brahman, seized in ourselves as our own Atman. The knowledge of this Atman, the great intelligence: “aham brahma asmi”, does not produce moksha (deliverance), but is moksha itself...

When seeing Brahma as the highest and the lowest everywhere, all knots of our heart, all sorrows are split, all doubts vanish, and our works become nothing. Certainly no man can live without doing work, and so also the Jivanmukta; but he knows, that all these works are illusive, as this whole world is, and therefore they do not adhere to him nor produce for him a new life after death. ... He feels himself everything, — so he will not desire anything, for he has whatever can be had; — he feels himself everything, — so he will not injure anything, for nobody injures himself. He lives in the world, is surrounded by its illusions but not deceived by them: like the man suffering from timira, who sees two moons but knows that there is one only, so the Jivanmukta sees the manifold world and cannot get rid of seeing it, but he knows, that there is only one being, Brahman, the Atman, his own Self, and he verifies it by his deeds of pure disinterested morality. And so he expects his end, as the potter expects the end of the twirling of his wheel, after the vessel is ready. And then, for him, when death comes, no more Samsara ... He enters into brahman, like the streams into

the ocean ... he leaves behind him nama and rupam, he leaves behind him individuality, but he does not leave behind him his Atman, his Self. It is not the falling of the drop into the infinite ocean, it is the whole ocean, becoming free from the fetters of ice, returning from its frozen state to that what it is really and has never ceased to be, to its own all-pervading, eternal, all-mighty nature.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The jivan-mukta's life has two phases: It is either samādhi or mystic trance when he turns inwards and loses himself in Brahman; or the condition known as vyutthāna or reversion to common life when the spectacle of the world returns but does not delude him since he has once for all realized its metaphysical falsity. Diversity continues to appear then as the sun, we may say, continues to appear as moving even after we are convinced that it is stationary. A jivan-mukta experiences pain and pleasure, but neither really matters to him. He does not necessarily give up all activity as is abundantly illustrated by the strenuous life which Śamkara himself led, but it does not proceed from any selfish impulse or even from a sense of obligation to others. Blind love for the narrow self which ordinarily characterizes man and the consequent clinging to the mere particular are in his case replaced by enlightened and therefore equal love for all. The basis for this universal love is furnished by the Upaniṣadic teaching 'That thou art.' We should do unto others as we do to ourselves, because they are ourselves—a view which places the golden rule of morality on the surest of foundations. 'Who sees all beings in himself and himself in all beings—he will dislike none,' as the Upanisad says; or as the Gitā puts it, 'He harms not self by self.' The common laws of social morality and ritual which are significant only in reference to one that is striving for perfection are meaningless for him. The jivan-mukta, having transcended the stage of strife, is spontaneously virtuous. Impulse and desire become one in him. He is not then realizing virtue but is revealing it. 'In one that has awakened to a knowledge of the self, virtues like kindness imply no conscious effort whatsoever. They are second nature with him. When at last he is dissociated from the physical accompaniments, he is not reborn, but remains as Brahman. That is videha mukti.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

Philosophy is no joke or talk. It will be realised, this body will vanish, this earth and everything will vanish, this idea that I am the body or the mind, will for some time vanish, or if karma is ended it will disappear never to come back ; but if a part of the karma remains—as a potter's wheel after the potter has finished the pot, will sometimes go on from the past momentum—the body, when this delusion has vanished altogether, will go on for sometime. Again this world will come, men and women and animals will come ..., but not with the same force; for along with it will come the idea that I know its nature now and it will cause no bondage, no more pain, nor grief, nor misery. Whenever anything miserable will come the mind will be able to say, I know you as hallucination. When a man has reached that state he is called jivan-mukta, 'living free'—free even while living. The aim and end in this life for the Jnana Yogi is to become this jivan-mukta, or attain the state of 'living freedom.' He is jivan-mukta who can live in this world without being attached. He is like the lotus leaves in water, which are never wet by the water. He is the highest of human beings, nay, the highest of all beings, for he has realised his identity with the Absolute—he has realised that he is one with God. So long as you think you have the least difference from God, fear will seize you, but when you have known that you are He, that there is no difference, entirely no difference, between you and Him, that you are all of Him and the whole of Him, all fear ceases.

See also:

in Sravana: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Related words

Moksha

Sanskrit

Jivanmukti — जीवन्मुक्ति

jīvanmukti - जीवन्मुक्ति

Jivatman

Variant spellings

jivatman

jīvātman

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Jīvātman — ... the individual self (see jīva)

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

jīvātman -

the living or personal or individual soul (as distinct from the paramāt... q.v.), the vital principle

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Jivatma (Jivatman): Individuated self, as against the universal self (paramatman), in Sankara's school of Vedanta.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

[Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

As long as one is confusing the body with the Atman, Atman is said to be lost and one is said to seek for it, but the ATMAN itself is never lost. It always exists. A body is said to be Atman, an indriya is said to be Atman, then there is the Jivatman and Paramatman and what not. There are a thousand and one things called Atman. The search for Atman is to know that which is really Atman.

Jivatman and Paramatman

General

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

16. The identity of the highest and the individual âtman, though perfectly true from the metaphysical standpoint, remains incomprehensible for the empirical view of things; this view distinguishes a plurality of souls different from each other and from the highest âtman, the creative power of the universe. This distinction between the highest soul (paramâtman) and the individual souls (jîvâtman) is the characteristic feature of what we may term the theism of certain later Upanishads. It emerges for the first time in Kâthaka, where the two, God and the soul, are contrasted as light and shadow, which intimates that the latter has no reality of its own. But the constantly growing realistic tendencies went on sharpening this contrast, until in the Çvetâçvatara-Up. the highest soul, almighty and all-pervading as it is, is represented as essentially different from the individual soul which, limited and indigent, lives in the heart, smaller than the point of a needle, smaller than the ten-thousandth part of a hair; and this, says the text, “becomes infinity”. Even here God, though isolated and severed from the soul, lives together with it in the heart. As two birds living on the same tree, one of which feeds on the fruits of his works, while the other abstains from eating and only looks on; thus the individual soul, bewildered by his own impotence and grieving, looks for the help of the highest soul, or rather of his own divine and almighty self.

...

what is the relation between my individual soul, the Jîva-Âtman, and the highest soul, the Parama-Atman or Brahman ? Here Çaçñkara, like a prophet, foresees the deviations of Râmânuja, Mâdhva and Vallabha and refutes them in showing, that the Jîva cannot be a part of Brahman (Râmânuja), because Brahman is without parts (for it is timeless and spaceless, and all parts are either successions in time or co-ordinations in space, — as we may add), — neither a different thing from Brahman (Mâdhva), for Brahman is ekam eva advitiyam, as we may experience by anubhava, — nor a metamorphose of Brahman (Vallabha), for Brahman is unchangeable (for, as we know now by Kant, it is out of causality). The conclusion is, that the Jîva being neither a part nor a different thing, nor a variation of Brahman, must be the Paramâtman fully and totally himself, a conclusion made equally by the Vedântin Çaçñkara, by the Platonic Plotinos, and by the Kantian Schopenhauer. But Çaçñkara in his conclusions goes perhaps further than any of them. If really our soul, says he, is not a part of Brahman but Brahman himself, then all the attributes of Brahman, all-pervadingness, eternity, all-mightiness (scientifically spoken: exemption of space, time, causality) are ours ; aham brahma asmi, I am Brahman, and consequently I am all-pervading (spaceless), eternal (timeless), almighty (not limited in my doing by causality). But these godly qualities are hidden in me, says Çaçñkara, as the fire is hidden in the wood, and will appear only after the final deliverance.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

19. The union of the Jivatman with the Paramatman is like the union of the hour and the minute hands of a watch once in every hour. They are inter-related and interdependent, and though usually separate, they may become united as often as favorable opportunities occur.

...

21. What is the relation between the Jivatman and the Paramatman? As a current of water seems to be divided into two when a plank of wood is placed against it edgewise, so the Indivisible appears divided into two, the Jivatman and the Paramatman, due to

the limitation of Maya.

22. Water and a bubble on it are one and the same. The bubble has its birth in the water, floats on it, and is ultimately resolved into it. So also the Jivatman and the Paramatman are one and the same, the difference between them being only one of degree. For one is finite and limited while the other is infinite; one is dependent while the other is independent.

...

920. When the nest of a bird is destroyed, it betakes itself to the sky. Similarly, when the consciousness of the body and the outer world is effaced from the mind, the Jivatman (individual Spirit) soars into the sky of the Paramatman (Supreme Spirit) and merges itself in Samadhi.

Related words

Atman

Paramatman

Sanskrit

Jīvātman — जीवात्मन्

jīvātman - जीवात्मन्

Jnana

Variant spellings

jnana

jñāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jñāna — ... knowledge; wisdom; comprehension

1. According to Jainism, it is the knowledge of details.

2. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, it is a path to liberation. It is the direct means and takes the individual straight to God. Its goal is union with God (sāyujya).

3. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is the ultimate means to liberation. Since it is the only thing which is opposed to ignorance (avidyā), it is the only means to release.

4. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, knowledge is not only about objects but also about itself.

5. According to Mīmāṃsā, knowledge is a mode of the self. It is described as an act (kriyā), or process (vyāpāra). It is supersensible and though knowable, it is known only indirectly through inference and not directly through introspection as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika posits. It may be either mediate or immediate.

6. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is a modification (vṛtti) of the mind as inspired by the witness self (sākṣin). The mental modification (vṛtti) element is contingent and the element of consciousness is eternal. It is divided into sākṣi-jñāna and vṛtti-jñāna. ... It may be either mediate or immediate. The “that” of an object is known in mediate knowledge. In immediate knowledge, the “what” is also revealed. Immediate knowledge takes place when the following conditions are fulfilled: the object must be directly knowable (yogya); the object must be existent at the time; there should be established a certain intimate relation between the subject and the object.

7. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, knowledge is able to manifest itself and other objects unaided, but what it manifests is never for itself. It pertains to either individual soul (jīva) or to God (īśvara).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jñāna -

knowing, becoming acquainted with knowledge, (esp.) the higher knowledge (derived from meditation on the one Universal Spirit); 'knowledge about anything, cognizance';
conscience MBh.;

N. of a Śakti

Wikipedia

Jñāna or gñāna is the Sanskrit term for knowledge or philosophy.

In Buddhism, it refers to pure awareness that is free of conceptual encumbrances, and is contrasted with vijñana, which is a moment of 'divided knowing'.

In Hinduism it means true knowledge, the knowledge that one's self (atman) is identical with Ultimate Reality Brahman. It is also referred to as 'Atma Jnana' which is frequently translated as 'self- realization'.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Jnana: Wisdom. In the Vedantic context, the Wisdom of the non-difference of oneself from the universal Reality. The way of Jnana (Jnana marga) is contrasted with that of rituals and actions (karma marga).

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Jnana (from the root jna, “to know”) literally means “knowledge” but is better translated as “gnosis” or “realization.” Specifically, it is the knowledge of the unity between the highest reality, or BRAHMAN, and the individual self, or JIVATMAN. The role of jnana is developed in the philosophy of the UPANISHADS and most clearly outlined in the ADVAITA (non-dualist) philosophy of SHANKARA. Much thought and writing have focused on the nature of jnana in Indian tradition. Some see it as a cognitive function: once one understands the truth of the unity of brahman and the self intellectually, that is enough. Others require a realization of a mystic sort. VEDANTA has often been characterized as interested only in gaining jnana, but it has many paths that stress BHAKTI or devotion as the first step on the path toward the ultimate. Jnana yoga is one of the three major yogas mentioned in the BHAGAVAD GITA.

Wikipedia

As per hinduism, Jnana means a divine wisdom or total knowledge of everybody, everything, everywhere and everytime in the entire cosmos. This wisdom can only be given by God to a qualified human being.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Cohen. Guru Ramana

Bh. Subjective knowledge – knowledge knowing itself is jnana. It is then the subject as the knower, the object as the known and the knowledge which connects them.

C. This last is not clear to me in this case.

Bh. Why so? Knowledge is the light which links the seer to the seen. Suppose you go in search of a book in a library in pitch darkness. Can you find it without light, although you, the subject, and the book, the object, are both present? Light has to be present to unite you. This link between the subject and the object in every experience is chit, consciousness. It is both the substratum as well as the witness of the experience, the seer of Patanjali.

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

... asked: "Can jnana be lost after being once attained?"

M.: Jnana, once revealed, takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the direct experience of everyone, but not as one imagines it to be. It is only as it is. This Experience is samadhi. Just as fire remains without scorching against incantations or other devices but scorches otherwise, so also the Self remains veiled by vasanas and reveals itself when there are no vasanas. Owing to the fluctuation of the vasanas, jnana takes time to steady itself. Unsteady jnana is not enough to check rebirths. Jnana cannot remain unshaken side by side with vasanas. True, that in the proximity of a great master, the vasanas will cease to be active, the mind becomes still and samadhi results, similar to fire not scorching because of other devices. Thus the disciple gains true knowledge and right experience in the presence of the master. To remain unshaken in it further efforts are necessary. He will know it to be his real Being and thus be liberated even while alive. Samadhi with closed eyes is certainly good, but one must go further until it is realised that actionlessness and action are not hostile to each other. Fear of loss of samadhi while one is active is the sign of ignorance. Samadhi must be the natural life of everyone. There is a state beyond our efforts or effortlessness. Until it is realised effort is necessary. After tasting such Bliss, even once one will repeatedly try to regain it. Having once experienced the Bliss of Peace no one would like to be out of it or engaged himself otherwise. It is as difficult for a Jnani to engage in thoughts as it is for an ajnani to be free from thought.

The common man says that he does not know himself; he thinks many thoughts and cannot remain without thinking.

Any kind of activity does not affect a Jnani; his mind remains ever in eternal Peace.

... jnana. It is the state beyond knowledge and ignorance. Yet jnana is not ignorance but knowledge.

Jnana and ajnana

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Knowledge (jnana) is not incompatible with ignorance (ajnana) because the Self in purity is found to remain along with ignorance-seed (ajnana beeja) in sleep. But the incompatibility arises only in the waking and dream states.

Jnana and vijnana

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

Jnana, ajnana, and vijnana

SHYAM: “What remains with a man when he goes beyond jnana and ajnana, knowledge and ignorance.”

MASTER (smiling): “It is vijnana, special Knowledge of God. To know many things is ignorance. To know that God dwells in all beings is knowledge. And what is vijnana? It is to know God in a special manner, to converse with Him and feel Him to be one’s own relative.

“To know that there is fire in wood is knowledge. But to make a fire with that wood, cook food with that fire, and become healthy and strong from that food is vijnana.”

SHYAM (smiling): “And about the thorn?”

MASTER (smiling): “Yes. When a thorn gets into the sole of your foot, you procure a second thorn. After taking out the first thorn with the help of the second, you throw both thorns away. Likewise, you should procure the thorn of knowledge in order to remove the thorn of ignorance. After destroying ignorance, you should discard both knowledge and ignorance. Then you attain vijnana.”

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Swami Lokesananda, a sannyasi: What is meant by jnana and vijnana?

M.: These words may mean differently according to the context. Jnana = samanya jnana or Pure consciousness. Vijnana = Vishesha jnana. Vishesha may be (1) worldly (relative knowledge); and (2) transcendental (Self-Realisation).

Mind is necessary for vishesha; it modifies the purity of absolute consciousness. So vijnana represents intellect and the sheath composing it, i.e., relative knowledge. In that case jnana is common (samanya) running through vijnana samjnana, prajnana, ajnana, mati, dhirti - different modes of knowledge (vide: Aitareyopanishad, Chapter 3) or jnana is paroksha (hearsay) and vijnana is aparoksha (direct perception) as in jnana vijnana triptatma, one perfectly content with jnana and vijnana.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

The knowledge of the Self and the rest acquired from the scriptures and preceptors is jnana and the personal experience of knowledge thus acquired is vijnana.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

In commentaries of the Gita, the interpreters vary in the meaning they give to the words vijnana and jnana. Amarakosha, the famous dictionary of Sanskrit, says mokshe dhirjnanam anyatra vijnanam silpasastrayoh: When you are endowed with the wisdom of the Ultimate Reality which is moksha, that wisdom is called jnana; and vijnana is the arts and the sciences of the world, such as architecture, sculpture, etc. – vijnanam silpasastrayoh. But Acharya Sankara and certain other teachers say vijnana is the direct experience of what one has already known through jnana, or what may be called lower knowledge.

Jnana and yoga

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Path of Jnana begins with and starts from Yoga and Jnana Consciousness and Reality. The Path of Yoga, on the compared. other hand, begins with man as he is found in his stage of ignorance and decay in the world, and lifts him up, stage by stage, by means of methodical self-discipline and spiritual practice. If Jnana begins “at the top”, Yoga begins “at the bottom”. As is clear, in actual life there can be no Jnana without some Yoga and no Yoga without some Jnana. Since life consists of cyclic recapitulations, an aspirant on the Path of Jnana is bound to recapitulate, often without his conscious intention, stages of Yoga. Similarly an aspirant on the Path of Yoga is bound to receive inspiration from previous contacts made with Jnana.

Jnana is oriented on Siva, Static Divinity, and Yoga is oriented on Sakti, Dynamic Divinity, Energy, Power, Creative Activity, which takes for the Yogis the form of Kundalini, the Serpent Fire. But both traditions teach that Siva and Sakti are at heart One. Where they appear to be two by the power of Maya, the aim of the Sadhaka or spiritual striver should be to re-unite them into One within his soul and in his life. Both traditions teach this in their own terms.

Jnana, antahkarana, sakshin

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

By jñāna or knowledge in general we must understand in the system neither a vṛtti of the internal organ [antah-karaṇa] nor the sākṣin by itself, but a blend of both —the vṛtti as inspired by the sākṣin. In jñāna thus understood, the vṛtti element is contingent; the other, viz. the element of consciousness, is eternal, being intrinsically Brahman itself which, owing to its association with the vṛttis that appear and disappear, only seems to be characterized by change, but is really untouched by it. It is sometimes termed sākṣi-jñāna to distinguish it from vṛtti-jñāna or empirical knowledge which is a result of the interaction of subject and object. It is present always and it is impossible to think it away. It is ‘the light of all our seeing’ and does not cease to be even in deep sleep. Vidya and jnana

See also:

Buddhi and purusha

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

jñāna — from the verb root jñā = “to know”.

Related words

Avidya

Moksha
Triputi
Vidya
Vijnana
Vrtti

Sanskrit
Jñāna — ज्ञान
jñāna - ज्ञान

Jnana-kanda

Variant spellings
jnana-kanda
jñāna-kāṇḍa

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Jñāna-kāṇḍa — ... the parts of the Veda dealing with the knowledge of the Absolute (Brahman) (see karma- kanda)

Descriptions

See: Karma-kanda and jnana-kanda

Related words

Kanda
Karma-kanda
Upanishad
Veda

Sanskrit
Jñāna-kāṇḍa — ज्ञानकाण्ड
jñāna-kāṇḍa - ज्ञानकाण्ड

Jnana Yoga

Variant spellings

jnana yoga
jnanayoga
Jñāna Yoga

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jñāna Yoga — ... the path of wisdom; the Yoga of knowledge

1. One of the principal means to liberation (mokṣa). According to Advaita Vedānta it is the means to Self-realization. According to other schools of Vedānta, it is an aid to liberation.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jñānayoga-

the Yoga as based on the acquisition of true knowledge (opposed to karma-y... or the Yoga as based on performance of ceremonial rites)

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

732. Jnana Yoga is communion with God by means of Knowledge. The Jnani's object is to realise Brahman, the Absolute. He says "Not this" "Not this" and thus leaves out of account one unreal thing after another until he gets to a point where all Vichara (discrimination) between the real and the unreal ceases, and Brahman is realised in Samadhi.

743. Jnana Yoga is exceedingly difficult in this age of Kali. In the first place, our life in this age depends entirely upon food (Annagataprana). Secondly, the term of human life now is much too short for this purpose. Thirdly, it is almost impossible in this age to get rid of the illusion that the Self is one with the body (Dehatmabuddhi), which clings to us. Now the conclusion which the Jnani must come to is : " I am not the body, I am one with the Universal Soul, the Absolute and Unconditioned Being. "As I am not the body, I am not subject to the conditions of the body, such as hunger, thirst, birth, death, disease and the rest. One subject to these physical conditions and yet calling oneself a Jnani, is like a person who is suffering from intense pain caused by a thorn that has run into his hand and who nevertheless says, " Why, my hand is not at all scratched or torn. It is all right. This kind of talk will not do. First of all the thorn of body-consciousness has to be burnt into ashes by the fire of Jnana.

744. Very few persons are fit for the attainment of Jnana. The Gita declares: "One among thousands desires to know Him; and even among thousands of those who are desirous to know, one perhaps can actually know Him." The less one's attachment to the world, i.e., for 'woman and gold' the more will be one's Jnana (knowledge of God).

See also:

in Bhagavat Gita: [Wikipedia](#)

Related words

Buddhi-yoga
Yoga

Sanskrit

Jñāna Yoga — ज्ञान योग

Jñāna Yoga - ज्ञान योग

Jnanendriyas

Variant spellings

jnanendriya
jñānendriya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Jñānendriya — ... organs of knowledge; senses of knowledge

1. The five cognitive sense organs are the organs of knowledge. They are the organs of hearing (śrotra), touch (tvak), sight (cakṣus), taste (rasana), and smell (ghrāṇa).
2. The Sāṅkhya school also includes the mind (manas) as one of the sense organs. The Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika also includes mind as one of the indhyas.
3. They are also referred to as the “internal senses” as they impact knowledge from inside.

Dictionary - Runes

Jnanendriya : (Skr.) One of the five indriyas (q.v.) of knowledge, the cognitive senses or powers of hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. K.F.L.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Jnanendriya (“organ of awareness”). In Indian philosophy, jnanendriya refers to any of the sense organs, traditionally considered to be the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and skin.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The knowing senses (jñānendriyas) are: the power to hear (śrota), the power to feel (tvak), the power to see (cakṣus), the power to taste (rasana), and the power to smell (ghrāṇa). They function respectively through the organs of ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jñānendriya -

'knowledge-organ', an organ of sensation

Descriptions

See: Jnanendriyas in Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

See: Manomaya kosha, manas, jnanendryas

See also:

in Tanmatras: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Broader term: Indriyas

Karmendriyas

Sanskrit

Jñānendriya — ज्ञानेन्द्रिय

jñānendriya - ज्ञानेन्द्रिय

Jnanin

Variant spellings

jnanin

jnani

jñānin

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jñānin -

knowing, endowed with knowledge or intelligence, wise, (opposed to vi-) knowing the higher knowledge or knowledge of spirit; a fortune-teller, astrologer; 'possessing religious wisdom', a sage

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. *The philosophy of Narayana Guru*

Jnanin: One who possesses jnana. One who has attained enlightenment. Jnana means wisdom as contrasted with karma (works or rituals). Jnana marga or the way of wisdom gives primacy to reason and intuition.

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. *The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*

The jnani sticking to the path of knowledge, always reasons about the Reality, saying, 'Not this, not this'. Brahman is neither 'this' nor 'that'; It is neither the universe nor its living beings. Reasoning in this way, the mind becomes steady. Then it disappears and the aspirant goes into samadhi. This is the knowledge of Brahman. It is the unwavering conviction of the jnani that Brahman alone is real and the world illusory. All these names and forms are illusory, like a dream. What Brahman is cannot be described. One cannot even say that Brahman is a Person. This is the opinion of the jnanis, the followers of Vedanta philosophy.

...

... the jnani—the Vedantist, for instance—always reasons, applying the process of 'Not this, not this'. Through this discrimination he realizes, by his inner perception, that the ego and the universe are both illusory, like a dream. Then the jnani realizes Brahman in his own consciousness. He cannot describe what Brahman is.

...

The jnani experiences God-Consciousness within himself; it is like the upper Ganges, flowing in only one direction. To him the whole universe is illusory, like a dream; he is always established in the Reality of Self.

...

... just as a cholera patient feels excruciating pain at the time of death, because of retaining consciousness, so also a jnani with partial knowledge must feel extremely miserable leading the life of the world, which he knows to be illusory.

M: "People who are completely ignorant are like typhoid patients, who remain unconscious at the time of death and so do not feel the pain."

...

The jnani gets rid of all desire if any is left, it does not hurt him. At the touch of the philosopher's stone the sword is transformed into gold. Then that sword cannot do any killing. Just so, the jnani keeps only a semblance of anger and passion. They are anger and passion only in name and cannot injure him.

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

The Jnani says, the mind does not exist, neither the body. This idea of the body and of the mind must go, must be driven off; therefore it is foolish to think of them. It would be like trying to cure one ailment by bringing in another. His meditation therefore is the most difficult one, the negative; he denies everything, and what is left, is the Self. This is the most of analytical way. The Jnani wants to tear away the universe from the Self by the sheer force of analysis. It is very easy to say "I am a Jnani," but very hard to be one really. 'The way is long; it is, as it were, walking on the sharp edge of a razor, yet despair not. Awake, arise, and stop not until the goal is reached,' says the Vedas.

So what is the meditation of the Jnani? He wants to rise above every idea of body or mind, to drive away the idea that he is the body. For instance, when I say, "I, Swami—" immediately the idea of the body comes. What must I do then? I must give the mind a hard blow and say, "No, I am not the body, I am the Self." Who cares if disease comes or death in the most horrible form? I am not the body. Why make the body nice? To enjoy the illusion once more? To continue the slavery? Let it go, I am not the body. That is the way of the Jnani. The Bhakta says—"The Lord has given me this body that I may safely cross the ocean of life and I must cherish it until the journey is accomplished." The Yogi says, "I must be careful of the body so that I may go on steadily and finally attain liberation." The Jnani feels that he cannot wait, he must reach the goal this very moment. He says: "I am free through eternity. I am never bound: I am the God of the universe through all eternity. Who shall make me perfect? I am perfect already." When a man is perfect he sees perfection in others. When he sees imperfection, it is his own mind projecting itself. How can he see imperfection if he has not got it in himself? So the Jnani does not care for perfection or imperfection. None exists for him. As soon as he is free, he does not see good and evil. Who sees evil and good? He who has it in himself. Who sees the body? He who thinks he is the body. The moment you get rid of the idea that you are the body, you do not see the world at all. It vanishes for ever. The Jnani seeks to tear himself away from this bondage of matter by the force of intellectual conviction. This is the negative way—the 'Neti, Neti' ('Not this, Not this').

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Someone enquired: Why is it said in scriptures that the Sage is like a child?

M.: A child and a Sage (Jnani) are similar in a way. Incidents interest a child only so long as they last. It ceases to think of them after they have passed away. So then, it is apparent that they do not leave any impression on the child and it is not affected by them mentally. So it is with a Sage.

...

Major A. W. Chadwick, an ardent English devotee, asked, "Why did Jesus call out 'My God! My God!' while being crucified?"

M.: It might have been an intercession on behalf of the two thieves who were crucified with Him. Again a Jnani has attained liberation even while alive, here and now. It is immaterial as to how, where and when he leaves his body. Some jnanis may appear to suffer, others may be in samadhi, still others may disappear from sight before death. But that makes no difference to their jnana. Such suffering is apparent only to the onlooker and not to the Jnani, for he has already transcended the mistaken identity of the Self with the body.

...

Having once experienced the Bliss of Peace no one would like to be out of it or engaged himself otherwise. It is as difficult for a Jnani to engage in thoughts as it is for an ajnani to be free from thought.

The common man says that he does not know himself; he thinks many thoughts and cannot remain without thinking.

Any kind of activity does not affect a Jnani; his mind remains ever in eternal Peace.

...

D.: Should not a Jnani (a sage) be insensible to pain?

M.: Physical pain only follows body-consciousness; it cannot be in the absence of body-consciousness. Mind, being unaware of the body, cannot be aware of its pains or pleasures. Read the story of Indra and Ahalya in Yoga Vasishtha; there death itself is said to be an act of mind.

Pains are dependent on the ego; they cannot be without the 'I', but 'I' can remain without them.

...

M.: Until you gain jnana you cannot understand the state of a Jnani. There is no use asking about the work of Isvara and the rest. Some ask why Siva went naked in Daruka forest and spoiled the chastity of the rishi's wives.

The puranas which record this incident have also said that Siva had previously saved the Devas and the universe by consuming the poison halahala at the time of churning the ocean of milk. He, who could save the world from the deadly poison and lead the sages to emancipation, had also wandered nude amongst their women. Their actions are incomprehensible to ordinary intellects.

One must be a Jnani to understand a Jnani or Isvara.

D.: Should we not learn the jnani's ways and imitate them?

M.: It is no use.

See also:

in Avarana: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Related words

Jnana

Jnana Yoga

Vidvan

Sanskrit

Jñānin - ज्ञानिन्

jñānin - ज्ञानिन्

Jnata

Variant spellings

jnata

jñātā
jñātr
jnatr

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Jñātā (jñātr) — ... knower

Narayana Guru tradition

[Nitya. Meditations on the self](#)

Jnata - The agent of awareness; the knower of a thing or idea.

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Jnatr (Jnata): The knower Subject in the context of knowing.

Related words

Bhokta

Jnana

Jneya

Karta

Sanskrit

***Jñātā (jñātr)* — ज्ञाता**

jñātā (jñātr) - ज्ञाता

Jneya

Variant spellings

jneya

jñeya

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Jñeya — ... knowable things; the known object of knowledge

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

jñeya -

to be known;

to be learnt or understood or ascertained or investigated or perceived or inquired about;

'understanding what is to be understood', the mind;

intelligibleness

Related words

Jnana

Jnata

Sanskrit

Jñeya — ज्ञेय

jñeya - ज्ञेय

Kalpa

Variant spellings

kalpa
kāḷpa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kalpa — ... a cycle of time of an extremely long duration; way; method.

1. One of the six limbs of the Vedas. Texts describing sacrificial rites.
2. It is a “day” of Brahmā and is divided into a number of lesser periods called manvantara. Four yugas makes a mahā-yuga (or manvantara) and 1000 mahā-yugas make a half-kalpa or 4,320,000,000 years, which is the duration of one day or one night of Brahmā. Two half-kalpas make a kalpa which is one day of Brahmā (i.e., a day and a night).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kalpa -

practicable, feasible, possible;

proper, fit, able, competent, equal to;

a sacred precept, law, rule, ordinance, manner of acting, proceeding, practice (esp. that prescribed by the Vedas);

a rule to be observed before any other rule, first duty;

the most complete of the six Vedāṅgas (that which prescribes the ritual and gives rules for ceremonial or sacrificial acts);

one of two cases, one side of an argument, an alternative;

investigation, research;

resolve, determination;

treatment of the sick, manner of curing;

the art of preparing medicine, pharmacy;

the doctrine of poisons and antidotes;

having the manner or form of anything, similar to, resembling, like but with a **Contents** degree of inferiority, almost;
a fabulous period of time (a day of Brahmā or one thousand Yugas, a period of four thousand, three hundred and twenty millions of years of mortals, measuring the duration of the world ; a month of Brahmā is supposed to contain thirty such Kalpas. ; according to the MBh., twelve months of Brahmā constitute his year, and one hundred such years his lifetime ; fifty years of Brahmā’s are supposed to have elapsed, and we are now in the śvetavārāha-kalpa of the fifty-first ; at the end of a Kalpa the world is annihilated ; hence kalpa is said to be equal to kalpānta below L.; with Buddhists the Kalpas are not of equal duration);

a kind of dance;
N. of the first astrological mansion;
N. of a son of Dhruva and Bhrami;
of Śiva;
the tree of paradise;
a kind of intoxicating liquor (incorrect for kalya)

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Kalpa The largest unit of cosmic time, equivalent to 4.32 billion years. According to one concept, the kalpa is broken up into one thousand mahayugas, each lasting 4.32 million years. The kalpa, or Day of Brahma, is the longest conceived measure of time and is used to determine the duration of the universe. After the kalpa is complete, it is followed by an equally long “Night of Brahma,” a period of universal dissolution (pralaya).

Wikipedia

Kalpa is a Sanskrit word (कल्प kālpa) meaning an aeon, or a long period of time in Hindu and Buddhist cosmology. The concept is first mentioned in the Mahabharata. The definition of a kalpa equalling 4.32 billion years is found in the Puranas (specifically Vishnu Purana and Bhagavata Purana).

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The symbolic nature of the numbers connected with the Cycles also stands revealed from another tradition which tells that a thousand times Four Yugas make up the period which is called a Kalpa. Fourteen Kalpas make one Mahakalpa; fourteen Mahakalpas make one Chakra; fourteen Chakras make one Nishtha; fourteen Nishthas make one Manu; and fourteen Manus make one Maha-Manvantara. Many interpreters have multiplied these figures and made them refer in a literalistic manner to earthly periods. Actually the Kalpa is the period which refers to the material plane, the Mahakalpa that which refers to the Element Water, the Chakra that which refers to the Element Fire, the Nishtha that which refers to the Element Air, the Manu-period that which refers to the Element Ether, and the Maha-Manvantara that which refers to the Moon- Sphere. It is well-known to a great many people from dream and sleepexperiences that on the inner planes time is subtler and quicker in nature than in the world. This tradition records that the desireful life of the emotional or astral plane proceeds fourteen times as quickly as the life of the physical plane, that the activity of thought proceeds fourteen times as quickly as the activity of the emotional plane, that the Spirit works fourteen times as quickly as the lower mind, that the action of the Guru works fourteen times as quickly as that of the Spirit, and that Pure Consciousness works fourteen times as quickly as the Light of the Guru. The number fourteen has its special symbolical implications which have been dealt with before.

Wikipedia

In Hinduism (cf. Hindu Time Cycles), it is equal to 4.32 billion years, a “day of Brahma” or one thousand mahayugas, measuring the duration of the world (scientists estimate the age of the Earth at 4.54 billion years). Each kalpa is divided into 14 manvantara periods, each lasting 71 yuga cycles (306,720,000 years). Preceding the first and following each manvantara period is a juncture

(sandhya) the length of a Satya-yuga (1,728,000) years. Two kalpas constitute a day and night of Brahma. A “month of Brahma” is supposed to contain thirty such days (including nights), or 259.2 billion years. According to the Mahabharata, 12 months of Brahma (=360 days) constitute his year, and 100 such years the life cycle of the universe. Fifty years of Brahma are supposed to have elapsed, and we are now in the shvetavaraha-kalpa of the fifty-first; at the end of a Kalpa the world is annihilated.

See also: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kalpa — ... from the verb root kal - “to count, or impel”.

Related words

Pralaya

Yuga

Sanskrit

Kalpa — कल्प

kalpa - कल्प

Kama

Variant spellings

kama

kāma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kāma — ... desire; pleasure; lust; love

1. One of the four values of life. It is the hedonistic or the psychological value of life.

2. The god of beauty and love. Born from the Creator’s (Brahmā’s) mind.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kāma -

wish, desire, longing;

pleasure, enjoyment;
love, especially sexual love or sensuality;
Love or Desire personified;
N. of the god of love;
(represented as son of Dharma and husband of Rati [MBh...] ; or as a son of Brahmā VP. ; or sometimes of Saṁkalpa;
N. of Agni;
of Viṣṇu;
of Baladeva;
a stake in gambling;
a species of mango tree;
N. of a metre consisting of four lines of two long syllables each;
a kind of bean;
a particular form of temple;
object of desire;
semen virile;
wishing, desiring;
desirous of, desiring, having a desire or intention

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Kamadeva or Kama is the Indian cupid, the god of love. He is found in the VEDAS as a divinity, but his character was developed in the Indian epics and PURANAS. Most famously Kamadeva is known to have been burned to ashes by the third eye of Lord SHIVA. In that tale, Shiva was in a state of MEDITATION and ascetic withdrawal. The gods desperately wanted him to marry and have progeny, because they knew that his offspring would be able to defeat the demon Taraka who was plaguing them. They sent the god of love to awaken sexual desire by shooting him with his flower arrows. Shiva became angry at Kamadeva for his presumption and he incinerated him with his third eye. Upon the mournful request of Kamadeva's wife, RATI, Shiva relented and restored the god of love to life, but without a body. This is why he is invisible. In other versions of the story, Kama is not revived, but rather reborn as Pradyumna, the son of KRISHNA.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Kama or Kama-Deva: The Eros of India. Rati is his consort. The central eye of Siva which erupts fire is said to have burnt Kama to ashes when Kama aimed his flowery-arrow at Siva in order to make him erotic, as commissioned by the gods who needed a martial deity. The war-god was born, however, without erotic love in circumstances portrayed by Kalidasa in his poem called Kumara Sambhava (The Birth of the War-God).

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Kama. In Indian philosophy, one of the four purusharthas, or aims of life, with the others being artha (wealth, power, and prosperity), dharma (righteousness), and moksha (liberation). The most basic meaning of kama is “desire,” with strong overtones of sexual desire, but kama can also refer to all types of attraction, including aesthetic pleasure from the arts. The most famous treatise on the fulfillment of kama is the Kama Sutra, which details the satisfaction of sexual desires. When pursued within the boundaries of righteous action, or dharma, desires and their satisfaction are recognized as a normal, acceptable part of life. It is when this governing force is absent that the search for pleasure becomes inappropriate and destabilizing.

Kama

(2) Minor deity identified as the personification of kama (“desire”). Kama is comparable to the Greek deity Eros and carries similar responsibility for igniting human sexual attraction and sensual desire. Kama is represented as a young man riding on a parrot, armed with a bow and arrows. The bow is a stalk of sugar cane, the bowstring a line of buzzing bees; his five arrows are five different flowers, each bringing a different emotional effect to the person it pierces. The five flowers and emotions are: lotus, infatuation; ashoka, intoxication (with love); mango, exhaustion; jasmine, pining; blue lotus, paralysis. Kama’s iconography carries strong associations with spring, and the spring season (personified as another minor deity, Vasant) is perceived as Kama’s friend and ally in awakening desire through the regeneration of the natural world and the showy display of spring blossoms.

The most famous episode in Kama’s mythology begins with the ascent to power of a demon named Taraka, who can only be killed by a son of Shiva. Taraka seems impossible to defeat, since Shiva has no sons and is in deep meditation, grieving over the death of his wife Sati. The other gods ask Kama to shoot Shiva with an arrow of desire so he will marry the goddess Parvati and produce a son. Kama creeps up on Shiva and shoots him with an arrow. When Shiva realizes who has disturbed his meditation, he releases a stream of fire from the third eye in the middle of his forehead, instantly burning Kama to ashes. Through Shiva’s grace, Kama is eventually brought back to life. One of Kama’s epithets or alternate names is Ananga, or “bodiless,” because of the loss of his body (and the fact that desire seems to strike in unseen ways). Despite being destroyed by Shiva and seemingly foiled, in the end Kama achieves his goal. His attempt to draw Shiva out of his meditation succeeds, and eventually Shiva marries Parvati.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: There is room for kama (desire) so long as there is an object apart from the subject (i.e., duality). There can be no desire if there is no object. The state of no-desire is moksha. There is no duality in sleep and also no desire. Whereas there is duality in the waking state and desire also is there. Because of duality a desire arises for the acquisition of the object. That is the outgoing mind, which is the basis of duality and of desire. If one knows that Bliss is none other than the Self the mind becomes inward turned. If the Self is gained all the desires are fulfilled. That is the apta kamah atma kamah akamascha (fulfilment of desire) of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. That is moksha.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

kāma —from the verb root kām= “to desire”.

Related words

Artha

Dharma

Moksha

Purushartha, the four goals of human life

Sankalpa

Sanskrit

Kāma — काम

kāma - काम

Kanda

Variant spellings

kanda

kāṇḍa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kanda — ... section; part; chapter

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kāṇḍa

a single joint of the stalk or stem of a plant, such as a bamboo or reed or cane (i.e. the portion from one knot to another ...), any part or portion, section, chapter, division of a work or book..., any distinct portion or division of an action or of a sacrificial rite (as that belonging to the gods or to the manes);

a separate department or subject (e.g. karma- kāṇḍa, the department of the Veda treating of sacrificial rites);

a stalk, stem, branch, switch;

the part of the trunk of a tree whence the branches proceed;

a cluster, bundle;

a multitude, heap, quantity;
an arrow;
a bone of the arms or legs, long bone;
a kind of square measure;
a cane, reed, Saccharum Sara;
water;
opportunity, occasion;
a private place, privacy;
praise, flattery;
vile, low

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Kanda: As in “ karma-kanda” refers to section or part. Jnana-kanda designates the philosophical section, while the karma-kanda refers to the ritualistic or religious section.

Related words

Jnana-kanda
Karma-kanda

Sanskrit

***Kāṇḍa* — काण्ड**

kāṇḍa - काण्ड

Karana

Variant spellings

karana
kāraṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kāraṇa — ... “instrument”; cause; the efficient or instrumental cause

1. The unique or special cause through the action of which a particular effect is produced. The adherents of satkāraṇa-vāda hold that the cause alone exists and all effects are illusory appearances of the cause.

2. Sādhāraṇa-kāraṇas are common causes.
3. Asādhāraṇa-kāraṇas are specific causes.
4. Samavāyi-kāraṇa is the material cause.
5. Asamavāyi-kāraṇa is that which produces its characteristics in the effect through the medium of the material cause.
6. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, unlike the other systems which posit that all positive effects have two sets of causes (the material cause—upādānakāraṇa— and the efficient cause—nimitta-kāraṇā), says that besides the efficient cause, the material cause is taken by two causes known as samavāyi- and asamavāyi-kāraṇas. The samavāyi-kāraṇa is invariably a dravya and the asamavāyi-kāraṇa is a guṇa or karma.
7. The means of knowledge and action. The inner and outer instruments (sense organs).
8. One of the practices in the ānava upāya, in which the aspirant contemplates the body and the nervous system as a replica of the cosmos.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kāraṇa -

cause, reason, the cause of anything;

instrument, means;

motive origin, principle;

a cause (in phil. i.e. that which is invariably antecedent to some product...);

an element, elementary matter;

the origin or plot of a play or poem;

that on which an opinion or judgement is founded (a sign, mark ; a proof ; a legal instrument, document);

an organ of sense;

an action;

agency, instrumentality, condition;

'the cause of being', a father;

'cause of creation', a deity;

the body;

a kind of musical instrument;

a sort of song

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Karana. In Indian philosophy, the name for an instrumental cause, or the cause by which another thing is accomplished. An example often given by the Nyaya philosophical school states that when a potter connects two pot-halves using a stick, the stick is the instrumental cause for the creation of the pot. In Sanskrit grammar, the word karana has a parallel sense; it designates the word in a sentence that shows how the action is accomplished.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

There was practically no systematic theory of causation in the Upanisads. Shankara, the later exponent of Vedānta philosophy, always tried to show that the Upanisads looked upon the cause as mere ground of change which though unchanged in itself in reality had only an appearance of suffering change. This he did on the strength of a series of examples in the Chāndogya Upanisad (VI. 1) in which the material cause, e.g. the clay, is spoken of as the only reality in all its transformations as the pot, the jug or the plate. It is said that though there are so many diversities of appearance that one is called the plate, the other the pot, and the other the jug, yet these are only empty distinctions of name and form, for the only thing real in them is the earth which in its essence remains ever the same whether you call it the pot, plate, or Jug. So it is that the ultimate cause, the unchangeable Brahman, remains ever constant, though it may appear to suffer change as the manifold world outside. This world is thus only an unsubstantial appearance, a mirage imposed upon Brahman, the real par excellence.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Darsanamala of Narayana Guru

A clear understanding of what cause is and what effect is, is necessary to perceive clearly what the Guru tries to convey here. It is easier to clarify with the help of an example. Pots, plates and many such utensils are made of clay. Clay here is to be understood as cause, and pots and plates as effects. Clay on its own does not assume the form of utensils; a potter's effort is also needed. Potter then is yet another cause. The former cause (clay) is called material cause (upādāna kāraṇa), and the latter (potter) efficient cause (nimitta kāraṇa). In the place of the utensils is to be seen the world. The problem is, "What is its cause?" In the present case, the world's material cause and efficient causes cannot be different, for one God or sat alone is there to serve as both the causes. God or Brahman, for this reason, in Vedānta, is considered the material-cumefficient cause (abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa) of the world.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

A stone falls and we ask why. This question is possible only on the supposition that nothing happens independently, that every motion must have been preceded by a cause of some kind. I request you to make this very clear in your minds, for whenever we ask why anything happens, we are taking for granted that everything that happens must have a why, that is to say, it must have been preceded by something else which acted as cause. This precedence and succedence are what we call the law of causation. It means that everything in the Universe is by turn a cause and an effect. It is the cause of certain things which come after it and is itself the effect of something else which has preceded it. This is called the law of causation, and is a necessary condition of all our thinking. ... But first we have to understand this, that the very asking of the question why presupposes that everything round us has been preceded by certain things, and will be succeeded by certain other things. The other belief involved in this question is that nothing in the universe is independent, everything can be acted upon by something outside itself. Inter-dependence is the law of the whole universe. In saying, 'What caused the Absolute?' what error are we making! We are applying the same supposition in this case. To ask this question we have to suppose that the Absolute also is bound by something else, and that the Absolute also

is dependent on something else. That is to say, in so using the word Absolute, we drag the Absolute down to the level of the universe. For above that line there is neither time, space, nor causation, because it is all one. That which exists by itself alone cannot have any cause. That which is free, cannot have any cause, else it would not be free, but bound. That which has relativity cannot be free. Thus, we see that the very question, why the infinite became the finite, is an impossible one, it is self-contradictory.

...

According to the dualistic sects of India, the individual souls remain as individuals throughout, and God is the Creator of the universe out of pre-existing material. He is the efficient cause. According to the Advaitins, on the other hand, God is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. He is not only the Creator of the universe, but He creates it out of Himself. The one sect of Advaitins that you see in modern India is composed of the followers of Sankara. According to Sankara, God is both the material and the efficient cause through Mâyâ, but not in reality. God has not become this universe, but the universe appears because God is its Background. This is one of the highest points to understand of Advaitic Vedânta, this idea of Mâyâ.

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

'Karana' or the cause is that which acts, i.e., it is the state in which the effect remains latent.

Karana and karya, cause and effect

General

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

Creation with Bâdarâyana [Advaita Vedanta] would be nothing but the result of Nescience, and yet Brahman is again and again represented as the cause of the world, and not only as the efficient, but as the material cause as well, so far as such foreign terms can be applied to the reasoning of the Vedanta. Here lies our great difficulty in rendering Hindu philosophy intelligible. The terms used by them seem to be the same as those which we use ourselves, and yet they are not. It is easy to say that Kârana is cause and Kârya effect, that the created world is the effect, and that Brahman is the cause. But the Vedântists have elaborated their own theory of cause and effect. According to them cause and effect are really the same thing looked at from two points of view, and the effect is always supposed to be latent in the cause. Hence, if Brahman is everything, and nothing exists besides Brahman, the substance of the world can be nothing but Brahman.

...

The Vedântists stand up for Kârya-kâranâbheda, the non-difference or substantial identity of cause and effect, and the Sâmkhya philosophers agree with them up to a certain point. In the Vedânta, II, i, 14, we read ... that 'they, cause and effect, are not other, are not different from each other.' On this, as a general principle, rests their dogma of the substantial identity of Brahman and the phenomenal world. Nor does Samkara support this principle by passages from the Veda only, but he appeals likewise to observation. Thus he continues, II, 1, 15, 'Only when a cause exists is an effect observed to exist, not when it does not exist. The non-difference of the two (cause and effect) is perceived, for instance, in an aggregate of threads, when we do not perceive the thing which we call cloth in addition to the threads, but merely threads running lengthways, and crossways. In the threads again we perceive finer threads, and in these again still finer threads, and so on. On this ground we conclude that the very finest parts which we can perceive are ultimately identical with their causes, viz. red, white, and black, these again with air, the air with ether, and, at

last, the ether with Brahman which is without a second and the ultimate cause of the whole world.' ... The Veda has declared ' that what is posterior in time, i. e. the effect, has its being, previous to its actual beginning, in the nature of the cause.' And Sankara adds that, even in cases where the continued existence of the cause (in the effect) is not perceived, as, for instance, in the case of seeds of the fig-tree from which spring sprouts and new trees, the term birth, as applied to the sprout, means only that the causal substance, viz. the seed, becomes visible by becoming a sprout through the continued accretion of similar particles, while the term death means no more than that through the secession of these particles, the cause passes again beyond the sphere of visibility.

...

The Kârya- kâranâbheda, the identity of cause and effect, is valid as much for Sâmkhya as for Vedanta. According to both, no real effect would be possible without the continuance of its cause. Though different in appearance or phenomenally, both are the same substantially. An effect is not something newly produced or created, it is a new manifestation only, the cause being never destroyed, but rendered invisible only. This is so characteristic a dogma of the Sâmkhya that this philosophy is often spoken of as the Sat-kâryavâda, the doctrine that every effect pre-exists, and is the effect of something real, while the Asat-kâryavâda is peculiar to Nyâya and Vaiseshika, and strongly supported by the Buddhists. ...Sankara himself certainly gives us the impression that with him the recognition of the identity of cause and effect came first, and afterwards its religious application, the identity of Brahman and the world. For he says (II, i, 20), 'Thus the non-difference of the effect from the cause is to be conceived. And therefore, as the whole world is an effect of Brahman, and non-different from it, the promise is fulfilled.'

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Later, Sri Bhagavan continued: "The Vedanta says that the cosmos springs into view simultaneously with the seer. There is no detailed process of creation. This is said to be yugapat srshti (instantaneous creation). It is quite similar to the creations in dream where the experiencer springs up simultaneously with the objects of experience. When this is told, some people are not satisfied for they are so rooted in objective knowledge. They seek to find out how there can be sudden creation. They argue that an effect must be preceded by a cause. In short, they desire an explanation for the existence of the world which they see around them. Then the Srutis try to satisfy their curiosity by such theories of creation. This method of dealing with the subject of creation is called krama srshti (gradual creation). But the true seeker can be content with yugapat srshti - instantaneous creation."

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

According to the Samkhyas this Prakriti is omnipresent, one omnipresent mass of matter in 'which are the causes of everything that exists.' What is meant by cause ? Cause is the more subtle state of the manifested state, the unmanifested state of that which becomes manifested. What do you mean by destruction ? It is reverting to the cause: the materials out of which a body is composed go back into their original state. Beyond this idea of destruction, any idea such as annihilation is, on the face of it, absurd.

...

The material cause is the cause which becomes effect: the effect is nothing but the cause in another form. Wherever you see effect, it is cause reproduced. If the universe is the effect, and God the cause, this must be the reproduction of God. If it be claimed that the universe is the body of God and that, that body becomes contracted and fine and becomes the cause, and out of that the universe is evolved, then the Advaitist says it is God Himself who has become this universe.

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

'Karya' or effect is that which is done, i.e., which has the characteristic of result. 'Karana' or the cause is that which acts, i.e., it is the state in which the effect remains latent.

...

11. Visva and Taijasa are conditioned by cause and effect. But Prajna is conditioned by cause alone. These two (cause and effect) do not exist in Turiya.

...

16. First of all, is imagined the Jiva (the embodied being) and then are imagined the various entities, objective and subjective, that are perceived. As is {one's} knowledge so is (one's) memory of it.

SANKARA'S COMMENTARY

What is the source of the imagination of various objects, subjective [Such as, pain and pleasure, knowledge, attachment, etc.] and objective [Such as, various objects perceived outside of us.] that are perceived and appear to be related to one another as cause and effect ? It is thus explained: The Jiva is of the nature of cause and effect and is further characterised by such ideas as, 'I do this, I am happy and miserable'. Such Jiva is, at first, imagined [The Atman itself imagines the idea of a Jiva through the power of Maya.] in the Atman which is pure and devoid of any such characteristics, like the imagination of a snake in a rope. Then for the knowledge of the Jiva are imagined various existent entities, both subjective and objective, such as Prana etc., constituting different ideas such as the agent, action and the result (of action). What is the cause of this imagination? It is thus explained: It, the Jiva, who is the product of imagination and competent to effect further imagination, has its memory determined by its own inherent knowledge. That is to say, its knowledge is always followed by a memory, similar to that knowledge. Hence, from the knowledge of the idea of cause results the knowledge of the idea of the effect. Then follows the memory of both cause and effect. This memory is followed by its knowledge which results in the various states of knowledge characterised by action, actor and the effect. These are followed by their memory, which, in its turn, is followed by the states of knowledge. In this way are imagined various objects, subjective and objective, which are perceived and seen to be related to one another as cause and effect.

Material and efficient cause

Sankara tradition

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda

6. The material cause is of three kinds: (1) the Vivarta, which gives rise to a phenomenal appearance, not materially related to the cause; (2) the Parinama which gives rise to an effect which is a modification or change of state of the cause; and (3) the Arambha which consists of effect being different from the causes. The last two (which presuppose parts) have no scope with reference to partless Brahman.

7. The Arambhavadin accept the production of one kind of material from another, as cloth from threads and they consider threads and cloth to be quite different. [Not Advaitins]

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Dhole

6. This material cause is of three different forms, viz. : (1) Altered condition without change of form and state; (2) Altered condition with change of form and state; and (3) Combination of the units of material cause producing different results (Arambhaka)*. In respect to substances without form, the second and third do not apply.

7. The Vaisheshikas and others who support the doctrine of arambha admit other causes than those which produce results as the source from which they are produced: because yarn is seen to produce cloth. Verily yarn is quite distinct from loth, its product ; and their modifications and uses are different; no thread can be worn, but cloth is.

* When from the relation or connection of the units or parts of the material cause a substance is produced differing in form, then it is called arambha; as from the combination of atoms and ther half of jar the result is jar. Altered condition of the material is parinama as curd is of milk. It will at once be apparent that these indications can only apply to substances which have form and shape, and not elsewhere, where form and shape are wanting; because both in regard to relation, and altered condition, on which arambha and parinama depend, parts, features or form is necessary. Felicity has neither parts, features, nor form, hence it is quite possible to regard it as the material cause of the universe of the first variety or Vivartta ; a trite instance of which is the snake in rope. Here the rope is not transformed into snake, but a substance (snake) extremely opposed to the site (rope) and an altered condition of it, is projected on it. Similarly the blue of ether (blue sky) and its convexity are illustrations of Vivartta.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

kāraṇa — from the causative form of the verb root kr = “to make, to cause to make”.

Related words

Antahkarana

Karana-sarira

Karya

Nimitta karana

Upadana-Karana

Satkarana-Vada

Sanskrit

***Kāraṇa* — कारण**

kāraṇa - कारण

Karana-sarira

Variant spellings

karana-sarira
kāraṇa-śārīra
kāraṇaśārīra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kāraṇa-śārīra — ... causal body

1. The sheath of bliss enveloped in ignorance, according to Advaita Vedānta.
2. It is also called ānandamayakośa.
3. See śārīra.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kāraṇaśārīra -

‘causal body’, the original embryo or source of the body existing with the Universal impersonal Spirit and equivalent to A-vidyā (equivalent also to Māyā, and when investing the impersonal Spirit causing it to become the Personal God or Īśvara)

Wikipedia

The Causal body - originally Karana-Sarira - is a Yogic and Vedantic concept that was adopted and modified by Theosophy and from the latter made its way into the general New Age movement and contemporary western esotericism. It generally refers to the highest or innermost subtle body that veils the true soul.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

The Mandukya Upanishad refers to the Self having four “feet” or states of consciousness. These are: waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and the transcendent (Turiya). Each of these is associated with both an individual state of consciousness and a cosmic state. Dreamless sleep corresponds to prajna. In Advaita Vedanta, this is associated with the Anandamaya kosha or “sheath” (kosha) made of bliss, and with the causal principle or causal body (karana sarira).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The essence of the present life is taken by the causal consciousness. It is like a migrating agent (kāraṇa śārira) which carries the essence of the vijñānamaya and ānandamaya aspects of the soul. Vijñāna means the essence of the perfection of talents In which

a person is engaged all through his or her life. The choice of the memory package depends on the ānanda substance of the Self. This is given figuratively in these mantras [Brihadaranyaka Upanishad] as being like a departing king.

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

The karana sharira (causal body) contains the essence of all the previous lives and the conditioning achieved in the present life. The causal body is constituted of four main factors. First, it has the light of the Self as its ground. Then it has the dynamic of the blissful Self to push consciousness to a new level where its inherent value essence and an existential factor can be brought in conjunction with an experience. The third factor is an archetypal impact that can propel unconscious energy into the preconscious field of the subtle. Finally, it has the magical power to make the archetypal thrust change into the establishment of an interest with a certain identity.

A person who is infatuated with love identifies with the archetype of a lover. A person who is soaked with fear identifies herself as a fugitive. An angry man shaking with hatred identifies himself as an enemy. Thus the archetypes we speak of are not identical with Jung's archetypes of Mother, Father, Trickster, and Magician. There is a much richer literature of archetypes to be found in the Mahabharata and similar books. In any case, when an archetype dominates, it uses causal energy to become a manipulator of dreams, then the dream percolates into the wakeful, giving it both the status of a daydream and of an action program.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Osborne. The collected works of Ramana Maharshi

Inexpressible and beginningless ignorance is said to be the causal body (as in deep sleep)...

The undifferentiated power which is spoken of as a compound of the three gunas is the causal body of the soul. Its state is that of deep sleep in which all the sense organs and functions of the mind are at rest. In this state all perceptions cease and the mind in its subtle seed-like form experiences supreme bliss. This is borne out by the universal experience, 'I slept soundly and knew nothing.'

See: Anandamaya and causal body

See also:

Ajnana, avarana, vikshepa

Sakshin and sushupti

Diagram: Three bodies (sharira traya)

Related words

Anandamaya kosha

Karana

Sarira

Sthula-sarira

Suksma sarira

Karma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Karma — ... action; rite; deed; cause and effect; accumulation of past actions; physical, verbal, or mental action

1. The accumulated effect of deeds in lives, past and present.
2. All the Indian systems except the Carvaka school accept the theory of karma in one form or the other. They agree that “As one sows, so shall one reap” or “what goes around comes around.” That is, an action performed by an individual leaves behind some sort of potency which has the power to cause either joy or sorrow in the future according to its nature.
3. According to Jainism, karma means an aggregate of extremely fine matter which is imperceptible to the senses. This matter consists of eight main types: comprehension obscuring (jnanavarana), apprehension obscuring (darsanavarana), feeling producing (vedaniya), deluding (mohaniya), age determining (ayus), status determining (gotra), personality making (nama), power obscuring (antaraya). The first four are obstructive (ghati) and the rest are nonobstructive (aghati).
4. According to Buddhism, it is the correlation between cause and consequence and the effect is conditional upon circumstances. According to the Buddha, one of the three factors—external stimuli, conscious motives, and unconscious motives—determines karma. Though the Buddhists deny identity, they do not deny continuity. Their doctrine of karma is based on the doctrine of dependent origination (pratitya- samutpada).
5. According to the Yoga school, it is divided into four classes: white (sukla) actions which produce happiness; black (krsna) actions which produce sorrow; white-black (sukla-krsna) actions which produce partly happiness and partly sorrow; and neither white nor black (asukla- krsna) actions which are devoid of any pleasure or pain.
6. According to Mimamsa, the Veda has action as its purport. The aim of the Veda is to prescribe certain actions and to prohibit others. Liberation or release is said to be gained through actions alone. There are obligatory actions (nitya- karma); occasional rites (naimittika- karma), and optional rites (kamya- karma). One is enjoined to perform the first two types of actions and to refrain from the optional rites. One should also refrain from prohibited actions (pratisiddha- karma). By these actions one will balance one’s karma and at the end of one’s life, there will be no more samsara for that person. Release requires what- is-to-be- accomplished and the latter requires action for its accomplishments.
7. According to Advaita Vedanta, the entire Veda does not have its purport in ritualistic action and action is not the means to release. Action is for the purification of mind and is, thus, a remote auxiliary to liberation.
8. Vihita-karmas are the actions prescribed by the Veda.
9. Sancita-karma is residue produced by acts performed either in this life or in a previous one, but which remains latent during this present life.

10. Agami-karma is the result of acts performed during this present life which will mature in the normal course of events.
11. Prarabdha-karma is the residue of acts that is working itself out during the present life.
12. Prayascitta-karma is expiatory action. It is performed to purify oneself because one has failed to do certain prescribed acts either in this life or in past lives.
13. According to the Vaiśeṣika school, it means physical motion. It is defined as “That which resides in only one substance, is devoid of qualities, and is the direct and immediate cause of both conjunction and disjunction.” Motion is of five kinds: upward (utk-sepana), downward (avaksepana), contraction (akuncana), expansion (prasarana), and locomotion (gamana).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

Note. 'Karma' is used in compound words for 'karman'.

karman -

act, action, performance, business;

office, special duty, occupation, obligation;

any religious act or rite (as sacrifice, oblation &c., esp. as originating in the hope of future recompense and as opposed to speculative religion or knowledge of spirit);

work, labour, activity (as opposed to rest);

physicking, medical attendance;

action consisting in motion (as the third among the seven categories of the Nyāya philosophy);

calculation;

product, result, effect;

(in Gr.) the object (it stands either in the acc. [in active construction], or in the nom. [in passive construction], or in the gen. [in connection with a noun of action] ; opposed to kartṛ the subject);

former act as leading to inevitable results, fate (as the certain consequence of acts in a previous life);

the tenth lunar mansion

Wikipedia

Karma in Indian religions is the concept of “action” or “deed”, understood as that which causes the entire cycle of cause and effect (i.e., the cycle called samsāra) originating in ancient India and treated in Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist philosophies.

Karma is a concept in Hinduism which explains causality through a system where beneficial effects are derived from past beneficial actions and harmful effects from past harmful actions, creating a system of actions and reactions throughout a person’s reincarnated lives.

The doctrine of transmigration of the soul, or fateful retribution for acts committed, does not appear in the Rig Veda, (though it is hinted at in Canto 4, Hymn 26 ,Verse 1 through 4 , along with the Avatar concept. The concept of karma appeared in Hindu thought during the period 800- 200 BC and became widespread during the period considered as “Classical Hinduism” 200 BC - 1100 AD.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

Karma means actions that will produce effects, also those effects or results of actions.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

'Karma' is an Eastern religious concept in contradistinction to 'faith' espoused by Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), which view all human dramas as the will of God as opposed to present - and past - life actions. In theistic schools of Hinduism, humans have free will to choose good or evil and suffer the consequences, which require the will of God to implement karma's consequences, unlike Buddhism or Jainism which do not accord any role to a supreme God or gods. In Eastern beliefs, the karmic effects of all deeds are viewed as actively shaping past, present, and future experiences. The results or 'fruits' of actions are called karma-phala.

Karma means "deed" or "act" and more broadly names the universal principle of cause and effect, action and reaction that governs all life

According to Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda, we produce Karma in four ways:

through thoughts

through words

through actions that we perform ourselves

through actions others do under our instructions

Hindu scriptures divide karma into three kinds:

Sanchita is the accumulated karma. It would be impossible to experience and endure all Karmas in one life. From this stock of sanchita karma, a handful is taken out to serve one lifetime and this handful of actions, which has begun to bear fruit and which will be exhausted only on their fruit being experienced. Hence, it is the sum of one's past karmas – all actions (good and bad) that follow through from one's past life to the next.

Prarabdha Fruit-bearing karma is the portion of accumulated karma that has "ripened" and appears as a particular problem in the present life.

Kriyamana is everything that we produce in current life. All kriyamana karmas flow in to sanchita karma and consequently shape our future.

In this way, so long as the stock of sanchita karma lasts, a part of it continues to be taken out as prarabdha karma for being experienced in one lifetime, leading to the cycle of birth and death. A Jiva cannot attain moksha until the accumulated sanchita karmas are completely exhausted.

Followers of Vedanta consider Ishvara, a personal supreme God, as playing a role in the delivery of karma. Theistic schools of Hinduism such as Vedanta thus disagree with the Buddhist and Jain views and other Hindu views that karma is merely a law of cause and effect but rather is also dependent on the will of a personal supreme God. Examples of a personal supreme God include Shiva in Shaivism or Vishnu in Vaishnavism. A good summary of this theistic view of karma is expressed by the following: "God does not make one suffer for no reason nor does He make one happy for no reason. God is very fair and gives you exactly what you deserve."

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Karma is apparent in the realms of both the universal and the particular. Water flows, fire blazes, wind blows, rain pours down, the earth supports everything -- all these are universal karmas. Luminaries in their thousands move around in the outer space, supernovae explode, stars emerge and remerge -- these are karmas of cosmic dimension.

You breathe, you eat, you drink, the food eaten gets digested, blood circulates, sense organs function, mind thinks, wills, imagines and becomes emotional -- all these are karmas related to the individual. Sub-atomic particles function in different, already-fixed ways to form a perfectly functioning system called an atom; this karma is of the microcosmic level.

Together, all these form the functional existence of prakrti. The well known "eternal flux" thus is an eternal flow of karmas

See: Avidya and Karma

Karma and karta

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Sri Bhagavan: There is no karma without a karta (doer). On seeking for the doer he disappears. Where is Karma then?

Karma-Vikarma-Akarma

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

Commentary by Nataraja:

Three classes of action are referred to here. The first is just plain karma (action), the second is vikarma (distorted or misaction), and the third is akarma (non-action or inaction). Inaction is included under the title "action" here, and this could be justified in the light of the Samkhya teaching where abhava (non-existence) is spoken of as a padartha (entity) as "nothing" could be conceived only in terms of negative existence.

Under vikarma (misaction) we should include all such merely traditional actions which are extraneous to the discipline of brahma-vidya (science of the Absolute) as understood in the Gita. Akarma (inaction) would refer to a negative attitude towards action, as when a man obstinately tries to live in a vacuum repressing all activity, natural or otherwise, as heterodox anti-ritualists in India tended to be in the post-Buddhistic period.

When the notion of action has been subjected to these two correctives and both subtracted, as it were, there remains a residue of action pure and simple which properly belongs to the way of life of a perennial philosopher who neither rejects anything wilfully because of his moods, nor suppresses anything wilfully against his own deeper nature. The wise man dialectically revalues his position constantly as his life is spent in keeping with the perennial way of those who went before him in the path of the Absolute. Such a path is full of wonder and mystery as the word gahana (subtle, elusive) indicates. No sastra (scientific text) definitely lays down this way of life. A man of intuition is supposed to be aware of it.

Isa Upanishad. Nitya

Commentary by Nitya:

Each relationship is experienced as a challenge. Every challenge has in it an implied compulsion to fight or to flee. ... When I become convinced of the relevancy of an encounter, I accept the challenge as a command to react. The action that I have to perform in that context is my apportioned duty. It is imperative and it cannot be discarded. If I act upon it, it is an action, karma. If I improperly act, it becomes an evil action, dukarma. If I do not act, it is an act of omission which can be called inaction, akarma. If my action becomes perverted, that becomes vikarma. In any case it will be followed by its result, karma phala. Now a question arises, "How many times will a person be exposed to such dire situations of challenge?" If a person has his/her physical consciousness of sense perception, reflex actions, and urge to act or react, action situations will recur from the day of birth until his or her vital breath is silenced with death. Hence in the second mantra of the tsavasyopanisad we are told that for a sentient person there is no vacation from action.

Does this mean that every living person has to be a creature of suffering exposed to inevitable action situations to the very end of his or her life? Only the action is inevitable; to suffer or not to suffer is your choice. The fruit of action is binding on the actor only if that person identifies himself or herself as the one who wills the act. Actually the command comes from "This" - the world at large. You are only lending the instrumentality of body, mind, energy, and know - how to carry out the command as one who is given a role to play in the sportive arena of nature.

See also:

in Sankalpa: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

karma — from the verb root kr = "to act, do, make".

[Wikipedia](#)

Karma, kárman- "act, action, performance"

Related words

Akarma

Karta

Nishkama-karma

Nitya-karma

Samsara

Sankalpa

Svarga

Karma-kanda

Variant spellings
karma-kanda
karma-kāṇḍa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Karma-kāṇḍa — ritual portion of the Veda.

1. The section of the Veda dealing with actions. Also known as Pūrvakāṇḍa.

Descriptions

Karma-kanda and jnana-kanda

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The Veda, we know, is in two sections, which seem to contradict each other in what they teach; and, since both alike are looked upon as revealed, it becomes necessary for every school of Vedānta to explain their mutual relation in some manner. According to Śankara, the two are really antithetical, and he gets over the antithesis between them by assuming that they are addressed to different classes of persons (adhikārin). The karma-kāṇḍa is intended for one who is still under the spell of avidyā and the jnāna-kāṇḍa, for one that has seen the hollowness of the activities it commends and is striving to transcend them. What is desirable and true from a lower standpoint is thus undesirable and not altogether true from the higher. Such a gradation of the teaching is permissible according to the Advaita with its belief in the relativity of prāmāṇya.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Chandogya Upanisad

The Upanisads form the last of the four sections of each of the four Vedas, the other three being Samhitā, Brāhmana and Aranya-ka. These three sections are of ritualistic import — they contain praising different gods, instructions on how to perform fire-sacrifices, how to invoke the blessing of the gods, details of how and why each minute step of the ceremonies is to be performed, pointing out their rewards and so on. These three sections together are therefore known as karma-kāṇḍa (the section dealing with

karmas, karma here meaning Vedic rituals). The Upanisads in this context are known as jñāna-kāṇḍa (section dealing with wisdom) of the Vedas. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad forms part of the jñāna-kāṇḍa of the Sāmaveda.

Related words

Jnana-kanda
Kanda
Veda

Sanskrit

Karma-kāṇḍa — कर्मकाण्ड
karma-kāṇḍa - कर्मकाण्ड

Karma Yoga

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

karmayoga -
performance of a work or business (esp. of religious duties);
active exertion, industry;
agriculture and commerce;
practical application;
connection with a sacrifice

Wikipedia

Karma yoga (also known as Buddhi Yoga) or the “discipline of action” is based on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Sanskrit scripture of Hinduism. One of the four pillars of yoga, Karma yoga focuses on the adherence to duty (dharma) while remaining detached from the reward. It states that one can experience salvation (Moksha) or love (bhakti) of God by performing their duties in an unselfish manner for the pleasure of the Supreme, which is the welfare of the world. Karma Yoga is an intrinsic part of many derivative types of yoga, such as Natya Yoga.

Shankaracharya says by practicing Karma, one’s mind gets purified. Thus, he describes Karma yoga as a path to Jnana yoga, with Jnana yoga ultimately leading to a state of Moksha or realisation.

Some consider personalities such as the Buddha to have been karma yogis. Buddha is the ideal karma yogi... acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest man ever born, beyond compare, the greatest combination of Head & Heart that ever existed. — Swami Vivekananda

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Karma yoga: The yoga of action. Realizing one's oneness with the total existence by performing deeds with the awareness that all actions belong to total nature, not to any individual being.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Karma yoga is described as a way of acting, thinking and willing by which one orients oneself toward realization by acting in accordance with one's duty (dharma) without consideration of personal self-centered desires, likes or dislikes. Acting without being attached to the fruits of one's deeds.

The practice of Karma Yoga in daily life makes an individual fit through action, meditation and devotion to sharpen his reasoning, develop the intuitive power of acquiring knowledge, and to transcend the mind itself.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Psychology of Darsanamala

Action, non-action, perverted action, and unitive action are all to be distinguished very carefully. Unitive action is called karma yoga. For achieving karma yoga a person has to see that everything pertaining to nature goes through series of changes which are entirely governed by physicochemical and biological laws of nature. These are like the ceaseless formations of waves in the ocean of phenomenality, which an individual can do nothing either to stop or to modify. Whether man wants or not, fire will burn, water will flow, the sun will shine, and the moon will wax and wane. Even his own body will have birth, existence, growth, evolution, and decay. In this vast field of phenomenal changes, action belongs to the 'other' and one need not pin one's responsibility or conscience to it. One has to own actions when they are willed with the motivation of achieving an end. It is here action has to become unitive. When the ego is infatuated with the emotional or value-significance of the end of action, one loses sight of the binding nature of action. So a karma yogi, as advocated by the Gita, sees action in inaction and inaction in action. Natural actions, actions to fulfill bodily necessities, and actions to perpetuate the welfare of the world are always relevant. When the relevancy is accepted with full understanding, and actions are performed in accordance with the injunctions of the science of the Absolute, karma becomes unitive. Such knowledge of the non-Self distinctly reveals the Self as the Supreme Knower in all sentient beings.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

WHAT IS KARMA YOGA?

814. Karma Yoga is communion with God by means of Work. Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga is Karma Yoga, if practised without attachment. It leads to communion through meditation and concentration. The performance of the duties of householders (i.e., self-regarding or altruistic work, social and political)—doing them without attachment, to the end that God may be glorified—is Karma Yoga. Again, worship according to the scriptures, silent repetition of the name of God and other pious duties of this kind,

is Karma Yoga if done without attachment, for the glorification of God. The end of Karma Yoga is the same (as of other Yogas), namely, the realisation of God, impersonal or personal or both.

...

819. In this age Work without devotion to God has no legs to stand upon. It is like a foundation of sand. First cultivate devotion. All the other things—schools, dispensaries, etc.—will, if you like, be added to you. First devotion, then work. Work, apart from devotion or love of God, is helpless and cannot stand.

Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: If one remained quiet how is action to go on? Where is the place for karma yoga?

M.: Let us first understand what Karma is, whose Karma it is and who is the doer. Analysing them and enquiring into their truth, one is perforce obliged to remain as the Self in peace. Nevertheless the actions will go on.

D.: How will the actions go on if I do not act?

M.: Who asks this question? Is it the Self or another? Is the Self concerned with actions?

D.: No, not the Self. It is another, different from the Self.

M.: So it is plain that the Self is not concerned with actions and the question does not arise.

D.: I agree.

...

D.: What is Karma yoga? Is it non-attachment to Karma or its fruit?

M.: Karma yoga is that yoga in which the person does not arrogate to himself the function of being the actor. The actions go on automatically.

D.: Is it the non-attachment to the fruits of actions?

M.: The question arises only if there is the actor. It is being all along said that you should not consider yourself the actor.

D.: So Karma yoga is kartrva buddhi rahita karma - action without the sense of doership.

M.: Yes. Quite so.

D.: The Gita teaches active life from beginning to end.

M.: Yes, the actor-less action.

See also:

in Bhagavad Gita: Karma Yoga

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

The word Karma is derived from the Sanskrit Kri, meaning 'to do', in its most basic sense karma simply means action, and yoga translates to union. Thus Karma yoga literally translates to the path of union through action.

Related words

Karma
Yoga

Sanskrit

Karma Yoga - कर्मयोग
karma yoga - कर्मयोग

Karmendriyas

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Karmendriya — ... organs of action.

1. The five conative sense organs. They are the organs of speech (vāk), prehension (pāṇi), movement (pāda), excretion (pāyu), and generation (upastha).

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The working senses (karmendriyas) are the powers or capacities to express (vāk), to procreate (upastha), to excrete (pāyu), to grasp (pāṇi), and to move (pāda). Their physical organs are the voice, sex organs, anus, hands, and feet, (1) The power of expression means the working of ideas, and not the mere production of vocal sound; (2) the power of procreation means the capacity of the entire being for recreation and passive enjoyment and not the mere physical act; (3) the power of excretion means the process of rejection throughout the entire organism, and not the single capacity of elimination; (4) the power of grasping means the capacity of permeating things, and not necessarily the physical act of handling objects; (5) the power of locomotion means the mental life behind all function, and not the aimless walking about.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Karmendriya (“organ of action”). In Indian philosophy, any of the five organs through which human beings act on their environment, traditionally considered to be: voice, hands, feet, and the organs of elimination and generation.

Descriptions

See: Karmendriyas in Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

See: Pranamaya kosa, prana, karmendriyas

See also:

in Tanmatras: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Indriyas
Jnanendriyas
Pada
Upastha
Vac

Sanskrit

Karmendriya — कर्मन्द्रिय
karmendriya - कर्मैन्द्रियि

Karta

Variant spellings

karta
kartā
kartr
karṭṛ

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Kartā — ... agent; doer

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

karṭṛ -

one who makes or does or acts or effects, a doer, maker, agent, author;
doing any particular action or business, applying one's self to any occupation;
one who acts in a religious ceremony, a priest;
the creator of the world;
N. of Viṣṇu;
of Brahman;
of Śiva;

(in Gr.) the agent of an action (who acts of his own accord [sva-tantra], the active noun, the subject of a sentence (it stands either in the nom. [in active construction], or in the instr. [in passive construction], or in the gen. [in connection with a noun of action] ; it is opposed to karman, the object);
one who is about to do, one who will do

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. *The philosophy of Narayana Guru*
Karta (Kartr): The doer of karmas.

Descriptions

See: Karma and karta

Related words

Bhokta
Jnata
Karma
Karya

Sanskrit

Kartā — कर्ता
kartā - कर्ता

Karya

Variant spellings

karya
kārya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kārya — ... effect; product

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kārya -

to be made or done or practised or performed, practicable feasible;

to be imposed (as a punishment);
to be offered (as a libation);
proper to be done, fit, right;
work or business to be done, duty, affair;
a religious action or performance;
occupation, matter, thing, enterprise, emergency, occurrence, crisis;
conduct, deportment;
occasion, need;
lawsuit, dispute;
an effect, result;
motive, object, aim, purpose;
cause, origin;
the denouement of a drama

Sankara tradition

[Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad](#)

Karya or effect is that which is done, i.e., which has the characteristic of result.

Descriptions

See: Karana and karya, cause and effect

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Kārya (fut. passive, participle of kar, to do, make, perform), to be done; motive, object, aim, purpose.

Related words

Karana
Karma
Karta

Sanskrit

Kārya — कार्य

kārya - कार्य

Katha Upanishad

Title

Katha Upaniṣad — कठोपनिषद्

Katha Upanishad

Kaṭhōpaniṣad - कठोपनिषद्

Kāṭhaka

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Katha Upanisad — ... lit. “story upaniṣad”

1. This Upaniṣad contains the story of the young child, Naciketās, with the lord of death, Yama. It has become famous on account of its clarity and depth. Many of its thoughts are also found in the Bhagavad Gītā. It belongs to the Katha Sākhya of the Taittirīya school of the Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda. Some noble personages in this Upaniṣad include Yama, Naciketās, and Vājaśravasa (Usanas also called Gautama of Gautama Gotra).

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Katha Upanishad One of the later and more developed Upanishads, the speculative religious texts that form the latest stratum of the oldest Hindu sacred texts, the Vedas. As with most of the Upanishads, the Katha Upanishad investigates profound questions, in particular the nature of the Self (atman). The text tells the story of a boy, Nachiketas, whose father sends him to Death in a fit of anger. Nachiketas goes to Death’s abode, but finds no one. He waits for three days before Death returns. To make amends for ignoring a brahmin guest—which the text describes as a serious sin— Death gives Nachiketas three boons, or wishes. Nachiketas uses the first boon to be restored to his father’s house and the second to receive instruction in performing a sacrificial fire. With the final boon, he asks what happens to a person after the death of the body. Death first tries to evade the question, then tries to bribe Nachiketas with other gifts. When the boy insists on an answer, Death begins to reveal his secrets; these revelations make up the bulk of the text. Death’s secrets focus mainly on the reality of the Self, its eternal and indestructible nature, its subtle qualities, and the difficulties in realizing it. The Self is the ultimate truth, and to know it is to know the only thing that really matters.

Wikipedia

The Katha Upanishad..., also titled “Death as Teacher”, is one of the mukhya (“primary”) Upanishads commented upon by Shankara. It is associated with the Cāraka- Kaṭha school of the Black Yajurveda, and is grouped with the Sutra period of Vedic Sanskrit. It is a middle Upanishad. It contains passages that suggest contact with Buddhist ideas, so was likely composed after the fifth century BCE. It figures as number 3 in the Muktika canon of 108 Upanishads. It consists of six parts (or two chapters with three sections each). It has some passages in common with the Gita.

It propounds a dualistic philosophy.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

The pupil had to pass through various tests before the teacher would instruct him in the Knowledge of Brahman. We read, for example, in the Katha Upaniṣad that young Nachiketa approached Yama, the king of death, for the Knowledge of the Self. In order to test his sincerity and earnestness, Yama tried to dissuade him from seeking it by offering him, in its place, the possession of sons and grandsons who would live one hundred years: and of cattle, elephants, gold and horses, without number. He tempted the young aspirant with celestial dancing-girls of exquisite beauty, and with wealth, longevity, suzerainty over the whole earth, and the promise of any other acquisition he might desire. He requested Nachiketa not to bother himself with such a useless question as that of the nature of Ātman. To the king of death the boy made this spirited reply: "These are all ephemeral and only tend to the decay of the vigour of our senses. Even the longest life on earth is indeed short compared to Immortality. May the chariots the music, and the dancing-girls remain with you." Finding him firm and unshakable in his resolve, the king of death granted Nachiketa his wished-for boon.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Katha Upanishad is part of the Black YAJUR VEDA. It is based on an ancient story of a young man, NACHIKETAS, who is mistakenly sent to hell by his father after he questions his father's generosity. When the boy reaches the realm of the god of death (YAMA), he finds no one at home. Since he, as a guest, is kept waiting, Yama offers the young, but very wise, boy three boons. The story of the three boons of the god of death forms the narrative core of this Upanishad. The first boon the boy asks for is that he be returned to the upper world to live with his father. The second boon he asks for is the secret of preserving good works. His final request is to learn the secret of overcoming continuous rebirth. Death gladly assents to the first two requests, giving the boy the Nachiketas fire, named for him, to fulfill the second wish. When asked for the secret of ending rebirth, however, Death tries to dissuade the boy with offers of wealth and other boons. When Nachiketas persists he is given the secret of Ultimate Reality or the BRAHMAN.

Wikipedia

The Upanishad uses as its base the story of Vajasravasa (alluded to in Rigveda 10. 135), a poor and pious Brahmin who performs a sacrifice and gives away all his worldly possessions as reward to the priests, which included a few old and feeble cows. His son, Naciketas, feeling disturbed by the inappropriateness of his father's observance of the sacrifice, proposes that he himself may be offered as payment. As he insisted, his father said in anger, "Unto Yama, I give thee.", whereupon Naciketas goes to the abode of Yama, and, finding him absent, waits there for three days and nights. Yama on his return, offers to grant him three wishes. (I.9) Naciketas wishes the following:

to be allowed to return to his father alive (I.10);

to be instructed as to the proper performance of Vedic fire-sacrifice in order to gain immortality (I.12- 13);

to be given knowledge about life after death (I.20).

Yama grants the first wish immediately (I.11). In answer to Naciketas' second question, Yama expounds the performance of a special fire-sacrifice, which he states is to be named after Naciketas (I.15- 19).

“He who knows the three-fold Naciketa-fire and performs the Naciketa fire-sacrifice with three-fold knowledge, having cast off the fetters of death and being beyond grief, he rejoices in the realm of heaven.” (I.19, trans. Paramananda).

Yama tries to avoid answering the third question and offers all sorts of worldly pleasures instead, but Naciketas insists (I.21- 29). The remainder of the text (parts II to VI) contains Yama's teaching concerning true immortality. It notably includes the parable of the chariot (III.3-4), not unlike (and roughly contemporary to) the one found in Parmenides, or the one in Plato's Phaedrus. Yama's parable consists of the following equations:

- atman, the “Self” is the chariot's passenger
- the body is the chariot itself
- consciousness (buddhi) is the chariot driver
- the mind (manas) is the reins
- the five senses (indriya) are the chariot horses
- the objects perceived by the senses are the chariot's path

The Katha Upanishad is also notable for first introducing the term yoga (lit. “yoking, harnessing”) for spiritual exercise:

“When the five organs of perception become still, together with the mind, and the intellect ceases to be active: that is called the highest state. This firm holding back of the senses is what is known as Yoga.” (VI.10- 11, trans. Paramananda)

Publications

Translations

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Related words

Upanishads

Yajur Veda

Kena Upanishad

Title

Kena Upaniṣad — केनोपनिषद्

Kena Upaniṣad

Kenopaniṣad - केनोपनिषद्

Kenopanishad

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kena Upaniṣad — ... lit. “By whom? Upaniṣad”

1. This Upaniṣad derives its name from the first word of the first stanza of the first section of the Upaniṣad: “Kenesitham .. .”-“by whom?” It belongs to the Sama Veda. It is a small text in four sections dealing essentially with the nature of the Absolute (Brahman) as the efficient cause of the universe as well as the knowledge thereof. The main teaching is that Brahman cannot be known by the mind.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Kena Upanishad or “By Whom [Kena] Upanishad,” takes its name from its first words, which ask the question, Who impels mind, breath and speech? Its subsidiary name, the Talavakara Upanishad, is from the Talavakara BRAHMANA of the SAMA VEDA, in which this Upanishad is sometimes found. The answer to the initial question is found in the second stanza: “That which is the hearing of the ear, the thought of the mind, the voice of speech and also the breathing of breath, and the sight of the eye” is the thing by which everything comes about.

Wikipedia

The Kena Upanishad is one of the earlier, “primary” Upanishads, a genre of Hindu scriptures, commented upon by Shankara and Madhvacharya. It is associated with the Samaveda. It figures as number 2 in the Muktika canon of 108 Upanishads.

... The Kenopanishad derives its name from the first word Kena , meaning ‘by whom’. It belongs to the Talavakara Brahmana of Sama Veda and is therefore also referred to as Talavakara Upanishad. It has four khaṇḍas (sections), the first two in verse and the other two in prose. Adi Shankara who has written commentaries on 12 Upanishads, chose to write two commentaries on Kenopanishad. One is called Kenopaniṣad Padabhāṣya and the other is Kenopaniṣad Vākyabhāṣya.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

This short Upanishad, with about 34 stanzas, tells a story (vss. 14–28) about the gods' first encounter with the BRAHMAN. They approached the unknown being to see whether they could overpower it, but all were defeated. INDRA himself could not overcome it, but on his way back the goddess Uma told him that the being was brahman. He passed on this information to the rest of the gods, and was recognized as the greatest of the gods because of this knowledge. Uma somehow does not get the credit.

Wikipedia

Not that which the eye can see, but that whereby the eye can see: know that to be Brahman the eternal, and not what people here adore;

Not that which the ear can hear, but that whereby the ear can hear: know that to be Brahman the eternal, and not what people here adore;

Not that which speech can illuminate, but that by which speech can be illuminated: know that to be Brahman the eternal, and not what people here adore;

Not that which the mind can think, but that whereby the mind can think: know that to be Brahman the eternal, and not what people here adore.

The One Power that illumines everything and every one is indivisible. It is the Ear behind the ears, Mind behind the mind, Speech behind speech, Vital Life behind life. The ears cannot hear it; it is what makes the ears hear. The eyes cannot see it; it is what makes the eyes see. You cannot speak about it; it is what makes you speak. The mind cannot imagine it; it is what makes the mind think. It is different from what all we know; yet it is not known either. Those who feel they know Him know Him not. Those who know that anything amenable to the senses is not Brahman, they know it best. When it is known as the innermost witness of all cognitions, whether sensation, perception or thought, then it is known. One who knows thus reaches immortality.

... Once the divines won a victory over the evil forces. The victory must have been credited to the power of the Absolute Brahman. Instead the divines thought it was theirs. Brahman appeared before them in a visible form of a spirit (yaksha) but they did not recognize the Absolute. One by one, Agni the God of fire and Vayu the God of air, came to challenge this new appearance in and tried to show off their powers. The God of Fire could not burn even the straw placed before him. The God of air could not blow even the straw placed before him. Finally Indra the God of all the divines came nearest to that spirit to find out who it is that is presenting these challenges to the divines. And before him stood a highly adorned woman in the name and form of Uma who finally reveals to Indra that the Spirit is the Absolute Brahman.

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Related words

Sama Veda
Upanishads

Kosha

Variant spellings

kosha
kosa
kośa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kośa — ... sheath; cover, subtle body; treasury; lexicon (from the root kuś = “to enfold”)

1. The individual self is enveloped within five subtle bodies: physical (annamaya), vital (prāṇamaya), mental (manomaya), consciousness (vijñānamaya), and bliss (ānandamaya). Each sheath is within the previous one and, thus, they become subtler and subtler, one within the next.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kośa -

a cask, vessel for holding liquids, (metaphorically) cloud;

a pail, bucket;

a drinking-vessel, cup;

a box, cupboard, drawer, trunk;

the interior or inner part of a carriage;

a sheath, scabbard, &c.;

a case, covering, cover;

store-room, store, provisions;

a treasury, apartment where money or plate is kept, treasure, accumulated wealth (gold or silver, wrought or unwrought, as plate, jewellery, &c.);
(in surg.) a kind of bandage;
a dictionary, lexicon or vocabulary;
a poetical collection, collection of sentences &c.;
a bud, flower-cup, seed-vessel;
the sheath or integument of a plant, pod, nut-shell;
a nutmeg;
the inner part of the fruit of *Artocarpus integrifolia* and of similar fruits;
the cocoon of a silk-worm;
the membrane covering an egg (in the womb);
the vulva;
a testicle or the scrotum;
the penis;
an egg;
(in Vedānta phil.) a term for the three sheaths or succession of cases which make up the various frames of the body enveloping the soul (these are, 1. the ānanda-maya k... or 'sheath of pleasure', forming the kāraṇa-śarīra or 'causal frame' ; 2. the vijñāna-maya or buddhi-m... or mano-m... or prāṇa-m... k..., 'the sheath of intellect or will or life', forming the sūkṣma-śarīra or 'subtile frame' ; 3. the anna-m... k..., 'the sheath of nourishment', forming the sthūla-śarīra or 'gross frame');
a ball or globe;
the water used at an ordeal or judicial trial (the defendant drinks thrice of it after some idol has been washed in it);
an oath;
a cup used in the ratification of a treaty of peace;
N. of a conjunction of planets;
of the 2nd astrological mansion

Wikipedia

A Kosha ... usually rendered "sheath", one of five coverings of the Atman, or Self according to Vedantic philosophy. They are often visualised like the layers of an onion. Belling states:

According to the Kosha system in Yogic philosophy, the nature of being human encompasses physical and psychological aspects that function as one holistic system. The Kosha system refers to these different aspects as layers of subjective experience. Layers range from the dense physical body to the more subtle levels of emotions, mind and spirit. Psychology refers to the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of our being. Together, all aspects make up our subjective experience of being alive.

The five sheaths (pancha-kosas) are alluded to in the fourteen verse of the Atmabodha. From gross to fine they are:

Annamaya kosha, food-apparent-sheath

Pranamaya kosha, air-apparent-sheath

Manomaya kosha, mind-stuff-apparent-sheath

Vijnanamaya kosha, wisdom-apparent-sheath(Vijnana)

Anandamaya kosha, bliss-apparent-sheath (Ananda)

According to Vedanta the wise man should discriminate between the self and the koshas, which are non-self.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

The description of the human person as found in the Taittiriya Upanishad (II, 1–5) became paradigmatic in later Vedanta. According to this description a person consists of five sheaths within which the atman lies enclosed. Starting from the outside, the first sheath consists of the body made of food (annamaya-kosa); within it are the vital airs that comprise the second sheath (pranamaya-kosa). The mind comprises the third sheath (manomaya kosa), consciousness the fourth (vijñanamaya kosa) and bliss the fifth (anandmaya). In Advaita the self consists of self-effulgent consciousness (svaprakasa caitanya), which is rather than has consciousness. It is one and the same in all human subjects (unlike Sakhya) and eternally free.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Five Elements form the “material” of the Five Kosas or “Sheaths” of Hindu tradition. These form the bodies or veils of man on the various planes. The grossest is the Annamayakoa or “sheath made of or by Anna” which means both Food and Earth. The second is Pranamayakosa. Prana here indicates the flowing, fluidic, liquid Element, Water. The third sheath is the Manomayakosa, “the sheath made of or by the lower mind”. The fourth is the Vijnanamayakosa, “the sheath made of Buddhi”, for Vijnana and Buddhi are synonyms. The fifth sheath is the Anandamayakoa, “the sheath made of Bliss”. The Bliss is the experience of the Sphere of Ether. It is the Pure Joy of Paradise, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

Lord Chaitanya used to have three sorts of states: (1) the conscious state in which the mind dwelt on the gross and the subtle bodies. (2) The semi-conscious state in which the mind soared to the causal body and felt the causal bliss, and (3) the state of in-turned consciousness (superconscious state) in which the mind used to merge completely in the Mahakarana—the great First Cause.

There is a great similarity between this and the five sheaths or Kosas of the Vedanta—the Annamaya and Pranamaya Kosas (together forming the gross body), the Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Kosas (together forming the subtle body) and Anandamayakosa (forming the causal body). The First Cause is beyond all these Kosas. When the mind used to merge in this First Cause, he (Sri Chaitanya) used to fall into Samadhi; this is known as the Nirvikalpa or Jada Samadhi.

Nirmalananda. A Commentary on the Upanishads

We have five levels or “bodies.” They are: 1) the physical, material body (annamaya kosha), 2) the magnetic or bio-energetic body (pranamaya kosha), 3) the sensory mind (manomaya kosha), 4) the intelligent mind, the intellect (jnanamaya kosha), and 5) the will (anandamaya kosha). These also correspond to the five elements: earth (prithvi), water (apa), fire (agni), air (vayu), and ether (akasha) which are also the seats of the five senses—smell, taste, sight, touch, and hearing.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Lessons on the Upanishads

The layers, or degrees of reality, that constitute the universe are also to be found in the human individual in the form of the koshas, or the sheaths, as they are called: the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and the causal. These are known in the Sanskrit language as annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha, manomaya kosha, vijnanamaya kosha and anandamaya kosha. These are the five layers of objectivity which, in a gradational form, externalise consciousness. The grosser the sheath, the greater is the force of externality, so that when consciousness enters the physical body, we are totally material in our outlook, physical in our understanding and assessment of values, intensely body-conscious, and know nothing of ourselves except this body. It is only when we go inward that we have access to the subtler layers of our personality, not otherwise.

The Taittiriya Upanishad deals with this subject of the five layers, known as the koshas; and the Mandukya Upanishad, which is another important Upanishad, sometimes considered as the most important, deals with the very same koshas in a different way – namely, by way of the elucidation of the involvement of consciousness in these koshas. The five koshas have been classified into three groups: the physical, the subtle and the causal. In the waking state in which we are now, for instance, the physical body is intensely operative and we always think in terms of the physical body, physical objects and physical sensations.

This physical sensation is absent in the state of dream, but three of the koshas operate in dream. All the five are operative in the waking condition, concentrating their action mostly on the physical body. The physical body is not operative in the dream state, but the vital, the mental and the intellectual sheaths are active. The prana is there, the mind is there, and the intellect is there, in a diminished intensity. We breathe, we think and we understand in the state of dream. That means the prana, manas and buddhi are all active in the state of dream minus the physical element – namely, the body consciousness. In the state of deep sleep, none of these are active. Neither the body is operative there, nor the mind, nor the intellect, nor is there any consciousness that we are even breathing. The consciousness is withdrawn entirely from all the sheaths – physical, vital, mental and intellectual. There is only one sheath operating in the state of sleep. That is the causal sheath – the anandamaya kosha, as it is called in Sanskrit.

See: Aham and koshas

See also:

in Virat: [Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad](#)

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

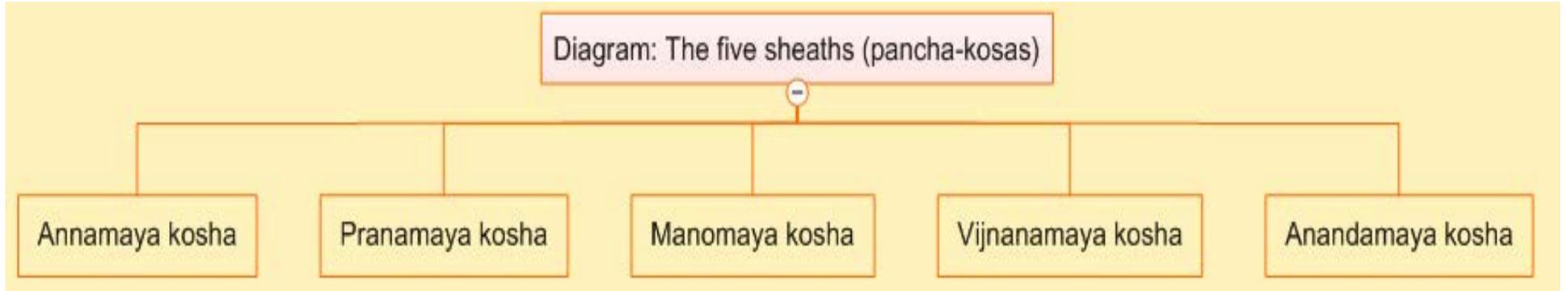
kośa, sheath <l-E base *(s) geu-ke, to cover, envelop

Related words

Sarira

Sanskrit
Kośa — कोश
kośa - कोश

Diagram: The five sheaths (pancha-kosas)



Krishna

Name

Krishna
Krsna
Kṛṣṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kṛṣṇa — ... black; ninth descent (avatāra) of Viṣṇu; “the dark one,” “the one who attracts irresistibly” (from the verb root krs = “black, dark colored”); or (from kṛṣ = “truth” + ṇa = “bliss”); i.e., He whose nature is truth and bliss

1. The dark blue One-i.e., Lord Kṛṣṇa (black or dark blue is the color of the infinite, the formless).
2. The one who attracts irresistibly. The eighth incarnation of Viṣṇu, whose life story is described in the Sṛīmad Bhāgavatam and the Mahābhārata and whose spiritual teachings are contained in the Bhagavad Gītā.
3. According to the Yoga school, a type of action (karma).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kṛṣṇa -
black, dark, dark-blue (opposed to śveta', śukla', ro'hita, and aruṇa');

wicked, evil;

the dark half of the lunar month from full to new moon;

the fourth or Kali-yuga;

black (the colour) or dark-blue (which is often confounded with black by the Hindūs);

the antelope;

a kind of animal feeding on carrion;

the Indian cuckoo or Kokila;

a crow;

Carissa Carandas;

N. of one of the poets of the RV. (descended from Aṅgiras);

N. of a celebrated āvatār of the god Viṣṇu, or sometimes identified with Viṣṇu himself ... as distinct from his ten āvatārs or incarnations (in the earlier legends he appears as a great hero and teacher [MBh. Bhag.]; in the more recent he is deified, and is often represented as a young and amorous shepherd with flowing hair and a flute in his hand; the following are a few particulars of his birth and history as related in Hariv. 3304 ff. and in the Purāṇas &c.: Vasu-deva, who was a descendant of Yadu and Yayāti, had two wives , Rohiṇī and Devakī; the latter had eight sons of whom the eighth was Kṛishṇa; Kāṁsa, king of Mathurā and cousin of Devakī, was informed by a prediction that one of these sons would kill him; he therefore kept Vasu-deva and his wife in confinement , and slew their first six children; the seventh was Balarāma who was saved by being abstracted from the womb of Devakī and transferred to that of Rohiṇī; the eighth was Kṛishṇa who was born with black skin and a peculiar mark on his breast; his father Vasu-deva managed to escape from Mathurā with the child, and favoured by the gods found a herdsman named Nanda whose wife Yazo-dā had just been delivered of a son which Vasu-deva conveyed to Devakī after substituting his own in its place. Nanda with his wife Yazo-dā took the infant Kṛishṇa and settled first in Gokula or Vraja, and afterwards in Vṛindāvana, where Kṛishṇa and Bala-rāma grew up together, roaming in the woods and joining in the sports of the herdsmen's sons; Kṛishṇa as a youth contested the sovereignty of Indra , and was victorious over that god, who descended from heaven to praise Kṛishṇa, and made him lord over the cattle ...; Kṛishṇa is described as sporting constantly with the Gopīs or shepherdesses ... of whom a thousand became his wives , though only eight are specified , Rādhā being the favourite ... ; Kṛishṇa built and fortified a city called Dvārakā in Gujarāt , and thither transported the inhabitants of Mathurā after killing Kāṁsa; Kṛishṇa had various wives besides the Gopīs, and by Rukmiṇī had a son Pradyumna who is usually identified with Kāma-deva; with Jains, Kṛishṇa is one of the nine black Vasu-devas; with Buddhists he is the chief of the black demons, who are the enemies of Buddha and the white demons);

N. of an attendant in Skanda's retinue;

of an Asura;

of a king of the Nāgas;

of Arjuna (the most renowned of the Pāṇḍu princes , so named apparently from his colour as a child);

of Vyāsa;

of a son of Śuka by Pīvarī (teacher of the Yoga);

of a pupil of Bharad-vāja;

of a son of Arjuna;

[name of a number of other persons - Compiler's Note];

N. of a hell

Wikipedia

Krishna is a deity worshipped across many traditions in Hinduism in a variety of perspectives. While many Vaishnava groups recognize him as an avatar of Vishnu, other traditions within Krishnaism consider Krishna to be svayam bhagavan, or the Supreme Being.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The god Krishna is understood to be an incarnation of VISHNU. None of the other incarnations of Vishnu has attracted as passionate and widespread a devotion in India as Krishna. There is some evidence that Krishna was originally a historical figure. Krishna is technically the black god, since the Sanskrit word *krishna* means "black." However, he is generally depicted with blue skin. Krishna appears in the MAHABHARATA epic as a friend to the PANDAVA brothers. In that epic Krishna is rarely referred to with divine epithet, or as a divinity. It is only in the BHAGAVAD GITA, the famous text that recounts the teaching of Krishna to ARJUNA just before the battle, that the divinity of Krishna is clearly detailed. Some have suggested that the worship of Krishna in this context may constitute a form of euhemerism, or the deification of a famous warrior.

A second role of Krishna is as the divine lover, dancing at midnight with the cowherd maidens (GOPIS), who are drawn to his beauty, his beautiful music, and the magic of his divine presence. According to tradition he eventually favors Radha among the gopis; the passionate love of Radha for her furtive, often unavailable lover becomes the paradigm for Krishna devotionalism. Finally, Krishna appears as a child and youth, mischievous, naughty, and beloved of every mother who lays eyes upon him.

The god was born in Mathura, where his father, VASUDEVA, was minister to the evil king Kamsa. Kamsa discovered that Vasudeva's wife, DEVAKI, was to give birth to a son who would eventually kill him. Therefore, he kept Vasudeva and Devaki under guard and killed their first six children.

The seventh child, BALARAMA, was miraculously transferred to the womb of Vasudeva's other wife, Rohini. When the eighth child, Krishna, was born, a profound slumber fell upon Vasudeva's guards and the father was able secretly to take the child across the YAMUNA River to BRINDAVAN and consign him to the cowherd Nanda and his wife, YASHODA, who became Krishna's foster mother.

As a child, Krishna was extremely mischievous, stealing milk and butter (one of his epithets is "butter thief"), overturning wagons, and felling trees with strength far beyond that of an ordinary child. Once Yashoda tied him to a huge mortar used for grinding things. Krishna, even though a baby, dragged it out of the house and used it to fell two trees.

Once when Yashoda caught him eating mud, she forced him to open his mouth; within, she saw the entire universe. Krishna's magic made her forget this incident, lest she not be able to treat him as an ordinary child.

In two stories of his childhood he outwits evil forces. Putana, a witch, was sent by the evil king Kamsa to kill the infant by suckling him with poisonous milk. Krishna was completely unharmed, but he sucked so ferociously at her breast that the demon's innards were sucked out and she died. In a later incident the snake demon Kaliya poisoned the drinking water in the Yamuna River, threatening the lives of the cowherds and the cows. Krishna found the pool where Kaliya was hiding and danced a furious dance upon him until he was killed.

In another tale the young Krishna asked people to worship the mountain Govardhana, rather than the great king of the gods Indra. Indra, learning this, sent terrible rain storms to wash away the cowherds who had defied him. Krishna with his divine strength lifted up the mountain, Govardhana, to use as an umbrella to protect the people and thus defeated Indra himself.

As a young man, Krishna began to attract the interest of the cowherd women as he played his magical flute day and night. He would flirt with them and play tricks on them. Once when the cowherd girls were bathing he took all their clothes and put them up into a big tree. When the women left the water and begged him for their garments, he bent the tree down and let them retrieve their clothes.

Particularly at night Krishna would work his divine magic. The women would yearn to see him and could not find him. They would begin to think of all his magical deeds and praise him. When they finally found him, they began to dance with him; he became many Krishnas, pairing with each woman as though she were the only one. This is referred to as the Rasalila dance and is the metaphor for the way that god is intimate with each soul while it is only one. Finally, in the stories of later times (c. 10th century) one cowherd woman alone, named RADHA, becomes Krishna's favorite. Her passionate love for him, her yearning when he does not appear at their assigned spot, and their loveplay are all celebrated in the passionate liturgy of Krishna worship, where the devotee sees himself or herself as Radha seeking passionate union with god.

After the death of Kamsa, Krishna becomes an ally of the Pandavas. He assists them in every way fair and foul and helps them triumph; the BHAGAVAD GITA makes clear that this was divine aid.

We are left here with the mystery of Krishna, a divinity who is mischievous and naughty as a child, naughty as a young man—playing games with the hearts of many women—and who in war does not hesitate to use stratagems that the SHASTRAS the authoritative texts, might find inappropriate for a warrior. Krishna effects his LILA, his divine game, in ways that humans cannot grasp, except through complete devotion. Krishna must eventually die, as must all the other AVATARS of Vishnu. While in the forest doing YOGA then, he is accidentally pierced in the foot with a spear by a hunter who mistook his foot for a deer's foot. He blesses the man who threw the spear that will take him to heaven.

Many devotional Vaishnavite movements in India focus on worship of Krishna only. Most famous of these are the followers of Saint CHAITANYA of Bengal, whose Goswamis, or followers of Chaitanya's tradition, moved to Brindavan to be closer to the place where Krishna lived. The followers of Chaitanya include Sri Swami Prabhupada BHAKTIVEDANTA, who traveled to the United States to found the Hare Krishna movement. As do many Krishnaites, they worship in ecstatic devotion, while chanting MANTRAS to their god.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Krishna.Hindu deity usually considered as the eighth avatar or incarnation of the god Vishnu; in certain religious contexts, however, as in the Gitagovinda, he is described as the ultimate deity and the source of all the avatars. In either case, Krishna is one of the major deities in the modern Hindu pantheon. Part of his popularity may stem from the extraordinary breadth of his manifestations, allowing his devotees (bhakta) to worship him in many different ways. His earliest appearance comes in the Mahabharata, the later of the two great Hindu epics, where he is a friend and adviser to the five Pandava brothers who are the epic's protagonists. His epic portrayal is highly complex, and his character is not always truthful or good. He is a regal king and heroic warrior, a cunning opponent, and a Machiavellian politician with his own underlying agenda. Here Krishna plays the role of a trickster, although late in the story, in the section of the epic known as the Bhagavad Gita, he eventually drops the mask to reveal himself as the supreme deity.

The later sectarian literature, particularly the Harivamsha and the Bhagavata Purana, virtually ignore this exalted, royal figure, preferring to concentrate on Krishna's birth, childhood, and adolescence. This latter stratum of Krishna's mythology has been clearly imposed on the earlier, heroic image, rendering Krishna a character with unusual mythic depth. Religiously speaking, the image of Krishna as child and lover has been far more important than the stern and somewhat amoral hero.

The characters in the story of Krishna's life, including his parents, friends, and companions, are not aware of his divinity, and throughout the story they confront many surprises and bewildering events. However, none of these plot twists surprise the readers, since they are aware that all of the characters are taking part in Krishna's divine play (lila). According to tradition, Krishna is the eighth son of Devaki and Vasudeva. He is born in a prison in the city of Mathura, where his parents have been confined by his uncle, the wicked king Kamsa. On Devaki's wedding day, a divine voice warns Kamsa that her eighth child will eventually kill him. In an effort to forestall this prophecy, he puts the couple in prison, and kills all of Devaki's children as soon as they are born. Kamsa intends to do the same with Krishna, but when Krishna is born, a deep sleep falls on all the jailers, the locked prison doors are miraculously opened, and Vasudeva is able to spirit the infant out of the prison to the home of his foster parents, Nanda and Yashoda. Vasudeva returns that night, bearing Yashoda's newborn baby girl, who is really Bhadrakali, the Goddess, in disguise. The next morning Kamsa kills the child by dashing it against a stone. From the body arises the Goddess, who taunts Kamsa, telling him that the person who will slay him has escaped.

Krishna lives happily at Nanda and Yashoda's home. His mythic images from that early time stress either his persona as the adorable child or unexpected feats of strength and heroism. As an infant he is placed under a cart, which he strikes with his foot and kicks into the air; he also slays a variety of demon assassins sent by his uncle Kamsa, most notably Putana, Keshi, and Trnavarta. During all these feats his companions are amazed but never realize that divinity is in their midst. Nor, for that matter, do his foster parents. In one story Yashoda looks in Krishna's mouth when he has been eating some dirt and sees the entire universe inside it. Through the workings of Krishna's power of illusion (maya), she immediately forgets the whole incident. The themes of forgetfulness and hidden divinity are central to Krishna's childhood mythology. The people in Braj treat Krishna with easy familiarity, because they are unaware of his true identity. Krishna is said to prefer this sort of natural interaction over all other worship.

As a boy Krishna becomes known for his mischief, particularly his penchant for stealing butter from the gopis (milkmaids), although when he is caught he can usually manage to charm his way out of punishment. His adolescence is marked by two heroic episodes—driving off the serpent Kaliya, and defeating the storm-god Indra by holding up Mt. Govardhan—and by the development of his persona as a lover. On moonlit, autumn nights, he plays his flute Murali on the banks of the Yamuna River. Hearing its irresistible call, the village women rush to meet him, whiling away the night in the circle dance known as the ras lila. Although she is not mentioned in the earliest texts, Radha appears as Krishna's special companion and consort, symbolizing the relationship between deity and devotee using the imagery of lover and beloved.

Some parts of Krishna's mythology relate episodes from later in his life, including his return to Mathura, the slaying of Kamsa, taking his rightful place as ruler, and marrying Rukmini and a host of other wives. The earlier strands of his mythic identity—the king, hero, and cunning diplomat portrayed in the Mahabharata—can be tied in here, to make it seem like the account of a single life. Some of the most poignant devotional (bhakti) poetry details the exchange between Krishna's female devotees, the gopis, and Uddhava, Krishna's companion sent back from Mathura. Uddhava reassures them that Krishna is the indwelling God and is omnipresent. For the gopis, this abstract concept is a poor substitute for the sweet boy they know so well. Their attention remains focused on the charming child of Braj, who never grows up, never grows old, and who invites his devotees to share his world.

The worship of Krishna emphasizes relationship and communion, both with the deity and one another. In the most elaborate forms of worship, Krishna's devotees envision themselves as entering Krishna's world and spending the day doing the ordinary activities of a village cowhand, such as getting up, eating, taking the cows to pasture, and bringing home the cows. Some devotional manuals give detailed daily calendars, for which the devotees can visualize themselves going to particular places and doing particular things at certain times—building a relationship with God through sharing the mundane parts of everyday life. Another common practice is communal singing, usually collections of the divine names known as kirtans, as a way to build relationships and communion among the devotees.

Another feature of Krishna's character and worship is the notion of lila or "play." As David R. Kinsley points out, the infant Krishna dispatches the demon assassins as a form of play, and they never pose any serious threat. His relationship with the people of Braj is also a sort of play. He comes as the divine presence in their midst, but keeps them completely unaware of this, occasionally hinting at it through his wondrous deeds, but unwilling to ruin their natural interactions with him by revealing their difference in status. In the same way, he is believed to be active in the lives of his devotees, always present, but dropping only teasing hints of his presence. Finally, lila is the name for a series of dramas performed during the monsoon season in the town of Brindavan. These productions, known as the ras lila, are not mere drama but combine both liturgy and drama. Krishna and his companions are played by local brahmin boys. While in costume, the boys are believed to have become the characters they portray. Part of the program is worship. The players, known as svarups ("own-forms"), gather on stage to give darshan to the audience. The most common religious act in modern popular Hinduism, darshan allows direct eye contact between the devotee and the image of a deity, which is considered to be a conscious, perceiving being. The second part of the program is the lila, a rendition of some episode in Krishna's mythology. The audience participates by virtue of its presence, making Krishna's lila part of present-day experience by performing or attending these productions. Given his stature as a Hindu deity, there are many works on Krishna.

Wikipedia

Krishna is often depicted as an infant, as a young boy playing a flute as in the Bhagavata Purana, or as a youthful prince giving direction and guidance as in the Bhagavad Gita. The stories of Krishna appear across a broad spectrum of Hindu philosophical and theological traditions. They portray him in various perspectives: a god-child, a prankster, a model lover, a divine hero and the Supreme Being. The principal scriptures discussing Krishna's story are the Mahābhārata, the Harivamsa, the Bhagavata Purana and the Vishnu Purana.

The various traditions dedicated to different manifestations of Krishna, such as Vasudeva, Bala Krishna and Gopala, existed as early as 4th century BC. The Krishna-bhakti Movement spread to southern India by the 9th century AD, while in northern India Krishnaism schools were well established by 11th century AD. From the 10th century AD, with the growing Bhakti movement, Krishna became a favorite subject in performing arts and regional traditions of devotion developed for forms of Krishna such as Jagannatha in Orissa, Vithoba in Maharashtra and Shrinathji in Rajasthan.

...

The name Krishna is also the 57th name in the Vishnu Sahasranama and means the Existence of Bliss, according to Adi Sankara's interpretation. Krishna is also known by various other names, epithets and titles, which reflect his many associations and attributes. Among the most common names are Govinda, "finder of cows", or Gopala, "protector of cows", which refer to Krishna's childhood in Vraja. Some of the distinct names may be regionally important; for instance, Jagannatha (literally "Lord of the Universe"), a popular deity of Puri in eastern India.

Iconography

Krishna is easily recognized by his representations. Though his skin colour may be depicted as black or dark in some representations, particularly in murtis, in other images such as modern pictorial representations, Krishna is usually shown with blue skin. He is often shown wearing a yellow silk dhoti and peacock feather headgear. Common depictions show him as a little boy, or as a young man in a characteristic relaxed pose, playing the flute. In this form, he usually stands with one leg bent in front of the other and raises a flute to his lips, accompanied by cows, emphasising his position as the divine herdsman, Govinda, or with the gopis (milkmaids).

The scene on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, notably where he addresses Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, is another common subject for representation. In these depictions, he is shown as a man, often shown with typical god-like characteristics of Hindu religious art, such as multiple arms or heads, denoting power, and with attributes of Vishnu, such as the chakra or in his two-armed form as a charioteer.

Representations in temples often show Krishna as a man standing in an upright, formal pose. He may be alone, or with associated figures: his brother Balarama and sister Subhadra, or his main queens Rukmini and Satyabhama.

Often, Krishna is pictured with his gopi-consort Radha. Manipuri Vaishnavas do not worship Krishna alone, but as Radha Krishna, a combined image of Krishna and Radha. This is also a characteristic of the schools Rudra and Nimbarka sampradaya, as well as that of Swaminarayan faith. The traditions celebrate Radha Ramana murti, who is viewed by Gaudiyas as a form of Radha Krishna.

Krishna is also depicted and worshipped as a small child (bāla kṛṣṇa, the child Krishna), crawling on his hands and knees or dancing, often with butter in his hand. Regional variations in the iconography of Krishna are seen in his different forms, such as Jagannatha of Orissa, Vithoba of Maharashtra and Shrinathji in Rajasthan.

Life

This summary is based on details from the Mahābhārata, the Harivamsa, the Bhagavata Purana and the Vishnu Purana. The scenes from the narrative are set in north India, mostly in the present states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Delhi and Gujarat.

Birth

Traditional belief based on scriptural details and astrological calculations gives the date of Krishna's birth, known as Janmashtami, as either 18 or 21 July 3228 BCE. Krishna belonged to the royal family of Mathura, and was the eighth son born to the princess Devaki, and her husband Vasudeva. Mathura was the capital of the Yadavas, to which Krishna's parents Vasudeva and Devaki belonged. The king Kamsa, Devaki's brother, had ascended the throne by imprisoning his father, King Ugrasena. Afraid of a prophecy that predicted his death at the hands of Devaki's eighth son, he had locked the couple into a prison cell. After Kamsa killed the first six children, and Devaki's apparent miscarriage of the seventh, being transferred to Rohini as Balarama, Krishna took birth.

Since Vasudeva believed Krishna's life was in danger, Krishna was secretly taken out of the prison cell to be raised by his foster parents, Yasoda and Nanda in Gokula. Two of his other siblings also survived, Balarama (Devaki's seventh child, transferred to the womb of Rohini, Vasudeva's first wife) and Subhadra (daughter of Vasudeva and Rohini, born much later than Balarama and Krishna). According to Bhagavata Purana it is believed that Krishna was born without a sexual union, by "mental transmission" from the mind of Vasudeva into the womb of Devaki. Hindus believe that in that time, this type of union was possible for achieved beings.

The prince

On his return to Mathura as a young man, Krishna overthrew and killed his uncle, Kamsa, after avoiding several assassination attempts from Kamsa's followers. He reinstated Kamsa's father, Ugrasena, as the king of the Yadavas and became a leading prince at the court. During this period, he became a friend of Arjuna and the other Pandava princes of the Kuru kingdom, who were his cousins. Later, he took his Yadava subjects to the city of Dwaraka (in modern Gujarat) and established his own kingdom there. Krishna married Rukmini, the princess of Vidarbha, by abducting her from her wedding on her request. According to Bhagavata Purana, Krishna married with 16,108 wives, of which eight were chief—including Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati; Krishna subsequently married 16,100 maidens who were being held in captivity by demon Narakasura, to save their honor. Krishna killed the demon and released them all. According to strict social custom of the time all of the captive women were degraded, and would be unable to marry, as they had been under the control of Narakasura, however Krishna married them to reinstate their status in the society. This wedding with 16100 abandoned daughters was more of a mass women rehabilitation. In Vaishnava traditions, Krishna's wives are believed to be forms of the goddess Lakshmi—consort of Vishnu, or special souls who attained this qualification after many lifetimes of austerity, while his queen Satyabhama, is an expansion of Radha.

Kurukshetra War and Bhagavad Gita

Once battle seemed inevitable, Krishna offered both sides the opportunity to choose between having either his army or simply himself alone, but on the condition that he personally would not raise any weapon. Arjuna, on behalf of the Pandavas, chose to have Krishna on their side, and Duryodhana, chief of the Kauravas, chose Krishna's army. At the time of the great battle, Krishna acted as Arjuna's charioteer, since it was a position that did not require the wielding of weapons.

Krishna displays his Vishvarupa (Universal Form) to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Upon arriving at the battlefield, and seeing that the enemies are his family, his grandfather, his cousins and loved ones, Arjuna becomes doubtful about fighting. Krishna then advises him about the battle, with the conversation soon extending into a discourse which was later compiled as the Bhagavad Gita.

Later life

At a festival, a fight broke out between the Yadavas who exterminated each other. His elder brother Balarama then gave up his body using Yoga. Krishna retired into the forest and sat under a tree in meditation. While Vyasa's Mahābhārata says that Krishna ascended to heaven, Sarala's Mahabhārata narrates the story that a hunter mistook his partly visible left foot for a deer and shot an arrow wounding him mortally.

According to Puranic sources, Krishna's disappearance marks the end of Dvapara Yuga and the start of Kali Yuga, which is dated to February 17/18, 3102 BC. Vaishnava teachers such as Ramanujacharya and Gaudiya Vaishnavas held the view that the body of Krishna is completely spiritual and never decays as this appears to be the perspective of the Bhagavata Purana. Krishna never appears to grow old or age at all in the historical depictions of the Puranas despite passing of several decades, but there are grounds for a debate whether this indicates that he has no material body, since battles and other descriptions of the Mahabhārata epic show clear indications that he seems to be subject to the limitations of nature. While battles apparently seem to indicate limitations, Mahabharatha also shows in many places where Krishna is not subject to any limitations as through episodes Duryodhana trying to arrest Krishna where His body burst into fire showing all creation within Him. Krishna is also explicitly told to be without deterioration elsewhere.

Worship

Vaishnavism

The worship of Krishna is part of Vaishnavism, which regards Vishnu as the Supreme God and venerates his associated avatars, their consorts, and related saints and teachers. Krishna is especially looked upon as a full manifestation of Vishnu, and as one with Vishnu himself. However the exact relationship between Krishna and Vishnu is complex and diverse, where Krishna is sometimes considered an independent deity, supreme in his own right. Out of many deities Krishna is particularly important, and traditions of Vaishnava lines are generally centered either on Vishnu or on Krishna, as supreme. The term Krishnaism has been used to describe the sects of Krishna, reserving term “Vaishnavism” for sects focusing on Vishnu in which Krishna is an avatar, rather than a transcended being.

All Vaishnava traditions recognise Krishna as an avatar of Vishnu; others identify Krishna with Vishnu; while traditions, such as Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Vallabha Sampradaya and the Nimbarka Sampradaya, regard Krishna as the svayam bhagavan, original form of God, or the Lord himself. Swaminarayan, the founder of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya also worshipped Krishna as god himself. “Greater Krishnaism” corresponds to the second and dominant phase of Vaishnavism, revolving around the cults of the Vasudeva, Krishna, and Gopala of late Vedic period. Today the faith has a significant following outside of India as well.

Early traditions

The deity Krishna-Vasudeva (kṛṣṇa vāsudeva “Krishna, the son of Vasudeva”) is historically one of the earliest forms of worship in Krishnaism and Vaishnavism. It is believed to be a significant tradition of the early history of the worship of Krishna in antiquity. This tradition is considered as earliest to other traditions that led to amalgamation at a later stage of the historical development. Other traditions are Bhagavatism and the cult of Gopala, that along with the cult of Bala Krishna form the basis of current tradition of monotheistic religion of Krishna. Some early scholars would equate it with Bhagavatism, and the founder of this religious tradition is believed to be Krishna, who is the son of Vasudeva, thus his name is Vāsudeva, he is believed to be historically part of the Satvata tribe, and according to them his followers called themselves Bhagavatas and this religion had formed by the 2nd century BC (the time of Patanjali), or as early as the 4th century BC according to evidence in Megasthenes and in the Arthashastra of Kautilya, when Vāsudeva was worshiped as supreme deity in a strongly monotheistic format, where the supreme being was perfect, eternal and full of grace. In many sources outside of the cult, devotee or bhakta is defined as Vāsudevaka. The Harivamsha describes intricate relationships between Krishna Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha that would later form a Vaishnava concept of primary quadrupled expansion, or avatara.

In the West

Since 1966, the Krishna bhakti movement has also spread outside India. This is largely due to the Hare Krishna movement, the largest part of which is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

Jainism

The most exalted figures in Jainism are the twenty- four Tirthankaras. Krishna, when he was incorporated into the Jain list of heroic figures presented a problem with his activities which are not pacifist or non- violent. The concept of Baladeva, Vasudeva and Prati- Vasudeva was used to solve it. The Jain list of sixty- three Shalakupurshas or notable figures includes amongst others, the twenty- four Tirthankaras and nine sets of this triad. One of these triads is Krishna as the Vasudeva, Balarama as the Baladeva and Jarasandha as the Prati- Vasudeva. He was a cousin of the twenty- second Tirthankara, Neminatha. The stories of these triads can be found in the Harivamsha of Jinasena (not be confused with its namesake, the addendum to Mahābhārata) and the Trishashti- shalakupurusha- charita of Hemachandra.

Buddhism

The story of Krishna occurs in the Jataka tales in Buddhism, in the Ghatapandita Jataka as a prince and legendary conqueror and king of India. In the Buddhist version, Krishna is called Vasudeva, Kanha and Keshava, and Balarama is his younger brother, Baladeva. These details resemble that of the story given in the Bhagavata Purana.

As depicted in the Mahābhārata, all of the sons are eventually killed due to a curse of sage Kanhadipayana (Veda Vyasa, also known as Krishna Dwaipayana). Krishna himself is eventually speared by a hunter in the foot by mistake, leaving the sole survivor of their family being their sister, Anjanadevi of whom no further mention is made.

Since Jataka tales are given from the perspective of Buddha's previous lives (as well as the previous lives of many of Buddha's followers), Krishna appears as one of the lives of Sariputra, one of Buddha's foremost disciples and the "Dhammasenapati" or "Chief General of the Dharma" and is usually shown being Buddha's "right hand man" in Buddhist art and iconography. The Bodhisattva, is born in this tale as one of his youngest brothers named Ghatapandita, and saves Krishna from the grief of losing his son. The 'divine boy' Krishna as an embodiment of wisdom and endearing prankster is forming a part of worshipable pantheon in Japanese Buddhism.

See: Vishnu, Narayana, Krishna

Etymology

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Sanskrit word kṛṣṇa means "black", "dark" or "dark- blue" and is used as a name to describe someone with dark skin. Krishna is often depicted in murtis (images) as black, and is generally shown in paintings with a blue skin.

Some Hindu traditions often ascribe varying interpretations and powers to the names. The Mahabharata's Udyoga- parva (Mbh 5.71.4) divides kṛṣṇa into elements kṛṣ and ṇa, kṛṣ (a verbal root meaning "to plough, drag") being taken as expressing bhū "being; earth" and ṇa being taken as expressing nirvṛti "bliss". In the Brahmasambandha mantra of the Vallabha sampradaya, the syllables of the name Krishna are assigned the power to destroy sin relating to material, self and divine causes. Mahabharata verse 5.71.4 is also quoted in Chaitanya Charitamrita and Prabhupada in his commentary, translates the bhū as "attractive existence", thus Krishna is also interpreted as meaning "all- attractive one". This quality of Krishna is stated in the atmarama verse of Bhagavatam 1.7.10.

Related words

Narayana

Vishnu

Sanskrit

Kṛṣṇa — कृष्ण

Kṛṣṇa - कृष्ण

Ksatriya

Variant spellings

ksatriya
kshatriya
kṣatriya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kṣatriya — ... warrior; member of the second caste (see āśrama)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kṣatriya -

governing, endowed with sovereignty;

a member of the military or reigning order (which in later times constituted the second caste);

a red horse;

N. of a people;

the power or rank of the sovereign

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Kshatriya. The Kshatriyas are the warrior/kingly class in the ancient fourfold class system of India. They are second in the hierarchy beneath the BRAHMINS. Their duty was to protect and rule. They were always allied with Brahmins in their role as kings and overlords, but they vied for control of the top of the social hierarchy. In the sixth century B.C.E. the heterodox movements of Buddhism and JAINISM, which opposed Brahminical orthodoxy, were founded by men of Kshatriya lineage, respectively, Siddhartha Gautama (later, BUDDHA) and Vardhamana (later, MAHAVIRA).

As do Brahmins, Kshatriyas receive the SACRED THREAD, making them “twice-born.” Up to the GUPTA era (c. 600 C.E.) they learned SANSKRIT and to some degree the scriptures. The UPANISHADS give examples of Kshatriya kings who teach Brahmins the highest wisdom.

Kshatriyas play a significant role in Indian literature, along with the Brahmins. Both the RAMAYANA and MAHABHARATA are essentially Kshatriya epics dealing with issues of kingly succession. They also, of course, highlight the two Kshatriya heroes RAMA and KRISHNA, both recognized as avatars of Lord VISHNU.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad. Tr. Madhavananda

11. In the beginning this (the Kṣatriya and other castes) was indeed Brahman, 1 one only. Being one, he did not flourish. He specially projected an excellent form, the Kṣatriya—those who are Kṣatriyas among the gods: Indra, Varuṇa, the moon, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Death, and ī ś ā n a . . . Therefore there is none higher than the Kṣatriya. Hence the Brāhmaṇa worships the Kṣatriya from a lower position in the Rājasūya sacrifice. He imparts that glory to the Kṣatriya. The Brāhmaṇa is the source of the Kṣatriya. Therefore, although the king attains supremacy (in the sacrifice), at the end of it he resorts to the Brāhmaṇa, his source. He who slights the Brāhmaṇa, Strikes at his own source. He becomes more wicked, as one is by slighting one's superior.

... although the king attains supremacy, viz the distinction of being anointed for the Rājasūya sacrifice, at the end of it, when the ceremony is over, he resorts to the Brāhmaṇa, his source, i.e. puts the priest forward.

Related words

Brahmin

Sanskrit

Kṣatriya -- क्षत्रिय

kṣatriya - क्षत्रिय

Kshetra

Variant spellings

kshetra

kṣetra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kṣetra — ... “field”; property; place of pilgrimage; sacred spot; astrological mansion

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kṣetra -

landed property, land, soil;

‘soil of merit’, a Buddha or any holy person Divyā;

a field;

place, region, country;

a house;

a town;

department, sphere of action;
place of origin, place where anything is found;
a sacred spot or district, place of pilgrimage (as Benares &c....);
an enclosed plot of ground, portion of space, superficies;
(in geom.) a plane figure (as a triangle, circle, &c.) enclosed by lines, any figure considered as having geometrical dimensions;
a diagram;
a planetary orbit;
a zodiacal sign;
an astrological mansion;
(in chiromancy) certain portions marked out on the palm;
‘fertile soil’, the fertile womb, wife;
the body (considered as the field of the indwelling soul);
(in Sāṃkhya phil.) = a-vyakta (q.v.) Tattvas

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

6. Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the aggregate, intelligence, courage — the kshetra with its modifications has thus been described briefly.

The attainment of a thing which is pleasure-giving and which has been experienced before, is desired again when one sees it,, for the reason that it gives happiness. This desire is the attribute of the antakarana and since it is knowable it is kshetra.

...

The aggregate is but the combination of the body and the senses and the impulses of the antakarana cast themselves on the aggregate, even as fire manifests itself in the glowing massive metal. Thus there is only a semblance of the Atma-chaitanya.. That too is kshetra, being knowable.

Courage which the body and the senses are supported when powerless, too, is kshetra, being knowable.

...

The kshetra with all its modifications such as Mahat etc. has been spoken of . The combination of the different forms of the kshetra has been described as “This the body is the kshetra” (xiii-i), beginning from the ‘great elements down to the last viz courage.

Kshetra-Kshetrajna

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The cultivation of the field. On the Third Day of Genesis ... the Great Goddess begins to mother the World of Manifestation as Earth-Mother and Goddess of Cultivation. Cultivation is the same as “culture”, a word which has become a bit stale in modern use, divorced as it is from its traditional implications. This Goddess was worshipped in Greece under the name of Demeter and in Rome under the name of Ceres.

She is not merely the Goddess of “husbandmen” who “plough” and “sow” and “reap” on the Earth-plane. That concerns only her lowest aspect. For she is the Goddess of the Field of Life, the Kshetra or “Field” of the Bhagavad Gita. The Kshetra is the entire field within the psyche. Sometimes it becomes a hunting-ground. The Kshetrajna or “dweller in the field” is the human soul. In the Field, the Domain of the Goddess, the Battle of Life between the Divine and the Ahankaric-Titanic Powers is taking place. In her Field the Ahankara grows its seeds and thorns, and there also the Aspirant exerts himself in weeding, and in sowing, tending and reaping the seeds of Immortality.

On one occasion the Buddha went on one of his daily rounds to beg his food, when he was accosted by a peasant who questioned him why he was not similarly cultivating the land. To an ignorant man it often seems — then as now — as if a Sage is spending his life in idleness. The Buddha replied: “O husbandman, I too, plough and sow; and having ploughed and sown, I eat. — Faith is the seed I sow; good works are the rain that fertilizes it; wisdom and modesty are the plough; my mind is the guiding-rein; I lay hold of the handle of the Dhamma (the Doctrine); earnestness is the goad I use; and exertion is my draught-ox. This ploughing is ploughing to destroy the weeds of illusion. The harvest it yields is the immortal fruit of Nirvana, and thus all sorrow ends.”

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

Kshetra-Kshetrajna: Field and Knower of the Field. Field or ground can be psychological or spiritual as well as actual. These terms correspond to the actual and perceptual aspects of reality. The entire XIII chapter of the Bhagavad Gyata is devoted to this discussion and the distinction between these two aspects of field and knower, in itself constitutes one of the central problems of philosophy.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

1. This body, O Kaunteya, is called kshetra (field); him who knows it, those who know thereof call Kshetrajna.

The body is called kshetra because it wards off itself from injury or destruction, or it is so called because the fruits of actions are reaped by it as in a field (kshetra).

He who knows the kshetra in the form of body from head to foot, i.e. he who knows this distinctly with all parts, through an understanding derived naturally or through instructions, is called Kshetrajna (knower of the kshetra).

...

Thus have been (the terms) kshetra and Kshetrajna explained. Is it enough to acquire only this much knowledge about them? No.

2. And know Me as the Kshetrajna in all bodies (kshetra), O Bharata. The knowledge of the kshetra and Kshetrajna do I regard as (true) knowledge.

Here now follows the exhaustive interpretation of the Acharya. In the whole of the Bhagavad Gita there is no other sukta on which the Acharya has bestowed so much of attention as in the case of this sukta. The two terms viz. kshetra and Kshetrajna are indeed subtle to explain which one has to cover vast grounds...

Know Me, the kshetrajna, dwelling in all bodies (kshejra) as the supreme Lord with the above characteristics, not subject to samsara, and lying divided into manifold bodies from Hiranya garbha down to a clumb of grass. Know Him as being devoid of all conditions not subject to comprehension through such terms as sat or asat. This is the drift.

Because nothing else constitutes the object of knowledge than the real nature of the kshetra (body), Kshetrajna and Isvara, O Bharata, therefore that alone by which these two viz. the kshetra and Kshetrajna can be realised, is the right knowledge. This is My (Lord Vishnu's) view.

...
it is a settled fact that all what is knowable is the kshetra and the knower alone is the Kshetrajna.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

Sri Krishna Himself starts speaking, without any question from Arjuna. Idam sariram kaunteya kshetram ity abhidiyate (13.1): "This body, this particular tabernacle, this physical embodiment of the human being, is technically called kshetra or the field where some activity takes place. A field is an area where something happens.

... while this body may be called kshetra or field, the one who knows this field is conscious of it, and operates through it – lives in it, indwells it, and handles it in a different manner – such a principle is called kshetrajna. Jna means knower, and kshetra is, of course, field, so kshetrajna means 'the knower of the field'. Hence, this body is the kshetra, the field, and the one who knows this field is kshetrajna.

...
Kshetrajnah iti tad-viddhi (13.1): "Arjuna, I am the knower of the field." The Lord says, "I am the Pure Consciousness that knows all things and operates these material forces; and I am not merely in one body. When I refer to the body, you may be thinking of some particular body – this body or that body – and there is a consciousness in each body. That may be so – that consciousness is inherently present in every body, within each person – but that is not the point." Sarva-kshetreshu bharata: "I am present as the kshetrajna, or the knower of the field, in all the fields. That is, all individuals whatsoever – right from Brahma, the creator, down to the atom – are indwelt by Me, and I know all things as the Omniscient Knower."

In a sense, it means that the kshetra is the entire physical universe. The whole of creation can be considered as the kshetra or the field of action, and Omniscient Intelligence that is operating in terms of this material manifestation is kshetrajna. Therefore, the question of the relationship between God and creation, consciousness and matter, kshetrajna and kshetra, purusha and prakriti – all mean finally one and the same thing.

Kshetrajnām chapī mam viddhi sarva-kshetreshu bharata, kshetra-kshetrajnayor jnanam yat taj jnanam matam mama (13.2): "This is real knowledge. I consider this to be supreme and real knowledge." What is that knowledge? It is the knowledge of kshetra and kshetrajna. If we can know the actual relationship between God and the world, soul and body, consciousness and matter, knower and the known – if this can be clear to us – we have known everything. This knowledge is the highest knowledge.

Related words

Kshetrajna

Sanskrit

Kṣetra — क्षेत्र

kṣetra - क्षेत्र

Kshetrajna

Variant spellings

kshetrajna
kṣetrajña

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Kṣetrajña — ... knower of the field; the individual self

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

kṣetrajña -

knowing localities;

clever, dexterous, skilful;

cunning;

'knowing the body' i.e. the soul, the conscious principle in the corporeal frame;

a form of Bhairava (or Śiva);

N. of a prince

Descriptions

General

Davies. Bhagavad Gita

... there is a higher spiritual essence, which is the animating principle of all things, Sankara says that its designation is kshetrajna, matter-knowing, and that it maintains life.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

Kshetrajna cannot be known or seen, because kshetrajna is the knower of the field. Therefore, the knower cannot be known.

See: Kshetra-Kshetrajna

Related words

Bhokta

Jiva

Ishvara

Kshetra
Purusa

Sanskrit

Kṣetrajña — क्षेत्रज्ञ

kṣetrajña - क्षेत्रज्ञ

Kṣiti

Variant spellings

ksiti

kṣiti

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Kṣiti — ... earth

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

kṣiti -

dominion (Comm.);

an abode, dwelling, habitation, house;

the earth, soil of the earth;

the number 'one';

settlements, colonies, races of men, nations;

(said of the families of the gods);

estates

See also:

Prithivi

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... Here he calls earth ksiti, elsewhere it is called dhara. These words are very important. They both refer to the earth, but have significantly different meanings. Dhara is that which retains, that which protects, contains, holds, supports. Ksiti means that which decays, degenerates and dissipates.

Earth becomes the supporting principle, dhara, when you understand that everything emerges from it. Then the earth as ksiti dissolves everything back into itself. If you bury a corpse and then look for it after some time, all you will find are bones. After some more time, they too will have become part of the earth. It has that power to make you decay, decompose, change and transform.

Sanskrit

***Kṣiti* — क्षिति**

ksiti - क्षिति

L

Laya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Laya — ... dissolution; absorption; “to merge”.

1. It is release or liberation proper according to Dvaita Vedānta.
2. Destruction of the entire universe.
3. The Agni Purāṇa describes four types of dissolution: daily death (nitya-laya); incidental dissolution of everything into the Absolute (naimittika-laya); material dissolution of everything at the end of a world period (prākṛita-naya); and ultimate dissolution of the individual into the Absolute (ātyantikaplaya).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

laya -

the act of sticking or clinging to ..., ‘to become attached to any one ‘;

lying down, cowering;

melting, dissolution, disappearance or absorption in;

extinction, destruction, death;

rest, repose;

place of rest, residence, house, dwelling;

mental inactivity, spiritual indifference;

sport, diversion, merriness;

delight in anything;

an embrace;

(in music) time (regarded as of 3 kinds, viz. druta, ` quick ‘, madhya, ` mean or moderate ‘, and vilambita, ` slow ‘);

a kind of measure;

the union of song, dance and instrumental music;

a pause;

a partic. agricultural implement (perhaps a sort of harrow or hoe);

a swoon;

the quick (downward) movement of an arrow;

making the mind inactive or indifferent

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Laya ... melting, dissolution, disappearance or absorption in, (in Yoga) making the mind inactive or indifferent.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

In deep sleep mind is merged and not destroyed. That which merges reappears. It may happen in meditation also. But the mind which is destroyed cannot reappear. The yogi's aim must be to destroy it and not to sink in laya. In the peace of dhyana, laya ensues but it is not enough. It must be supplemented by other practices for destroying the mind. Some people have gone into samadhi with a trifling thought and after a long time awakened in the trail of the same thought. In the meantime generations have passed away in the world. Such a yogi has not destroyed his mind. Its destruction is the non-recognition of it as being apart from the Self. Even now the mind is not. Recognise it. How can you do it if not in everyday activities. They go on automatically. Know that the mind promoting them is not real but a phantom proceeding from the Self. That is how the mind is destroyed.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentaries by Nikhilananda:

Though māyâ is indescribable and indefinable, yet its existence can be inferred from its effects, such as the projection or manifestation (Sṛṣṭi), the preservation (sthiti), and the dissolution (laya), of the universe.

...

If the mind does not succeed in being established in Brahman after it has been detached from the world, it often lapses into a state of sleep or torpidity (laya) A kind of stagnation sets in. The aspirant is reluctant to make fresh efforts. His progress is slowed down.

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

42. The mind distracted by desires and enjoyments as also the mind enjoying pleasure in oblivion (trance-like condition) should be brought under discipline by the pursuit of proper means. For, the state of oblivion is as harmful as desires.

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

The word 'Laya'² [oblivion] in the text indicates Susupti, i.e., deep sleep in which state one becomes oblivious of all things. The³ (injunction implied in the) words 'should be brought under discipline', should also be applied in the case of the mind when it feels happy, that is to say, free from all worries in the state of Laya or oblivion. Why should it be further brought under discipline if it feels pleasure (in that state)? It is thus replied: Because the state of oblivion is as harmful as desire, the mind should be withdrawn from the state of oblivion as it should be withdrawn from objects of enjoyment.

2. Laya—The state of Laya realised by the Yogi in Samadhi is nondifferent from the state of Susupti or deep sleep. Both are characterised by the absence of subject-object relationship. Again in both these states, the student is not aware of the real nature of his self. The difference between the two states is this: The Yogi can induce Samadhi at his mere will, but Susupti, for an ordinary man, is not under his control.

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Laya (from the root lī, late form of the root rī, be dissolved, melt, become fluid).

Related words

Sushupti

Sanskrit

Laya — लय

laya - लय

Linga sarira

Variant spellings

linga sarira

linga sharira

liṅga-śārīra

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Liṅga-śārīra — ... subtle body.

1. According to Sāṅkhya-Yoga, what transmigrates is the subtle body consisting of the eleven organs of sense together with the intellect, egoity, and the five subtle essences of the elements.

2. See sūkṣma-śarīra.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

liṅga-śārīra -

the subtle body which accompanies the individual spirit or soul in all its transmigrations and is not destroyed by death (it is also called sūkṣma-ś... q.v., and since it is the sign and accompaniment of individuality it can never perish till the individualized soul is finally merged in the Universal)

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Lingaśārīra, the subtle body, the invisible vehicle of the soul jiva; it is constant and does not change throughout the cycles of life and death; however, it is not eternal, for it is eventually re-absorbed into the elements of which it is composed; it consists of eigh-

teen elements, viz. (1) Intelligence (buddhi), (2) Ego (ahamkāra), (3) Mind (manas), (4) five Knowing-senses (jñānendriyas), (5) five Working-senses (karmendriyas), and (6) five Subtle Elements (tanmātras); it is also called Sūkṣmaśarīra.

Descriptions

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

The individual proceeds from the universal condition of Spirit (Puruṣa) and Matter (Prakṛti) manifesting as an individual soul or jīva. So it is that man consists of a subtle aspect and a gross aspect. All things must have a vehicle in which to manifest themselves; these spiritual forces have their vehicle in what is called the linga śarīra. Linga means that invariable mark which proves the existence of anything; śarīra means “body.” Here the two terms mean the subtle body which accompanies the individual spirit or soul (jīva) and survives the destruction of the physical body. This subtle body (linga śarīra) is the invisible vehicle of the soul (jīva); it is constant and does not change throughout the cycles of life and death; however, it is not eternal, for it is eventually re-absorbed into the elements of which it is composed. The subtle body (linga śarīra) consists of eighteen elements: intelligence (buddhi), ego (ahamkāra), mind (manas), five knowing-senses (jñānendriyas), five workingsenses (karmendriyas) and five subtle elements (tanmātras).

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. Three Acharyas and Narayana Guru tradition](#)

Linga-sarira: Subtle body. An idea borrowed from Samkhya and Yoga by Vedanta. According to this idea, what transmigrates is the subtle body consisting of eleven organs of sense together with the intellect, ego, and the five subtle essences of elements. This idea is not subscribed to by any of the major Upanisads, though commentators have read it into them.

Ramakrishna tradition

[Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion](#)

All ... organs or indriyas combined, plus the internal instrument antahkarana, are called the finer body of man—the linga (or sukshma) sarira.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

[Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Talk 129.

An elderly gentleman, formerly a co-worker with B. V. Narasimha Swami and author of some Visishtadvaita work, visited the place for the first time. He asked about rebirths, if it is possible for the linga sarira (subtle body) to get dissolved and be reborn in two years after death.

M.: Yes. Surely. Not only can one be reborn, one may be twenty or forty or even seventy years old in the new body though only two years after death. Sri Bhagavan cited Lila’s story from Yoga Vasishtha.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The subtle body of ours, the astral body, is called, in Sanskrit, liṅga-śarīra or liṅga-deha. Liṅga is a mark, an indication or a symptom. The subtle body is called a symptom, an indication or a mark, because it determines the character of the physical body which is its manifestation. The physical body is nothing but the form that is cast in the mould of the subtle body. The subtle body is not visible to us, and it is internal to the physical body...

This subtle body which is vibrant with desires, unfulfilled, puts on a form called the body, for the sake of the fulfilment of the desires. This putting on of a body is called birth; and birth cannot cease for us as long as the subtle body is not extinguished.

See: Namarupa, Linga sarira

Related words

Sarira
Sukshma sarira

Sanskrit

Liṅga-śarīra — लिङ्गशरीर

liṅga-śarīra - लङ्गिशरीर

Lila

Variant spellings

lila
līlā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Līlā — play; sport; divine play.

1. The cosmic play. The idea is that creation is a play of the Divine, existing for no other reason than for the mere joy of it.
2. According to some of the Vedānta schools, it is the motive of creation. Some Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas and Tantrics also hold this view.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

līlā -

(derivation doubtful) play , sport , diversion , amusement , pastime;
mere sport or play , child's play , ease or facility in doing anything;

mere appearance , semblance , pretence , disguise , sham;
grace , charm , beauty , elegance , loveliness;
(in rhet.) a maiden's playful imitation of her lover;
a kind of metre (4 times \$);
N. of a Yogini HPariz

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

lila. A common notion in Indian tradition is that there is no logical "reason" for things as they are in the universe; everything is merely the lila (play) of the divinity. This term is used only in association with a deity who can be seen as overseeing all of the universe. This would most often be VISHNU (or one of his incarnations), SHIVA, or the great GODDESS. Any such divinity will be said to have his or her divine lila.

Wikipedia

Lila, or Leela is a concept within Hinduism literally meaning "pastime", "sport" or "play". It is common to both non-dualistic and dualistic philosophical schools, but has a markedly different significance in each. Within non- dualism, Lila is a way of describing all reality, including the cosmos, as the outcome of creative play by the divine absolute (Brahman). In the dualistic schools of Vaishnavism, Lila more simply refers to the activities of God and his devotees, as distinct from the common activities of karma.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Lila - ("play"). A word whose broad literal meaning denotes any sort of play, game, or sport, but which in a theological context conveys a fundamental assumption about how God interacts with the world. According to this notion, the supreme deity engages in creation not from any sense of need, but for the sheer enjoyment and entertainment gained from creating and taking part in the world. This is particularly true for the god Vishnu, especially in his manifestations as Rama and Krishna. In this understanding, all divine interactions between God and his devotees (bhakta) are undertaken in this spirit of play, although in their ignorance human beings may not recognize the true nature of this encounter. Final liberation of the soul (moksha) comes when the devotee recognizes the true nature of this encounter, since after that moment of realization one's entire life is a series of playful interactions with God himself. One of the ways that contemporary devotees strive to enter Rama's and Krishna's divine world is through dramas that are themselves known as lilas. These lilas can be attended for entertainment, but viewing them can also be a deeply serious religious act. When child actors portraying the deities are in costume and in character, they are considered manifestations of the deities themselves. For ardent devotees, viewing these lilas is an avenue for gaining God's grace, and an entry-point into a privileged, divine world.

Wikipedia

Modern interpretations

Ram Shanker Misra in "The Integral Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo" -

"Brahman is full of all perfections. And to say that Brahman has some purpose in creating the world will mean that it wants to attain through the process of creation something which it has not. And that is impossible. Hence, there can be no purpose of Brah-

man in creating the world. The world is a mere spontaneous creation of Brahman. It is a Lila, or sport, of Brahman. It is created out of Bliss, by Bliss and for Bliss. Lila indicates a spontaneous sportive activity of Brahman as distinguished from a self-conscious volitional effort. The concept of Lila signifies freedom as distinguished from necessity.”

Rohan Bastin in “The Domain of Constant Excess: Plural Worship at the Munnesvaram Temples in Sri Lanka” -

“The relation of Purusa to Prakrti - the unfolding force of nature - becomes here a relation of male to female. This is expressed in the Siva temple in the core image of the sivalinga, an expression of male (linga) and female (yoni) union. The basic cosmogonic motif of an unfolding or flowering cosmos is expressed here specifically in the relation of male to female, as well as in terms of consciousness and intentionality (in the concept of lila as the divine play of male and female). As such, the core saivite image of cosmogony as the flowering of consciousness and sexual union rather than the sacrificial act. This theme resonates with other Hindu doctrines, such as Tantra and Sakta.”

Heinrich Zimmer and Joseph Campbell in “Philosophies of India” -

“The Vendantic yogi never tires of stating that kaivalya, ‘isolation- integration,’ can be attained only by turning away from the distracting allure of the world and worshiping with single-pointed attention the formless Brahman- Atman; to the Tantric, however - as to the normal child of the world - this notion seems pathological, the wrong-headed effect of a certain malady of intellect. (...) ‘I like eating sugar,’ as Ramprasad said, ‘but I have no desire to become sugar.’ Let those who suffer from the toils of samsara seek release: the perfect devotee does not suffer; for he can both visualize and experience life and the universe as the revelation of that Supreme Divine Force (shakti) with which he is in love, the all-comprehensive Divine Being in its cosmic aspect of playful, aimless display (lila) - which precipitates pain as well as joy, but in its bliss transcends them both.”

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Lila has the additional meaning that life is to be taken sportively. A sport gladdens your heart and your mind. Within the sport there are elements of tragedy and comedy. For instance, in a game like basketball one side has to win and the other to lose. Winning is joyous and failure is tragic, and these are woven into the very fabric of the sport.

Related words

Nitya

Meditative verse

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

VERSE 71

Bereft of becoming none stays here on earth
In equalised state; a beginningless sport all this!
In its global fullness, when, as a whole, one knows this
There comes to him unbounded happiness.

[Compiler’s note. “Sport” = ‘lila’ in the original]

Loka

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Loka — world; universe; plane.

1. There are seven planes according to Indian lore: bhū-, bhuvan-, svar-, mahar-, jano-, tapo-, and satya-loka. These planes represent the heavens or the places of vastness, light, and becoming. They are said to be located in the human body, respectively, in the feet, genitals, navel, heart, throat, between the eyebrows, and on the crest of the head. (See cakra.)
2. According to Jainism, the universe has three parts: where the gods reside (ūrdhva-loka), earth (madhya-loka), and hell (adho-loka). It is that place in which happiness and misery are experienced as results of virtue and vice. The perfected individual goes beyond the ūrdhva-loka, to the top of lokākāśa and remains motionless there.
3. Another list of planes includes: Brahma-loka, the abode of Brahmā; Tapo-loka, the abode of Virāj; Jana-loka, the abode of certain of Brahma's sons; Mahar-loka, the abode of certain Prajāpatis; Svarloka, the paradise of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Indra, and Kṛṣṇa; Bhuvan-loka, the atmosphere sphere, and abode of the pitṛs; and Bhū-loka, the earth.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

loka -

free or open space, room, place, scope, free motion;
intermediate space;

a tract, region, district, country, province;

the wide space or world (either 'the universe ' or, 'any division of it ', esp. 'the sky or heaven ' ; 3 Lokas are commonly enumerated, viz. heaven, earth, and the atmosphere or lower regions; sometimes only the first two; but a fuller classification gives 7 worlds, viz. Bhū-loka, the earth; Bhuvan-loka, the space between the earth and sun inhabited by Munis, Siddhas &c.; Svarloka, Indra's heaven above the sun or between it and the polar star; Maharloka, a region above the polar star and inhabited by Bhṛigu and other saints who survive the destruction of the 3 lower worlds; Janarloka, inhabited by Brahmā's son Sanat-kumāra &c.; Tapar-loka, ...inh...inhabited by deified Vairāgins; Satya-loka or Brahma-loka, abode of Brahmā, translation to which exempts from rebirth...; elsewhere these 7 worlds are described as earth, sky, heaven, middle region, place of re-births, mansion of the blest, and abode of truth; sometimes 14 worlds are mentioned, viz. the 7 above, and 7 lower regions called in the order of their descent below the earth --- A-tala, Vi-tala, Su-tala, Rasā-tala, Talā-tala, Mahā-tala, and Pātāla;

N. of the number 'seven ' ;

the earth or world of human beings &c.;

(also pl.) the inhabitants of the world, mankind, folk, people (sometimes opp. to 'king ');

(pl.) men (as opp. to 'women ');
a company, community (of ten ifc. to form collectives);
ordinary life, worldly affairs, common practice or usage ... (loke either 'in ordinary life ', 'in worldly matters ', or, 'in common language, in popular speech ', as opp. to vede, chandasi);
the faculty of seeing, sight

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Loka ... a sphere; world; universe; three Lokas are commonly enumerated, viz. heaven, earth, and the atmosphere or lower regions; but a fuller classification gives seven worlds, viz. (1) Earth (bhūrloka), (2) Sky (bhavarloka), (3) Heaven (svarloka), (4) Middle Region (maharloka), (5) Place of Re-births (janarloka), (6) Mansion of the Blessed (taparloka), and (7) Abode of Truth (satyaloka or brahmaloka).

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In Hindu tradition are found teachings analogous to those referring to the “evenings and mornings” of the Six Days of Genesis, and to the Night-thrones and Day-thrones of Astrology. One set of teachings, referring not to Time, but to Space, is found in the traditions regarding the Lokas and Talas. The Lokas are the Light-abodes or “heavens”, and the Talas are, literally, “lower places” or “underworlds”. The root of “Tala” means “surface, level”. Sometimes Tala becomes Tāla, which word has also other meanings, as “musical time”, and “the throne of Durga”, which is significant. Tala also means the palm of the hand and the sole of the foot, that is to say the underside, the dark and hidden side of these organs. The implication hereof will presently become clear.

In all there are Seven Lokas and Seven Talas, corresponding to the Seven Days of Creation. The Seventh Loka and Tala are, like the Seventh Day, to be taken as being either beyond Space and Time, as measured in the Zodiac, or as referring to the Day of Capricorn-Aquarius, the stage in which Perfection and the Beyond are represented or approximated within the Scheme of Time and Space.

Slight variations are found in the names of the Lokas and Talas in different scriptures, such as the Vishnu Purana, the Manu Dharma Sastra, Vyasa's Yoga-Bhashya, the Bhagavata Purana, the Vayu Purana, and the Uttaragita. It has been pointed out before, that the Lokas are not particularly “heaven-states” and the Talas not “hell-states”. In early tradition “hells” are not mentioned at all. Often the Talas are described as spheres of great beauty and magnificence, and as the abodes of semi-divine beings like Nagas, Daityas and Danavas — which also shows that they are not “hells”. These “semi-divine” beings are nothing but special aspects of humanity on the various stages of the Path through the Houses of the Universe, which are so many worlds.

The Lokas and Talas are given in the traditional order of the Elements and Seven Spheres: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Moon and Sun. The Seven Lokas are mentioned in a large number of scriptures by the same names. The Talas, shown like the Lokas on Diagram 3, have been taken from Vyasa's Yoga-Bhashya.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

To consider the Brahmaloka as a region is also admissible. That is what the pouraniks say and many other schools also imply it by expounding kramamukti (liberation by degrees). But the Upanishads speak of sadyomukti (immediate liberation) as in Na tasya prana utkranti; ihaiva praleeyante - the pranas do not rise up; they lose themselves here. So Brahmaloka will be Realisation of Brahman (Brahmasakshatkara). It is a state and not a region. In the latter case, paramritat must be properly understood. It is para inasmuch as avyakrita is the causal Energy transcending the universe, amrita because it persists until the Self is realised. So that paramritat will mean avyakrita. The kramamukti (liberation by degrees) school say that the upasaka goes to the region of his Ishta Devata which is Brahmaloka to him. The souls passing to all other lokas return to be reborn. But those who have gained the Brahmaloka do not. Moreover those desirous of a particular loka can by proper methods gain the same. Whereas Brahmaloka cannot be gained so long as there is any desire left in the person. Desirelessness alone will confer the loka on him. His desirelessness signifies the absence of the incentive for rebirth.

The age of Brahma is practically immeasurable. The presiding deity of the loka is said to have a definite period of life. When he passes away his loka also is dissolved. The inmates are emancipated at the same time, irrespective of the different nature of individual consciousness in them prior to Self-realisation.

...

Sri Bhagavan said Brahmaloka is the same as Atmaloka. Again Brahmaiva lokah = Brahmalokah (Brahma is Himself the region) and Brahma is Atma. So Brahmaloka is only the Self.

Loka, aloka are both synonymous. It is the same as andamillakkan in Ulladu Narpadu. Lokyate iti lokah (That which is seen is loka).

Etymology

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Lokas are "lokyante", meaning "what are seen". For they are the worlds ruled on the Day throne, the "mornings" of Genesis. Etymologically related words are "to look", the Latin "locus" or "place", from which "local" is derived, and other more remotely related words from which "light" is derived.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Loka from the root lok, connected with the root ruc, to shine, beam, display splendor.

Related words

Bhuh

Jagat

Naraka

Svarga

World

Sanskrit

Loka — लोक

loka - लोक

Madhva

Name

Madhva
 Madhvācārya
 मद्वाचार्य
 Vāsudeva at birth
 Pūrṇa-prajña
 Ānanda-tīrtha

Summary

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

madhva -

N. of the founder of a sect of Vaishṇavas in the south of India (he was a Kanarese Brāhman otherwise called ānanda-tīrtha, Bhagavat-pāAda or Madhu, said to have been born about 1200; his doctrine is commonly called Dvaita, 'Duality', in opposition to the Advaita, 'Nonduality', of the great Vedāntist Śamkaracārya, and his sect are called Mādhas)

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Madhva (c. 1197 to 1276 C.E.) Vedanta philosopher Madhva was a brilliant, prolific scholar of VEDANTA who developed his own DVAITA or dualist philosophy.

Madhva was born near Udipi in Karnataka in a village called Rajapitha, which may be the modern Kalyanapura. He was born into an orthodox Vaishnavite BRAHMIN family. He became the disciple of Acutyapreksha, a great teacher.

Madhva studied the writings of SHANKARA, the great non-dual (ADVAITA) philosopher, but concluded by rejecting his teachings. In fact, he eventually wrote tracts opposing 21 important philosophers in order to establish his own philosophy of dvaita or dualist VEDANTA. He made a circuit of the south of India, going first to Trivandrum and staying in RAMESHVARAM, the famous Vaishnavite holy city in Tamil Nadu. As he spoke, he would argue against the various existing philosophical schools. He later traveled in North India, living in such places as HARIDVAR and Badarika. He is said to have converted many followers of Shankara in his travels. Eventually, he even converted his own GURU.

Madhva produced a massive corpus of work including commentaries on all the 13 orthodox Vedic Upanishads, the Vedanta Sutra, and the Bhagavad Gita. In these works he relentlessly argued for the idea that God and the human self or soul were completely distinct from each other, and that the world also was completely distinct from God. His profound dualism was a challenge to the non-dualist thinkers who preceded and followed him, who represent by far the largest school of Vedanta. He argued that only the grace of God, in the form of KRISHNA, could save a human being from the endless round of birth and rebirth, and only BHAKTI, or devotion to the divinity, could rescue humans from the abyss of successive rebirth.

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Madhva's Dvaita Vedanta is recognized as one of the three major schools of Vedanta (besides Sankara's Advaita and Ramanuja's Visistadvaita Vedanta). It has been further developed by such major figures as Jayatirtha (1356-1388) and Vyasaraya (1478-1589) and is kept alive by a still flourishing community [Madhva sampradaya] in India with its main center at Udipi (Karnataka).

Wikipedia

Date of Birth 1238 CE

Place of birth Pajaka, Udipi, India

Birth Vasudeva Naduilya

Date of death 1317 CE

Place of death Adi Udipi, Udipi, India

Philosophy Dvaita Vedanta

Madhvācārya ... (1238–1317) was the chief proponent of Tattvavāda “Philosophy of Reality”, popularly known as the Dvaita (dualism) school of Hindu philosophy. It is one of the three most influential Vedānta philosophies. Madhvācārya was one of the important philosophers during the Bhakti movement. He was a pioneer in many ways, going against standard conventions and norms. According to tradition, Madhvācārya is believed to be the third incarnation of Vāyu (Mukhyaprāṇa).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Madhva - (1199-1278 CE). One of the three great masters of Vedanta philosophy, who expounded the dualistic school of Vedanta known as Tattva Vada. He was also known as Ananda Tirtha and Puma Prajna.

Life

General

Encyclopedia of religion

MADHVA (1238–1317), also known as Anandatirtha or Purnaprajna; founder of the Dvaita Vedanta school of Indian philosophy. Born in Pajakakshetra near Udipi in the Tulu country of the Indian state of Karnataka, Madhva attracted attention as a young renunciate by his prodigious abilities in reciting, interpreting, and criticizing scriptural and exegetical texts. Gathering pupils at his classes in Udipi, he made numerous trips throughout India accompanied by his disciples, including at least two visits to Badrinath in the Himalayas. It is believed that he debated a number of prominent scholars during his lifetime. Madhva established his main temple, consecrated to the god Krishna, at Udipi, and installed in it the idol of Bala Krishna secured from Dwarka. The temple has flourished to this day in the charge of a steady line of successors stemming from Madhva and his disciples. Tradition holds that in the year 1317, in the middle of delivering a lecture, Madhva vanished and retired permanently to Badrinath.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The orthodox biographical account of the life and work of Madhva is Nārayaṇācāryas Madhvavijaya and Maṇimañjari. ... He was born in the year 1199 in a village near Udipi of the South Kanara district about sixty miles north of Mangalore. At an early age he became proficient in Vedic learning and soon became a sañnyāsīn. After spending several years in prayer and meditation, study

and discussion, he went forth to teach and preach. He founded a temple for Kṛṣṇa at Udipi, where he taught until his death at the age of seventy-nine.

Teachings

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

Madhva carries much further the protest against the nondualism of Samkara than Ramanuja. Whereas for Samkara the texts teaching difference have a practical value in that they steer one in the right direction and lead one to the real teaching of the Upanishads, that is, the teaching of nondifference, for Madhva the texts teaching difference convey the true import of the Upanishads. Substance is one of the ten categories that Madhva accepts. Out of the twenty substances that Madhva enumerates, he accepts, like Ramanuja, three as the most important: brahman or God, matter, and selves.

Bheda (difference) is the central category in Madhva's philosophy. This is another way of saying that each object is unique; each object possesses its own nature, which accounts for one object's difference from another object. The brahman or God is the only independent reality. God has a divine body and is transcendent. However, since God is the inner controller of all souls, he is also immanent. God creates the world by his will and brings into existence the world of objects and selves. Objects and selves, though real, eternal, and irreducible to each other, are dependent on the first. At the time of the dissolution of the world, God transforms material objects into undifferentiated matter and selves into disembodied intelligences. It is important to note in this context that even in the state of dissolution God, matter, and selves remain distinct. Unlike Ramanuja, for Madhva no two souls are alike. Thus, whereas Ramanuja advocates qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism of souls, Madhva advocates both qualitative and quantitative pluralism of souls. Since the immediate cause of bondage is ignorance of the real nature of the brahman or God, the soul must acquire the knowledge of the real nature of God to attain moksha. It is important to remember in this context that knowledge by itself does not and cannot remove ignorance; knowledge is only a qualification for release, which in the final analysis depends on God's will. No matter how hard an aspirant may try, he or she cannot gain such an immediate knowledge, unless God chooses to reveal himself to him or her.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

Although worshippers of Vishnu, the worship of Siva was allowed in the temples of the Madhva followers. The affiliations of the Madhva cult extended in the form of temples and monasteries from Uduppi in the south to Dvaraka in the north and the followers traced their faith to the historical personage of Krishna of the Bhagavad Gyata. South India is pervaded by the influence of this group today.

Works

General

Encyclopedia of religion

Madhva is credited with some thirty-seven works, including commentaries on the Bhagavadgita., the Brahma Sutras, and ten of the older Upanishads; ten independent treatises on Dvaita philosophy; short commentaries on the Bhagavata Purana, the Ma-

habharata, and part of the Rigveda; and a number of other brief works of a varied nature. Many of these treatises were subsequently commented upon by Jayatirtha, Vyasa-tirtha, and other famous Dvaitins; the resulting large body of literature forms the basis of Dvaita Vedanta.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The standard treatises of his school are the commentary which he composed on the Vedāntasūtra and a work called Anuvyākhyāna in which he justifies his interpretation. Other works that help to elucidate his central position are his commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā and the Upaniṣads, his epitome of the Mahābhārata called MahuhhāTūtutātpUTyaniTnayū, and his gloss on the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. These are considered his most important, although he wrote many others. Much can be gleaned from the study of Jayatirtha's commentary on Madhva's Sūtrabhāṣya and that on Madhva's Anuvyākhyāna called Nyāyasudhā. Still another work of importance is Vyāsa-tirtha's gloss on Jayatirtha's commentary called Tātparyacandrikā.

Wikipedia

Commentaries on the Bhagavadgita

भगवद्गीताभाष्यम् (Bhagavadgītābhashyam)

This work focusses on explaining the meaning of Gita. This is said to be the first work of Sri Madhvacharya, and at a very young age. ...

भगवद्गीतातात्पर्यनिरणयः (Bhagavadgitatātparyanirṇaya)

This work compliments the Bhashya in two ways - it gives some alternate meanings to Gita (perhaps an indication to the truth in the quotation given in the Bhashya that Gita has at least 10 meanings) and reviews and criticizes some other commentaries on Gita, notably the advaita commentary on Gita.

Commentaries on the Brahmasutras

ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्यम् (Brahmasutra Bhashya)

This is a commentary on the Brahmasutras and covering every sutra. According to the Dvaita sampradaya, there are 564 sutras.

Commentaries on the Upanishads

ईशावास्योपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Ishavasya Upanishad Bhashya)

केनोपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Kena Upanishad Bhashya)

कठोपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Katha Upanishad Bhashya)

मुण्डकोपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Mundaka Upanishad Bhashya)

षट्प्रश्नोपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Satprashna Upanishad Bhashya)

माण्डूक्योपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Mandukya Upanishad Bhashya)

ऐतरेयोपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Aitareya Upanishad Bhashya)

तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Taittiriya Upanishad Bhashya)

बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Bhashya)

छान्दोग्योपनिषद्भाष्यम् (Chandogya Upanishad Bhashya)

For more see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Works_of_Madhvacharya

Mahabharata

Title variants

Mahabharata
Maha-Bharata
Mahābhārata
महाभारत
Author

General

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

The story is said to have been dictated to the god GANESHA by the sage VYASA. Vyasa is the teller of the tale for our own era, but it is considered to have existed long before. From time to time Vyasa himself plays an important role in the epic.

[Wikipedia](#)

The epic is traditionally ascribed to Vyasa, who is also a major character in the epic. The first section of the Mahabharata states that it was Ganesha who, at the request of Vyasa, wrote down the text to Vyasa's dictation. Ganesha is said to have agreed to write it only on condition that Vyasa never pause in his recitation. Vyasa agreed, provided Ganesha took the time to understand what was said before writing it down.

Narayana Guru tradition

[Nitya. Bhagavad Gita](#)

Who wrote this epic?

It is believed that Krsna Dvaipayana Vyasa composed the Mahabharata. There are other great works attributed to Vyasa, such as the Vedanta Sutras and the Patañjali Sutra Bhasya. We do not know whether both these Vyasas are the same person. Like the term "Pope", names such as Vyasa, Vasistha, Narada, and Kasyapa, often mentioned in the archaic literature of India, were not personal names but spiritual appellations vested on the succeeding heads of the respective hierarchies. Therefore we cannot say whether the Mahabharata and other works were written by the same Vyasa or a number of Vyasas. All that we can surmise is that it was written by a certain Vyasa. The name Vyasa literally means a compiler or editor.

Descriptions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Mahābhārata — ... the great epic of the Bhāratas.

1. The epic poem compiled by the sage Vyāsa which recounts the struggle between the Kauravas and the Pāndava brothers over a disputed kingdom. As its vast narrative unfolds, a treasure house of Indian secular and religious lore is revealed. The Bhagavad Gītā occurs in the latter portion of the Mahābhārata.

2. One of two Hindu epics. ... It consists of 220,000 lines divided into twelve books. It is the longest poem in the world containing legendary and philosophical material worked into and around a central heroic narrative which portrays the struggles between two Bhārata families: the evil Kurus and the virtuous Pāṇḍavas. Written by Vyāsa, it contains the Bhagavad Gītā and is sometimes called the fifth Veda.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mahābhārata -

‘great narrative of the war of the Bharatas’ , N. of the great epic poem in about 215,000 lines describing the acts and contests of the sons of the two brothers Dhṛitarāshṭra and Pāṇḍu , descendants of Bharata , who were of the lunar line of kings reigning in the neighbourhood of Hastināpura (the poem consists of 18 books with a supplement called Hari-varṁśa , the whole being attributed to the sage Vyāsa)

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Mahabharata (MBh), is one of the two great Indian epics (the other is the RAMAYANA). It tells the story of the descendents of BHARATA, the legendary leader of the early Indian tribes. It is the world’s largest epic, containing at least 100,000 verses. It is often said in India that there is nothing that is not in the MBh and that which is not in the MBh is to be found nowhere.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Mahabharata

One of the two great Sanskrit epics, traditionally ascribed to the mythical sage Vyasa. The Mahabharata is much longer than the other great epic, the Ramayana. At almost 100,000 stanzas, the Mahabharata is the world’s longest epic poem. If the Ramayana can be characterized as the tale of the “good” family, in which brothers cooperate to support and preserve their family, the Mahabharata describes the “bad” family, in which hard-heartedness and the lust for power in an extended royal family ultimately cause its destruction. The epic is set in the region west of modern Delhi and describes a fratricidal civil war.

Wikipedia

The Mahabharata ... is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, the other being the Ramayana. The epic is part of itihasa.

Besides its epic narrative of the Kurukshetra War and the fates of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, the Mahabharata contains much philosophical and devotional material ... Among the principal works and stories that are a part of the Mahabharata are the Bhagavad Gita, the story of Damayanti, an abbreviated version of the Ramayana, and the Rishyasringa, often considered as works in their own right...

There have been many attempts to unravel its historical growth and compositional layers. The oldest preserved parts of the text are not thought to be appreciably older than around 400 BCE, though the origins of the story probably fall between the 8th and 9th centuries BCE. The text probably reached its final form by the early Gupta period (ca. fourth century CE). The title may be translated as “the great tale of the Bhārata dynasty”. According to the Mahabharata itself, the tale is extended from a shorter version of 24,000 verses called simply Bhārata.

The mahabharata in its longest version consists of over 100000 shloka or over 200000 individual verse lines (each shloka is a couplet), long prose passages, or about 1.8 million words in total, the Mahabharata is roughly ten times the length of the Iliad and Odyssey combined, or about four times the length of the Ramayana...

The epic employs the story within a story structure, otherwise known as *frametales*, popular in many Indian religious and secular works. It is recited to the King Janamejaya who is the great-grandson of Arjuna, by Vaisampayana, a disciple of Vyasa.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

What is Mahabharata?

... an epic called the Mahabharata which reflects the life and ideals of the people who lived in India around 1000 B.C. It is not the usual story of a single hero and a few other characters. It is a great saga, singing the heroic deeds and thoughts of hundreds of heroes and heroines, and highlighting all aspects of human life. The Mahabharata does not treat any human value as irrelevant or insignificant. In its composition there are themes both beautiful and ugly; it contains side-splitting comedies as well as blood-curdling tragedies. In fact, nothing of the rich legacy of India's ancient tradition is left out of this great epic. We can easily call it an encyclopedia of psychological types and a compendium of Upanisadic thoughts and ideals.

Structure

General

Wikipedia

The division into 18 parvas is as follows:

	Title	sub-parvas	Contents
1	Adi Parva(The Book of the Beginning)	1–19	How the Mahabharata came to be narrated by Sauti to the assembled rishis at Naimisharanya. The recital of the Mahabharata at the sar-pasattra of Janamejaya by Vaishampayana at Takṣaśilā. The history of the Bharata race is told in detail and the parva also traces history of the Bhrigu race. The birth and early life of the Kuru princes. (adi means first)
2	Sabha Parva (The Book of the Assembly Hall)	20–28	Maya Danava erects the palace and court (sabha), at Indraprastha. Life at the court, Yudhishtira's Rajasuya Yajna, the game of dice, and the eventual exile of the Pandavas.
3	Vana Parva also Aranya-ka-parva, Aranya-parva (The Book of the Forest)	29–44	The twelve years of exile in the forest (aranya).
4	Virata Parva (The Book of Virata)	45–48	The year in incognito spent at the court of Virata.
5	Udyoga Parva (The Book of the Effort)	49–59	Preparations for war and efforts to bring about peace between the Kurus and the Pandavas which eventually fail (udyoga means effort or work).

6	Bhishma Parva (The Book of Bhishma)	60–64	The first part of the great battle, with Bhishmaas commander for the Kauravas and his fall on the bed of arrows.
7	Drona Parva (The Book of Drona)	65–72	The battle continues, with Dronaas commander. This is the major book of the war. Most of the great warriors on both sides are dead by the end of this book.
8	Karna Parva (The Book of Karna)	73	The battle again, with Karnaas commander.
9	Shalya Parva (The Book of Shalya)	74–77	The last day of the battle, with Shalyaas commander. Also told in detail is the pilgrimage of Balarama to the fords of the river Saraswati and the mace fight between Bhima and Duryodhana which ends the war, since Bhima kills Duryodhana by smashing him on the thighs with a mace.
10	Sauptika Parva (The Book of the Sleeping Warriors)	78–80	Ashvattama, Kripa and Kritavarma kill the remaining Pandava army in their sleep. Only 7 warriors remain on the Pandava side and 3 on the Kaurava side.
11	Stri Parva (The Book of the Women)	81–85	Gandhari, Kunti and the women (stri) of the Kurus and Pandavas lament the dead.
12	Shanti Parva (The Book of Peace)	86–88	The crowning of Yudhisthiraas king of Hastinapura, and instructions from Bhishmafor the newly anointed king on society, economics and politics. This is the longest book of the Mahabharata (shanti means peace).
13	Anushasana Parva (The Book of the Instructions)	89–90	The final instructions (anushasana) from Bhishma.
14	Ashvamedhika Parva (The Book of the Horse Sacrifice)[21]	91–92	The royal ceremony of the Ashvamedha(Horse sacrifice) conducted by Yudhisthira. The world conquest by Arjuna. The Anugita is told by Krishna to Arjuna.
15	Ashramavasika Parva (The Book of the Hermitage)	93–95	The eventual deaths of Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti in a forest fire when they are living in a hermitage in the Himalayas. Vidura predeceases them and Sanjaya on Dhritarashtra's bidding goes to live in the higher Himalayas.
16	Mausala Parva (The Book of the Clubs)	96	The infighting between the Yadavaswith maces (mausala) and the eventual destruction of the Yadavas.
17	Mahaprasthanika Parva (The Book of the Great Journey)	97	The great journey of Yudhisthira and his brothers across the whole country and finally their ascent of the great Himalayas where each Pandava falls except for Yudhisthira.

18	Svargarohana Parva (The Book of the Ascent to Heaven)	98	Yudhisthira's final test and the return of the Pandavas to the spiritual world (svarga).
kh- ila	Harivamsa Parva (The Book of the Genealogy of Hari)	99–100	Life of Krishnawhich is not covered in the 18 parvas of the Mahabharata.

Mahabharata and Bhagavadgita

General

Wikipedia

The Bhagavad Gita occurs in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata and comprises 18 chapters from the 25th through 42nd and consists of 700 verses.

See also:

in Vyasa: [Wikipedia](#)

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

Maha means great. Mahabharata is "Greater India". In ancient days the term Mahabharata referred to a state of mind, or a culture that was lived not within the limit of the political or geographical unit called "India". It covered a vast area stretching from the Pacific Islands in the Far East to the Mediterranean in the West, in which region the Hindu-Buddhistic culture exerted a great influence in the arts, literature, and socio-political thought, although politically it was never under a single monarch at any time.

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The epic recounts a dynastic struggle that took place near Delhi in northern India. The eldest son in the dynasty of the Kurus is Pandu, whose wife, Kunti, has five sons (considered Pandu's sons, although each was fathered by a different god): YUDHISHTHIRA, ARJUNA, BHIMA, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Collectively they are known as the PANDAVAS. Because of a curse on Pandu that he will die if he has sexual intercourse with either of his wives (Kunti and Madri), Pandu is forced to give up his claim to the throne in favor of his blind brother, Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra has 100 sons, the oldest of whom is DURYODHANA. They are known collectively as the KAURAVAS.

Dhritarashtra becomes regent until Pandu's sons are of age, when one of them will rightfully assume the throne. Dhritarashtra is weak-willed and cannot resist his son Duryodhana's attempts to usurp power. The plotting of Duryodhana and his Kauravas

against the Pandavas forms the central dynamic in this intriguing story. When their plot to murder the five Pandava brothers fails, they flee them at dice and drive them into exile.

Finally, events culminate in open warfare between the two camps. The Pandavas are forced to fight against not only their evil cousins and uncles, but their venerable guru DRONA and their grand-uncle BHISHMA. In fact, part of the epic's greatness is that the story is not pure black and white, but instead shows shades of gray on both sides.

The god KRISHNA serves as the noncombatant charioteer of the brave Pandava, Arjuna. As the two pull up to look at the opposing armies before the war begins, Krishna recites the celebrated BHAGAVAD GITA, a profound poem that summarizes Hindu philosophy. On the battlefield of KURUKSHETRA a terrible carnage ensues, as the Pandavas eventually triumph and gain the kingdom. This epic story is known to all Indians, many of whom are named for its heroes; place names in every part of India are taken from this story as well. There are versions in every one of the local Indian languages, as well as simplified folk dramas that act out its tales for those who cannot read.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

A greatly abridged account can be given as follows:

Shantanu is the king of the Kurus. He dies an untimely, heirless death. In a desperate attempt to preserve the royal line, Shantanu's wife, Satyawati, calls upon her elder son, the sage Vyasa, who fathers children by Shantanu's two wives. The elder son, Dhrtarashtra, is born blind, and thus the rights to the throne fall to his younger brother Pandu. Pandu later abdicates his throne because of a curse, and goes to live in the forest with his two wives, Kunti and Madri, leaving his elder brother to rule in his place. In time Dhrtarashtra's wife, Gandhari, magically gives birth to one hundred sons, of whom the oldest is Duryodhana; the hundred sons are called the Kauravas, and are the epic's antagonists. In the forest Kunti has three sons, Yudhishtira, Bhima, and Arjuna, while Madri has the twins Nakula and Sahadeva. These five sons are the Pandavas, the epic's protagonists. None of these children are actually Pandu's sons, since he has been cursed to die the moment he holds his wife in amorous embrace. Rather, they have been magically conceived using a mantra given to Kunti by the sage Durvasas, giving the woman reciting it the power to call down any of the gods and have a son equal in power to that god himself. When Kunti first receives the mantra, long before her marriage, she impulsively recites it while gazing upon the sun, and gives birth to a shining child. Distraught and desperate, Kunti puts him in a box and abandons him in the Ganges River. The child is adopted by the charioteer Adhiratha, and grows up to be the heroic Karna.

As the result of his curse, Pandu dies an early death, and Kunti (his wife) and his sons (the Pandavas) return to the court at Hastinapur, where the boys are raised as princes. From the beginning there are bad feelings between Duryodhana (the eldest of the Kauravas) and his cousins, largely because Duryodhana desires the throne, which rightly belongs to Yudhishtira (one of the Pandavas). After foiling several attempts to kill them, the Pandava brothers leave the kingdom to become mercenaries. On one of their journeys, Arjuna wins the hand of the princess Draupadi, who becomes their common wife (their mother commands that Arjuna share whatever he wins with his brothers). After some time Dhrtarashtra (father of the Kauravas) renounces the throne and divides his kingdom. The Pandavas build a new capital at Indraprastha, identified near modern Delhi.

For a little while things are quiet, but Duryodhana is not content to share his kingdom. He invites Yudhishtira for a game of dice, matching Yudhishtira against Shakuni, the most skillful gambler alive. Although Yudhishtira is a model for truthfulness and virtue, his fatal flaw is his love of gambling. In the match Yudhishtira loses his kingdom, all his possessions, his brothers, himself, and finally his wife. In one of the epic's most powerful scenes, Duryodhana's brother, Duhshasana, drags Draupadi by her hair into the assembly hall, her clothes stained with her menstrual blood. Draupadi's humiliation moves Dhrtarashtra to set them free, but

also sparks the enmity that helps drive the rest of the plot. After some bargaining, the parties agree that the Pandavas will spend twelve years in exile and a thirteenth incognito. If they can remain undiscovered during the thirteenth year they will regain their kingdom. If they are discovered, however, the cycle of exile will begin again.

After thirteen years, Yudhishtira and his brothers approach Duryodhana for their rightful share, but are haughtily rebuffed. All efforts at conciliation fail; Duryodhana claims that he will not give them enough land in which to stick the point of a needle. Pushed to the wall, the Pandavas prepare for battle. On one side are Yudhishtira and his brothers, aided by their counselor Krishna. On the other are Duryodhana and many respected figures, such as Drona, Bhishma, and Karna. For eighteen days the battle rages, until most of the important people are dead. Yudhishtira and his brothers survive. Yudhishtira is crowned king and rules righteously for many years. Late in life he installs his grandson, King Parikshit, on the throne. With his siblings he takes a final journey into the Himalayas. During the journey his brothers fall dead, one by one; Yudhishtira eventually enters the divine realm.

The complete epic is more complex than this summary. One of the features of the epic is that it contains many unrelated tales, for which the main story acts as a frame. Aside from being a tale of a dysfunctional family, the Mahabharata also contains a great deal of cultural wisdom, making the names of characters symbolic even today. A televised serial of the text, which ran for more than a year in 1989–90, was wildly popular throughout India. It is also interesting to note that many traditional Indian families will not keep a copy of the text in the house, since it is believed that to do this will foster discord in the family.

Wikipedia

The core story of the work is that of a dynastic struggle for the throne of Hastinapura, the kingdom ruled by the Kuru clan. The two collateral branches of the family that participate in the struggle are the Kaurava and the Pandava. Although the Kaurava is the senior branch of the family, Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, is younger than Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava. Both Duryodhana and Yudhishtira claim to be first in line to inherit the throne.

The struggle culminates in the great battle of Kurukshetra, in which the Pandavas are ultimately victorious. The battle produces complex conflicts of kinship and friendship, instances of family loyalty and duty taking precedence over what is right, as well as the converse.

The Mahabharata itself ends with the death of Krishna, and the subsequent end of his dynasty and ascent of the Pandava brothers to heaven. It also marks the beginning of the Hindu age of Kali (Kali Yuga), the fourth and final age of mankind, in which great values and noble ideas have crumbled, and man is heading toward the complete dissolution of right action, morality and virtue.

Publications

Critical Edition

Between 1919 and 1966, scholars at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, compared the various manuscripts of the epic from India and abroad and produced the Critical Edition of the Mahabharata, on 13,000 pages in 19 volumes, followed by the Harivamsha in another two volumes and six index volumes. This is the text that is usually used in current Mahabharata studies for reference. This work is sometimes called the 'Pune' or 'Poona' edition of the Mahabharata.

Translations

General

Wikipedia

English translations

The first complete English translation was the Victorian prose version by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, published between 1883 and 1896 (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers) and by M. N. Dutt (Motilal Banarsidass Publishers). Most critics consider the translation by Ganguli to be faithful to the original text. The complete text of Ganguli's translation is in the public domain and is available online. Another English prose translation of the full epic, based on the Critical Edition, is also in progress, published by University Of Chicago Press, initiated by Chicago Indologist J. A. B. van Buitenen (books 1–5) and, following a 20-year hiatus caused by the death of van Buitenen, is being continued by D. Gitomer of DePaul University (book 6), J. L. Fitzgerald of Brown University (books 11–13) and Wendy Doniger of the University of Chicago (books 14–18).

A poetic “transcreation” (author’s own description) of the full epic into English, done by the poet P. Lal is complete, and in 2005 began being published by Writers Workshop, Calcutta. The P. Lal translation is a non-rhyming verse-by-verse rendering, and is the only edition in any language to include all slokas in all recensions of the work (not just those in the Critical Edition). The completion of the publishing project is scheduled for 2010. Sixteen of the eighteen volumes are now available.

A project to translate the full epic into English prose, translated by various hands, began to appear in 2005 from the Clay Sanskrit Library, published by New York University Press. The translation is based not on the Critical Edition but on the version known to the commentator Nīlakaṇṭha. Currently available are 15 volumes of the projected 32-volume edition.

Indian economist Bibek Debroy has also begun an unabridged English translation in ten volumes. Volume 1: Adi Parva was published in March 2010.

Related words

Bhagavad Gita
Vyasa

External links

Original text
Mahabharata 6.23–6.40 (sacred-texts.com)
GRETIL etext (Muneo Tokunaga)

Mahabhutas

Variant spellings

mahabhuta
mahābhūta

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Mahābhūta — ... the five great elements.

1. They are ether (ākāśa), which emerges from sound (śabda); air (vāyu), which emerges from touch (sparśa); fire (tejas), which emerges from color (rūpa); water (ap), which emerges from taste (rasa); and earth (pṛthivī), which emerges from smell (gandha). These five gross elements emerge from the subtle essences of the elements (tanmātrās).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mahābhūta -

being great, great;

a great creature or being;

a great element, gross element (of which 5 are reckoned, viz. ether, air, fire, water, earth Up. Nir. Mn. &c. [cf. IW. 83, 221], as distinguished from the subtle element or Tanmātra)

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nm7c6

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Wikipedia

Mahābhūta is Sanskrit and Pāli for “great element.” In Hinduism, the five “great” or “gross” elements are ether, air, fire, water and earth. In Buddhism, the “four great elements” (Pali: cattāro mahābhūtāni) are earth, water, fire and air.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Five Elements, from Earth to Ether, are called in the Gita (VII; 4) Bhumi, Ap, Anala, Vayu and Kha. But generally they are called Prithvi, Ap, Agni, Vayu and Akasa. Sometimes Seven Elements are mentioned instead of five, in order to include the Lunar and Solar Spheres. In that case Akasa is subdivided into three spheres, the highest of which, called Atmakasa, Jnanakasa or Mahakasa, or respectively the “Ether of the Self,” the “Ether of Realization” and the “Great Ether”, is no “sphere” at all, because it refers to the state beyond Manifestation, the abode of the Supernal Sun.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The last five principles of the Samkhya system are called Mahābhūtas. ... They are the five forms into which Cosmic Substance (Prakṛti) differentiates itself, namely: Ether (Akāśa), Air (Vāyu), Fire (Tejas), Water (Apas), and Earth (Pṛthivī).

The five Sense-Particulars (Mahābhūtas) are postulated in order to account for the vehicles through which the Subtle Elements (Tanmātras) manifest themselves, for example the Tanmātra of Sound (Śabda) cannot be heard if it does not have the IVlahābhūta of Ether (Akāśa) to serve as its vehicle. Each Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta) is conditioned and evolved from the one immediately preceding it, and has a special property in addition to the general qualities of the others from which it was evolved. For the sake of discussion, each can best be considered separately.

The first Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta) is Akāśa (Ether), derived from the prefix a and the root his, “to appear.” Here it is used to mean the principle of vacuity. It has the special property of sound, therefore, it can be heard, but it cannot be felt, seen, tasted, or smelled: i.e., a clear sound has no touch, no form, no flavour, no odour. It is only a sound beyond the range of the four senses.

The second Sense-Particular (IVfahābhūta) is Vāyu (Air) ... Here it is used to mean the principle of motion. Its function is pressure or impact. It has the special property of touch and the general quality of sound; therefore, it can be felt and heard: i.e., a gust of pure air has a touch and a sound, but no form, no flavour, no odour; therefore, it cannot be seen, tasted, or smelled.

The third Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta) is Tejas (Fire) ... Here it is used to mean the principle of luminosity. Its function is expansion. It has the special property of form and the general quality of touch and sound; therefore, it can be seen, felt, and heard: i.e., a pure blue flame has a form, a touch, and a sound, but no flavour or odour; therefore, it cannot be tasted or smelled.

The fourth Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta) is Apas (Water) ... Here the term is used to mean the principle of liquidity. Its function is contraction. It has the special property of flavour and the general quality of form, touch, and sound; therefore, it can be tasted, seen, felt, and heard: i.e., a glass of pure water has a flavour, a form, a touch, and a sound, but no odour; therefore, it cannot be smelled.

The fifth Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta) is Pṛthivī (Earth) ... Here it is used to mean the principle of solidarity. Its function is cohesion. It has the special property of odour and the general qualities of flavour, form, touch, and sound, therefore, it can be smelled, tasted, seen, felt, and heard; i.e., an apple has an odour, a flavour, a form, a touch, and a sound; therefore, it can be known by the five senses.

The following outline shows the relation of the five Sense-Particulars (Mahābhūtas) to one another:

Ether has sound

Air has sound and touch

Fire has sound touch and form

Water has sound and touch and form and flavour

Earth has sound and touch and form and flavour and odour.

With the manifestation of the Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta) the process of cosmic evolution comes to rest; therefore, these principles or tattvas are classified as evolutes, that is, they are produced and do not produce any new mode of being. All manifestations in the phenomenal world are said to be modifications of these principles and not the creation of anything new.

Wikipedia

In Hinduism’s sacred literature, the “great” or “gross” elements (mahābhūta) are fivefold: space (or “ether”), air, fire, water and earth.

For instance, the Taittirīya Upanisad describes the five “sheaths” of a person (Sanskrit: purusa), starting with the grossest level of

the five evolving great elements:

From this very self (ātman) did space come into being; from space, air; from air, fire; from fire, the waters, from the waters, the earth; from the earth, plants; from plants, food; and from food, man.... Different from and lying within this man formed from the essence of food is the self (ātman) consisting of lifebreath.... Different from and lying within this self consisting of breath is the self (ātman) consisting of mind.... Different from and lying within this self consisting of mind is the self (ātman) consisting of perception.... Different from and lying within this self consisting of perception is the self (ātman) consisting of bliss....

In the Śvetāśvatara Upanisad, God is identified as the source of the great elements:

Some wise men say it is inherent nature, while others say it is time — all totally deluded. It is rather the greatness of God present in the world by means of which this wheel of brahman goes around. Who always encompasses this whole world — the knower, the architect of time, the one without qualities, and the all-knowing one — it is at his command that the work of creation, to be conceived of as earth, water, fire, air, and space, unfolds itself.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. *The philosophy of Narayana Guru*

These elements, in their pure and uncompounded form, have no actual existence other than as concepts. The existence of concepts is in consciousness or mind alone.

See: **Bhuta and mahabhuta**

Evolution of mahabhutas

General

Dasgupta. *A history of Indian philosophy*

The five classes of atoms are generated from the tanmātras as follows: the sound-potential, with accretion of rudiment matter from bhūtādi generates the ākāsa-atom. The touch-potentials combine with the vibratory particles (sound-potential) to generate the vāyu-atom. The light-and-heat potentials combine with touch-potentials and sound-potentials to produce the tejas-atom. The taste-potentials combine with light-and-heat potentials, touch-potentials and sound-potentials to generate the ap-atom and the smell-potentials combine with the preceding potentials to generate the earth-atom. The ākāsha-atom possesses penetrability, the vāyu-atom impact or mechanical pressure, the tejas-atom radiant heat and light, the ap-atom viscous attraction and the earth-atom cohesive attraction. The ākāsa we have seen forms the transition link from the bhūtādi to the tanmātra and from the tanmātra to the atomic production; it therefore deserves a special notice at this stage. Sāṃkhya distinguishes between a kārana-ākāsha and kāryākāsha. The kārana-ākāsha (non-atomic and all-pervasive) is the formless tamas--the mass in prakṛti or bhūtādi; it is indeed all-pervasive, and is not a mere negation, a mere unoccupiedness (āvaranābhāva) or vacuum. When energy is first associated with this tamas element it gives rise to the sound-potential; the atomic ākāsha is the result of the integration of the original mass-units from bhūtādi with this sound-potential (shabda tanmātra). Such an ākāsha-atom is called the kāryākāsha; it is formed everywhere and held up in the original kārana ākāsha as the medium for the development of vāyu atoms. Being atomic it occupies limited space.

See: Relations of Vedas to their objects, four elements, etc.

See also:

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Agni

Panca-bhuta-viveka

Pancikarana

Tanmatra

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

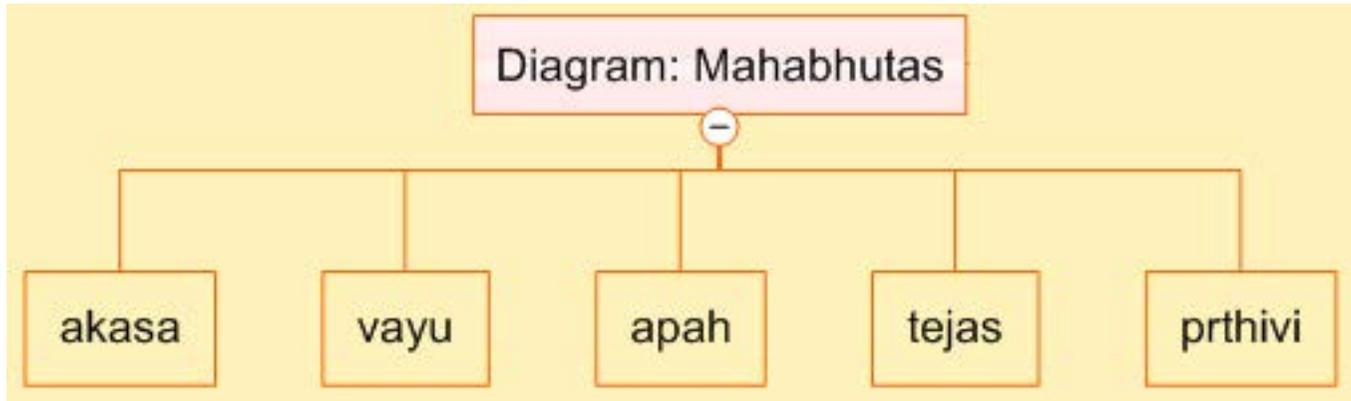
Mahābhūtas, derived from the root bhu, to be, to come into being, to exist.”

Sanskrit

Mahābhūta — महाभूत

mahābhūta - महाभूत

Diagram: Mahabhutas



Maharsi

Variant spellings

maharshi
maharṣi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Maharṣi — ... great sage.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

maharṣi -

a great Rishi, any great sage or saint (accord. to Mn. i, 34, ten Maharshis were created by Manu Svāyambhuva, viz. Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracetas, Vasishṭha, Bhṛigu, Nārada, also called the 10 Prajāpatis ; some restrict the number to 7, and some add Daksha, Dharma, Gautama, Kaṇva, Vālmīki, Vyāsa, Manu, Vibhāṇḍaka &c.);

N. of Śiva;
of Buddha

Wikipedia

Maharishi (noun, mah-huh-ree-shee) is the anglicized version of the Sanskrit word Maharshi महर्षि (mahā meaning “great” and ṛṣi meaning “seer”). Maharishi is often used as an addition to a person’s name as an honorary title. The term was first seen in modern English literature in the 18th century.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Maharishi may refer to a Hindu guru or “spiritual teacher” of “mystical knowledge”. Additional meanings cited by dictionaries include: sage, poet, spiritual leader, wise man and holy man.

Alternate meanings describe Maharishi as a collective name that refers to the seven rishis or saptarishis (including Maharishi Bhrigu) cited in the scriptures of Rig Veda and the Puranas or any of the several mythological seers that are referenced in Vedic writings and associated with the seven stars of the constellation Ursa Major.

Maharishi may refer to any individual who has added the title to their name. According to Brewers Dictionary, outside of India, the most well known Maharishi was Maharishi Mahesh Yogi who founded the Transcendental Meditation and made it available to the West.

Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950) was an “Indian sage” with a philosophy about the path to self-knowledge and the integration of personality espoused in books by author Paul Brunton and Ramana’s own writings such as the Collected Works (1969) and Forty Verses on Reality (1978).

The title was also used by Maharishi Valmiki, Maharishi Patanjali and Maharishi Dayananda Sarasvati.
The term Maharishi became popular in modern English literature “sometime before 1890” and was first used in 1758.

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Maharsi: Maha + rsi; a great rsi or seer.

Sanskrit

Maharṣi — महर्षि

maharṣi - महर्षि

Mahat

Variant spellings

mahat

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mahat — ...the Great; intellect.

1. The first evolute of primordial Nature (prakṛti). It is the cosmic aspect of the intellect and, along with the intellect, ego, and mind, it is the cause of the entire creation. It is also called buddhi which is the psychological aspect of the intellect in individuals. It is both eternal and noneternal. Its special function is determination. From it evolves egoity (ahañkāra).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mahat -

great (in space, time, quantity or degree) i.e. large, big, huge, ample, extensive, long, abundant, numerous, considerable, important, high, eminent;

abounding on rich in;

distinguished by;

early (morning);

advanced (afternoon);

violent (pain or emotion);

thick (as darkness), gross;

loud (as noise);

many (people, with jana sg.);

a great or noble man;
the leader of a sect or superior of a monastery;
a camel;
N. of Rudra;
of a Dānava;
a partic. class of deceased progenitors;
of two princes;
'the great principle', N. of Buddhi, 'Intellect', or the intellectual principle (according to the Sāṃkhya philosophy the second of the 23 principles produced from Prakṛiti and so called as the great source of Ahaṃkāra, 'self-consciousness', and Manas, 'the mind');
the (7 or 100-stringed) lute of Nārada;
the 12th day in the light half of the month Bhādrapada;
anything great or important;
greatness, power, might;
dominion;
a great thing, important matter, the greater part;
advanced state or time (mahati' rātriyai or rātryai, in the middle of the night);
sacred knowledge

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Mahat ("great one"). In the account of evolution found in the Sāṃkhya philosophical school, mahat is the first evolutionary stage. It consists of the initial disturbance of prakṛti (primal matter) transforming from its original state of equilibrium. Mahat is called the "great one" because prakṛti remains unchanged. Mahat is also known as buddhi, the mental faculty for awareness, apperception, and decision making that is believed to be at the root of mental processes. The mental processes facilitated by buddhi spur the development of the next stage in the evolution, ahaṃkāra or subjective consciousness, after which the division of the world into subjective and objective spheres proceeds.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The first evolute of the prakṛti is generated by a preponderance of the sattva (intelligence-stuff). ... It thus holds within it the minds (buddhi) of all puruṣas which were lost in the prakṛti during the pralaya. ... This state of evolution consisting of all the collected minds (buddhi) or all the puruṣas is therefore called buddhitattva. ... the first transformation from prakṛti becomes buddhi-transformation. This stage of buddhis may thus be regarded as the most universal stage, which comprehends within it all the buddhis of individuals and potentially all the matter of which the gross world is formed. ... it has the widest and most universal existence comprising all creation, and is thus called mahat (the great one).

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

You must remember that the first manifestation of this Prakriti in the cosmos is what the Samkhyas called Mahat. We may call it universal intelligence—the great principle; that is the literal meaning. The first manifestation of Prakriti is this intelligence; I would not translate it by self-consciousness, because that would be wrong. Consciousness is only a part of this intelligence, which is universal. It covers all the grounds of consciousness, subconsciousness and super consciousness. In nature, for instance, certain changes are going on before your eyes which you see and understand, but there are other changes so much finer that no human perception can catch them. They are from the same cause, the same Mahat is making these changes. There are other changes, beyond the reach of our mind or reasoning, all these series of changes are in this Mahat.

... It is very important to understand this Mahat in man, the intelligence. This intelligence itself is modified into what we call egoism, and this intelligence is the cause of all these changes which result in producing the body. This covers all the grounds of sub-consciousness, consciousness and super-consciousness. What are these three states? The sub-conscious state is what we find in animals, and call instinct. This is nearly infallible, but very limited. Instinct almost never fails. An animal instinctively knows a poisonous herb from an edible one, but its instinct is limited to one or two things, it works like a machine. Then comes the higher state of knowledge, which is fallible, makes mistakes often, but has a larger scope, although it is slow, and this you call reason. It is much larger than instinct, but there are more dangers of mistakes in reasoning than in instinct. There is a still higher state of the mind the super-conscious, which belongs only to the Yogis, men who have cultivated it. This is as infallible as instinct, and still more unlimited than reason. It is the highest state. We must remember that as in man this Mahat is the real cause of all that which is manifesting itself in various ways, covering the whole ground of his sub-conscious, conscious and superconscious states—the three states in which knowledge exists—so in the Cosmos, this universal Intelligence, Mahat, exists as instinct, as reason and as super-reason.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. The secret of the Katha upanishad

There is a higher Knowledge than the human understanding. That higher Intelligence superior to human understanding is called mahat-tattva, also called mahat. Sometimes, in Vedantic parlance, you call it hiranyagarbha. This Cosmic Intelligence is regarded as the totality of individual intelligences. This is the usual description of Cosmic Intelligence; but it is not a correct statement of fact. The Universal is not merely a totality of particulars. Many fools do not make one wise man. You know that even a thousand fools put together do not make one of wisdom. Even all the individualities put together cannot make the Cosmic Mind. The mahat-tattva or the Cosmic Intelligence is qualitatively different from the totality or the mathematical union of individual understandings. God's knowledge is not merely a total of human knowledge. It does not mean that if everybody sneezes, God will have a big sneeze! He does not sneeze, though we all may. Quality marks the difference between cosmic existence and individual process. You cannot call individuality as existence at all. You can only call it a process, a becoming, and not being. Being is only the supreme state. The mahat or Cosmic Intelligence is as much different from individual understanding in quality as waking knowledge is from the dreamer's perception. You cannot say that your knowledge in the waking life is only a totality of what is there in dream. It is qualitatively different and therefore you are happy even to be a beggar in the waking condition than a king in dream. The cosmic knowledge is qualitatively different from, that is, superior to, the human understanding. Yama says, mahat-atman or hiranyagarbha is a higher reality than human understanding, to which human nature points. Evolution is not over with human expe-

rience. Mankind is only a link in the process of a longer evolution. You have to move further, still, to the mahat. But mahat itself is not complete. The avyakta is, yet, higher.

See: Ahankara and mahat

Mahat and buddhi

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. The secret of the Katha upanishad

This is the beginning of spirituality in the proper sense of the term. ... The spiritual element in the practice comes into relief when the intellect, the buddhi or the jnana-atman, is attuned to the mahat-atman or the Universal Intelligence. This is not an easy affair, but this is, precisely, meditation proper. The attunement of the intellect to the mahat, the establishment of the jnana-atman in the mahat-atman is possible only when we have an adequate understanding as to what this mahat-atman is. We hear of this term, mahat, several times in the Sankhya, and also in the Vedanta. It is said that mahat comes out of prakriti and the mahatis superior to the individual intellect, and so on. But what is this mahat? What is our relation to it? What are we supposed to do about it, especially in our spiritual practices?

The mahat is the great, the large, or the big, literally translated. But what is this largeness or the bigness or the vastness of it? The largeness of the mahat consists in the fact that it is inclusive of all other particular units which go to constitute it. The mahat is the ocean, while the buddhi is a drop in the ocean. As many drops make the ocean, we may say that all the intellects constitute the mahat in its completeness. ... For the jnana-atman to contemplate the mahat-atman, the intellect has to rise to the Universal. ... While the intellect of the human being, the individualised understanding, is a part of the Universal or the mahat-tattva, like the drop in the ocean, this analogy again is not complete. It is only a partial illustration. ... While in quality the drop is the same as the ocean, the intellect is not in quality the same as the mahat-atman. This is the difference. Otherwise, we would be small gods sitting in this hall. We are not that. We have something else in us, other than the element of the mahat-Tattva. While the mahat is imbedded in our hearts, while the mahat-atman is the soul of our intellect itself, it is the background, the presupposition of all our thoughts and understanding. Yet, our understanding is not an exact fraction of the Universal Understanding. Our will is not a direct part of the Divine Will. It does not mean that if all the people would think together, they would think like God. Not so! ... the reason being that we are refracted, distorted, limited parts of the mahat-atman - parts, no doubt, but reflected ones...

The identification of the intellect or the jnana-atman with the mahat-atman, the union that is to be established through yoga between the individual understanding or buddhi and the Universal Intelligence, is constituted of many subtle inward conscious processes. From now onwards, yoga becomes a purely internal affair, a growth of consciousness, properly speaking, from its lowest involvement to the stages of its higher freedom.

See also: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Hiranyagarbha
Ishvara

Mahavakya

Variant spellings
mahavakya
mahāvākya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mahāvākya — ... Great Saying.

1. They are the Great Sayings of the Upaniṣads. Traditionally they are four in number: prajñānam brahma, which occurs in the Aitareya Upaniṣad of the Ṛg Veda; ayam ātma brahma, which occurs in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad of the Sāma Veda; and aham brahmāsmi, which occurs in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad of the Yajur Veda.
2. Advaita Vedānta says that the mahāvākyas posit the essential identity between the individual and the Absolute. Some Advaitins say that this knowledge by itself can cause direct understanding while others hold that it is only by meditating on the meaning of the mahāvākya (and not the mere hearing) that cognition occurs.
3. Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta also says that the mahavakya's import is to affirm the identity of the individual with Brahman. However, unlike Advaita Vedānta, the unity means that individual souls are eternal with God and not external to God. The souls and the world are real and distinct, but they are included as parts within the one Absolute. Distinction is not denied but, at the same time, the organic unity of the whole is affirmed.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mahāvākya -

any long continuous composition or literary work;

a principal sentence, great proposition, N. of 12 sacred utterances of the Upanishads (e.g. tat tvam asi, aham brahmāsmi &c., esp. of the mystic words tattvam and om) Vedāntas.;

N. of an Upanishad

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Mahavakya (“great utterance”). Short statements from the speculative texts known as the Upanishads, called “great” because they reveal the true nature of reality and of the Self. One of the most famous mahavakya is tat tvam asi (“that thou art”), expressing the unity of the Self with Brahman. Other well known utterances are ayam ātma Brahman (“This Self is Brahman”), sarvam idam khalu Brahman (“Truly, this universe is Brahman”), aham brahmasmi (“I am Brahman”), and prajnanam Brahman (“Knowledge is Brahman”). These great utterances are most important in the leap philosophy propounded by the philosopher Sureshvara. Leap

philosophers believe that complete freedom is possible, but out of our immediate control, in that it cannot be gained by a precisely specified sequence of causes and effects. According to Sureshvara's understanding, when a person whose understanding has been purified hears one of these mahavakyas, the profound truth in the utterance brings the flash of insight that brings final liberation of the soul (moksha).

Wikipedia

The Mahavakyas ... are "The Great Sayings" of the Upanishads, the foundational texts of Vedanta. Though there are many Mahavakyas, four of them, each from one of the four Vedas, are mentioned often as "the Mahavakyas". The subject matter and the essence of all Upanishads being the same, all the Upanishadic Mahavakyas express this one universal message in the form of terse and concise statements. In later Sanskrit usage, however, the term mahāvākya came to mean "discourse," and specifically, discourse on a philosophically lofty topic.

The four Upanishadic statements indicate the ultimate unity of the individual (Atman) with God (Brahman).

The Mahavakyas are:

prajñānam brahma - "Consciousness is Brahman" (Aitareya Upanishad 3.3 of the Rig Veda)

ayam ātmā brahma - "This Self (Atman) is Brahman" (Mandukya Upanishad 1.2 of the Atharva Veda)

tat tvam asi - "Thou art That" (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7 of the Sama Veda)

aham brahmāsmi - "I am Brahman" (Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10 of the Yajur Veda)

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

There are four great Vedic statements through the contemplation of which the mind is led from the world of names and forms to Brahman. They are as follows: "That thou art" (Tattvamasi), "I am Brahman" (Aham Brahmāsmi), "This Self is Brahman" (Ayamātmā Brahma), "Brahman is Consciousness" {Prajñānam Brahma). All of these statements point to the same fact, namely, the ultimate and essential oneness of man, or the individual soul, and God, or the Universal Soul, the reality behind them both being Brahman, or Pure Consciousness.

Mahavakyas as used for instruction

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

In the Upanishads, four great dictums or mahavakya are given. One is called the dictum of instruction, upadesa vakyam. Upadesa means an instruction given by a Guru to his disciple; vakyam means a sentence. Therefore it signifies a great sentence of instruction given by a Guru to his disciple. Two other great dictums are given as methods for carrying out the instruction, called manana vakya, dictums for meditation. Then there is one called anabhavam vakya, the great dictum of experience. So the Upanishadic teaching begins with an instruction, then gives the methodology for carrying out the instruction, and finally describes the experience which is the achievement of the teaching.

The great dictum of instruction is tat tvam asi. Tat means That; tvam, you; and asi, are. Together it is “That you are,” or “That thou art.” Every Guru whispers this great secret in the ear of his disciple, but you can shout it out loud, and still nobody will hear. The secrecy won't be lost even in a million tellings.

Then the disciple asks, “How do I go about it? You say ‘That thou art,’ but what is That? And how am I That?” He is helped by the next two dictums. The first is ayam atma brahma, “this knowledge by which you know everything is the Absolute.” If you want to find out what that is you should enter into your own knowledge and see how it is expansive, what depth it has, how it is the only luminous reality of being you experience, and so on. You have to do a lot of manana, which is not discursive thinking but going into the depths...

The other of the manana vakyas is prajnanam brahma, “this knowledge is That.” What you want to find out first of all is what ‘That’ is, what tat is. If this knowledge is That, what is That? Then you are told that all you experience here in this world in so many forms are modulations of consciousness, which are nothing other than the Absolute, brahman. So you do only two things. Either you turn inward and look at the subject who is knowing everything, or you look at everything that is not the subject and see the world of objects, which is also consciousness. These two things can be put together. The seer and the seen put together are That, tat. When the teacher says tvam, ‘you’, you understand it as aham, ‘I’. “That is me.” The teacher did not say “You are That.” If you first think ‘you’, you only think of your body and the rest of your individuation. To avoid that mistake you are first instructed to meditate on tat, and then place yourself in That...

When you engage in the contemplative reasoning by which you can relate ‘you’ to that Absolute, you are called tattva cinta grahan, a knower of the secret of That and thou. Then alone do you become a philosopher. Such a person who is capable of relating the Absolute to the knower sees everything as one.

See also:

in Nididhyasana and upasana: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Related words

Aham Brahma Asmi
Ayamatma- Brahma
Prajnanam Brahma
Tal-tvam-asi

Sanskrit

Mahāvākya — महावाक्य

sing.: mahāvākya, महावाक्य

plural: mahāvākyaṅi, महावाक्यानि

Manana

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Manana — ... reflection; consideration.

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, it removes the doubt of an aspirant regarding the nature of the object (prameya) to be contemplated— i.e., the Absolute (Brahman). Reflection is to be employed so as to get an intellectual conviction of the truth. It is the constant thinking of the Absolute (Brahman).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

manana -

thoughtful, careful;

thinking, reflection, meditation, thought, intelligence, understanding (esp. intrinsic knowledge or science, as one of the faculties connected with the senses);

homage, reverence

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Manana ... thinking, discriminative understanding, the second stage of self-culture.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Manana. This is arguing within oneself, after knowing definitely what the Upaniṣads teach, how and why that teaching alone is true. The main object of this process is not to discover the final truth, for that has been learnt already through śravaṇa, but to remove the doubt (asambhāvanā) that it may not after all be right. It is intended to transform what has been received on trust into one's own true conviction and brings out well the place assigned to reason in the Advaita. The recognition of the value of analytical reflection, we may note by the way, is rather a unique feature in a doctrine which finally aims at mystic experience.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

It is not enough to read the scripture. We have to enter into the truth it presents and be it. ... To enter into it, we need manana: not thinking, but resting with what is heard and merging into its essence. ... Listening (śravaṇa) is to be followed by silent rumination on whatever one has heard from one's teacher. This exercise is called manana. Manana implies recalling the teaching to one's mind along with similar ideas one has heard before and looking for other appropriate examples. ... When we sit at a guru's feet, we are not prompted to go into vicāra [linear thinking] but to engage in manana, diving deep without ever taking our attention away from the key words uttered by the guru. It is like knocking at the door of one's Intuition for a revelation of truth. Only when we can

recall what we have heard before, can we reconsider it. Reconsideration brings a new clarity to our perspective. It is like going deeper and deeper into the several layers of truth which are superimposed on the central theme of what the guru wants us to know. Even in the most familiar words and their structures we will start finding a new insight.

Sometimes it takes years for a person to make a true manana of what one has heard from one's guru. When one sits to listen for the first time, what one hears is only the voice of the guru. In that voice, more and more clear impressions come to the surface. Ultimately, the words burst into meanings that can even startle the listener. This is one way of strengthening one's inner vision and making the meaning of the manana real in one's life. Some Vedāntins hold the mistaken view that manana takes place while one is listening attentively. Normally one has many convictions that have come only through hearsay. Only when one looks purposively for deeper meaning does one's insight become penetrating. A spiritually or mystically meaningful word shared with a student by a guru is like a treasure chest. In the spoken word, an unspeakable volume of truth is enshrined to which the student has to slowly become attuned...

... not reasoning, not thinking, but entering a thing and being it in an intuitive flash.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

A practiser may by long practice gain a glimpse of the Reality. This experience may be vivid for the time being. And yet he will be distracted by the old vasanas and so his experience will not avail him. Such a man must continue his manana and nididhyasana so that all the obstacles may be destroyed. He will then be able to remain permanently in the Real State.

Manana, vicara, cinta

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... our thinking processes can be circular, linear or deep. When you worry your thoughts go in vicious circles, which is why you can't easily get away from them. This is called cinta in Sanskrit, and is the worst kind of mental operation. In linear thinking you start with a statement, and then see what is connected or associated with it and where it leads to, before proceeding logically to the next item. You direct your thoughts with reason, called vicara. It's a better way of thinking, but often is somewhat limited. With the third way of thinking, you don't allow your mind to run away. First you decide what your standpoint is. Next you look at the field and decide what its scope is. You have to decide not to be carried away by anything you have previously heard, not allowing any kind of memories to come and distract you. You just repeat what you hear and penetrate into the heart of it, so that you can have an intuitive grasp of its meaning. This is manana.

See: Sravana, manana, nididhyasana

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Manana - from the root man, to think.

Related words

Cinta
Nididhyasana
Sravana
Vicara

Sanskrit

Manana — मनन
manana - मनन

Manas

Variant spellings

manas
manah

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Manah — ... mind; one of the aspects of the internal organ.

1. Mind emerges from the Pure (sattva) aspect of egoity (ahañkāra).
2. Mind stimulates the other senses to attend to their respective objects. Thus it is an organ of cognition and of action. It is the doorkeeper to the senses. Its specific function is to explicate.
3. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, it is atomic and eternal. It is an instrument of knowing and is inert as any other sense. Its cooperation is necessary for all knowledge. It exercises a double function: it helps the self to acquire knowledge and it narrows its field to a single object or group of objects. Association with the mind is the basic cause of bondage.
4. According to Jainism, it is not a sense organ, but the organ of cognition of all objects of all the senses. It is of two types: physical mind (bhāva), which performs the mental functions proper, and material mind (dravya), which is subtle matter compounded into the physical mind.
5. According to Dvaita Vedānta and Sāṅkhya, the mind is considered as one of the sense organs (indriya).
6. According to Mimāṃsā, different cognitions are explained by a type of atom called manas. The mind alone brings about cognitions, aversions, efforts, etc., but by itself it is devoid of any qualities such as color, smell, etc. Thus it needs the aid of the other organs to cognize these qualities.
7. See antahkaraṇa.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

manas -

mind (in its widest sense as applied to all the mental powers), intellect, intelligence, understanding, perception, sense, conscience, will RV. &c. &c. (in phil. the internal organ or antaḥkaraṇa of perception and cognition, the faculty or instrument through which thoughts enter or by which objects of sense affect the soul; in this sense manas is always is always regarded as distinct from ātman and puruṣa, 'spirit or soul' and belonging only to the body, like which it is - except in the Nyāya - considered perishable ; as to its position in the various systems ... it is sometimes joined with hṛd or hṛdaya, the heart ... with cakṣus, the eye); the spirit or spiritual principle, the breath or living soul which escapes from the body at death (called asu in animals); thought, imagination, excogitation, invention, reflection, opinion, intention, inclination, affection, desire, mood, temper, spirit; N. of the 26th Kalpa; of the lake Mānasa

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Manas (mind) is the term for the mental capacity in the 24 categories that define reality in SAMKHYA and YOGA. It is seen to oversee the five capacities of action and the five capacities of perception directly. Above mind in the schema are the ego (aham-kara) and the intellect (buddhi). While manas is essential for the proper functioning of the human being, it is always understood to be subject to the whims of ego under the disguise of instinct or in terms of ego's role in creating the "grasping" self.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Manas ... mind; in the widest sense of the word, it means all the mental powers, such as intellect, intelligence, understanding, perception, conscience, and will; in its limited use, it means the capacity for reflection, inference, testimony, doubt, ready wit, dream, cognition, conjecture, memory, desire, and feeling of pleasure and pain, (in Nyāya) it is an object of Right Knowledge (Prameya); (in Vaiśeṣika) it is the ninth Eternal Reality or Substance (Dravya), the internal organ of cognition and perception through which thoughts enter or by which objects affect the Soul (Ātman); (in Sāmkhya) it is the Cosmic Mind, the principle of cognition; (in Yoga) it is the individual mind, the power of attention, selection, and rejection.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

Manas in the Vedantic context is the seat of nescience (avidya), misdirected volition (vikalpa) and even pure volition (sankalpa). It is a factor to be abolished by anyone who aspires to a full vision of the Absolute. It has both a transcendental and an immanent content which can be finally abolished in favour of fuller vision of absolute truth or reality.

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The mark of the INTELLECT (manas) is the capacity for reflection, inference, testimony, doubt, ready wit, dream, cognition, conjecture, memory, desire, and feeling of pleasure and pain. Another indication of the intellect is its incapacity to perceive two things at the same time even though the senses are in contact with their objects. In contrast with the faculty of intelligence, the intellect seeks factual knowledge which is worldly, while the intelligence aims at wisdom which is divine.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

I do not know this table as it is, but it makes an impression; it comes to the eye, then to the indriyas, and then to the mind [manas]; the mind then reacts, and that reaction is what I call 'the table'. It is just the same as throwing a stone into a lake; the lake throws a wave against the stone ; this wave is what we know. The waves coming out are all we know. In the same way the fashion of this wall is in my mind; what is external nobody knows; when I want to know it, it has to become that material which I furnish; I, with my own mind, have furnished the material for my eyes, and the something which is outside is only the occasion, the suggestion, and upon that suggestion I project my mind, and it takes the form of what I see...

There is no difference between matter and mind save in degree. It is the same substance in finer or grosser form; one changes into the other, ... and it will save you from a great deal of fighting and struggling if you believe it, rather than that you have a mind separate from the brain, and all such impossible things.

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

... you ought to understand one thing more that will help us in understanding the Advaita system later on. ... most of you know how pearls are made. Some irritating grain of dust or sand enters into the body of the pearl oyster and sets up an irritation there, and the oyster's body reacts towards the irritation and covers the little grain with its own juice. That crystallizes and forms the pearl. So the whole universe is like that, the universe is the pearl which is being formed by us. What we get from the external world is simply the blow. Even to know that blow we have to react, and as soon as we react we project really a portion of our own mind towards the blow, and when we come to know of it, it is really our own mind as it has been shaped by the blow. Therefore it is clear ... that, supposing that we represent the external world by "X" what we really know is "X" plus mind, and this mind element is so great that it has covered the whole of that "X" which has remained unknown and unknowable throughout, therefore if there be an external world it is always unknown and unknowable. What we know of it is as moulded, formed, fashioned by our own mind. So with the internal world. The same applies to our own soul, the atman. In order to know the âtman we shall have to know it through the mind, and therefore what little we know of this atman is simply the âtman plus the mind. That is to say, the âtman covered over, fashioned, and moulded by the mind, and nothing more.

Sankara tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

170. In the dream-state, even though there is no contact with the outside world, the mind alone projects the entire dreamuniverse of enjoyer etc. Similarly, the waking-state is no different. All this (world of pluralistic phenomena), is but a projection of the mind.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

During the dream ... the mind, out of itself, creates the dreamer, the dream-world and the dream-experience. ... The mind is the dreamsubject, the mind is the dream-object and the mind again is the dream-experience of joy and sorrow.

Similarly, in the waking-state also there is no reality at all. Just as, in the dream, the mind creates a world of its own which has an appearance of Reality, so too, the apparent Reality of the universe perceived in the waking world is but a hallucination. All that we see around is a projection of our mind. Stop the mind and the world ends. One may say, "How about the other man seeing it?" But the other man is also the perceiver's own creation only.

171. In deep-sleep, the mind is reduced to its causal-state and nothing perceivable exists as is proved by the universal experience of all people. Therefore, man's world of change is just the creation of his own mind and has no objective Reality.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

During deep-sleep when the mind is completely dissolved, the experience of the individual is that there is nothing. ... Thus when the mind is not there, there is no world perceived. So then, this world of variable experiences (samsar) ... is projected by man's mind alone.

173. The mind causes man's attachment for the body and the sense-objects. ... Thereafter, the same mind ... liberates man from his bondage.

175. When the mind has been made pure due to a predominance of discrimination [viveka] and dispassion [vairagya], it turns towards liberation. These two must be strengthened by one who is an intelligent seeker of liberation.

See: Antahkarana, manas, citta, buddhi, ahankara

See: Atman and manas

Manas and avidya

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

171. There is no avidyā besides the manas. Manas itself is the avidyā, the instrument for the production of the bondage of conditioned existence. When that (avidyā) is destroyed, all is destroyed, and when that is manifested, all is manifested.

Note. Manas being the organ of doubt or the production of multiplicity of concepts in relation to one and the same objective reality, is here taken to be the same as avidyā. The buddhi determines these manas-born concepts as real and through the ahamkāra specializes them by an association with the true ego. Thus is the world of illusions produced. It will now be seen that if the manas attains tranquillity, the world of illusions is destroyed. For then the buddhi having no hypothetical concepts with regard to the one objective reality to deal with, reflects that reality and the ahamkāra is destroyed by the destruction of its limitations and becomes merged in the absolute Self.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

169. Apart from the mind there is no ignorance (avidya). The mind itself is the ignorance which is the cause for the bondage of rebirth. When the mind is destroyed, everything else is destroyed. When the mind manifests, everything else manifests.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

All avidya put together is Maya. Maya is constituted of the three Gunas: Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. These function only in the mind. Therefore, other than the mind, there is no avidya. Mind alone is avidya. It is the cause for all the bondages in the world-of-becoming.

When this mind is destroyed, all pluralistic perception and the sense of mortality end. When it is projected, the entire world gets projected.

See: Manomaya kosha, manas, jnanendryas

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Manas - from the root man, to think, believe, imagine, suppose, conjecture.

Related words

Buddhi

Chitta

Indriya

Manomaya kosha

Sanskrit

Manah — मनः

manah - मनः

Mandukya Upanishad

Title

Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad — माण्डूक्योपनिषद्

Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

māṇḍūkyopaniṣad - माण्डूक्योपनिषद्

[Wikipedia:](#)

The name, literally “Frog Scripture”, may have come about for several reasons:

1. Attribution to a sage called Manduka. Manduka means “son of Manduki” and a seer with this metronymic is mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad along with the Mandukeyas, his disciples. The Mandukeyas figure in the Bhagavata Purana as the receivers of a branch of the Rig Veda from Indra. This group of seers also figures in the Rig Veda itself: their hymns are mostly connected with linguistics. A text on the etymology of Vedas with the name “Manduki Shiksha” deals with the notes of the musical scale.
2. Connection with Varuna. Folk etymology relates that Varuna, the Lord of Cosmic waters, took the form of a frog to preach this Upanishad. There is a hymn called the Toad Hymn (manduka sukta) in the Rgveda, ostensibly an ode to the arrival of the monsoons.
3. Manduka is also a type of yoga - a “particular kind of abstract meditation in which an ascetic sits motionless like a frog”. Mandukasana is one of the asanas (postures) described in yoga.

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad — ... “frog”.

1. This Upaniṣad is said to contain, in just twelve verses, the gist of all the other Upaniṣads. It belongs to the Atharva Veda. It consists of only twelve verses and is thus the shortest of the Upaniṣads. Brahman (the Absolute) is identified with the sound Om̐ and entire universe is represented as a manifestation of this Om̐. The sound Om̐ consists of three parts—A, U, and M,—which are identified with Vaiśvānara, Taijasa, and Prājñā. Unlike the other Upaniṣads, this one does not relate any anecdotes, imaginary dialogues, or stories to illustrate its teachings. Also, unlike the other Upaniṣads, it is silent about rituals and worship and plunges at once into a discussion of Ātman and Brahman.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Mandukya is a short UPANISHAD (12 small stanzas) in the Atharva Veda, one of the most important for the ADVAITA (non-dual) VEDANTA of SHANKARA. Shankara's guru, GAUDAPADA, wrote a commentary on the Mandukya Upanishad that became important in that tradition.

Wikipedia

Māṇḍūkya Upanishad is the shortest of the Upanishads - the scriptures of Hindu Vedanta. It is in prose, consisting of twelve verses expounding the mystic syllable Aum, the three psychological states of waking, dreaming and sleeping, and the transcendent fourth state of illumination.

This Upanishad has been greatly extolled. The Muktikopanishad, which talks about all other Upanishads, says that the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad alone is enough for salvation. According to Radhakrishnan it contains the fundamental approach to reality.

It contains many particular Buddhist terms or uniquely Buddhist modes of expression. It was compiled at a relatively later period, under strong influence of Mahayana Buddhism, in the 1st or 2nd centuries AD.

Aum in the Mandukya Upanishad

Wikipedia

There are three mātrās (“letters”, syllabic instants in prosody) in the word aum : ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’. The ‘a’ stands for the state of wakefulness, where we experience externally through our mind and sense organs. The ‘u’ stands for the dream state, in which inward experiences are available. In the state of deep sleep, represented by the sound ‘m’, there is no desire and consciousness is gathered in upon itself.

But there is a fourth, transcendent state, that of one “who is neither inwardly nor outwardly aware, nor both inward and outward, nor with consciousness infolded on itself.... who is unseen and ineffable, ungraspable, featureless, unthinkable and unnameable” The fourth state (turīya avasthā) corresponds to silence as the other three correspond to AUM. It is the substratum of the other three states. It is referred to as atyanta- shunyata (absolute emptiness).

From the fact that many Buddhist terms are used in explaining the fourth state, it is clear that this view was established under the influence of the Mahayana Buddhist concept of emptiness.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

In its first stanza the Upanishad establishes the supremacy of the syllable om, equating it to the ultimate BRAHMAN. Stanzas 3 through 7 outline the four STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS. Stanzas 9 through 12 establish that the four parts of om (esoterically understood as a, u, m, and a fourth, which is beyond parts) are identical to the four states of consciousness, thus establishing om as the ATMAN or self.

Commentaries

General

Wikipedia

The first extant commentary on this Upanishad was written by Gaudapada, before the time of Adi Shankara. This commentary, called the Māndūkya- kārikā, is the earliest known systematic exposition of advaita Vedanta. When Shankara wrote his commentary on Māndūkya Upanishad he merged the Kārikā of Gaudapada with the Upanishad and wrote a commentary on the Kārikā also.

Gaudapada deals with perception, idealism, causality, truth, and reality. In the fourth state of consciousness - turiya - the mind is not simply withdrawn from the objects but becomes one with Brahman. In both deep sleep and transcendental consciousness there is no consciousness of objects but the objective consciousness is present in an unmanifested 'seed' form in deep sleep, while it is transcended in turīya. Specifically, if one identifies the wordless state with turīya and meditates, one realizes the true self and 'there is no return to the sphere of empirical life'.[10]

[10] Swami Nikhilananda: Mandukyopanishad with Gaudapada's Karika and Sankara's Commentary. Shri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. Sixth edn. 1974.

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Related words

Atharva Veda

Mahavakya: Ayamatra- Brahma

Upanishads

Manomaya kosha

Variant spellings

manomaya kosha

manomaya kosa

manomayakośa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Manomayakośa — ... the sheath of the mind; the mental sheath.

1. It is part of the subtle sheath (sūksma-śarīra), with its patterns of desires, motives, etc., which form the complex called mind. It is the third sheath of the body composed of thought.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

manomayakośa -

the mental sheath (the 2nd of the subtle sheaths in which the soul is encased) Vedāntas.

Wikipedia

Manomaya kosha. Manomaya means composed of manas or mind. The mind (manas) along with the five sensory organs is said to constitute the manomaya kosa. The manomaya kosa, or “mind-sheath” is said more truly to approximate to personhood than annamaya kosa and pranamaya kosha. It is the cause of diversity, of I and mine. Sankara likens it to clouds that are brought in by the wind and again driven away by the same agency. Similarly, man’s bondage is caused by the mind, and liberation, too, is caused by that alone.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

The organs of sensation together with the manas form the manomaya sheath which is the cause (hetu) of the differentiation between “I” and “mine”; it is the result of ignorance, it fills the former sheath and it manifests its great power by distinguishing objects by names, etc. 169

The fire of the manomaya sheath, fed with objects as if with streams of melted butter by the five senses like five Hotrs [priests offering oblations to the fire], and blazing with the fuel of manifold desires, burns this body, made of five elements. 170

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

The manomaya has duhkha-svarūpa. It is duhkha-svarūpa, one which has unhappiness as its very nature.

Manomaya kosha, manas, jnanendryas

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The senses with the mind form the manomaya kosa (mind-sheath). They are the jnanendryas.

Diagram: The five sheaths (pancha-kosas)

Related words

Dukha

Manas

Suksma sarira

Sanskrit

Manomayakośa — मनोमयकोश

manomayakośa - मनोनयकोश

Mantra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mantra — ... a sacred word or phrase of spiritual significance and power; hymns; “that which saves the one who reflects”... ; form of sound.

1. Along with the Brāhmanas, as hymns they constitute the ritual section of the Veda (karma-kāṇḍa).

2. They are classified according to their metres: gāyatrī has twenty four syllables with nine subdivisions; usṇik has twenty-eight syllables with seven subdivisions; prakṛti has forty syllables with eight subdivisions; brhafi has thirty-six syllables with nine subdivisions; tristup has forty-four syllables with ten subdivisions; jagatī has forty-eight syllables with three subdivisions; ajagatl has fifty-two syllables; śakvarī has fifty-six syllables; atiśakvarī has sixty syllables; asti has sixty-four syllables; dhrti has seventy-two syllables; and atidhrti has seventy-six syllables.

3. The mantras are preserved chiefly in the Ṛk- and Atharva-samhitās.

4. According to Śākta philosophy, a mantra is so called because it saves one who meditates on its significance. Each mantra has a deity (devatā). For instance, the mantra of Kālī is krīm; of Māyā is hrīm, etc.

5. Mantras are of two classes: kaṇṭhika, or those given expression to by the voice, and ajapa, or those nonuttered mantras which are not spoken but repeated internally.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mantra -

‘instrument of thought’, speech, sacred text or speech, a prayer or song of praise;

a Vedic hymn or sacrificial formula, that portion of the Veda which contains the texts called ṛc or yajus or sāman (q.v.) as opp. to the Brāhmaṇa and Upanishad portion;

a sacred formula addressed to any individual deity (e.g. om śivāya namaḥ);

a mystical verse or magical formula (sometimes personified), incantation, charm, spell (esp. in modern times employed by the Śāktas to acquire superhuman powers ; the primary Mantras being held to be 70 millions in number and the secondary innumerable);

consultation, resolution, counsel, advice, plan, design, secret;

N. of Viṣṇu;

of Śiva;

the fifth mansion

Dictionary - Runes

Mantra: (Skr.) Pious thought couched in repeated prayerful utterances, for meditation or charm. Also the poetic portion of the Veda (q.v.). In Shaktism (q.v.) and elsewhere the holy syllables to which as manifestations of the eternal word or sound (cf. sahda, vact aksara) is ascribed great mystic significance and power. K.F.L.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

A mantra is a specially empowered spoken or chanted utterance, usually in SANSKRIT, although there are utterances called mantras in every Indian language. Mantras vary in size from one short syllable to a long chant, such as found in the “mantras” of the RIG VEDA. Etymologically mantra comes from the man, “think,” and tra, “instrument,” making a mantra literally an “instrument of thought,” or more truly an “instrument of consciousness.” In the VEDAS the mantras were understood to be of superhuman origin, eternal and uncreated, and were received and recited by seers and reciters in order to call to divine powers. They were used for the removal of sins, diseases, and misfortune; the conquest of enemies; and innumerable other purposes.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

What is mantra? You are thinking of the simple sounds of the mantra. Repetition of the same excludes all other thoughts. The single thought of the mantra japa remains. That too drops away giving place to the Infinite Self, which is the mantra itself.

...

Sri Bhagavan told him to perform Gayatri Japa. The young man went away satisfied. When he returned after some years, he asked:

D.: If I meditate on the meaning of the Gayatri mantra, my mind again wanders. What is to be done?

M.: Were you told to meditate on the mantra or its meaning? You must think of the one who repeats the mantra.

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Mantra — from the verb root man = “to think”.

Related words

Japa

Sanskrit

Mantra — मन्त्र

mantra - मन्त्र

Marga

Variant spellings

marga

mārga

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Mārga — ... way; path; street.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

mārga -

(in most meanings from mṛga...) seeking, search, tracing out, hunting;

the track of a wild animal, any track, road, path, way to ... or through, course (also of the wind and the stars);

a walk, journey;

reach, range;

a scar, mark (left by a wound &c.);

(in medic.) a way, passage, channel (in any part of the body, esp. the intestinal canal, anus);

a way, expedient, means;

a way, manner method, custom, usage;
the right way, proper course;
(with Buddhists) the way or path pointed out by Buddha for escape from the misery of existence (one of the 4 noble truths);
a title or head in law, ground for litigation;
a way of speaking or writing, diction, style;
a high (opp. to 'vulgar') style of acting or dancing or singing;
(in dram.) pointing out the way, indicating how anything is to take place;
the 7th mansion;
a section;
musk;
the month Mārgaśīrsha (November-December);
the constellation Mṛiga-śīras;
N. of Viṣṇu (as 'the way' ... to final emancipation);
belonging to or coming from game or deer

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: What is Jnana Marga?

M.: Concentration of the mind is in a way common to both Knowledge and Yoga. Yoga aims at union of the individual with the universal, the Reality. This Reality cannot be new. It must exist even now, and it does exist.

Therefore the Path of Knowledge tries to find out how viyoga (separation) came about. The separation is from the Reality only.

...

M.: An examination of the ephemeral nature of external phenomena leads to vairagya. Hence enquiry (vichara) is the first and foremost step to be taken. ... If, however, the aspirant is not temperamentally suited to Vichara Marga (to the introspective analytical method), he must develop bhakti (devotion) to an ideal - may be God, Guru, humanity in general, ethical laws, or even the idea of beauty. When one of these takes possession of the individual, other attachments grow weaker, i.e., dispassion (vairagya) develops. ...

In the absence of enquiry and devotion, the natural sedative pranayama (breath regulation) may be tried. This is known as Yoga Marga. ... All attention being turned on breath or its regulation, other interests are lost. Again, passions are attended with irregular breathing, whereas calm and happiness are attended with slow and regular breathing. ... Real peace is happiness. Pleasures do not form happiness. The mind improves by practice and becomes finer just as the razor's edge is sharpened by stropping. The mind is then better able to tackle internal or external problems. If an aspirant be unsuited temperamentally for the first two methods and circumstantially (on account of age) for the third method, he must try the Karma Marga (doing good deeds, for example, social service). His nobler instincts become more evident and he derives impersonal pleasure. His smaller self is less assertive and has a chance of expanding its good side. The man becomes duly equipped for one of the three aforesaid paths. His intuition may also develop directly by this single method.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mārga — from the verb root mārg = “to seek, to strive”, or from the verb root mrj = “to pursue, search for”.

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

The word Marga means the Path or the Pursuit, from the root “mrig” meaning “to hunt”, to follow, “to follow to the source”.

Sanskrit

Mārga — मार्ग

mārga - मार्ग

Matha

Variant spellings

matha

maṭha

math

mutt

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Maṭha — ... monastery; school of learning.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

maṭha -

a hut, cottage, (esp.) the retired hut (or cell) of an ascetic (or student);

a cloister, college (esp. for young Brāhmans), temple;

a cart or carriage drawn by oxen

Wikipedia

A maṭha (also written math, matha or mutt) is a term for monastic and similar religious establishments of the Hindu tradition. A maṭha is usually more formal, hierarchical, and rule- based than an ashram.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Math

(often translated as “monastery”) A dwelling place for ascetics; usually a large, well-settled dwelling for a number of ascetics belonging to an established order. The four most famous maths are believed to have been established by the philosopher Shankaracharya: the Jyotir Math in the Himalayan town of Joshimath; the Govardhan Math in the city of Puri, on the Bay of Bengal; the Sharada Math in the city of Dwaraka on the Arabian Sea; and the Shringeri Math in the town of Shringeri in southern India. These maths are the headquarters for the four major groups in the Dashanami sect Sanyasis, renunciant ascetics who are devotees (bhakta) of the god Shiva. Although most maths do not have the status of these four, they all serve as ascetic and religious centers.

Wikipedia

Advaita Maṭhas

The oldest such institutions follow the Advaita tradition, where the head of a maṭha is called a Shankaracharya, a title derived from Ādi Śankara. Śankara was a prominent religious teacher of the eighth century, from whose philosophies originate the environment of popular modern Indian thought. Ādi Śankara established the following mathas, with each of his four main disciples in charge: Sureshwaracharya, Hastamalakacharya, Padmapadacharya, and Totakacharya respectively. The four Āmnāya maṭhas founded by Ādi Śankara, all of the Smarta tradition, are:

Śringeri Śāradā Pīṭham, at Sringeri, Karnataka

Dwaraka Pīṭham, at Dwaraka, Gujarat

Govardhana matha, at Puri, Orissa

Jyotirmath, in Uttarakhand

In addition, these Advaita mathas also claim they were founded by Ādi Śankara:

Swarnavalli Mutt at Swarnavalli, Sirsi

Ramachandrapura Math at Haniya, Hosanagara, Karnataka

Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, at Tamil Nadu

Ashta Mathas of Udupi

The Ashta Mathas of Udupi are a group of eight mathas or monasteries established by Sri Madhvacharya the preceptor of the Dvaita school of Hindu thought. For each of the eight mathas, Sri Madhvacharya also appointed one of his direct disciples to be the first Swamiji. The names of the mathas and the first Swamijis are:

Palimaru - Sri Hrishikesh Tirtha

Adamaru - Sri Narasimha Tirtha

Krishnapura - Sri Janardhana Tirtha

Puttige - Sri Upendra Tirtha

Shirur - Sri Vamana Tirtha

Sodhe - Sri Vishnu Tirtha

Kaniyooru - Sri Raama Tirtha

Pejavara - Sri Adhokshaja Tirtha

The ashta mathas are named after the villages in which they were originally located. Today, the mathas are situated in the temple town of Udupi. The mathas work to propagate the Dvaita philosophy. They also administer the famous Udupi Krishna Temple by way of a formal rotation scheme called Paryaya.

When the ashta mathas were formed, Sri Madhvacharya initiated the Swamijis of the mathas in pairs. Each pair of mathas is called Dwandva (literally meaning two in the local languages Kannada and Tulu). Each matha in a pair is called a Dwandwa (dual). In the event the current Paryaya Swamiji has difficulty performing his duties, the Swamiji from the Dwandwa matha takes over the responsibility. The four pairs of mathas are: Palimaru and Adamaru; Krishnapura and Puttige; Shirur and Sodhe; and Kaniyooru and Pejavara.

Related words

Ashrama
Sankara

Sanskrit

Matha — मठ

maṭha - मठ

Maya

Variant spellings

maya
māyā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Māyā — ... the principle of appearance; illusion; marvelous power of creation; magical power; mystery; God's power...; "that which measures".

1. The force which shows the unreal as real and presents that which is temporary and short lived as eternal and everlasting. The force that conceals our divinity. In the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkarācārya, it is described as the beginningless cause which brings about the illusion of the world; an indescribable power of the Absolute (Brahman), which is neither real nor totally unreal.
2. The principle which shows the attributeless Absolute as having attributes.
3. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is the indeterminable principle which brings about the illusory manifestation of the universe. It is the principle of illusion. It is the key concept of Advaita Vedānta. It is not ultimately real, nor can it function without Brahman/Ātman as its locus. It is the device by which the Advaitin explains how the one reality appears as many. It is the power which brings about error and has significance only at the empirical or relative level. It has six facets: it is beginningless (anādi); it is terminated

by right knowledge (jñāna-nivartya); it veils and projects (āvaraṇa and viksepa); it is indefinable (anirvacanīya); it is of the nature of a positive existence (bhāvarūpa); and it is located either in the individual (Jiva) or in the Absolute (Brahman). Śaṅkara used the term māyā as interchangeable with avidyā.

4. According to Dvaita Vedānta, it is God's mysterious power.

5. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, it is the mysterious power of God. See sapta-vidha-anupapatti for Ramanuja's major objections to the Advaita Vedānta concept of avidyālmāyā.

6. According to Saiva Siddhānta, it is the material cause of the world. It is nonconscious. It is twofold as pure (śuddha) and impure (asuddha). It is both a bond (pāśā) of the individual soul and that which provides the individual souls with the means, location, and objects of enjoyment. It requires the guidance of Siva to function, though Siva does not directly operate on māyā, but only through his cit-śakti.

7. According to Vira Saivism, it is the name of Sakti or mūla-prakṛti. It evolves into the phenomenal universe.

8. According to Kashmir Saivism, it is the power of obscuration. Its purpose is to limit the experience as regards both the experiencer and what is experienced. It is a restrictor (mala) which is the impurity of transmigratory existence. It is real and a creation of the Lord. It is divided into śuddha and aśuddha-māyā.

9. Synonym for prakṛti, avyakta, pradhāna, avidyā, ajñāna, avyakṛta.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

māyā -

art, wisdom, extraordinary or supernatural power (only in the earlier language);

illusion, unreality, deception, fraud, trick, sorcery, witchcraft magic ṚV. &c. &c.;

an unreal or illusory image, phantom, apparition;

duplicity (with Buddhists one of the 24 minor evil passions)... (in phil.) Illusion (identified in the Sāṃkhya with Prakṛiti or Pradhāna and in that system, as well as in the Vedānta, regarded as the source of the visible universe);

(with Śaivas) one of the 4 Pśas or snares which entangle the soul;

(with Vaishṇavas) one of the 9 Śaktis or energies of Viṣṇu;

Illusion personified (sometimes identified with Durgā, sometimes regarded as a daughter of Anṛita and Nirṛiti or Nikṛiti and mother of Mrityu, or as a daughter of Adharma);

compassion, sympathy;

Convolvulus Turpethum;

N. of the mother of Gautama Buddha;

of Lakshmī;

of a city Cat.;

of 2 metres;

N. of 2 Sāmans

Wikipedia

Maya has multiple meanings, within a Hindu or Sikh context, the word refers to concepts of "illusion". Maya, is the principal concept which manifests, perpetuates and governs the illusion and dream of duality in the phenomenal Universe.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Maya - What is not and yet seems to be In Vedanta philosophy, the generic possibility of error shared by all alike is maya, while the individual, specific possibility of error is called avidya, ignorance.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Maya: The mysterious urge inherent in the Absolute (brahman or atman) to unfold itself as all the worlds and the phenomenon of life. The very appearing of the world caused thus ends up in becoming a sort of veil put over the Absolute, hiding its vision from our view and making the illusory vision that the apparent world is the real.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Maya is the building power of Consciousness. It creates duality, multiplicity, substance, form, dimensions, time, and so forth. It is the creative power which involves all life in the bondage of its threads and forms, but which ultimately reveals the truth regarding itself, thereby granting liberation and salvation. The Tradition, which is a form of Maya, is the instrument of liberation and salvation.

...

The passing through the five doors of the temple implies clothes and the piercing of the Veils of Spirit, from the grossest in the physical plane to the subtlest in the “inner spheres”. The veils are those of Maya, or Isis. Who would worship the Veil of Maya, the dark mist which hides Reality? And yet this is what is being done at the present day. The modern world stares at the Veil of Intellect in fascination, taking it for the Truth. It does not realize that there is something beyond. Veil-worship, in another sense, has even entered Hindu temples. Hindu tradition knows an offering of clothes to the Deity — Vastropavastram. Cloths or clothes are symbols of Maya, they represent Maya’s Veils. In the ancient Mysteries the aspirant for the highest initiation had to shed his clothes and go forward naked. ... In the Element Air, the Spirit, nakedness becomes complete and symbolizes purity in the sense of “rising above sex” and liberation from the entanglement of Maya. In the Apocryphal Gospel of the Egyptians we read that Salome inquired of Jesus: “How long shall death prevail?” The Lord answered: “Until you have trampled on the garment of shame and the two become one, and the male with the female is neither male nor female.” ...The tradition of complete nakedness as symbolizing perfect “purity” in the sense of enlightenment of spirit, is found in Jain and Hindu traditions. The Jain Tirthankaras — which are parallel with the Buddhas of Buddhism — are represented as completely naked. ... Naked Hindu ascetics of various Hindu traditions are called Avahutas, “those who have shaken or washed off”, and Naga-swamis. ... A very exalted Hindu aspect of God, not much known in popular hinduism, but worshipped by contemplatives, is Dattatreya, an Incarnation of the Trimurti, the Triad Brahma-Vishnu-Siva. He is represented as naked.

The tradition of nakedness is preserved to a modified extent in the general orthodox custom, found especially in South-India, that a man should enter a sacred place only with a bare upper body. ... and even if shirts are tolerated, at least the “upper cloth” has to be taken from the shoulders and wound round the hips. This custom illustrates how the meaning of things was lost little by little. Such a loss of insight is demonstrated very significantly by the fact that images of deities in modern Hinduism are generally covered by cloths or clothes. The rite of Vastropavastram or renunciation of the Veils of Maya has been falsely interpreted as having the meaning that the Gods want clothes. Instead of offering the Veils of Ignorance and laying them at the feet of the Deity, they

are projected on to the image. By doing this the priest or worshipper veils the God with his own Maya. This procedure is symbolic of the spirit of the age. Even the Gods have become veiled in Maya since sacred tradition has been forgotten. ... Sometimes the images are hidden by a profusion of garlands of flowers, symbolic of the fact that in the present age (in all religions) the Spirit is often smothered by an excess of sticky sentiment or devotion.

...

To pierce the Veils of Maya and rise to the glories of the Moon-Sphere, one should renounce “having”, whatever form it may take, gross or subtle. Instead of having there should be Being. Instead of being dressed in the habits or Veils of Maya, one should go forward naked: utterly possessionless. Even the creeds, theories and beliefs of the world of Manifestation should be discarded.

Wikipedia

Māyā (/ma:ja:/) According to Adi Shankara, Māyā is the complex illusionary power of Brahman which causes the Brahman to be seen as the material world of separate forms. Maya has two main functions — one is to “hide” Brahman from ordinary human perception, and the other is to present the material world in its (Brahman) place. Māyā is also said to be indescribable, though it may be said that all sense data entering ones awareness via the five senses are Māyā, since the fundamental reality underlying sensory perception is completely hidden. It is also said that Māyā is neither completely real nor completely unreal, hence indescribable. Its shelter is Brahman, but Brahman itself is untouched by the illusion of Māyā, just like a magician is not tricked by his own magic. Māyā is temporary and is transcended with “true knowledge,” or perception of the more fundamental reality which permeates Māyā.

Since according to the Upanishads only Brahman is real, but we see the material world to be real, Adi Shankara explained the anomaly by the concept of this illusionary power Māyā.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

In Vedāntic literature generally the term māyā is used as an all-inclusive or blanket expression to cover many items of errors of judgement and value in human life. Ambiguity, ambivalence, irrationality, absurdity as well as more delicate errors of judgement as also more fundamental ones due to optical illusion and the like, are all jumbled together and made to be included under the overall term māyā.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Maya is defined as sadasat vilaksanam, that which has the special characteristic of being both real and unreal. Maya is often translated into English as “illusion,” but this itself misleading. Professor Betty Heimann, in her Facets of Indian Thought gives a better interpretation:

The Sanskritist must at the outset feel repelled when, for example, the Indian concept of maya is translated as ‘illusion’. The western mind, according to the present use of ‘illusion’ sees here something unreal, deceptive and delusive. Yet this is not even the primary meaning of the Latin word *illusio*, from the root *luclere*, ‘to play’. *Illusio* originally, though this is now forgotten, meant ‘interplay’. As such, but only in its original meaning is it a near equivalent of maya. Maya, the ‘world of the measurables’ (from the root *ma*, to measure), is a relative and transitory display of forms. In this sense it actually corresponds to *illusio*, interplay in variant shapes and forms, manifestations of the underlying substance. *Illusio*, thus interpreted according to its original meaning, truly is analogous to the Sanskrit term *lila*, ‘play and display’ of the creative urge for world-formation and elusive world-manifestation, as taught in Indian cosmogony.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Asking impossible questions and insisting on getting them definitely answered is one of the many human weaknesses, an outcome, so to say, of man's divine gift of an enquiring mind. For example, how does a tiny seed keep within it a huge tree of the future? No one can answer this question with any definiteness. Similar are some of the basic questions concerning life. How does the one Reality become many? How does it divide itself into mind and matter? How can pure consciousness assume the form of gross and inert objects like rock and metal? In Vedanta, the impossibility of answering all such basic questions is put under the cover of the blanket term maya. Though it gives the impression of having given some explanation, really it explains nothing. Those who do not insist on getting a conclusive definite answer would prefer to remain satisfied, thinking, "All this is just a lila of God." For the reason that maya is no answer to such questions, its well-accepted definition is:

"na vidyate ya sa maya"

That which has no existence is maya.

For the satisfaction of those who do not become content unless they get a definite answer to all questions, the concept of maya is introduced as a sakti (an indomitable potential) inherent in atma or iswara. Though we know nothing about this sakti, having been taught nothing about it, the word creates the impression in us of having got an answer.

No school of Vedanta can dispense with this maya concept for the reason that an element of mystery lurks in the Real. The maya conceived by all admits mystery at one level of thinking or another, yet one's maya concept is ridiculed by another. They differ only in respect of the level at which the door is opened to let the mystery in.* And, providing room for mystery in philosophical thinking is no anathema to Indian philosophers. They even admit that the greatest of all mysteries is the Reality we are in search of.

Maya, thus, is a blanket term to signify all that is inexplicable in Reality, and therefore is undefinable. It simply tells us that there is a mystery in what we perceive. Therefore, it is thought that maya's presence is to be inferred from its effects (karyanumeya).

The Effects of Maya

Maya, we have already seen, is a mysterious principle that could only be inferred from its effects. What are those effects? All the apparent dualities -- such as one- many, subject-object, cause-effect, vidya-avidya, para-apara -- are its effects. For Narayana Guru avidya also is thus an effect of maya, although with Sankara it is more or less a synonym for maya.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

The word māyā was used in the Rg-Veda to denote a kind of magical power. There it is said that Indra, through the help of māyā, assumed different forms. In the Upanishads the word acquires a philosophical significance. We read in the Svetasvatara Upanisad: "Know Prakṛti, or Nature, to be māyā, and the Great Lord to be the Master of māyā". Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gītā: "Verily, this divine māyā of Mine, consisting of the three guṇas, is hard to overcome. But those who take refuge in Me alone, shall cross over this māyā."

Śankara speaks of māyā as the Power of the Lord, beginningless, and compounded of the three gunas. Though intangible, it can be inferred from the effect it produces. Sadananda says that māyā is "something positive, though intangible, which cannot be described as either being or non-being, and which is antagonistic to Knowledge". Let us try to understand the meaning of these definitions.

Māyā cannot be described either as being or non-being; that is why māyā is said to be indefinable. If it were being, in the true sense, then its effect, the tangible universe, would be perceived at all times. For being can never become non-being; the Real can never become unreal. But one does not behold the universe in samādhi or in communion with Brahman, neither in dreamless sleep. On the other hand, if māyā were non-being, a non-existent unreality, like the son of a barren woman, the manifold universe could not be seen. One could not see the world of names and forms as real. Therefore māyā is said to be “something positive”. The word something here denotes its unsubstantiality or worthlessness, because, apart from Brahman, the world, its effect, is both unsubstantial and worthless. The word positive denotes its capability of producing the visible universe. It also serves the purpose of removing the erroneous notion that māyā, or ignorance, is pure negation because it is the absence of Knowledge. Māyā is said to be “antagonistic to Knowledge” because both māyā and its effect, the material universe, disappear when one attains the Knowledge of Brahman. Brahman and māyā cannot co-exist any more than the Absolute and the relative, the One and the many. When one of these is perceived, the other is nonexistent. They are not even correlatives. That is why the question often asked as to how the Absolute becomes the relative world is illogical and meaningless.

As long as one sees māyā or its effects, one may say that it belongs to Brahman, because nothing exists, ultimately, but Brahman. Thus māyā has been described by Vedantists as the inexplicable Power of the Supreme Lord, Paramesa-śakti, by which is produced the illusion of the creation, preservation, and dissolution of the universe. But from the standpoint of Brahman, which is all Light and Knowledge, there is no māyā. One identified with Brahman does not see even a trace of māyā. ... As the mind itself is a product of māyā, one cannot, through reasoning, know the cause of māyā. It is māyā, ignorance, that produces the illusion of deśa, kāla, and nimitta—time, space, and causality—which hides the true nature of Pure Consciousness and projects the multiple universe.

See: Ishvara and Maya

See: Gunas, prakriti, maya

See: Prakriti and Maya

See: Vidya and maya

See also:

Avarana and vikshepa

in Advaita Vedanta: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

in Namarupa: [Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Māyā — ... from the verb root mā = “to measure, to limit, give form”.

[Wikipedia](#)

The word origin of maya is derived from the Sanskrit roots ma (“not”) and ya, generally translated as an indicative article meaning “that.” The mystic teachings in Vedanta are centered on a fundamental truth that cannot be reduced to a concept or word for the ordinary mind to manipulate. Rather, the human experience and mind are themselves a tiny fragment of this truth. In this tradition, no mind- object can be identified as absolute truth, such that one may say “That’s it.” So, to keep the mind from attaching to incomplete fragments of reality, a speaker could use this term to indicate that truth is “Not that.”

Related words

Ajnana
Atman
Avarana
Avidya
Brahman
Gunas
Ishvara
Shakti
Vikshepa

Sanskrit

Māyā — माया

māyā - माया

Mimansa

Variant spellings

mimansa
mimamsa
Mīmāṃsā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mīmāṃsā — ... “enquiry”; investigation; debate; discussion.

1. It is short for Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, one of the six schools of philosophy (sad-darśana).
2. It is one of the six orthodox (āstika) schools and it primarily investigates the Vedic rites and their uses. Its main objective is to establish the authority of the Veda.
3. Jaimini is the founder and the author of the Mīmāṃsā-sūtra which is the foundational work of the school, and the longest of the sūtra works.
4. The aphorisms commented on by Sabarasvāmin gave rise to two main schools of interpretation: Prabhakara’s and Kumārila Bhatta’s.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mīmāṃsā -

profound thought or reflection or Consideration, investigation, examination, discussion; theory;

examination of the Vedic text ‘, N. of one of the 3 great divisions of orthodox Hindū philosophy (divided into 2 systems, viz. the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā or Karma-mīmāṃsā by Jaimini, concerning itself chiefly with the correct interpretation of Vedic ritual and text, and usually called the Mīmāṃsā; and the Uttara- mīmāṃsā or Brahma-mīmāṃsā or Śārīraka-mīmāṃsā by Bādarāyaṇa, commonly styled the Vedānta and dealing chiefly with the nature of Brahman or the one universal Spirit)

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Vedanta Revalued and Restated

Mimamsa: A critical enquiry. Two Indian Schools of philosophy are called Mimamsas [Purva Mimamsa and Uttara-Mimamsa].

Descriptions

General

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

The Mīmāṃsā is only a methodical handbook treating of the various questions arising out of the complicated Vedic ritual.

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The Vedic texts were used as mantras (incantations) for sacrifices, and people often disputed as to the relation of words in a sentence or their mutual relative importance with reference to the general drift of the sentence. There were also differences of view with regard to the meaning of a sentence, the use to which it may be applied as a mantra, its relative importance or the exact nature of its connection with other similar sentences in a complex Vedic context. The Mīmāṃsā formulated some principles according to which one could arrive at rational and uniform solutions for all these difficulties. Preliminary to these its main objects, it indulges in speculations with regard to the external world, soul, perception, inference, the validity of the Vedas, or the like, for in order that a man might perform sacrifices with mantras, a definite order of the universe and its relation to man or the position and

nature of the mantras of the Veda must be demonstrated and established. Though its interest in such abstract speculations is but secondary yet it briefly discusses these in order to prepare a rational ground for its doctrine of the mantras and their practical utility for man. It is only so far as there are these preliminary discussions in the Mimāṃsā that it may be called a system of philosophy. Its principles and maxims for the interpretation of the import of words and sentences have a legal value even to this day. The sūtras of Mimāṃsā are attributed to Jaimini, and Shabara wrote a bhāṣya upon it. The two great names in the history of Mimāṃsā literature after Jaimini and Shabara are Kumārila Bhatta and his pupil Prabhākara, who criticized the opinions of his master so much, that the master used to call him guru (master) in sarcasm, and to this day his opinions pass as guru-mata, whereas the views of Kumārila Bhatta pass as bhatta-mata. It may not be out of place to mention here that Hindu Law (smṛti) accepts without any reservation the maxims and principles settled and formulated by the Mimāṃsā.

The Vedānta sūtras, also called Uttara Mimāṃsā, written by Bādarāyana, otherwise known as the Brahma-sūtras, form the original authoritative work of Vedānta.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Mimamsa (inquiry) is one of the six traditional orthodox schools of Indian philosophy. The Mimamsa SUTRAS of Jaimini (c. third century C.E.) is the first extant text of the tradition.

Mimamsa in its earliest form (Purva [early] Mimamsa) preserves a strict Vedic tradition; it sees the Vedas as eternal, divine texts that should guide all life and action. According to early Mimamsa one must do one's ritual duties and worldly duties precisely according to the Vedas. The Mimamsa texts, therefore, aim to clarify the precise meaning of each Vedic injunction, so that devotees can reach the heavenly realm after death. The Mimamsakas argue very strongly that even the UPANISHADS, valued by so many for their philosophy, should be read only to learn any requirements for action that they may contain.

Mimamsa cannot be said to be theistic or oriented toward gods in a true sense; the gods are at the beck and call of humans thanks to the power of the Vedic MANTRAS. Gods exist, but the Vedas supersede all. The soul or self is understood to exist in Mimamsa, as in all six orthodox Brahminical systems.

Early Mimamsa preserved the ancient Vedic understanding of the afterlife: after death, a person went to a heavenly realm somewhat like the earthly one, where one remained in a happy state, being fed by one's family. There is no overt mention of reincarnation in the Vedic mantras themselves, with the exception of the late ISHA UPANISHAD, which is appended to the mantras of the YAJUR VEDA. Salvation itself in Mimamsa put the soul in an inert state, liberated from the bonds of earthly existence through proper performance of Vedic duty. As Mimamsa developed and changed around the seventh century with the commentary of Shabaraswamin, it accepted the notion of karma and rebirth. In this respect it converged, as did YOGA, with the other VEDANTIC schools.

Two lines of teachers, drawing upon Prabhakara and Kumarila (eighth and ninth centuries), refined the doctrine further, using careful philosophical analysis of perception, causation, and the like, for the purposes of this school. This precise investigation was replicated in the commentary on the Upanishads that developed into VEDANTA. Because it was seen as an extension of the earlier Mimamsic investigative method, Vedanta is often called Uttara Mimamsa, or "later Mimamsa."

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Mīmāṃsā was founded by Jaimini. It is concerned chiefly with the correct interpretation of Vedic ritual and texts...

Mīmāṃsa is divided into two systems, viz., the Pūrvamīmāṃsā and the Uttaramīmāṃsā. The adjective purva means "earlier"; therefore, that which deals with the earlier part of the Vedas. The adjective Uttara means "latter"; therefore, that which deals with the latter part of the Vedas. Both are based on the Vedas; both use the same logical method of handling their problems; both use

the same literary form; but each has its own limited sphere of interpretation. Pūrvamīmāṃsā interprets the actions enjoined in the Vedas, leading to freedom of the soul; Uttaramīmāṃsā interprets the knowledge revealed in the Vedas, leading to freedom of the soul. When these two systems are referred to in this light, they are respectively called Karma Mīmāṃsā and Jñāna Mīmāṃsā, but their popular names are simply Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta.

Sankara tradition

[Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne](#)

Mimansa and Vedanta have very little in common. Their conjunction has arisen from the circumstance that the Mimansa (otherwise called the Purva or Earlier Mimansa) deals with the ritual portion of the Vedas as explained in the Brahmanas; while the Vedanta or Uttara (later) Mimansa seeks to unfold and apply the principles of the Upanishads; and thus, as each expounds a portion of what had come to be called the Veda, the two systems came to be bracketed together.

...

Purva-Mimansa ... founded on the Mantras [Vedas] and Brahmanas, in contradistinction to the Uttara- Mimansa or Vedanta, based on the later Upanishads.

See also:

Classic systems of Hindu philosophy

Sanskrit

Mīmāṃsā — मीमांसा

Mīmāṃsā - मीमांसा

Mithya

Variant spellings

mithya

mithyā

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Mithyā —... not real; neither real nor unreal; illusory; false; untrue; incorrect.

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, it has a special status as it is not the real (sat)—for it is sublatale—and it is not the unreal (asat)—because it is perceived (unlike a barren woman's son or a square circle).

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

mithyā -

(contracted from mithūyā') invertedly, contrarily, incorrectly, wrongly, improperly ... (with ... to pronounce a word wrongly ... ; with ... to act wrongly ... ; with ... to behave improperly ... ; falsely, deceitfully, untruly ... (often with ... to speak falsely, utter a lie ... ; not in reality, only apparently ... ; to no purpose, fruitlessly, in vain ...)

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda

The appearance of an object which is in fact non-existent is an illusion (mithya) just as that of the elephant seen in a dream.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

On account of ... Mayas troubles appear in the Atma like the cinema pictures on the screen. Only to remove this Maya it is said that the whole world is mithya (unreal). Atman is like the screen. Just as you come to know that the pictures that are shown are dependent on the screen and do not exist otherwise, so also, until one is able to know by Self enquiry that the world that is visible is not different from Atma, it has to be said that this is all mithya. But once the reality is known, the whole universe will appear as Atma only. Hence the very people who said the world is unreal, have subsequently said that it is only Atma swarupa. After all, it is the outlook that is important. If the outlook changes, the troubles of the world will not worry us. Are the waves different from the ocean? Why do the waves occur at all? If asked, what reply can we give? The troubles in the world also are like that. Waves come and go. If it is found out that they are not different from Atma this worry will not exist."

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

The word 'mithyā' has two meanings, one is false or not true, and the other is that which depends upon something else for its existence.

Mithya and satyam

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words

As I recalled Bhagavan saying sometimes that unreal (mithya, imaginary) and real (satyam) mean the same, but did not quite understand, I asked him about it. He said, 'Yes, I do sometimes say that. What do you mean by real? What is it that you call real?' I answered: "According to Vedanta, only that which is permanent and unchanging can be called real. That is the meaning of Reality."

Then Bhagavan said: "The names and forms which constitute the world continually change and perish and are therefore called unreal. It is unreal (imaginary) to limit the Self to these names and forms and real to regard all as the Self. The non-dualist says that the world is unreal, but he also says, 'All this is Brahman'. So it is clear that what he condemns is, regarding the world as objectively real in itself, not regarding it as Brahman. He who sees the Self sees the Self alone in the world also. It is immaterial to the Enlightened whether the world appears or not. In either case, his attention is turned to the Self. It is like the letters and the paper

on which they are printed. You are so engrossed in the letters that you forget about the paper, but the Enlightened sees the paper as the substratum whether the letters appear on it or not.

This is still more succinctly stated as follows:

The Vedantins do not say that the world is unreal. That is a misunderstanding. If they did, what would be the meaning of the Vedantic text: 'All this is Brahman'? They only mean that the world is unreal as world but real as Self. If you regard the world as non-self, it is not real. Everything, whether you call it illusion (Maya) or Divine Play (Lila) or Energy (Shakti) must be within the Self and not apart from it.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

Commentaries by Dayananda:

The physical body is annamaya which is mithyā. And mithyā cannot be away from the satya which is ātmā. In fact mithyā is satya (but satya is not mithyā). These people also say that you have to remove these kośas to reach the ātmā. You do not have to remove the mithyā to recognise the satya. You have to just remove the error of taking what is mithyā as satya. You do not have to remove wave to see water, you only have to recognise that wave is nothing But water.

...

If what is mithyā is not understood, one would not know that there is no mithyā without satya, the basis. There is no pot without the clay.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

mithyā —from the verb root mith = “to dispute angrily, altercate”.

Related words

Satyam

Sanskrit

Mithyā — मिथ्या

mithyā - मिथ्या

Moha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Moha — ... infatuation; delusion

1. The power to delude. A power of illusion (māyā).
2. One of the afflictions (kleśa) according to Buddhism.
3. One of the five types of false knowledge (viparyaya) according to Sāñkhya.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

moha -

loss of consciousness, bewilderment, perplexity, distraction, infatuation, delusion, error, folly;

fainting, stupefaction, a swoon;

darkness or delusion of mind (preventing the discernment of truth and leading men to believe in the reality of worldly objects);

(with Buddhists) ignorance (one of the three roots of vice);

a magical art employed to bewilder an enemy (= mohana);

wonder, amazement;

Infatuation personified (as the offspring of Brahmā)

Dictionary - Runes

Moha: (Skr.) Distraction, perplexity, delusion, beclouding of the mind rendering it unfit to perceive the truth, generally explained as attachment to the phenomenal; in Buddhism, ignorance, as a source of vice. K.F.L.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

The state of mind in which the unreal appearance and the reality are mixed up, causing bewilderment is called moha.

Descriptions

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Katha Upanishad

... in enjoyment, the intellect is not necessary. The mind and senses work together in the lower stage, the mind merely playing second fiddle to what they say and not being independent. The independence belongs to the intellect... Where it is lacking, moha is created and we go after things. When the light of the soul, bereft of intelligence, works through the mind and senses, there is samsara. But we have also the higher intellect which should guide us throughout.

...

The essence behind sense-perception is not properly understood, and so we are caught up in moha; we are in a helpless condition. This condition of helplessness is samsara. It is a pitiable state of affairs when there is a mutual reaction between subject and object caused by a force of which no one knows.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Darkness and inertia make memory corrode and consequently partial or total forgetfulness (moha) can arise. When one forgets one's own true Self, false identification can easily follow. Thus moha is not mere forgetfulness. It can also indicate desires born out of forgetfulness. When forgetfulness is extreme, it is mahamoha. Mahamoha also indicates the generic forgetfulness with which all sentient beings are afflicted.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

Moha is delusive attachment or infatuation based on a completely false perception and evaluation of the object. Occasionally it has an almost magical connotation, as of a person being "under a spell" of admiration or attachment. The idea is that the person suffering from moha is bereft of reason and utterly overwhelmed by a passionate response to the object. Usually it is thought of as being directed to a person, but it can also be delusive obsession with a material object and even an aspiration or ambition for something or someone.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

moha — from the verb root muh = "to delude".

Related words

Avidya

Tamas

Sanskrit

Moha — मोह

moha - मोह

Moksha

Variant spellings

moksha

moksa

mokṣa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mokṣa — liberation; spiritual freedom; release; the final goal of human life.

1. There are two views in the Upaniṣads toward liberation. Some say it is attainable in this very life and others say that it is attainable only after death. (See Jīvanmukta.)
2. Mīmāṃsā says that it is achieved through action (karma) and Vedic rites alone. It is release from action, both in the sense of action and in the sense of the fruits of one's actions.
3. Advaita Vedānta says that knowledge (jñāna) is the ultimate means to release. Truly speaking, release is the eternal nature of the Self (Ātman) and manifests itself once ignorance is removed. It is not a new acquisition, but the realization of what eternally is.
4. Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta says that devotion (bhakti) is the ultimate means to release. Karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga are aids to devotion (bhakti-yoga). Liberation is living in Vaikuṅṭha with a nonphysical body enjoying omniscience and bliss and dwelling in the presence of God. Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta also recognizes total surrender (prapatti) as a means of release.
5. Dvaita Vedānta says that God's grace (prasāda) is the ultimate means to release. Leading to ultimate release, the individual soul practices knowledge, dispassion, action, devotion, and a loving meditation of God, regarding oneself as His reflection. In the state of release, the individual soul remains separate from God though similar and dependent. Its personality remains in one of the four levels of graded release which Dvaita posits.
6. Jainism says that release is the highest state of isolation in which the individual is freed from all fetters of karma particles. The means to release are right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. Aids to these include the mahā-vratas.
7. Buddhism says that release (nirvāṇa) is the eradication of all craving and an overcoming of the wheel of birth and death. The means to it is the eightfold path.
8. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika says that release (apavarga) is a separation from all qualities. There is no pleasure, happiness, or pain, or any experience whatsoever in release. It is achieved by cultivating ethical virtues and obtaining an insight into the nature of the categories.
9. Sāṅkhya says that release (kaivalya) is aloofness from all matter. There is neither pleasure nor pain, though there is an undisturbable peace. It is achieved once the individual is able to discriminate between the spirit (puruṣa) and matter (prakṛti). It is defined as puruṣa-prakṛti viveka.
10. Yoga says that the cultivation of the eight-limbed yogic path is the way to kaivalya or a state of superconscious samādhi in which the individual is left totally alone. Yoga defines it as citta vṛtti nirodha.
11. Śaiva Siddhānta says that the path to release consists in caryā, kriyā, yoga, and jñāna. In release, the soul retains its individuality. It becomes similar to God and, thus, release is unity in duality. The soul enjoys God's nature, though it is not identical with God.
12. Vīra Śaivism says that release is identity in essence between Śiva and the individual soul (liṅgāṅga-sāmarasya). The individual soul is a part of Śiva though it is also different. Release is a unity (aikya) of the individual soul with Śiva, wherein the individual soul enjoys complete and unexcellible bliss. The path to release is devotion as aided by the eight aids (aṣṭāvaraṇa).

13. Śivādvaita says that release is freedom from bondage and an attainment of bliss. Release is attained through realization of one's own nature. Contemplation of Lord Śiva is the means to release.
14. Kashmir Śaivism says that release is the recognition of the individual's identity with the ultimate Reality. It is a return to one's original state of perfection and purity. It is gained by the four steps of āñavopāya, śāktopāya, śāmbhavopāya, and anupāya, culminating in the grace of the Divine Will.
15. Liberation in theistic Śaivism is generally said to be in heaven (Kailāsa). Liberation in Vaiṣṇavism is in Vaikuṅṭha.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mokṣa -

emancipation, liberation, release from;

release from worldly existence or transmigration, final or eternal emancipation;

death;

N. of partic. sacred hymns conducive to final emancipation;

the liberation of an eclipsed or occulted planet, the last contact or separation of the eclipsed and eclipsing bodies, end of an eclipse;

falling off or down;

effusion;

setting free, deliverance (of a prisoner);

loosing, untying (hair);

settling (a question);

acquittance of an obligation, discharge of a debt;

shedding or causing to flow (tears, blood &c.);

casting, shooting, hurling;

strewing, scattering;

utterance (of a curse);

relinquishment, abandonment;

N. of the Divine mountain Meru;

Schrebera Swietenoides

Dictionary - Runes

Moksa: (Skr.) Liberation, salvation from the effects of karma (q.v.) and resulting samsara (q.v.). Theoretically, good karma as little as evil karma can bring about liberation from the state of existence looked upon pessimistically. Thus, Indian philosophy early found a solution in knowledge (vidya, jnana) which, disclosing the essential oneness of all in the metaphysical world-ground, declares the phenomenal world as maya (q.v.). Liberation is then equivalent to identification of oneself with the ultimate reality, eternal, changeless, blissful, or in a state of complete indifference either with or without loss of consciousness, but at any rate beyond good and evil, pleasure and pain. Divine grace is also recognized by some religious systems as effecting moksa. No generalization is possible regarding the many theories of moksa, its nature, or the mode of attaining it. See Nirvana, Samadhi, Prasada. K.F.L.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Since mokṣa, according to Śamkara, is not a state to be newly attained, but is the very nature of the self, we can hardly speak of a means in its ordinary sense for achieving it. It is realizing what has always been one's own innate character but happens for the time being to be forgotten. The Upaniṣadic statement is 'That thou art,' not 'That thou becomest.' The common illustration given here is that of a prince, brought up as a hunter from infancy, discovering afterwards that he is of royal blood. It involves no becoming, for he has always been a prince and all that he has to do is to feel or realize that he is one. ... in the case of advaitic mokṣa, all that is needed is a removal of the obstacle that keeps the truth concealed from us and the discipline that is prescribed is solely with a view to bring about this result. It is therefore only in a negative or indirect sense that we can talk of attaining mokṣa here. Empirical life being entirely the consequence of an adhyāsa, the obstacle is ajñāna and it is removed through its contrary jñāna. The jñāna that is capable of effecting it should be, for the reasons mentioned more than once before, direct or intuitive (sākṣāt-kāra); and it should refer to one's own identity with Brahman, for it is the forgetting of this identity that constitutes saṃsāra. Such knowledge is the sole means of liberation. Neither moral perfection nor religious acts are required as direct aids to it. The cultivation of the will and the purification of the affections are of course necessary, but they are only aids to jñāna, not to mokṣa. It means that the morally impure will not seriously set about acquiring the saving knowledge. When once jñāna arises, it does of itself dispel ajñāna and the simultaneous revelation of spirit in all its innate splendour is mokṣa. To state the same in another way, ethical improvement and religious discipline are necessary for mokṣa but not enough. That is what is meant by karma-saṃnyāsa as advocated by Śamkara. The conception of jīvan-mukti is the logical result of such a view of the world and of escape from it. If knowledge is the sole means of release from bondage, freedom should result the moment it is gained; and there is nothing in the psychical or other equipment of the human being which renders its acquisition impossible here and now.

The discipline is to be undergone in two stages—one, preliminary which qualifies for entering upon the serious study of the Advaita; and the other, Vedāntic training proper which directly aims at self-realization. Of these, the former is identical with karma-yoga as explained in the chapter on the Gītā and its aim is the cultivation of detachment. The latter consists of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsa.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

Bhagavan remarked, "I should give them moksha, they say. It is enough if moksha alone is given to them. Is not that itself a desire? If you give up all the desires that you have, what remains is only moksha. And you require sadhana to get rid of all those desires."

...

The devotee said, "But Bhagavan always tells us that Self-enquiry of 'Who am I?' is the most important, is it not?"

Bhagavan replied, "It is the same thing. For enquiry there must be somebody. There is the person and there is the Self. They are known as the lower Arani and the upper Arani [Arani means a twig of the 'Sami tree' used for kindling the sacred fire by attrition.]

The enquiry itself is the attrition. As one goes on continuously with this attrition the fire called Vijnana gets generated and the bond

of ignorance that the Self is different from the object gets burnt out. That means the life's impurities get destroyed. Then the Self remains as the real 'Self'. That is 'Moksha'.

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji](#)

Neither the relinquishment of the body, nor of the staff, nor of the water-pot (the wooden water-pot used by ascetics) is moksa (liberation); but moksa is the happiness (that results from) untying the knot of ignorance in the heart. 559

See: Purushartha, the four goals of human life

See also:

in Advaita Vedanta: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

mokṣa - from the verb root mokṣ = "to liberate".

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Mokṣa - from mokṣ, desiderative of the root muc, to set loose, free, release.

Related words

Artha

Ananda

Bandha

Dharma

Jiva

Jivan Mukta

Jnana

Kama

Mukti

Purushartha, the four goals of human life

Samsara

Sanskrit

Mokṣa — मोक्ष

mokṣa - मोक्ष

Mukti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mukti — ... liberation; release.

1. One who is liberated from bondage. (See moksa.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mukti -

setting or becoming free, release, liberation, deliverance from;

final liberation or emancipation, final beatitude (= mokṣa);

abandonment, putting off, giving up;

throwing, casting, hurling, shooting, sending;

discharge (of a debt);

N. of a divine being (the wife of Satya)

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Mukti ... final liberation or emancipation of the soul from worldly existence, final beatitude.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Experiencing the Isavasya Upanishad

You are free to ... opt for Isvara. It takes only a moment for “This” with all its variegation to disappear. Such instant freedom is called saddyo mukti. If you choose the sportive way of a slow climber you can also free your self. It is called krama mukti. In either case ultimately you will come to the end of the game.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: ...The instruction is [in Bhagavad Gita] for the one who sees diversity. In reality there is no bondage nor mukti for himself or for others from the jnani’s standpoint.

D.: Are all in liberation?

M.: Where is all? There is no liberation either. It could be only if there was bondage. There was really no bondage and so, it follows, there is no liberation.

...

M.: Mukti, i.e., liberation, is not to be gained hereafter. It is there for ever, here and now.

D.: I agree, but I do not experience it.

M.: The experience is here and now. One cannot deny one's own self.

D.: That means existence and not happiness.

M.: Existence = happiness = Being. The word mukti (liberation) is so provoking. Why should one seek it? He believes that there is bondage and therefore seeks liberation. But the fact is that there is no bondage but only liberation. Why call it by a name and seek it?

D.: True, but we are ignorant.

M.: Only remove ignorance. That is all there is to be done.

...

Mr Subbaramiah, a college professor from Nellore, asked about mukti.

M.: All questions relating to mukti are inadmissible; because mukti means release from bondage which implies the present existence of bondage. There is no bondage and therefore no mukti either.

D.: The sastras speak of it and its grades.

M.: The sastras are not meant for the wise because they do not need them; the ignorant do not want them. Only the mumukshus look up to the sastras. That means that the sastras are neither for wisdom nor for ignorance.

Sankara tradition

[Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad](#)

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Jnāna or knowledge is alone the cause of Mukti which does not depend upon anything else. The moment we know the real nature of Aum, we become unified with it.

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

mukti —from the verb root muc = “to liberate”.

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Mukti from the root muc, to set loose, free.

Related words

Moksha

Sanskrit

Mukti — मुक्ति

mukti - मुक्ति

Mumukṣutva

Variant spellings

mumukṣutva
mumukṣutva
mumukṣuta
mumukṣatram
mumukṣhutwa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mumukṣutva — ... a burning desire for liberation.

1. It is one of the four qualifications for a spiritual aspirant. (See sādhana-catuṣṭaya.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mumukṣutva -
(Vedāntas) desire of liberation or of final emancipation

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Mumukṣhutwa is the yearning for spiritual freedom. [When the aspirant is equipped with the three abovementioned Sadhanas [see Sadhanacatustaya], he cannot but have a strong desire for liberation. Then alone does he become fit to receive from the spiritual guide the Absolute Knowledge.]

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Mumukṣutva - right desire, which consists of earnestness to know the Ultimate Principle and thereby to attain liberation. This will come when one dedicates his life to this single goal.

...

(in Vedānta) one of the four qualifications listed by Samkara for a student of philosophy, viz. (1) right discrimination (viveka), (2) right dispassion and indifference (vairāgya), (3) right conduct saṁsāmpat), and (4) right desire (mumukṣutva).

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Mumukṣatram or longing for Liberation: This is the intense longing of the student to free himself, through the Knowledge of the true Self, from all bondages pertaining to the body, the mind, and the ego—bondages created by ignorance. It must be understood that longing is totally different from restlessness, which is an inferior state of mind. A restless mind shows lack of self-control and also a lack of firm belief in the existence of Truth. Restlessness creates confusion: the longing for Freedom is the result of all the virtues mentioned above [see Sadhanacatustaya]. It endows the mind with an intense one-pointedness and enables it to pierce through the thick crust of ignorance. Renunciation and the longing for Freedom are the cardinal virtues through which the others bear their fruit. Without these the mere ethical disciplines give only a veneer of spirituality.

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. [Hindu philosophy](#)

Mumukṣutva from mumukṣu [from desiderative of the root muc, to set loose, free] + abstract formative -tva .

Related words

Sadhanacatustaya

Sanskrit

Mumukṣutva — मुमुक्षुत्व

mumukṣutva - मुमुक्षुत्व

Mundaka Upanishad

Title

Mundaka Upaniṣad — मुण्डिकोपनिषद्

muṇḍakopaniṣad - मुण्डकोपनिषद्

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

Mundakopanishad

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad — ... lit. “shaven head Upaniṣad”.

1. Since this Upaniṣad speaks of Brahmagyā or knowledge of the Absolute as the mystery which only those with shaven heads know, thus its name. Or, the instruction given in this Upaniṣad has the sharpness of a razor. It comes from the Atharva Veda. It consists of three parts called mundakas, each subdivided into two sections. The Upaniṣad draws a clear line between the higher knowledge of Brahman and the lower knowledge of the phenomenal world. It describes the phenomenal world as springing from Brahman.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

muṇḍakopaniṣad -

N. of a well-known Upanishad of the Atharva-veda (called also Atharvaṇopaniṣad and said to take its former name from the word muṇḍa, because every one who comprehends its sacred doctrine is ‘shorn’, i.e. liberated from all error, a similar idea being probably involved in the name of the Kshurikopaniṣad or ‘Razor Upanishad’)

Wikipedia

The Mundaka Upanishad ... is one of the earlier, “primary” (mukhya) Upanishads, a genre of Hindu scriptures commented upon by Shankara. It is associated with the Atharvaveda. It figures as number 5 in the Muktika canon of 108 Upanishads.

... It is a Mantra-upanishad, i.e. it has the form of a Mantra. But, as the commentators observe, though it is written in verse, it is not, like other Mantras, to be used for sacrificial purposes. Its only object is to teach the highest knowledge, the knowledge of Brahman, which cannot be obtained either by sacrifices or by worship (Upasana), but by such teaching only as is imparted in the Upanishad. With its beautiful style, lucid metres, serious wording, and lofty feelings each mantra of this Upanishad gives joyous reading. It might have derived its name from the word “Munda” meaning “Shaven Head”. The assumption is that if the principle thought of this Upanishad is understood, the illusions of material world will be cut like hairs in the process of shaving; or because mostly monks are audience for its teachings, and since usually Hindu monks will have a shaven head, this name might have something to do with that background. It is the first text to mention the six disciplines of Vedanga.

It has three chapters and each chapter is divided into sub chapters which are called “Khanda”. In total this Upanishad has 64 Mantras.

Traditional Origin of the Upanishad

As described in the beginning of this upanishad, it is said to be first told by Brahma to his son Atharva and Atharva taught it to Satyavaha and Satyavaha passed it to Angiras who in turn passes the knowledge to Shaunaka, dialogue between the two forms the content of this Upanishad.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

Among the Upanishads, the Mundaka Upanishad is regarded as one the most important. It throws a flood of light on the Jnana Marga (the path of Knowledge) and leads the aspirant to the highest rung in the ladder of Jnana—Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati.

That this Upanishad was meant for the Sannyasin (and hence the significant name Mundaka Upanishad) is itself the highest tribute that can be paid to its sacredness. The truth that this Supreme Knowledge which the Upanishad imparts is to be had through inspirational initiation direct from a Guru who is well versed in the Brahma Vidya and who has at the same time had the Brahma Anubhava, is brought out very clearly in this Upanishad.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Wikipedia

This Upanishad divides all knowledge into two categories. The knowledge that leads to Self Realization is called Para Vidya (Great or Divine Knowledge) and everything else is called Apra Vidya or Knowledge of Material world (wordly knowledge). Shaunaka approaches sage Angiras and asks "Revered Sir, by knowing what everything will be known?" Angiras replies that Two knowledges should be known, one is Para Vidya and other is Apra Vidya. Knowledge of worldly things is Apra Vidya and that by which Eternal Truth or Akshara is obtained is Para Vidya. Though Apra Vidya enables one to earn ones bread and helps one to understand each object of universe separately, it does not show the Ultimate Reality (Akshara) or Root Cause of this universe. While Para vidya doesn't teach objects of this universe but enables one to understand underlying fabric of it. Like by knowing gold all the gold ornaments could be known, by knowing Akshara, its another manifestation, the universe is known. This Upanishad expounds the greatness of Para Vidya.

Another important feature of this upanishad is its lauding of Sarva Karma Sannyasa or Renouncement of All Action. Thus encourages the opinion that monkhood is good way for attaining self realization. verses 1.2.11, 3.2.6 and 3.2.3 aptly support this view. It teaches that one may be good Yogi and could have attained yogic powers, or could have been a person doing charities and public welfare, or a learned intellectual man but by all these, illusion of world would not disappear in that person. To attain ultimate salvation (Moksha), knowledge of supreme reality attained through practice of monk hood is essential. It also teaches that desires cause rebirth in the world and one who renounced all desires (by taking Sannyasa), all desires end in this life itself, thus implying that there is no rebirth to such person (verse 3.2.2).

Another feature of this Upanishad is the Yoga prescribed for attaining Self Realization. This spiritual practice has been described beautifully using a bow-arrow simile.

A seeker of The Truth should take the Mantra Aum or Pranava told in Upanishad's as bow, The seeker's Self purified by Upasana is arrow, Supreme Reality or Brahman is target. By pulling back the senses from their sensual interests, should meditate and become as much concentrated like an arrow in flight, and hit the target Brahman. (refer verse 2.2.4).

Mundaka Upanishad also tells the way in which the self realized souls enter supreme reality or Godhead (Brahman) and their state afterwards. It says they Enter Everything (3.2.5). Just like when pot is broken, the small space inside the pot becomes one with great space outside; cause for the individual identity or separateness would disappear. During Moksha, elements building body and mind go back to their sources and self becomes one with overself just like rivers lose their name and form once they enter ocean (3.2.7 and 3.2.8).

Since the whole teaching is the conversation between Shaunaka and Angiras, the Upanishad ends with saluting Angiras with deep gratitude.

The Mundaka Upanishad is notable as the source of the phrase Satyameva jayate (3.1.6), the national motto of India, appearing in the national emblem having four lions.

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Related words

Atharva Veda
Upanishads

External links

http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/mundak/Mundaka_Upanishad.pdf

Murti

Variant spellings

Murti
mūrti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Mūrti — ... embodiment; figure; image; statue.

1. Any image of the Divine, either in a temple or in a place of worship.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

mūrti -

any solid body or material form, (pl. material elements, solid particles ;... consisting or formed of);

embodiment, manifestation, incarnation, personification;
anything which has definite shape or limits (in phil. as mind and the 4 elements earth, air, fire, water, but not ākāśa, ether ...), a person, form, figure, appearance;
an image, idol, statue;
beauty;
N. of the first astrological house;
of a daughter of Daksha and wife of Dharma;
N. of a Rishi under the 10th Manu;
of a son of Vasishṭha

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Murti ("shape," "form"). The most common name for a sculptural image of a Hindu deity fashioned by human beings, rather than those that are self-manifested (svayambhu images) forms of the deity.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Murti: Concrete form that an abstract something assumes. Used also to mean any worshippingable idol, in this context.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

mūrti — from the verb root mure = "to form, to become solid".

Sanskrit

Mūrti — मूर्ति

mūrti - मूर्ति

Nachiketas

See: Katha Upanishad

Naimittika-karma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Naimittika-karma — occasional duties to be performed on special occasions like the full moon, new moon days, etc.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Naimittika Karma (“occasional [ritual] action”). One of three general types of ritual action, the others being nitya karma and kamya karma. Naimittika karma rites follow a particular cause (naimittika); when particular circumstances arise, one is required to perform the ritual. For example, when a child is born, certain rites must be performed. However, the ritual is not required unless a birth has taken place.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

The performance of one’s duties enjoined by one’s career or vocation. Any action that one is impelled to do by force of circumstance (like saving a man from drowning), called naimittika karma.

Related words

Nitya-karma

Sanskrit

Naimittika-karma — नैमित्तिककर्म

naimittika-karma - नैमित्तिकिकर्म

Nama

Variant spellings

nama

nāma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Nāma — ... name.

1. According to Jainism, it is one of the eight main types of action (karma). In itself, it is of one hundred and three types. They all have to do with personality making. They are subdivided into four groups: collective types (piṇḍa-prakṛti); individual types (praty-eya-prakṛti); self-movable body (trāsadasaka); and immovable body (sthāvaradaśaka).
2. According to Buddhism, one of the names for the four elements (because they are objects of name).
3. According to Advaita Vedānta, every appearance consists of name and form (nāma and rūpa).
4. The Name is a referent to the Divine. God's various names are employed in chanting sacred hymns. Note the Ṛg Veda hymn "The One Being the wise call by many names—ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti."

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

nāma -

(acc. of nāman) by name i.e. named

nāman -

a characteristic mark or sign, form, nature, kind, manner;

name, appellation;

personal name (as opp. to gotre, family name);

merely the name (as opp. to reality...), a noun (as opp. to a verb);

substance, essence;

a good or great name, renown, fame;

water

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Nama: Name. Nama with rupa (form) distinguishes every individual entity in this world.

Descriptions

Name and word

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In all traditions the Resurrection and Revelation of the Word of the Tradition is connected with the time of the vernal equinox. What is this Word? It is not the mere, meaningless, combination of letters and sounds. It does not represent "the letter of the Law". The

Word is the meaning of the Tradition, entering Manifestation. The word “Logos” or Word means “Meaning”. The symbolism of the Word is associated with the symbolism of vision, insight and enlightenment, and their practical consequences in the World.

Since the conception of the Word has lost its meaning, which is Meaning itself, that is, the meaning of the symbolism of the Tradition, dealing with the meaning of life, all human traditions have lost their meaning, and therefore their bearing on practical life in the world — for insight into the meaning of things is the most potent factor for changing life for the better...

The creative Word has sound and meaning, that is, spirit and meaning. In the first Chapter of Genesis we read repeatedly “God said” and “God saw”. The Hindu conception is Sabdartha, which is composed of Sabda, meaning sound, and Artha, implying thought-meaning. The Sabdartha or “Sound-Meaning” manifests as the Nama-rupa or “Name-form”. This applies to the world-of-name-and-form of the intellectual function. The Sabdartha corresponds to the Logos (Word), which has been said to be inseparable thought-word-meaning...

The uttering of the Word at the beginning of the Path, Silence. in Aries, is followed by a steady increase of the power of the Word, till it reaches its full strength in summer. After that its strength begins to decrease, till ultimately it vanishes in Silence. Jupiter, as Ruler of Sagittarius, is the Guru giving the Silence-initiation. It is the Silence of the Speaker of the Word — the Supreme — about Whom or Which nought can be said or should be said. It is the Silence of God- Reality.

The Word is born in the negative silence of a complete absence of insight into the mystery of life, and ultimately passes away in the positive Silence of perfect Self-realization. Both, opposite, forms of “silence” pertain to the same region of the Zodiac, in which both the beginning and the end of the Spiritual Path are conceived.

In the beginning of the Path the Word implies “So be it” in the sense of “fiat”, meaning “be it done”, and at the end of the Path the Silence of the Word directs to the “So be it” in the sense of the return to Being or God- Reality. According to various traditions the sacred Word should be whispered into the ear of a disciple by his Guru. In other words, the Guru conveys “the voice of the silence” rather than instruction. This symbolism has been generally interpreted as implying mere secrecy. In Jewish tradition the utterance of the four-lettered Name of God, YHVH, that is, Jehovah, is prohibited. Its pronunciation has been said to be blasphemy. On the Day of Atonement alone the Name of God was spoken by the High Priest in the Temple. Actually, perfect pronunciation of the Word means representing the Word and being the Word — something which only a perfect Man, a Son of God, could embody. Wrong pronunciation, that is, wrong interpretation, of the Word, would be blasphemy.

The Name which is given in the beginning, representing the moral and thought-aspect of the Word, is ultimately given up. At the beginning of the Spiritual Path names are very important, later they cease to count, and finally they are renounced altogether. Definitions and literal interpretations make place for symbols and these to ever profounder symbols, till ultimately all merge and vanish in Silence...

The words Amen, OM, Allah and YHVH are composed of syllables or letters, symbolizing the states of consciousness, connected with the various Elements and periods of time connected with regions of space. Though the Names or Words are different, the basic tradition dealing with the symbolic meaning of their component parts, is the same, as will be shown later.

The Speaker and the Voice are ever the same, but Word varies in accordance with the characteristics of time and place. From time to time “a new name” arises and “a new song” bursts forth.

Word and Name should not be confused. The Name forms the rational aspect of the Word. The Sound is the spiritual aspect of the Word. The Word itself represents the harmonious combination of “all elements” of the soul — the Elements Earth, Water, Fire and Air, presided over by the Element Ether, which the Word represents par excellence.

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

nāma — from the verb root nam= “to honor”.

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Nāma (etymology uncertain), name; a characteristic mark or sign, as opposed to reality.

Related words

Namarupa

Rupa

Sanskrit

Nāma — नाम

nāma - नाम

Namarupa

Variant spellings

namarupa

nāmarūpa

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Namarupa — ... “name and form”.

1. According to Buddhism, one line of the causal chain of dependent origination. It provides the support for the six fields of contact (ayatana) and in turn is dependent itself on consciousness (vijñāna). “Name” is said to be the three groups (sensation, perception, and predisposition); and “form” is the four elements and forms derived from the four elements.
2. In the Upanisads, the term is used in the sense of determinate forms and names as distinguished from the indeterminate indefinable reality.
3. Advaita Vedānta uses the term to indicate the phenomenally existent (vyavaharika) universe.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

nāmarūpa -

name and form;

individual being

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

In Hinduism

The term *nāmarūpa* is also used in Hindu thought, *nāma* describing the spiritual or essential properties of an object or being, and *rūpa* the physical presence that it manifests. These terms are used similarly to the way that 'essence' and 'accidence' are used in Catholic theology to describe transubstantiation. The distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa* in Hindu thought explains the ability of spiritual powers to manifest through inadequate or inanimate vessels - as observed in possession and oracular phenomena, as well as in the presence of the divine in images that are worshiped through *pūja*.

In Buddhism

This term is used in Buddhism to refer to constituent processes of the human being: *nāma* is typically considered to refer to psychological elements of the human person, while *Rūpa* refers to the physical. The Buddhist *nāma* and *rūpa* are mutually dependent, and not separable; as *nāmarūpa*, they designate an individual being.

In the Pali Canon, the Buddha describes *nāmarūpa* in this manner:

“And what [monks] is name-&-form? Feeling, perception, intention, contact, & attention: This is called name. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements: This is called form. This name & this form are [monks] called name-&-form.”

In keeping with the doctrine of *anātman/anatta*, “the absence of an (enduring, essential) self”, *nāma* and *rūpa* are held to be constantly in a state of flux, with only the continuity of experience (itself a product of dependent origination) providing an experience of any sort of conventional 'self'.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

... there is one thing between the metaphysical and the moral aspect of Advaitism, it is the theory of *Mâyâ*. Every one of these points in the Advaita system requires years to understand and months to tell. Therefore you will excuse me if I only just touch upon them en passant. This theory of *mâyâ* has been the most difficult thing to understand in all ages. Let me tell you in a few words that it is more than a theory, it is the combination of the three ideas *Desa-kâla-nimitta*—Space, time, and causation, which have been further reduced to *nama-rupa*—name and form. Suppose there is a wave in the ocean. The wave is distinct from the ocean only in its form and name, and this form and this name cannot have any separate existence from the wave, they exist only with the wave. The wave may subside, but the same amount of water remains, even if the name and form that were on the wave vanish forever. So this *mâyâ* is what makes the difference between me and you, between all animals and man, between men and gods. In fact it is this *mâyâ* that causes the Atman to be caught, as it were, in so many millions of beings, and these are distinguishable only through name and form. If you let name and form go, all this variety vanishes forever, and you are what you really are. This is *mâyâ*. It is again no theory, but a statement of facts.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

Commentary by Krishnananda:

The nāmā and the rūpa of the Vedānta philosophy, or of the Upaniṣhads, are not the names and the forms with which we are usually familiar in our social life, but they rather correspond to what Aristotle called in his system, form and matter. Form, according to Aristotle, is the formative power of an object, and matter is the shape this power takes by materialisation, concretisation, etc. The subtle body may be regarded as the nāmā, and the physical body the rūpa. It is the nāmā or name in the sense that it indicates a form which is the object corresponding to it, namely the body.

Namarupa and linga sarira

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

Commentary by Krishnananda:

The liṅga-śārīra, the sūkṣhma-śārīra of ours, is our name. That is our real name, and if at all we name ourselves as Gopāla, Goviṇḍa, Kriṣhna, etc., that name which is given to us at the time of nāmākaraṇa, the naming ceremony, should correspond to our character within. The name should not be incongruent with our essential nature. The real name is within us. It is not merely a word that we utter with reference to us. You may call a man, kshīrasāgara-bhatta (ocean of milk), but he may not have even a little buttermilk in his house. What is the use of calling a poor man as Daulat Rām? There are names that we give without any connection with the nature or the status of the person, and the internal structure of the subtle body. The real name, liṅga, indication, mark, is the sūkṣhmaśārīra, and it is the determining factor of the physical form, the body in which we are engaged.

Namarupa and vastu

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

In the jagat, there are two things: nāma-rūpa, names and forms, and vastu, the reality. There is a difference between them; nāmarūpa is nothing but vastu but the vastu is not nāmarūpa. This is the understanding with reference to vastu and the nāma-rūpa. The body is only nāma-rūpa but is mistaken for the vastu, the ātmā. ... In a clay pot, the pot is nāma-rūpa and the clay is vastu. So the clay should be understood where the pot is. We have to do the viveka with reference to the pot and understand the vastu - clay.

See also:

in Karana: [Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Nāmarūpa (compounded of nāma, name +- rupa, form), name and form, meaning the phenomenal world.

[Wikipedia](#)

Namarupa is a compound in Sanskrit and Pali meaning “name (nāma) and form (rūpa)”.

Related words

Nama

Rupa

Vastu

Sanskrit

Nāmarūpa — नामरूप

nāmarūpa - नामरूप

Naraka

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Naraka — ... hell; “pertaining to the human”.

1. There are various hells: put—the childless hell; avīci—hell for those awaiting reincarnation; samhāta—for general evildoers; tāmīśra— where the real gloom of hell begins; rjīśa—where torments attack; kuḍmala—the worst hell for those who will be reincarnated; talātala—the bottomless pit, the eternal hell of indescribable tortures and pain for those who have no hope of reincarnation.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

naraka -

hell, place of torment;

(distinguished from pātāla; personified as a son of Anṛita and Nirṛiti or Nirkrīti Mārkd.; there are many different hells, generally 21;

N. of a demon (son of Viṣṇu and Bhūmi or the Earth, and therefore called Bhauma, haunting Prāg-jyotiśa and slain by Kṛiṣṇa);

of a son of Vipra-citti;

N. of a place of pilgrimage

Descriptions

General

Macdonell. Vedic mythology

Hell. - If in the opinion of the composers of the RV [Rigveda], the virtuous received their reward in the future life, it is natural that they should have believed at least in some kind of abode, if not in future punishment, for the wicked... As far as the AV [Atharvaveda]. and the Katha Upanishad are concerned, the belief in hell is beyond doubt. The AV ... speaks of the house below, the abode of female goblins and sorceresses, called naraka loka, in contrast with svarga loka, the heavenly world, the realm of Yama ... To this hell the murderer is consigned ... It is in the AV several times described as 'lowest darkness' ... as well as 'black darkness'... and 'blind darkness' ... The torments of hell are also once described in the AV ... and with greater detail in the ŚB [Śatapūtha Brāhmaṇa] ... ; for it is not till the period of the Brāhmaṇas that the notion of future punishment appears plainly developed. The same Brāhmaṇa further states that every one is born again after death and is weighed in a balance receiving reward or punishment according as his works are good or bad ... Roth favours the view that the religion of the RV knows nothing of hell, the wicked being supposed to be annihilated by death. Evidence of the belief in some kind of hell is, however, not altogether wanting in the RV. Thus, 'this deep place' is said to have been produced for those who are evil, false, and untrue ... Indra-Soma. are besought to 'dash the evil-doers into the abyss (vavre)¹ into bottomless darkness, so that not even one of them may get out' ... ; and the poet prays that 'she (the demoness) who malignantly wanders about like an owl concealing herself, may fall into the endless abysses' ... , and that the enemy and robber may lie below all the three earths But such references are few and the evidence cannot be said to go beyond showing belief in a hell as an underground darkness. The thoughts of the poets of the RV, intent on the happiness of this earth, appear to have rarely dwelt on the joys of the next life, still less on its possible punishments. The doctrine of the Brāhmaṇas is that after death, all, both good and bad, are born again in the next world and are recompensed according to their deeds ... , but nothing is said as to the eternity of reward or punishment. The notion also occurs there that those who do not rightly understand and practise the rites of sacrifice, depart to the next world before the natural term of their terrestrial life...

The idea of a formal judgment to which all the dead must submit, seems hardly traceable to the Vedic period. One or two passages of the RV in which reference to it has been found, are too indefinite to justify such an interpretation. In the TA [Taittirīya Āraṇyaka] ... it is said that the truthful and untruthful are separated before Yama, but that he acts in the capacity of a judge, is not implied

Related words

Loka

Svarga

Sanskrit

Naraka — नरक

naraka - नरक

Narayana

Variant spellings

Narayana
Narayan
nārāyaṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

nārāyaṇa -

the Purusha-hymn (Rv. x , 90 , said to have been composed by Nārāyana’);

(as synonym of Vishṇu) N. of the 2nd month;

N. of a son of Ajā-mila;

of sev. men, authors and commentators;

relating or belonging to Nārāyana or Kṛishṇa

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Narayana. Epithet of the god Vishnu. The name is traditionally interpreted as meaning “resting on the waters,” based on the claim that the word nara, which usually means “man,” in this case means “waters.” Narayana is the image of Vishnu in the time of cosmic dissolution (pralaya). He is reclining on his serpent couch, Shesha, in the midst of the cosmic sea, with his wife, Lakshmi, seated at his feet, and his vehicle, Garuda, standing by. Vishnu is the sole remaining agent in the cosmos, as its beginning and end. When the time for a new creation arrives, a lotus sprouts forth from Narayana’s navel, which opens to reveal the creator-god Brahma. The cycle of creation begins anew.

Wikipedia

Narayana or Narayan is an important Sanskrit name for Vishnu, and in many contemporary vernaculars a common Indian name. Narayana is also identified as the original man, Purusha. The Puranas present divergent views on Narayana. In the Kurma Purana he is identified with Brahman and Krishna- Vishnu, but in the Brahma Vaivarta Purana Narayana is considered different from Krishna and also considered part of Krishna.

In the Mahabharata Krishna is often referred to as Narayana and Arjuna as Nara. The epic identifies them both in plural ‘Krishnas’, or as part incarnations of the earlier incarnations of Vishnu, recalling their mystical identity as Nara- Narayana. Followers of Lord Swaminarayan believe that Narayan manifested himself as Swaminarayan.

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

Vishnu in the aspect of Narayana is that under which he was first worshipped. Nara is parallel to Adam, and Narayana means something like “the son of man”. Narayana further means the “ayana” that is, abode, or place of motion, of “nara”, the waters. This form of Vishnu is generally represented in its first form, as a baby-boy, lying on a leaf of the sacred banyan tree, floating on the waters. ... “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1; 2).

Wikipedia

Variations

Narayanasamy
Narayanaswamy
Narayan
Narayanan
Narine
Narayanaswami
Narain

Religious uses

Narayana is another name for Vishnu and appears as the 245th name in the Vishnu sahasranama. (See Vaishnava Theology.)

The book, Sri Ramanuja, His Life, Religion, and Philosophy, states that the name “Narayana” means, “He who is the dwelling place, i.e., the source, support and dissolving ground of all Jivas or souls, including inert matter.”

Om Namō NārāyaNāya is one of the most famous mantras chanted by Hindus. This mantra, along with Om Namah Shivāya, and the Gayatri mantra are the most sacred prayers by Hindus.

When doing a puja, people say the 108 names of Narayana.

A verse that confers the Devas’ subordinate status comes from the Vishnu sahasranama, whose concluding verses state: “The Rishis (great sages), ancestors, the Devas, the great elements, in fact, all things moving and unmoving constituting this universe have originated from Narayana.” This verse indicates that the Devas are subordinate to Vishnu, but Vishnu is often named a Deva. (Vasudeva, Narasimhadeva, etc.)

Secular uses

Among the many people with the name Narayan are the novelist R.K. Narayan, the political activist Jayaprakash Narayan, the singer Udit Narayan T.R., and the Fijian stateswoman Irene Jai Narayan T.R.. Prithvi Narayan Shah founded the kingdom of Nepal. There is also song “Narayan” by The Prodigy on their *The Fat of the Land* album, with the lyrical line “Om Namah Narayana”. The song is co-composed and sung by Crispian Mills, singer and frontman of the English psychedelic rock band Kula Shaker. Kula Shaker covers the song in a version named “Song of Love/Narayana” in their *Strangefolk* album.

Narayan Holden, record producer and owner of Playakoda in Sydney, Australia.

In the video game *Grand Theft Auto 2* from the *Grand Theft Auto* series, Narayana is the name of a neighborhood occupied by the Hare Krishna street gang.

In the video game Myst III: Exile, the final age to which the player travels is called Narayan. It consists of an ocean extending to the horizon, beneath a clouded sky in which float trees, suspended by bubbly “pearls” released periodically by the ocean.

The name of the Siamese king Narai (r. 1656- 1688) is a Thai pronunciation of Narayana.

narayan murthy who is supposed to be the pioneers of it revolution in india and chief mentor of infosys

See: Vishnu, Narayana, Krishna

Etymology

General

[Wikipedia](#)

In Sanskrit, another name for water is ‘Naara’. The Supreme Lord Vishnu whose resting place (‘Ayana’) is ‘Naara’ is therefore called Naarayana. “Naara” also means the living entities (Jivas). Therefore, another meaning of Naarayana is ‘resting place for all living entities. The close association of Narayana with water explains the frequent depiction of Narayana in Hindu art as standing or sitting on an ocean. Another important translation of Narayana is “The supreme Man who is the foundation of all men”.

Another interpretation of the word Narayana sees Nara meaning “human” and Ayana as “direction/goal”. Hence Narayana refers to the “direction of a human” (or the one that helps a human to his/her goal, i.e. towards moksha). Nara is related to moksha as both are rooted to the Water element (Ap), one of the Great Elements (Mahābhūta). (See also: Tattva).

According to the Vaishnav Philosophy, the Narayana is the Purnapurushottom Purush lord Keshav. In Gita, lord Krishna admits that he is the Keshav.

Related words

Krishna

Vishnu

Sanskrit

Nārāyaṇa — नारायण

nārāyaṇa - नारायण

Narayana Guru

Name

Narayana Guru

Nārāyaṇa Guru

Sree Nārāyaṇa Guru Swami

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Nārāyana Guru ... was a Hindu saint, sadhu and social reformer of India. The Guru was born into an Ezhava family, in an era when people from backward communities like the Ezhavas faced much social injustices in the caste-ridden Kerala society. Gurudevan, as he was fondly known to his followers, led Reform movement in Kerala, revolted against casteism and worked on propagating new values of freedom in spirituality and of social equality, thereby transforming the Kerala society and as such he is adored as a prophet...

Nārāyana Guru was instrumental in setting the spiritual foundations for social reform in today's Kerala and was one of the most successful social reformers who tackled caste issues in India. He demonstrated a path to social emancipation without invoking the dualism of the oppressed and the oppressor.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Narayana Guru - (1854-1928.) A great seer and revaluator of Vedanta philosophy. He took the initiative in exposing the evils of all forms of apartheid, such as the caste system in India, and eradicating social injustice. His dictum of "One in kind, One in religion, and One in God is Man" revolutionized the sociocultural outlook of his generation.

Biography

Dates

August 20, 1856 – September 20, 1928

Sri Narayana Guru Mission of the UK

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF GURU

1854 Birth, Vayalvarom House, Chempazhanthy, Trivandrum, Kerala, India

1861-71 Basic education under Chempazhanthy Pillai

1872-77 Stayed in Trivandrum - learned Tamil language and literature

1877-79 Higher education under Kummampally Raman Pillai at Varanapally House

1889 Came back to Chempazhanthy

1881 Started a school at Anchuthengu; Nanu became Nanu Asan

1882-84 Got attracted to Spiritualism but relatives persuade him to marry Kaliaamma Started to wander around - visited Maruthuamala and Aruvippuram Death of father - Madanasan

1884-87 Left the home and traveled as a mendicant; spent time in meditation Meeting with Chattabi Swamikal; Yogic practice under Thycadu Ayya Swami

1887 Started to stay at Aruvippuram

1888 Consecration of Sivalinga at Aruvippuram - Great revolution in the life of the Guru

1891 Meeting Kumaru (who later became the greatest Poet Kumaran Asan) at Kayikkara

1893 Conditioning of Aruvippuram Temple affairs
1895 Travel to Bangalore with Kumaran Asan
1898 Formation of Aruvippuram Temple Society: known as Vavoottu Yogam
1899 Installation of Subramanya Idol at Kunnumpara, near Kovalam
1903 Formation of Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (S.N.D.P) in January
1904 Exempted Guru from appearing any Courts First Anniversary of S.N.D.P Yogam with a Women Conference Started a school at Vakkom in February Settled at Sivagiri, Varkala Organized a meeting at Paravoor to discuss about stopping bad customs in society
1905 Started an evening school for Paryas at Vettoor near Varkala
1907 Guru visited Malabar, North Kerala
1908 Reception by Theosophical Society (January) Installation of Sree Jagannatha Temple Idol at Thalassery, North Kerala (February) Founded Sree Khanteswara Temple, Kozhikod
1909 Traveled to Mangalore. Founded Kudroli Gokarna natha Temple at the request of Billava community
1911 Census Report of Travancore declared Guru as National Saint
1912 Stoppage of 'Kettu Kalyanam' (an unnecessary marriage ceremony) Installation of the idol of Goddess Sharada at Sivagiri (April)
1914 Establishment of Adwaita Ashram at Aluva (August) Karaleeya Nair Society gave a reception at Kottayam
1916 Founded Sanskrit School at Aluva (August) Went to Thiruvannamalai and visited Ramana Maharshi (February) Celebrated 60th birthday Went to Madras accepting Justice Sadasiva Iyer's and Justice Krishnan's invitation
1918 Journey to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and visited many places there
1920 Installed a 'Lighted Lamp' as the idol in the Karamukku Temple (May 15)
1921 All Kerala Convention of Brotherhood at Aluva (May 15) Installed a slab as idol at Murikkumpuzha Temple with the words: "Sathyam' (Truth), Dharmam (Ethics), Daya (Compassion), Sneham (love)"
1922 Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore visited Guru at Sivagiri
1924 Unexpected demise of Kumaran Asan in a boat accident (January 16) Guru organized The All Religious Conference at Aluva (February) Vaikom Sathyagraha for the rights of the Backward Classes to enter Temples
1925 Visit of Mahatma Gandhi at Sivagiri to meet Guru (March 12) Bodhananda Swami was declared as Guru's successor (September 27) Diwan Watts visits Guru at Sivagiri Laid foundation stone for Brahma Vidyalaya (A school for teaching all religions)
1926 Second journey to Ceylon Demise of Sathyavrida Swami (September 1)
1927 First statue of Guru was unveiled at Thalassery, North Kerala Installed a 'Mirror' as the idol at Kalavancodem (June 14) Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham was registered (January 9)
1928 Nataraja Guru founded Gurukulam at Ootty Attained Maha Samadhi (departed this world) in September
<http://www.sngm.org/biography.htm>

Place of birth

General

Wikipedia

The village of Chempazhanthy near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India.

Life

General

Wikipedia

Narayana Guru was born on August 20, 1856, in the village of Chempazhanthy near Thiruvananthapuram, the son of Madan Asan, a farmer, and Kutti Amma. The boy was dotingly called Nanu. Madan was also a teacher who was learned in Sanskrit and proficient in Astrology and Ayurveda. He had three sisters. ... Nānu was initiated into the traditional formal education Ezhuthinir-ithal by Chempazhanthy Pillai, a local schoolmaster and a village officer. Besides schooling, young Nānu continued to be educated at home, under the guidance of both his father and uncle Krishnan Vaidyan who was a reputed Ayurvedic physician and a Sanskrit scholar, where he was taught the basics of the Tamil and Sanskrit languages and traditional subjects such as Siddharupam, Bālaprobhodhanam and Amarakosam.

He was sent to a famous scholar, Kummampilli Rāman Pillai Asan at Karunagapally, a village fifty miles away from his home, at the age of 21... Nānu, along with other students, was taught Sanskrit language and poetry, drama and literary criticism, and logical rhetoric. He studied the Vedas and the Upanishads. He also began teaching in a near-by school...

Nānu moved to his hermitage deep inside the hilly forests of Maruthwāmala, where he led an austere life immersed in meditative thought and yoga and subjected himself to extreme sustenance rituals. This phase of solitude lasted for 8 long years. After an unpretentious life of over thirty years abounding in knowledge and harsh experiences, this epoch is considered the culmination of the meditative recluse; the point at which Nārāyana Guru is believed to have attained a state of Enlightenment...

A new phase began in the Guru's life in 1904. He decided to give up his wandering life and settle down in a place to continue his Sadhana (spiritual practice). He chose Sivagiri, twenty miles north of Thiruvananthapuram. Goddess 'Amba' became his deity of worship.

Death

General

Wikipedia

Guru became seriously ill in September 1928. He remained bedridden for some time. ... On 20 September, Guru died.

Teachings

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Nataraja Guru:

We know ... that the Guru Narayana, being an avowed Advaita Vedantin who follows the steps of Sankara and revalues his position in his own way, has the basic doctrine of non-duality preserved intact in his writings. This can be gathered from a general examination of the other compositions of the Guru taken all together.

The task of the student of philosophy of the Guru will be facilitated if he can place his finger correctly and carefully on just those points where the Guru tries to restate the position of Sankara's Advaita. The later modifications given to the Science of the Absolute (brahmavidya) as brought about in the writings of the two other important classical Gurus of South India, Ramanuja and Madhva, should also be kept in mind by the careful student.

In point of method and theory of knowledge the Guru Narayana will be seen to depart slightly from all these Gurus: Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, and although the essential spirit of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita will be seen to be maintained, and the finalised position of the Brahma Sutras generally supported, the Guru will be seen to conform closely to the requirements of a more strictly unitive or dialectical approach.

He is not content to be merely theological like Ramanuja; nor does he make of philosophy as perhaps with Sankara, sometimes, merely academic abstractions in which the living breezes of human values do not play. In these verses 5 to 7, it would be advantageous to note in advance that the method employed here approximates to that of Sankara in the analysis of the states of consciousness in locating the substratum of the Absolute common to waking, dreaming and deep sleep. It is compatible with Sankara's definition of the Absolute as avastha-traya-sakshi (the neutral witness, as it were, of the three states, jagrat or waking, svapna or dreaming, and sushupti, sleeping). This compares with the method of the Mandukya Upanishad which equates absolute consciousness with that of the 'fourth' or turiya state which inclusively transcends all the other three.

Ramanuja's dynamism of existence follows the same dialectical lines but in terms of being and becoming rather than in terms of pure consciousness. Madhva stresses the aspect of a scale of values as between the Absolute and the Relative, understood in the dialectical context. But here the Guru Narayana brings dialectics to bear on common human life...

It would not be wrong to fit the teaching here back upon the general teaching of the Advaita of Sankara and upon the greater background of Vedanta thought in general as implicit in the three 'canonical' writings, namely, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras. Only then one would be but doing justice to the Guru Narayana, who represents the Advaita tradition in a fully revalued and restated form.

Nitya. Narayana Guru

Both in the theory and practice of Narayana Guru's philosophy of life, his emphasis is on the philosophical oneness and unity of all things. It would be natural for him to uphold the monistic philosophy of sankara. But after sankara's presentation of the non-dual school, many refutations of that position came from all quarters of the world. Because of this historical development, Narayana Guru could not simply repeat what sankara said. On the one hand, he was obliged to restate Advaita Vedanta in a new format and, on the other, he had to take full cognizance of the great masters of India who came after sankara and showered criticism on his concept of the non-differentiated Brahman.

Works

General

Wikipedia

Next, he started a Sanskrit school in Varkala. Poor boys and orphans were taken under his care. They were given education regardless of caste distinctions. Temples were built at different places - Thrissur, Kannur, Anchuthengu, Tellicherry, Calicut, Mangalore. A temple was built for Sharada Devi in 1912, at Sivagiri. Worship at such temples helped reduce to a large extent superstitious beliefs and practices.

One of the temples built in Thrissur is the Sri Narayana Temple at Koorkenchery. The temple has a school in its compound named Sri Narayana School. The School encourages students' talents by organizing talent competitions. These competitions, regularly held every year, have been a platform for youngsters to stand up and recognize their talents.

In 1913, he founded the Advaita Ashram at Aluva. This was an important event in his spiritual quest. This Ashram was dedicated to a great principle - Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra (all men are equal in the eyes of God). This became the motto of the new Ashram. When Nārāyana Guru attained the age of sixty, his birth day was observed throughout the west-coast from Mangalore to Sri Lanka. Between 1918 and 1923 he visited Sri Lanka many times. In 1921, a Conference of Universal Brotherhood was held at Aluva. Again in 1924, a conference of all religions was held there. Guru stressed the need for a Brahma Vidyalaya for a comparative study of different religious faiths.

Organizations

General

Wikipedia

In 1913, the Guru founded an Ashram at Aluva. It was called the Advaita Ashram. The Ashram was dedicated to a great principle - Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra (all human beings are equal in the eyes of God). In 1921, a Conference of Universal Brotherhood was held at Aluva. Again in 1924, a conference of all religions was held there. The Guru stressed the need for a Brahma Vidyalayam for the comparative study of various religious faiths.

An institution called Narayana Gurukulam was established in the Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu by Bodhananda Swamikal and later handed over to Nataraja Guru.

Writings

General

Wikipedia

In Malayalam

Swanubavageethi

Atmopadesa Śatakam

Advaita Deepika

Arivu

Daiva Dasakam

Jeevakarunya Panchakam

Anukamba Dasakam

Jathi Nirnayam

Jathi Lakshanam

Chijjada Chinthanam

Daiva vichinthanam - 1 & 2

Athma Vilasam

Shiva Shathakam

Kolatheereshastavam

Bhadraaalyashtakam

In Sanskrit

Darsana Mala

Brahmavidya Panchakam
Nirvruthi Panchakam
Slokathrayi
Vedantha Suthram
Homa Manthram
Municharya Panchakam
Asramam
Dharmam
Charama Slokangal
Homa Mantram
Chidambarashtakam
Guhashtakam
Bhadrakaliashtakam
Vinayaka Ashtakam
Sree Vasudeva Ashtakam
Genani Navaratna Manjari “
In Tamil
Thevarappathinkangal
Translations
Thirukural
Isavasyo Upanishad
Ozhivil Odukkam

SNDP

1925

Homa Mantra in Sanskrit

1918

Sri Narayana Smriti (A work on religious or social conduct) in Malayalam

1916

Darsana Mala (Garland of Visions) in Sanskrit

(This link will open a new window.)

Municharya Panchakam (Five verses on the way of the Renounced Recluse) in Sanskrit

1915

Nirvriti Panchakam (Five verses on Inward Release) in Malayalam

1914

Daiva Desakam (Ten verses on God) in Malayalam

Jati Mimamsa (A critique of Caste) First verse in Sanskrit remaining in Malayalam

Anukampa Desakam (Ten verses on Mercy) in Malayalam

Jiva Karunya Panchakam (Five verses on Kindness to life) in Malayalam

1909

Janani Nava Ratna Manjari (A cluster of nine verses on Mother) in Malayalam

1897

Atmopadesa Satakam (Life and Teachings of NG on Self Instruction) in Malayalam

1888-1897

Chinta Jadangal (Ten verses on Thought and Intertia) in Malayalam

Kundalini Pattu (Seventeen verses with a refrain of the Kundalini snake) in Malayalam

Pinda Nandi (Nine verses on Prenatal gratitude) in Malayalam

Sadasiva Darsanam (Vision of the Eternal Siva) in Malayalam

Devi Stavam (Nine verses on the Goddess) in two parts one in Sanskrit another in Malayalam

Subrahmanya Stotram (Fifteen verses on Subrahmanya) in Malayalam

Indriya Vairagyam (Fifteen verses on Detachment) in Malayalam

Saravana Bhava Stuti (Ten verses on Subrahmanya) in Malayalam

Shanmukha Stavam (Nineteen verses on the Six Faced god Subrahmanya) in Malayalam

Kali Natakam (A long poem on the Dance of Kali) in Malayalam

Bahuleya Ashtakam (Eight verses on Bahuleya) in Malayalam

Chitambara Ashtakam (Eight verses on the Mental sky, Siva) in Malayalam

Siva Prasada Panchakam (Five verses on the Grace of Siva) in Malayalam

Ottapadyangal (A sequence of fifteen verses) in Malayalam

Arivu (Fifteen verses on Knowledge) in Malayalam

Brahma Vidya Panchakam (Five verses on the Science of the Absolute) in Sanskrit

Isa Vashya upanishad (Translation of the Isa- vasya) in Malayalam

Advaita Deepika (The bright lamp of non- dual wisdom) in Malayalam.

Swanubhava Giti (Song of self-realization) in Malayalam

Ardha Nari-Isvara Stotram (Five verses on the androgynous Siva) in Malayalam

Tiru Kural (Translation of Tiru Kural) in Malayalam

Ozhivil Odukkam (Translation from Tamil) in Malayalam

1887

Siva Ashtakam (Eight verses on Shiva) in Malayalam

Thevarappathinkangal (Five hymn sequences about God) in Tamil

Subrahmanya Ashtakam (Eight verses to Subrahmanya) in Malayalam.

Saravana Bhava Stotram (Hymn to the lake born god Subrahmanya) in Malayalam

1884

Vinayaka Ashtakam (Hymns in Praise of Vinayaka, the Elephant God) in Sanskrit

Guha Ashtakam (Eight verses on Guha or Subrahmanyan) in Sanskrit

Sree Vasudeva Ashtakam (Eight verses on Shree Vasudeva) in Sanskrit

Bhadralaki Ashtakam (Eight verses on Bhadrakali) in Sanskrit

Navamanjari (A cluster of nine verses) in two series, one in Malayalam and another in Sanskrit

Vairagya Desakam (Ten verses on Detachment) in Malayalam
1881

Chijjda Chintanam (Reflections of the mind and Inertia) in Malayalam

Daiva Chintanam (Reflections of the divine) in Malayalam

<http://www.sndp.org>

Sree Narayana Association of North America Inc

Books By Narayana Guru

- * Ashramam, Five verses in Sanskrit on the rules of the of the 'Sree Narayana Dharmasangham' written in Sanskrit in 1928.
- * Advaita Deepika (The bright lamp of non- dual wisdom) in Malayalam. Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Admavilasam, an essay on God.
- * Anukampa Desakam (Ten verses on Mercy) in Malayalam Written in 1914.
- * Ardha Nari-Iswara Stotram (Five verses on the androgynous Shiva) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897. Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Arivu (Fifteen verses on Knowledge) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Atmopadesa Satakam (Life and Teachings of NG on Self Instruction) in Malayalam Written in 1897.
- * Janani Nava Ratna Manjari, in Malayalam written in 18 ... in praise of the Supreme Mother.
- * Bahuleya Ashtakam (Eight verses on Bahuleya) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Bhadrakali Ashtakam (Eight verses on Bhadrakali) in Sanskrit Written in 1884.
- * Bhariya Dharmam, Ten verses on the qualities of a housewife, translated from Tamil.
- * Brahma Vidya Panchakam (Five verses on the Science of the Absolute) in Sanskrit Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Chinta Jadangal (Ten verses on Thought and Inertia) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Chijjada Chinthakam, an essay.
- * Chijjda Chintanam (Reflections of the mind and Inertia) in Malayalam Written in 1881.
- * Chit Ambara Ashtakam (Eight verses on the Mental sky, Shiva) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Darsana Mala (Garland of Visions) in Sanskrit Written in 1916.
- * Daiva Chintanam part 1, (Essay on reflections of the divine) in Malayalam Written in 1881.
- * Daiwa Chintanam part 2, (a verse and an essay on reflections of the divine) in Malayalam Written in 1881
- * Daiwa Desakam (Ten verses on God) in Malayalam, Written in 1914.
- * Dharmam, One verse written in Sanskrit.
- * Charamaslokam, two verses in Sanskrit, written at the passing of Chattampi Swamykal.
- * Bhadrakali Ashtakam, Eight verses and Bhalashruthi on the Goddess Bhadrakali in Sanskrit Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Brahmavidyapanchakam, Five verses in Sanskrit on the science of the Absolute written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Devi Prenamadevyaastakam (©al£±dXjh©al¬inéJ«), Eight verses in Sanskrit in praise of Devi. (The author ship of this Is not full confirmed.)
- * Devi Stavam, Nine verses on the Goddess Supreme in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Gadya Prardhana, A prayer in prose.
- * Guha Ashtakam (Eight verses on Guha or Subrahmanyam) in Sanskrit Written in 1884.
- * Homa Mantram in Sanskrit Written in 1925.

- * Indriya Vairagyam (Fifteen verses on Detachment) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Isa Vashya Upanishad (Translation of the Isa- vashya) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Janani Nava Ratna Manjari (A cluster of nine verses on Mother) in Malayalam Written in 1909.
- * Jati Lekshanam, Ten verses in Malayalam on the signs of Jati (kind) of living things written in Malayalam.
- * Jati Mimamsa (Jati Nirnayam), A critique of Caste, First verse in Sanskrit remaining in Malayalam Written in 1914.
- * Jeeva Karunya Panchakam (Five verses on Kindness to life) in Malayalam Written in 1914.
- * Kali Natakam (A long poem on the Dance of Kali) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Kolatheerashwastavam, Ten verses on Shiva (Kolathukara Temple) in Malayalam.
- * Kundalini Pattu (Seventeen verses with a refrain of the Kundalini snake) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Mananateetam (Vairagya Desakam), Ten verses on Detachment in Malayalam Written in 1884.
- * Mannanthala Devi Stavam, Nine verses on the Goddess of Mannanthala, in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Municharya Panchakam (Five verses on the way of the Renounced Recluse) in Sanskrit Written in 1916.
- * Navamanjari (A cluster of nine verses) in two series, one in Malayalam and another in Sanskrit.
- * Nirvriti Panchakam (Five verses on Inward Release) in Malayalam Sanskrit Written in 1915.
- * Ottapadyangal (A sequence of fifteen verses) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Ozhivil Odukkam, Translated form Tamil to Malayalam. Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Oru Samasyapooranam, one verses written in Malayalam in 1897.
- * Oru Tamil Sloam, one verse in Tamil. * Oru Mangalashamsa, One verses written in Malayalam written on the occasion of the publication of a magazine in memory of Kumaranashan in 1925.
- * Pinda Nandi (Nine verses on Prenatal gratitude) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Sadacharam, Seven verses on good conduct in Malayalam.
- * Sadashiva darshanam (Vision of the Eternal Shiva) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Shanmukha Dashakam, Ten verses on Subrahmanyam in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Shanmathurastavam, Hymn to the lake born god Subrahmanyam in Sanskrit Written in 1887.
- * Sanyasimahima (Nittarperumai), Ten verses translated from Tamil.
- * Saravana Bhava Stuti (Ten verses on Subrahmanyam) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Shanmukha Stotram, Nineteen verses on the Six Faced god Subrahmanyam in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Subramanya Keerthanam, Fifteen verses of praise to Lord Subrahmanyam in Malayalam Written in 1887.
- * Shiva Ashtakam (Eight verses on Shiva) in Malayalam Written in 1887.
- * Shivashatakam, Life and Teachings of NG on Shiva in Malayalam.
- * Shiva Prasada Panchakam (Five verses on the Grace of Shiva) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Shivastavam (Prepanchsrusti), Ten verses on Shiva in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Sloktreyi, Three verses in Sanskrit.
- * Shree Krishnadarshanam. (A single verse in praise of Shree Krishna written in Sanskrit) year not known.
- * Subrahmanyam Ashtakam (Eight verses to Subrahmanyam) in Malayalam. Written in 1887.
- * Subrahmanyam Stotram (Fifteen verses on Subrahmanyam) in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Subrahmanyam Stuthi, sixty one verses in praise of Lord Subrahmanyam written in Malayalam. (The author ship of this is not full confirmed.)

- * Sree Narayana Smriti (A work on religious or social conduct) in Malayalam Written in 1918.
- * Sree Vasudeva Ashtakam (Eight verses on Shree Vasudeva) in Sanskrit Written in 1884.
- * Swanubhava Giti (Vibhoothi darshanam) Song of self- realization in Malayalam Written between 1888 and 1897.
- * Thevarappathikangal (Five Hymn about God in Tamil) written in 1887.
- * Tirukkural (Translation of Tirukkural) in Malayalam.
- * Vanchirappu (Varshavarnanam), Ten verses on rain translated from Tamil.
- * Vinayaka Ashtakam (Hymns in Praise of Vinayaka, the Elephant God) in Sanskrit Written in 1884.
- * Vinayaka Stavam, Hymn in praise of Vinayakan, the elephant headed god in Sanskrit written in 1884.
- * Vishnuawstakam, Hymns in Praise of Vishnu, in Sanskrit.
- * Vedanta Storm, in Sanskrit.

<http://www.snaofna.org/>

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Narayana Guru

All the works of Narayana Guru are not readily available to us. Of the sixty works that have been recorded and published, those which are most relevant to a basic understanding of the Guru's philosophy are Atmopadesha satakam (One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction), Advaita D^pika (Lamp of Non-Duality), Brahmavidya Pancakam (The Science of the Absolute), Darshana Mala (Garland of Visions), Svanubhava^ti satakam (Experiential Aesthetics and Imperiential Transcendence), Citjada Cintanam, (Spirit-Matter Consideration) and Arivu (Critique of Knowledge).

Temples consecrated by Narayana Guru

General

Wikipedia

Narayana Guru built Temples at different places - Trichur, Kannur, Anjuthengu, Tellicherry, Calicut, Mangalore.

On June 14, 1927 Sree Narayana Guru consecrated a mirror - with the message "Om shanti" written on the surface - in a temple in Kalavankode. The prathishta of the mirror is symbolic in that Advaita Vedanta interpret the mirror as the visible symbol of the unity of the Finite and the Infinite. That was the last prathishta that the Guru would do. Schools rather than temples are to be preferred, he exhorted in a dramatic shift of focus.

Some of the temple built by guru are:

1888. Shiva temple established at Aruvippuram, Thiruvananthapuram

1889. Devi Temple dedicated at Mannanthala, Thiruvananthapuram

1892. Temple established at AayiramThengu, Alappad, Kollam

1893. Established Sree Kulathoor Kolathukara Shiva Temple, Thiruvananthapuram

1893. Dedicated Sree Subrahmanya Temple(Sree Dharmashastha Temple), Earathu near Kayikkara Thiruvananthapuram

1895. Bhagavathi temple dedicated at Karunagappalli (near Kunnazathu), kollam

1898. Subrhamaniya temple dedicated at Vazhamuttam, Kunnumpara, Thiruvananthapuram

1904. Subrhamaniya temple dedicated at Thammandi, Kumaramangalam, Erunakulam

1907 The Sree Bhakthi Samvardhini Yogam, Kannur was constituted with the blessings of Sree Narayana Guru

1907 December/1908 January . Guru laid foundation for Sreekandeswaram temple at Kozhikkode

1908 February. Jaganatha Temple at Thalasserry, kannur dedicated.
1909. Foundation stone laid for temple at Mangalapuram
1912 Kudroli Sri Gokarnatheshwara temple, In mangalore, Karnataka
1912 Sreekandeswaram temple established at Kozhikkode
1914. August, Advaita Ashramam at Aluva started.
1914 consecrated idol of Lord Shiva at Palluruthy Sree Bhavaneeswara Temple
1914 Ernakulam(Poonurunni-Vytila Road) Sree Narayaneswaram Temple. The temple was raised at the instance of Sree Narayana Guru.
1915. Dedicated Jnanaswara temple at Anchuthengu
1916. Sree Maheshwara Temple at Koorkkancheri, Trichur dedicated.
1916. Dedicated Sundareswara Temple Kannur.
1918. Sree Somasekhara temple at Peringottukara, Trichur.
1920 Dedicated the temple at Karamukku, Trichur.
1921. Dedicated the Sree Kalakandeshwaram Temple, Murukumpuza, Thiruvananthapuram
1927. June 14, Temple dedicated at Kalavamkodam(Cherthala Thaluk of Alleppey District) with a mirror inscribed with AUM
Some of the other temples built by Sree Narayana Guru are
Puthiya Kavu Subrahmanya Temple, Vaikom , Thiruvananthapuram
Vaikom Subrahmanya Temple (Velayudhan Nada), Vaikom , Thiruvananthapuram
Vaikom Deveshwara Temple, (Vaikom Puthan Nada), Vaikom , Thiruvananthapuram
Mannanthala Anandavalleshwaram Temple, Mannanthala, Thiruvananthapuram
Sreekapaleshwara Temple, Anjuthengu, Thiruvananthapuram
Poothotta Sree Narayana Vallabha Temple, Kanayanoor, Erunakulam
Vealikkattu Sree Narayanamangalam Kartikeya Temple, Kollam
Kunninezath Sree Narayana Bhoovaneshwari Temple, Kozhikod, Karunagappalli, Kollam
Sree Narayanamangalam Temple, Moothakunnam, North Paroor, Erunakulam
Sree Kumaramangalam Subrahmanya Temple, Kumarakam, Kottayam
Vezhapra Shaktiparambu Temple, Ramankari, Alappuzha
Sree Ardhanareeshwara Temple, Kumbalangi, Kochi
Sree Pillayar Kovil(Temple), Kottar, Nagarkoil, Tamil Nadu
Sree Gowreeshwara Temple, Cherai, Erunakulam
Sree Sharada Temple, Sivagiri, Varkala, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Anandabhuteshwaram Temple, Mezhuveli, Kozhanchery, Pathanamthitta
Sree Pottayil Devi Temple, Nadama , Thrupunithura, Erunakulam
Sree Njaneshwara Temple, Puthan Nada, Chirayinkeezhu, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Mahadevar Temple, Nagambadam, Kottayam
Sree Ardha Nareeshwara Temple, Ootuparambu, Kadakkavoor, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Maheshwara Temple, Sreenarayanapuram, Koorkenchery, Thrissur
Sree Somasekharam Temple, Tannyam, Peringottukara, Thrissur

Sree Subrahmanya Temple, Nellikkunnu, Kasaragod
Palakkunnu Sree Bhagavati Temple, Uduma, Kasaragod
Sree Narayaneshwaram Subrahmanya Temple, Vaikom, Kottayam
Sree Bhadrachala Subrahmanya Temple, Valappad, Thrissur
Sree Chidambara Temple, Kandassamkadavu, Thrissur
Sree Kandeshwaram Sree Mahadeva Temple, Cherthala, Alappuzha
Sree Kumarapuram Temple, Mangad, Kollam
Manakkal Temple, Chempazanthi, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Balasubrahmanya Temple, Bharananganam, Meenachil, Kottayam
Aakalpantha Prashobhini Sree Subrahmanya Temple, Poonjar Thekkekara, Meenachil, Kottayam
Sree Brahmapuram (Mathaanam) Temple, Vadayar, ThalayolaParambu, Kottayam
Chernnamangalam Siva Temple, Koduvazhannoor, Pulimath Vazhi, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Shakteeshwaram Temple, Vayalar, Alappuzha
Ullala Omkareshwara Temple, Thalayazham, Vaikom, Kottayam
Sree Nayinaar Deva Temple, Arumanoor, Neyyattinkara, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Vishwanatha Temple, Manathala, Gurupadapuri, Chavakad, Thrissur
Vallabhasseril Siva Temple, Alamthuruthi, Thiruvalla, Pathanamthitta
Sree Sankara Narayana Temple, Koovappadi, Cheranellur, Erunakulam
Katiravan Kunnu Sree Balasubrahmanya Swamy Temple, Puthoor, Kollam
Sree Narayana Maheshwara Temple, Pullazhi, Thrissur
Myladum Kunnu Bhajana Madom Subrahmanya Temple, Anappad, Thiruvananthapuram
Kumarapuram Sree Subrahmanya Temple, Maannanam, Kottayam
Sree Ghuhanandapuram Temple, Thekkumbhagam, Chavara, Kollam
Kuppana Sree Velayudhamangala Temple, Kollam
Sree Swamy Madom Temple, Anjuthengu, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Amruthamkulangara Temple, Kollam
Bhuvaneshwari Temple, Thachankonam, Varkala, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Chidambaranatha Temple, Oottara, Kanjiramkulam, Thiruvananthapuram
Sree Kalikulangara Temple, Nandyattukunnam, Paravoor, Erunakulam
Sanmargasandayini Sree Anandasayaneshwaram Temple, Kayippuram, Muhamma, Alappuzha
Sree Shaktidhara Temple, Njarakkal, Vaipin, Erunakulam
Sree Narayana Temple, Puliyanur, Meenachil, Kottayam
Sree Narayanapuram Temple, Aashraamam, Kollam
Plavazhikam Devi Temple, Nedunganda, Varkala, Thiruvananthapuram
Shivadarshana Devaswom Temple, Pampadi, Kottayam
Elankavu Sree Bhagavati Temple, Mullakkal, Alappuzha
Sree Ganeshamangalam Temple, Vadanappilli, Thrissur
Sree Suryanarayanapuram Temple, Pampadi, Kottayam

Sree Balasubrahmanya Temple, Kurichikara, Thrissur
Dharmagiri Sree Subrahmanya Swamy Temple, Thruthala, Palakkad
Erected Madam(Guruswamy Mutt) at Kudakkalam, near Thalassery, Kannur
Sri Narayana Velayudhan Kovil, Pilackool, Thalassery, Kannur District

Related words

Advaita Vedanta

Nataraja

Variant spellings

Nataraja

Naṭarāja

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Naṭarāja — ... “king of dance”; Lord of dance; name of Śiva.

1. An epithet of Śiva, referred to as the dancing Śiva. The object of His dance is to free all souls from the fetters of illusion. The whole cosmic play, or līla, is the dance of Śiva. All movements within the cosmos are His dance. He sets into motion the creation of the world, and when the time comes, also destroys all names and forms through His dancing.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Nataraja, or Lord of the Dance (nata, dance; raja, king or lord), is one of the most popular iconic forms of SHIVA (the most common is the LINGAM). In his cosmic dance he creates, sustains, and eventually destroys the universe. When Shiva’s dance is seen as symbolizing only the end of time, it is called the Tandava dance.

Nataraja is depicted in a pose from the BHARATA NATYAM dance, with his left leg raised and his right leg resting on a dwarflike being representing ignorance and delusion, sometimes called Apasmara (forgetfulness [of the truth of the divine]). He has four arms. In his upper right hand he holds the “shake-drum” (damaru) that can be sounded with one hand, a tethered ball striking either end of a small two-sided drum. His lower right hand is formed into the ABHAYA MUDRA, a gesture that removes fear. His upper left hand holds the flame that symbolizes the end of creation. His lower left hand points toward his upraised left foot. Around his head and in the circular frame to which he is attached is a halo of flames that show his divine energy.

Among Shiva’s many celebrated dances: he danced in the sky with VISHNU; once he danced in the cremation ground to please KALI, his female counterpart; once he danced as a beggar for PARVATI’S hand; once he danced a mad, erotic dance in the deodar forest for the wives of the RISHIS there; and he danced after the destruction of DAKSHA’S sacrifice. The great shrine at CHIDAMBARAMI in South India is perhaps the most famous one depicting Shiva’s Nataraja form. There is also an awe-inspiring 20-foot-high Nataraja in black stone in the Meenakshi Temple at Madurai.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Nataraja. Form of the god Shiva as the “Lord of the Dance.” The most famous Nataraja image is in the temple-town of Chidambaram in the state of Tamil Nadu. The temple was erected during the reign of Vira Raja (927–997 C.E.), with Nataraja as its primary deity. However, the image of Nataraja is well known, particularly from the southern Indian bronzes of the Chola dynasty (9th–13th c).

As a divinity, one of Shiva’s most important characteristics is that he transcends all duality; the Nataraja image symbolizes this concept. Shiva dances within a circle of fire, symbolizing birth and death, but remains untouched by these forces. As Shiva dances, his matted locks swing wildly, showing the force of his activity, yet his face stays impassive and unmoved. One of his four hands holds the drum that beats the rhythm of creation, while a second hand holds the fire of destruction. His third hand is held palm upward in a gesture meaning “fear not.” The fourth points to his upraised foot, the symbol of refuge and divine mercy for the devotee (bhakta). His other foot crushes a demon, displaying his power to destroy the wicked. The image is a well-developed theological statement, able to be “read” by those who can interpret it.

In Nataraja’s charter myth, Shiva and Kali, the goddess, decide to settle their competition with a dance contest. Shiva finally bests Kali by manifesting as Nataraja and doing an athletic (tandava) dance style that Kali’s feminine modesty prevents her from copying. Mythic roots aside, the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram has been an important center for classical Indian dance for well over a thousand years. The temple’s eastern wall bears relief carvings of the 108 basic dance positions (karanas). These positions are central to classical Indian dance, particularly in the Bharatanatyam school, which is the major dance tradition in Tamil Nadu.

Wikipedia

The sculpture is usually made in bronze, with Shiva dancing in an aureole of flames, lifting his left leg (or in rare cases, the right leg) and balancing over a demon or dwarf (Apasmara) who symbolizes ignorance. It is a well known sculptural symbol in India and popularly used as a symbol of Indian culture.

The two most common forms of Shiva’s dance are the Lasya (the gentle form of dance), associated with the creation of the world, and the Tandava (the violent and dangerous dance), associated with the destruction of weary worldviews - weary perspectives & lifestyles. In essence, the Lasya and the Tandava are just two aspects of Shiva’s nature; for he destroys in order to create, tearing down to build again.

Characteristics

A cobra uncoils from his lower right forearm, and the crescent moon and a skull are on his crest. He dances within an arch of flames. This dance is called the Dance of Bliss, *aananda taandavam*.

The upper right hand holds a small drum shaped like an hourglass that is called a *ḍamaru* in Sanskrit.[4][5][6] A specific hand gesture (mudra) called *ḍamaru-hasta* (Sanskrit for “ḍamaru-hand”) is used to hold the drum.[7] It symbolizes sound originating creation or the beat of the drum is the passage of time.

The upper left hand contains Agni or fire, which signifies destruction. The opposing concepts in the upper hands show the counterpoise of creation and destruction or the fire of life.

The second right hand shows the *Abhaya mudra* (meaning fearlessness in Sanskrit), bestowing protection from both evil and ignorance to those who follow the righteousness of dharma.

The second left hand points towards the raised foot which signifies upliftment and liberation. It also points to the left foot with the sign of the elephant which leads the way through the jungle of ignorance.

The dwarf on which Nataraja dances is the demon Apasmara (Muyalaka. as known in Tamil), which symbolises Shiva's victory over ignorance. It also represents the passage of spirit from the divine into material.

As the Lord of Dance, Nataraja, Shiva performs the tandava, the dance in which the universe is created, maintained, and dissolved. Shiva's long, matted tresses, usually piled up in a knot, loosen during the dance and crash into the heavenly bodies, knocking them off course or destroying them utterly.

The surrounding flames represent the manifest Universe.

The snake swirling around his waist is kundalini, the Shakti or divine force thought to reside within everything. This also parallels the cords of life worn by the Brahmins to represent the second rebirth.

The stoic face of Shiva represents his neutrality, thus being in balance.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Naṭarāja - from nata - "dancer" + rāja = King".

Wikipedia

Nāṭaraja is derived from the Sanskrit words narta rājan "lord of dance". The change of the dental /rt/ to a retroflex /ṛ/ with concomitant vowel lengthening is a normal sound change for the Prakrit languages descended from Sanskrit.

Related words

Siva

Sanskrit

Naṭarāja — नटराज

naṭarāja - नटराज

Neti-Neti

Definitions

General

Wikipedia

In Hinduism, and in particular Jnana Yoga and Advaita Vedanta, neti neti may be a chant or mantra, meaning "not this, not this", or "neither this, nor that" (neti is sandhi from na iti "not so"). Neti neti is a saying found in the Upanishads and especially attributed to the Avadhuta Gīta.

Neti neti is also an analytical process of conceptualizing something by clearly defining what it is not. One of the key elements of Jnana Yoga is often a “neti neti search.”

Adi Shankara was one of the foremost Advaita philosophers who advocated the neti-neti approach.

Neti-neti is held as the approach to understand the concept of Brahman without using affirmative (and thereby inadequate) definitions or descriptions of Brahman, comparable to apophatic theology in Eastern Christianity.

The purpose of the exercise is to negate conscious rationalizations, and other distractions from the purpose of a meditation. It is also a sage view on the nature of the Divine, and especially on the attempts to capture and describe the essence of God. In this respect, the phrase succinctly expresses the standpoint of negative theology.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Two methods have been adopted by the rishis of the Upanishads to arrive at what is not known. They share the assumption that there cannot be many truths. Truth should be one, without a second. It cannot be one thing now and later something else. It cannot have a beginning and an end. Furthermore, there cannot be anything or anyone outside truth to be a witness; that imparts duality...

The first of the two methods of the rishis is to affirm everything. They go on repeating asti, asti, ‘and this, and this’. They say, “What I see is also truth; what I hear is also truth; what I touch is also truth; what I think is also truth; what I imagine is also truth; what cannot be imagined is also truth.” Anything which comes within the frame of awareness is affirmed as also being true. They know that each time they affirm something they are affirming only a part, which they presume belongs to a whole. This is in anticipation of someday arriving at a notion of the whole.

Even before that they axiomatically believe that there is a whole. From where did that arise? Who revealed it to them? How is the truth of axioms revealed to begin with? We do not know, and yet we experience it. This is called vibhadrangavada, the argument of affirmation. The basis of the argument of affirmation is the revelation which comes in the form of an axiom that does not need to be proved.

The other method is to go on denying everything, neti, neti, ‘not this, not this’. “Am I this body? neti. The senses? neti. The mind? neti. Anything visible? neti. Anything inferential? neti. Anything not visible? neti. Anything not inferential? neti.” In the fourth quarter of the Mandukya Upanishad, there is a whole set of such denials. After denying everything, you come to a certain mystical silence in which you cannot further deny anything and yet you know that you cannot deny the existence of that state. You are enveloped and engulfed by an undeniable experience.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Yajnavalkya uses the method of negation, while in the Chandogya Upanishad, Aruni uses the method of affirmation. With either method you arrive at the same truth.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

One ultimately discovers God by trying to know who this 'I' is. Is this 'I' the flesh, the bones, the blood, or the marrow? Is it the mind or the buddhi? Analysing thus, you realize at last that you are none of these. This is called the process of 'Neti, neti', 'Not this, not this'. One can neither comprehend nor touch the Atman. It is without qualities or attributes.

...

As long as one has not realized God, one should renounce the world, following the process of 'Neti, neti.' But he who has attained God knows that it is God who has become all this. Then he sees that God, maya, living beings, and the universe form one whole.

...

Jnana is the realization of Self through the process of 'Neti, neti', 'Not this, not this'. One goes into samadhi through this process of elimination and realizes the Atman.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: When Sita was asked who was her husband among the rishis (Rama himself being present there as a rishi) in the forest by the wives of the rishis, she denied each one as he was pointed out to her, but simply hung down her head when Rama was pointed out. Her silence was eloquent.

Similarly, the Vedas also are eloquent in 'neti' - 'neti' (not this - not this) and then remain silent. Their silence is the Real State.

This is the meaning of exposition by silence. When the source of the 'Ithought' is reached it vanishes and what remains over is the Self.

...

Mrs. Dodwell raised a second question, asking what is meant by neti-neti.

M.: There is now wrong identification of the Self with the body, senses, etc. You proceed to discard these, and this is neti. This can be done only by holding to the one which cannot be discarded. That is iti alone.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

neti-neti - from na = "not" + iti = "thus".

Sanskrit

Neti-neti — नेति नेति

neti-neti - नेति नेति

Nididhyasana

Variant spellings

nididhyasana
nididhyāsana

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Nididhyāsana — meditation; contemplation; profound and continuous meditation.

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, it removes the contrary wise tendencies of the mind. It is one of the principle aids to liberation.
2. It is a continuous, unbroken stream of ideas of the same kind as those of the Absolute (Brahman).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

nididhyāsana -
profound and repeated meditation

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Nididhyasana: The last stage of gaining wisdom. Sravana (hearing the word of instruction from the guru) and manana (intense cogitation on what is heard from the guru) are the two preceding stages.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

nididhyasana: the last of the three stages of vedantic realization; uninterrupted contemplation.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Nididhyāsana. Manana secures intellectual conviction. But there may still be obstacles in the way of self-realization. For despite such conviction, there may be now and again an unconscious reassertion of old habits of thought (viparītabhāvanā) incompatible with what has since been learnt. Nididhyāsana is meant to overcome this kind of obstacle. It is meditation upon the identity between the individual self and Brahman—the central point of Vedāntic teaching. It should be continued till the desired intuitive knowledge arises and that identity becomes immediate (aparokṣa). When it does, one becomes a jīvan-mukta. The ultimate philosophic fact is no doubt to be known through the testimony of the Upaniṣads; but if the knowledge conveyed by it is to bring real freedom, one should verify it by one's own living experience in the form 'I am Brahman' or Aham Brahma asmi. It is this immediate

experience or direct intuition of the Absolute, which is described as vidvadanu- bhava to distinguish it from lay experience, that accordingly becomes the final criterion of Truth here.

Sankara tradition

Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad

Commentary by Gambhirananda:

...nididhyasana ... is roughly translated as meditation. Some Vedāntists, too, would think of nididhyasana as meditation in the ordinary sense of the term. But Sureśvara in his Vārttika is at pains to show that this can never be so. In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka (II.4.5), Yājñavalkya says to Maitreyī, his wife: 'The Self is to be seen, to be heard of, to be thought of, and to be made an object of nididhyāsana. Everything is known when the Self is seen through hearing, thinking and realisation (vijñāna).' Commenting on this, Sureśvara says that the use of the word vijñāna in the second sentence, in place of nididhyāsana in the first, shows that nididhyāsana is not ordinary meditation, but a meditation of a higher order in which there is no sense of exertion of will, no conscious employment of the thinking process, and no intellection whatsoever. It is the constant presence of a conviction of the form 'I am Brahman', and yet falls just short of aparokṣānubhūti or the direct realisation of the Self.

Nididhyasana and upasana

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Nididhyāsana in this sense [śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana] is the highest form of meditation and is possible only after considerable practice in concentration of thought. Hence the Upanisads prescribe several meditative exercises of a preliminary character. They are usually called upāsanas, and the prominence given to them in the Upanisads is comparable to that given to rites in the Brahmanas. ... In upāsanas, the thought may be directed wholly outwards and two selected objects, both external, may be mentally identified...; or only one external object may be chosen and it may be thought of as identical with the contemplative's own self. There is an important difference between the two forms of meditation. While the former affords exercise only in concentration, the latter gives scope... — the power to place oneself in the position of another. It accordingly serves as a more direct aid to Brahma-realization, wherein ... Brahman is to be identified with the contemplative's self. Again the objects of contemplation may be real objects or only symbols. ... Whatever form these meditations may take, they prepare the disciple for the final mode of contemplation as Aham Brahma asmi. When a person that has morally purified himself and has after formal study and reflection convinced himself intellectually of the truth of unity, succeeds through nididhyāsana in transforming what was heretofore known only mediately into an immediate certainty, he attains the spiritual goal.

Sankara tradition

Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad

Upāsana is the pre-eminent means to nididhyāsana. The latter is necessarily preceded by vicāra, discrimination, between the Self and the not-Self, whereas upāsana does not depend on vicāra, but on faith in the teachings of the scriptures and the teacher.

...

In fact, even the highly regarded Brahma-upasana, while it results in the meditator reaching the Brahmaloaka and finally merging in Brahman after aeons of living in that world, is nothing compared to realisation of Brahman here in this very life by practising nidid-

hyasana. And for this nididhyasana the pre-requisites are discrimination between the real and the unreal, and utter disregard for enjoying this world or the other.

See: **Sravaṇa, maṇaṇa, nididhyasana**

Etymology

Ramaṇa Maḥarṣi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramaṇasramaṇam

Nidi means swarupa; nididhyasana is the act of intensely concentrating on the swarupa with the help of sravana and manana of the words of the Guru. That means to meditate on that with undeflected zeal. After meditating for a long time, he merges in it. Then it shines as itself. That is always there. There will be no troubles of this sort if one can see the thing as it is. Why so many questions to see one's own self that is always there?"

Related words

Manana
Sravaṇa
Svarupa
Upasana
Vicāra

Sanskrit

Nididhyāsana — निदिध्यासन

nididhyāsana - तदिधियासत

Nimitta karaṇa

Variant spellings

nimitta-karaṇa
nimitta-kāraṇa
nimittakāraṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

nimittakāraṇa -

instrumental or efficient cause (esp. the Deity as the agent in creation)

Related words

Karana

Upadana-Karana

Sanskrit

Nimitta-kāraṇa — निमित्तकारण

nimitta-kāraṇa - तमित्तकारण

Nirguna

Variant spellings

nirguna

nirguṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Nirguṇa — ... attributeless; devoid of qualities; without attribute; the formless.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

nirguṇa [nir--guṇa] -

having no cord or string;

having no good qualities or virtues, bad, worthless, vicious;

devoid of all qualities or properties;

having no epithet;

(said of the Supreme Being)

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Nirguna (“without qualities”). Epithet of the divine reality in its ultimate aspect. According to many Hindu traditions, God is ultimately without qualities or attributes, transcending all particularity and superior to any qualified form. This conception is first phrased in the Upanishads, the speculative religious texts that are the most recent part of the Vedas, and in the philosophical traditions based on the Upanishads such as Advaita Vedanta. This belief is opposed by certain Hindu theistic traditions, such as the Gaudiya Vaishnava religious community, in which a particular deity—in this case, Krishna—is conceived as the Ultimate Reality.

Related words

Nirguna-brahman
Saguna

Sanskrit

Nirguṇa — निर्गुण
nirguṇa - तरिगुण

Nirguna-brahman

Definitions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

nirguna Brahman - unqualified Absolute.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The advaitic Absolute is not merely indefinable; we cannot know it either, for the moment it is made the object of thought it becomes related to a subject and therefore determinate...

One should ... be careful in understanding what exactly is meant when the Upaniṣads describe Brahman as nirguṇa and therefore as indefinable and unknowable. ... Even granting that the negative definition is the only possible one, it does not follow that the nirguṇa Brahman is a blank. For all propositions directly or indirectly refer to reality and negation necessarily has its own positive implication. As a matter of fact, however, the Advaitins assign Upaniṣadic statements like neti neti—'Not this, nor that'—a secondary place while the primary place is given to those like Tat tvam asi, which point to the reality in us as the ultimate. That is, the negative statement is not to be understood in isolation, but along with positive ones like Tat tvam asi. Negation is only a preliminary to affirmation. It means that the Absolute is not conceived here objectively— as merely inferred from outer phenomena; but as revealing itself within us. This alters totally the significance of the negative description, for we are thereby constrained to admit not only its positive character but also its spiritual nature. It is not thus a bare or contentless being for which the Absolute stands here. Nor should the statement that Brahman is unknowable lead us to regard the doctrine as agnostic. It, no doubt, rules out all discursive thought as inapplicable to Reality; but it does not represent it as extra-empirical—as something wholly outside the world of experience. ... we can 'know' Brahman by being it. This higher type of experience is not altogether unfamiliar to us. There are moments, though all too rare, when we transcend ourselves and when even the experience that is being lived through is not cognized. We pass in it not only beyond common consciousness in which the thought of self is implicit, but also beyond explicit selfconsciousness to where thought merges in experience. It may be taken as a distant analogue of the attitude of the sage who,

having through long discipline learnt to feel his identity with all that exists, at last succeeds in passing beyond even that state, and losing sight of the objective world and of himself as such, is straight away installed within Reality. That constitutes the consummation of Advaitic teaching.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

Brahma nirguna, as already mentioned, exists in a state of dreamless sleep, unconscious of its own existence. It is a common error to imagine that the nirguna Brahma, assuming qualities, made the world. According to the Vedanta the nirguna Brahma never changes, never acquires qualities.

See also:

in Advaita Vedanta: **Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy**

Nirguna and saguna brahman

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

MASTER: "When the Godhead is thought of as creating, preserving, and destroying, It is known as the Personal God, Saguna Brahman, or the Primal Energy, Adyasakti. Again, when It is thought of as beyond the three gunas, then It is called the Attributeless Reality, Nirguna Brahman, beyond speech and thought; this is the Supreme Brahman, Parabrahman."

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

BRAHMA is said to exist in two conditions nirguna, unbound, and saguna, bound. The two states are sometimes called the Higher and Lower Brahma. The former is called Brahma, neuter; the latter Brahma, masculine. The name I'svara, lord, is also often applied to the latter.

Related words

Brahman

Nirguna

Parabrahman

Saguna-brahman

Nishkama-karma

Variant spellings

niskama-karma

nishkama-karma

niskama-karma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Niskama-karma — ... dedicated action; disinterested action; desireless action.

1. Action dedicated to the Divine without any personal desire for the fruits of one's labor. It purifies the mind and is a remote auxiliary to the path of knowledge (according to Advaita Vedānta). It is activity engaged in as dedication and worship.
2. Some aver that it is the central teaching of the Bhagavad Gītā. It is to act according to God's will; to be a successful instrument in the divine hands through complete identity with the Divine. In doing action thus, one relinquishes the desire for any fruits of such action.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Niskama-karma: Action not motivated by personal benefits, but performed as a part of the creative function of nature with full sense of detachment. Such actions keep their doers always liberated from all bondages.

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

829. When the pure Sattva arises in a man, he only meditates on God, and does not find pleasure in any other work. Some are born with this pure Sattva on account of their past actions. But one can develop this pure quality if one continues to perform unselfish work in a spirit of devotion and dedication to God. If there be Sattva with an admixture of Rajas, the mind slowly gets distracted in several directions and brings in its wake the egoistic feeling, "I shall do good to the world." It is highly hazardous for ordinary Jivas to attempt to do good to the world. But it is good if a man works without motive for the benefit of others; there is no danger in it. This kind of work is called Nishkama Karma. It is quite desirable to do such works. But all cannot do it! Very difficult!

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 118.

Mr. Rangachari, a Telugu Pandit in Voorhees' College at Vellore, asked about nishkama karma. There was no reply. After a time Sri Bhagavan went up the hill and a few followed him, including the pandit. There was a thorny stick lying on the way which Sri Bhagavan picked up; he sat down and began leisurely to work at it. The thorns were cut off, the knots were made smooth, the whole stick was polished with a rough leaf. The whole operation took about six hours. Everyone was wondering at the fine appearance of the stick made of a spiky material. A shepherd boy put in his appearance on the way as the group moved off. He had lost his stick and was at a loss. Sri Bhagavan immediately gave the new one in his hand to the boy and passed on.

The pandit said that this was the matter-of-fact answer to his question.

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Niskama (karma): (Nish, without; Kama., passion)

Related words

Karma

Sanskrit

Niṣkama-karma — निष्कामकर्म

niṣkama-karma - तष्कामकर्म

Nitya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

nitya -

innate, native;

one's own;

continual, perpetual, eternal;

constantly dwelling or engaged in, intent upon, devoted or used to;

ordinary, usual, invariable, fixed, necessary, obligatory;

the sea, ocean;

N. of Durgā;

of a Śakti;

of the goddess Manasā;

constant and indispensable rite or act

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

866. Whose is this Lila (this universe of change., the manifestations of which can be called a play of God), His is that Nitya (the absolute state). And again. He who is in that Nitya state, His is this Lila. It is through the Lila that you must feel your way up to the

Nitya. It is again from the Nitya that you must feel your way back to the Lila—now no longer unreal but the manifestation of the Nitya on the sense plane.

...

1055. Try to know the Nitya through the Lila.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

134. Neither is It born nor does It die; neither does It grow nor does It decay; being eternal, It does not undergo any change. Even when this body is destroyed, It does not cease to exist. It is like the space in the jar that is broken—it is independent of the jar.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

The first two lines of this verse contain the definition of the term “eternal” (Nitya). That which is never born nor dies, nor grows nor reduces, nor ever is modified is infinite, eternal (Nitya), Conversely, that which is finite and ephemeral (Anitya), is that which is born, that which grows, decays, and undergoes different modifications.

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Nitya - from prefix [e]ni, ‘in’ -+- formative -tya .

Related words

Lila

Sanskrit

Nitya — नित्य

nitya - नित्य

Nitya-karma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Nitya-karma — ... obligatory Vedic duties; categorical imperative.

1. According to the Mīmāṃsakes, they produce no specific fruits, though if these actions are not performed, they produce demerit or sin. This theory is denied by the Advaita Vedāntins. The Advaitins claim that omission of these actions does not produce sin.

Nityakarmas are the regular rites which are to be performed daily—e.g., the daily fire sacrifice (agni-hotra), etc.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Nitya Karma (“perpetual [ritual] action”). One of the three broad types of ritual action, the others being naimittika karma and kamyā karma. Nitya karma is ritual action that is prescribed at regular fixed intervals, often on a daily basis; one gains no religious merit from performing them, but omitting them is considered a religious demerit. One example of a nitya karma is the Gayatri Mantra, which must be recited at morning and evening worship (sandhya) by every “twice-born” man who has received the adolescent religious initiation known as the “second birth.” Another nitya karma is the Five Great Sacrifices (panchamahayajna), which are daily religious duties for a “twice-born” householder; they are rarely performed today.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

The daily routines of life, such as waking up, ablutions, taking food, resting, sleeping, etc., called nitya karma.

Related words

Karma

Naimittika-karma

Sanskrit

Nitya-karma — नित्यकर्म

nitya-karma - नित्यकर्म

OM

Variant spellings

Om

Aum

Om̐kara

Auṃkāra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Om — ... the Word; the pranava; the Eternal.

1. All words are said to be but various forms of the one sound—om— according to the Upaniṣads. It represents the Divine and the power of God. It is the sound symbol for the ultimate Reality.

2. The three letters (mātra)—A, U, and M—represent, respectively, the outer, the inner, and the superconscious states of consciousness and the waking, dream, and deep-sleep states. And beyond these is the modeless fourth (a-mātrā), which is the Self, according to Advaita Vedānta.

[Wikipedia](#)

Om or Aum ... is a sacred/mystical syllable in the Dharma or Indian religions, i.e. Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

Descriptions

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The syllable aum is first described as all-encompassing mystical entity in the Upanishads. Today, in all Hindu art and all over India and Nepal, 'aum' can be seen virtually everywhere, a common sign for Hinduism and its philosophy and theology. Hindus believe that as creation began, the divine, all-encompassing consciousness took the form of the first and original vibration manifesting as sound "AUM". Before creation began it was "Shunyākāsha", the emptiness or the void. Shunyākāsha, meaning literally "no sky", is more than nothingness, because everything then existed in a latent state of potentiality. The vibration of "AUM" symbolizes the manifestation of God in form ("sāguna brahman"). "AUM" is the reflection of the absolute reality, it is said to be "Adi Anadi", without beginning or the end and embracing all that exists. The mantra "AUM" is the name of God, the vibration of the Supreme. When taken letter by letter, A-U-M represents the divine energy (Shakti) united in its three elementary aspects: Bhrahma Shakti (creation), Vishnu Shakti (preservation) and Shiva Shakti (liberation, and/or destruction).

Narayana Guru tradition

[Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad](#)

The Upaniṣad [Brhadaranyaka Upanisad] commences with AUM. AUM is the praṇava. Signifying catuspāda, or the four limbs of the Absolute. This indicates that the Upaniṣad is not a delimited study. It is going to discuss in detail all four aspects of the science of the Absolute. The first aspect of AUM, represented by the letter A, is the transactional world in which we live as physical organisms and perceive its variegated forms to which we have assigned names for the purpose of identity. Our own organism is born of this world and it will be ultimately reabsorbed in its phenomenality...

The second aspect of AUM, represented by the letter U, is the subjective depth of all our experiences which takes us again and again from the gross to the subtle, from the perceptual to the conceptual, and from manifoldness to unity. ...the transactional world is a projected aspect of the subjective phenomena and for every perceptual objectivization in the phenomenal world there is a corresponding subjective reference. The transactional world needs the entire space of the cosmos and all of conceivable time for its totality. Surprisingly, we do not need anything more than the confines of our skull and its grey matter to which we can add as an appendix our sense organs and the spinal ganglia connected with our brain in order to subjectively conceive of such a voluminous world or quantifiable objectivity. Thus from a large circa of immeasurable dimensions we go to a highly condensed system occupying an awkwardly negligent space of condensation.

The third aspect of AUM is a mystery which cannot be unravelled because of its primeval and causal nature. It can at best be only intuitively guessed or surmised from the dual phenomenal effect of the world and the mind which is holding in it a detailed and almost mathematically precise image of the world. This highly elusive aspect is represented by the letter M which does not per-

mit any elaboration of a temporal, spatial, or conceptual detail. When we chant the mantra AUM our awareness converges into a zero-point and the energy to chant also comes to self extinction. But we can imagine a beyond. This refers to the infinitude of a ground which provides us with a canvas so extensive that we can spread out the entire science of the Absolute on it. Ultimately we will come to realize that the foundation of all sciences is based on the principle implied in the magic formula of AUM.

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY SANKARA

How does, again, the determination of (the meaning of) Aum help the realization of the essential nature of Atman? It is thus¹ explained: The Sruti passages such as these declare [N's Note] (Nikhilananda's Note) The ultimate relationship between Aum and Brahman is thus explained. The phenomena of the world consist of ideas or the mental states. Ideas depend upon words for their expression. The utterance of the word Aum (A.U.M.) gives the clue to the pronunciations of all words or sounds used by human beings. The various parts of the vocal organ used in the utterance of sounds come in contact with each other while pronouncing the word Aum. Therefore, Aum is the matrix of all sounds which in their diversified forms give rise to words used in the language. The substratum of phenomena is Brahman. The substratum of all sounds, as seen above, is Aum. The sounds signifying the phenomena are non-different from the phenomena as both are illusions. When the illusion disappears the substratum alone remains which, being one, admits of no difference. Hence Brahman is Aum.] thus: 'It is Aum.' [Kathopanishad, 1. 2. 15. When Aum is uttered with concentration there arises the consciousness of Brahman in the mind. Therefore Aum is the nearest symbol helping the concentration of the mind leading to the realization of Brahman.] ... 'Meditate on the Self as Aum.' [N's Note. One, who seeks to realize the Self through 'one-pointed' concentration on Aum, feels that the gross universe (symbolised by A) is absorbed into the subtle (U) and (U) into the causal (M) and, finally the universe dependent upon causal relation is withdrawn into the transcendental which is known as Amatra and which cannot be designated by any letter or sound.] 'Aum, this word is Brahman.' 'All this is verily Aum.' [N's Note. Both i.e., Aum and Brahman, are the support of everything, they form the most universal concept. Therefore the knowledge of Aum and Brahman is identical.] As the rope etc., which are the substratum of such illusions (misapprehensions) as the snake etc., so is the non-dual Atman, which is the Ultimate Reality, the substratum of such imaginations as the vital breath (Prana) etc., which are unreal. Similarly. Aum is the substratum of the entire illusion of the world of speech having" for its (corresponding) contents such illusory objects as Prana etc., imagined in Atman. [N's Note. Prana, etc., are merely modifications of speech because they cannot be conceived of without names. As again names are nothing but different manifestations of Aum, therefore Prana etc., have Aum for their substratum.] And Aum is verily of the same essential character as the Atman; for it is the name for Atman. All illusions such as Prana etc., having Atman for their substratum and denoted by words—which are but modifications of Aum—cannot exist without names (which are but the modifications of Aum) [N's Note. All sounds are included in 'A'—the first letter of the alphabet. 'A' is the chief constituent of Aum. Therefore all mental manifestations (i.e.. the objects denoted by them are identical with the sounds associated with them) cannot exist apart from Aum.]

Therefore it is said:

Hari Aum. Aum, the word, is all this. A clear explanation of it (is the following). All that is past, present and future is verily Aum. That which is beyond the triple conception of time, is also truly Aum.

SANKARA'S COMMENTARY

Aum, the word, is all this. As all diversified objects that we see around us, indicated by names, are not different [N's Note. That the name and the object denoted by it are identical is understood from the standpoint of mentalism which explains everything cognized or perceived as only a form of thought.] from their (corresponding) names, and further as the different names are not different from Aum, therefore all this is verily Aum. As a thing is known through its name so the highest Brahman is known through Aum alone. Therefore the highest Brahman is verily Aum. This (treatise) is the explanation of ... Aum, the word, which is of the same nature as the higher as well as the lower Brahman.

Advaita

General

Wikipedia

In Advaita philosophy it is frequently used to represent three subsumed into one, a triune, a common theme in Hinduism. It implies that our current existence is mithyā and maya, “falsehood”, that in order to know the full truth we must comprehend beyond the body and intellect the true nature of infinity. Essentially, upon moksha (mukti, samādhi) one is able not only to see or know existence for what it is, but to become it. When one gains true knowledge, there is no split between knower and known: one becomes knowledge/consciousness itself. In essence, Aum is the signifier of the ultimate truth that all is one.

Examples of sacred triunes (three-in-ones):

Creation (Brahma)- Preservation (Vishnu)- Destruction (Shiva) into Brahman the Atman

Waking- Dreaming- Dreamless Sleep into Turiya (transcendental fourth state of consciousness)

Rajas (activity, heat, fire) - Tamas (dullness, ignorance, darkness) - Sattva (purity, light, serenity or peace/shānti) into Brahman

Body, Speech and Mind into Oneness

Generate(Brahma-Saraswati), Operate(Nārāyan-Lakshmi), Destroy(Shiv-Shakti) as GOD within

Satchitānanda

Pronunciation and written representation

General

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit name for the syllable is praṇava, from a root nu “to shout, sound”, verbal pra-nu- being attested as “to make a humming or droning sound” in the Brahmanas, and taking the specific meaning of “to utter the syllable aum” in the Chāndogya Upanishad and the Shrauta Sutras. More rarely used terms are akṣara (lit. symbol, character) or ekākṣara (lit. one symbol, character), and in later times omkāra becomes prevalent.

Phonemically, the syllable is /aum/, which is regularly monophthongized to [ō:] in Sanskrit phonology. ... When occurring within a Sanskrit utterance, the syllable is subject to the normal rules of sandhi in Sanskrit grammar, however with the additional peculiarity that after preceding a or ā, the au of aum does not form vriddhi (au) but guna (o) per Pāṇini 6.1.95 (i.e. ‘om’).

The aum symbol is a ligature of Devanagari ओं (om, encoded in Unicode at U+0950 ॐ, the Tibetan script variant ཨོ at U+0F00, and the Chinese version 唵 at U+5535 or 唵 at U+543D).

... Aum is most commonly pronounced as a long or over-long nasalized close-mid back rounded vowel, [ō:~]) though there are other enunciations adhered to in received traditions. It is placed at the beginning of most Hindu texts as a sacred incantation to be intoned at the beginning and end of a reading of the Vedas or prior to any prayer or mantra.

Vedantic literature

General

Wikipedia

The syllable is mentioned in all the Upanishads, specially elaborated upon in the Taittiriya, Chāndogya and Māndukya Upanishad set forth as the object of profound religious meditation, the highest spiritual efficacy being attributed not only to the whole word but also to the three sounds a (a-kāra), u (u-kāra), m (ma-kāra), of which it consists. A-kara means form or shape like earth, trees, or any other object. U-kāra means formless or shapeless like water, air or fire. Ma-kāra means neither shape nor shapeless (but still exists) like the dark energy content of the Universe. When we combine all three syllables we get AUM which is a combination of A-kāra, U-kāra, and Ma-kāra.

OM (Pranava) and cetana

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Sutra I:29

Also, from the repetition of the pranava mantra, the attainment of the disappearance of obstacles and the turning inward of consciousness.

Commentary by Nitya:

Consciousness is like light that oscillates. The two-way movement of light can be described as centripetal convergence and centrifugal divergence. In ordinary people who are exposed to the fivefold stimuli coming from the objects of interest of all five senses, two locations are again and again established, one in the object and a corresponding one in the subject. The outer stimulus haunts the individuated consciousness and sensory knowledge oscillates between the object of interest and the I-consciousness of the agent of perception. Even though the inward-moving consciousness (pratyak cetana) can ultimately reach the core of one's being and find its identity with the Self, this is thwarted by the oscillating consciousness. After establishing an inner picture that corresponds to what is experienced outside, the oscillating consciousness returns to the external object to establish its relationship with the source of the new interest.

The outward-going consciousness (paranga cetana) that is luring consciousness to the object outside is called vikshepa. Kshepanam is "depositing;" vikshepa is "depositing the interest of the individual in an external object." But when pranava is meditated upon, the unitiveness of the threefold consciousness becomes merged in the fourth and, as a result, paranga cetana is inhibited by the wholesomeness of unmodulating consciousness. Only pratyak cetana is allowed which, in its ultimate convergence, goes to the very core (pratyak) of the Self. By repeatedly thwarting the outward-flowing consciousness, the hindrances to imperiential empathy with the core aspect of the Self become weaker and weaker. Because of the salutary effect of continuously repeating pranava, the outward-going tendency of consciousness is arrested. This enables the twofold benefit of dissipating all obstacles in the path of Yoga and making the aspirant yogi spirit-oriented.

Etymology

Compiler's comment

Om is the original Word, it has no etymology.

Related words

Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Sphota

Sanskrit

Om — ओम्

Om - ओम् or ॐ

Omkaara - ओम्कार (lit. "Om form/syllable")

Pada

Variant spellings

pada
pāda

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pāda — ... part; chapter; foot; a type of signficatory power of words.

1. Vaiśvānara, taijasa, prajñā, and turlya are the four quarters (pāda) of the Self as described in the Māṇḍūkya Upanisad. The first three are parts and the fourth is the whole.
2. It means “a quarter,” as originally it referred to the four feet of an animal. Thus, there are four parts to the Self or four parts to a verse, etc.
3. Sometimes it is used as an honorific ending, applied to form titles of individuals—e.g., Pūjyapāda.
4. See karmendriya.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pāda-

the foot (of men and animals) ... (the pl. sometimes added to proper names or titles in token of respect e.g. deva-pādāḥ, ‘the king’s majesty’;

the foot or leg of an inanimate object, column, pillar;

a wheel;

a foot as a measure;

the foot or root of a tree;

the foot or a hill at the foot of a mountain;

the bottom;

a ray or beam of light (considered as the foot of a heavenly body);

a quarter, a fourth Part (the fourth of a quadruped being one out of 4);

the quadrant (of a circle);

a verse or line (as the fourth part of a regular stanza);

the caesura of a verse, the chapter of a book (orig. only of a book or section of a book consisting of 4 parts, as the Adhyāyas of Pāṇini’s grammar).

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Pāda, the foot, a foot as a measure, (in Samkhya) the power to move, one of the five abstract working-senses (karmendriyas).

Descriptions

General

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

Nothing shows so well the philosophical character of the Sanskrit language than this very word Padârtha... It means in ordinary Sanskrit simply a thing, but literally it meant Artha, the meaning, the object, Pada, of a word. What we should call objects of thought, they called far more truly objects of words, thus showing that from the earliest times they understood that no thought was possible except in a word, and that the objects of our knowledge became possible only after they had been named.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Mandukya-Upanishad explains the relationship of the states of consciousness to the Word, OM... OM is actually written as AUM. Every letter is called a pada. The Upanishad says: "All, indeed, is AUM; even all that is beyond the triple conception of time". It is then equated with Brahman and Atman and said to have four padas. "The first pada is Vaisvanara whose sphere is the state of waking, who is cognizant of the objective, . . . and whose fruition consists of the gross". Vaisvanara is derived from Visva, the world or universe, and is rendered as "the fire of life"... It relates to the physical plane: the Element Earth. "The second pada is Taijasa whose region is dream, who is cognizant only of the subjective, . . . and whose fruition consists of the subtle." It refers to the Elements of Water and Fire. The next [third] refers to Air, the Sphere of Buddhi. "This is the state of deep sleep wherein the sleeper does not imagine anything, and does not see any dream. The third pada therefore is the Prajna whose sphere is deep sleep, in whom all melts into one, who is a mass all sentiency, who is all bliss, whose fruition is of bliss, and who is the way of sentiency." Prajna is the consciousness of the sphere of Buddhi. ... The fourth pada [Ether] is not that which is conscious of the subjective, nor that which is conscious of the objective nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is a mass all sentiency nor that which is all darkness. It is unseen, transcendent, unapprehensible, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, the sole essence of the consciousness of self, the negative of all illusion, the ever peaceful, all bliss, the One Unit; this indeed is the Self (Atman), as it should be known. ... The padas are the parts, and the parts the padas, those being A, U, M."

See also: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Karmendriya

Sanskrit

Pāda — पाद

pāda - पाद

Pancagnividya

Variant spellings

pancagnividya
pañcāgnividya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pañcāgnividya — ... “knowledge of the five fires”

1. The eschatological doctrine of the five fires taught as a form of meditation in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

The Panchagni-Vidya [the knowledge of the Five Fires]... is a particular type of knowledge, or meditation, which is introduced to know the inner meaning of the common phenomenon of birth and death.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Chandogya Upanisad

Pancagni-vidya, literally “the teaching on the five fires,” forms part of the Vedic rituals. These fires are known as daksinagni, garhapatyagni, ahavaniyagni, sabhyagni, and avasathyagni. These five sacrificial fires are supposed to be maintained constantly by those who follow Vedism strictly. But this Vedic concept of the five sacrificial fires is subjected to a total revision here in light of the wisdom of Vedanta. The result is the emergence of a new set of five-fire sacrifices. The unknown realms of life, and the known ones, are correlated by means of these sacrifices. What emerges from the unknown realms, through different stages, causes the emergence of the individual human being. Its re-mergence back into the unknown Source is described likewise. So the emergence and re-mergence of individual beings are to be seen as part of this process. All these are symbolically represented by the new set of five fires taught by the King Pravahana. [see the text]

...

The five burnt sacrifices (pancagni-vidya) mentioned here in this Vedantic context are not intended to be understood as the five rituals of Vedism, as already noticed. Here the Vedic five-ritual concept becomes subjected to a total revision and revaluation in the light of Vedantic Wisdom. The gods, within this Vedantic context, stand for the causal Consciousness that becomes subject to a fivefold becoming, figuratively conceived of as five sacrifices. The emergence of a person is the final result of this fivefold becoming. ... Everything in this world emerges from and reemerges back into Brahman; this is a fundamental tenet of Vedanta. The five burnt sacrifices and the return to Brahman via deva-yana are simply poetic imageries symbolising the individual’s emergence from and re-mergence into Brahman, or the ultimate Reality. Let it be noted that the process of going back to Brahman is five-tiered like

the five burnt sacrifices (pancagni-vidya) conceived. It covers light, time (from day to year), sun, moon, and lightning. According to this Upanisad it is the individuals, not their souls alone, that emerge from and remerge back into Brahman. This is the truth of everyone's life, enlightened or not, but is understood so by jnanins alone. It appears irrelevant to most merely because they are unaware of this secret concerning Brahman and Its creativity.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

We now come to a peculiar doctrine. I do not understand much of it myself. If you can make something out of it I will read it to you. When a man who has meditated, and purified himself, and got knowledge, dies, then he first goes to light, from light to day, from day to the light half of the moon, from that to the six months when the sun goes to the north, from the months to the year, from the year to the sun, from the sun to the moon, from the moon to the lightning, and when he comes to the sphere of lightning he meets a person who is not a man, and that person helps him to meet Brahman, to meet God. This is the path of the gods. When sages and knowing persons die they go that way and they do not return. What is meant by this month and year and all these things, no one understands clearly. Each one makes his own meaning, and a good many say it is all nonsense. What is meant by going to the world of the moon, and of the sun, and this person who comes to help the Soul after it has reached the spheres of light, no one knows. There has been a peculiar idea among the Hindus that the moon is a state of life, and we will see how life has come from the moon, it has rained from the moon upon this earth. Those that have not attained to knowledge, but have done good work in this life, when they die, first go through smoke, then to night, then to the dark fifteen days, then the six months when the sun goes to the south, from that they go to the region of the forefathers, then to ether, then to the region of the moon, and there they become the food of the gods, and are born as gods. There they live as long as their good works will permit. And when the effect of the good work has been finished they come back. They first become ether, and then air, and then smoke, then mist, then cloud, and then get hold of raindrops, and fall upon the earth, get into food, are eaten up by human beings, and then become their children. Those whose works have been very good take birth in very good families, and those whose works have been bad take very bad births. The animals are always dying, and are continually coming in this earth. That is why this earth is not full, and not empty.

Sankara tradition

Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad

... meditation, the well-known Pañcāgni-vidyā (the meditation on the five fires). The whole world, sentient and insentient, is here thought of as a group of factors in a cosmic sacrifice involving five successive fires arranged in the order of their subtleness; and they are all knit together through a spirit of self-sacrifice, so that a new creation may emerge, new life may come into existence, at every stage. Thus faith is poured as an oblation in heaven, which is the highest of the fires; and, as a consequence, the lunar world—the world of manes—comes into existence. The moon is then poured as an oblation in the second fire, viz the rain-god; and so rain pours on earth, which is the third fire. From this sacrifice grows food, which is offered to man, who is considered as the fourth fire, from whom comes the seed. The fifth fire is the wife. The most familiar emergence of life is witnessed at child-birth. The ancients were bold enough to look on all things and processes from a higher intellectual and spiritual plane. To their spiritual vision, the father, the mother, and the gods who presided over the organs were all agents in a sacrifice bringing new life into existence. As the cosmic counterpart of this outlook on conjugal relationship, we are asked to think of the other world, i.e. heaven, as

fire, the sun as its fuel, the rays as the smoke of that fire, day as the light of the fire, the directions as charcoal; or of the cloud-god as fire, the year as its fuel, the clouds as smoke, lightning as light, thunder as charcoal; and so on and so forth.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

There are various stages of manifestation. Here, a specific type of manifestation is under consideration for the purpose of meditation. How the birth of an individual takes place, how a child is born, is the actual question on hand. We are so ignorant that we think that the child is born from the womb of the mother. We know only that much, but this is the least type of knowledge that one can have about the birth of a child. The child is not pushed out of the womb of the mother, as if by magic. It is a tremendous process that takes place throughout the cosmos. ... The whole universe vibrates with action even if a single baby is to be born somewhere in the corner of a house. ... The whole universe is our father; the entire universe is our mother; the universe is the parent. ... The Upanishad tells us this secret of cosmic interconnectedness and involution of factors which are unknown to the senses and unthinkable to the mind. There is no such thing as a private act in this world. There is also no such thing as 'my' child and 'your' child. If this secret is known, no one will say, "It is my son, my daughter." It is neither yours nor anybody's. It belongs to that from where it has come. ... It is the child of the universe, which is to take care of it; and it shall withdraw it when it is to be summoned back; it projects it when it is to be sent out for reasons which are known to the universal law alone. Here is the philosophical background of the vidya, called Panchagni-Vidya. The Upanishad, in its exposition of the Panchagni-Vidya, takes the standpoint of the wider background that operates behind every event in the phenomena of natural processes. Things are not what they seem; there is a deeper significance behind every visible process or activity in Nature. This is the esoteric side, or the invisible aspect of the visible phase of our practical existence.

... The Celestial Region, the Atmosphere, the Earth, Man and Woman,—these are the five stages of the Fire which becomes the object of meditation known as the Panchagni- Vidya. By the interconnection, combination and harmonious adjustment of the structure of these five levels of manifestation, birth takes place. This symbology of the birth of the individual through the Five Fires is applicable to the birth of every event and every form of expression in the world, whether it is what we call a living being or the manifestation of the other levels, such as the inorganic etc.,—the physical, the superphysical, or otherwise. The theory is of the manifestation of anything, anywhere. There is a universal concatenation of causes and effects coming together from every side, like the rush of waters in the ocean, from every corner, in order to make the waves rise on its surface. The cooperation of the structure of the waters in the body of the ocean is necessary for the welling up of the waves, though this may be only a local effect whose ulterior causes are not visible to the naked eye. There is, thus, in the end, no such thing as a local event in this world. Every event is a universal event. So is the case with the birth of even a human individual. Every birth is a point of universal pressure. ... When the span of life is finished, there is what we call the death of the body, the extrication of the prana from the individual embodiment. And these Fires take the individual to the destination to which it is bound after death. ... In the same way as one was pushed into manifestation into this particular life, one is put out of existence here, and then taken through the same process of manifestation into other realms. The process is the same, because the Five Fires work everywhere in all the realms of being. ... "One who knows this," reaches the higher realms reached only by meritorious deeds; "ya evam veda"; yea, "One who knows this."

Pancagnividya and yajna

General

Wikipedia

Panchagni Yajna

This sacrifice is addressed in the Chandogya Upanishad. It enables one to achieve Brahmaloaka.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

The Five Fires, called the Panchagnis, mentioned here, are not actually fires in the physical sense. They are meditational techniques. The Fire, here, is symbolic of a sacrifice which one performs through contemplation. How are these sacrifices performed visibly with the traditional sense of rituals? There is a sacrificial ground; there is a sacred altar in which the holy oblations are offered through the instrumentality of the sacred fire. There is the blazing fire flaming forth from the altar in the holy atmosphere of the sacrifice. And there is a substance that is offered, the sacrament. And certain ideas are entertained in the mind of the yajamana or the performer of the sacrifice, which are conveyed through the recitation of certain mantras. The mantras that are chanted or recited, in the performance of the yajna, or the sacrifice, are the sacred intentions of the performer expressed in language. This is the methodology of the performance of a sacrifice usually. The offerings are made to certain deities. The invocation of a particular celestial, a god, or a deity is the intention behind the performance of the sacrifice. Now, the Upanishad here tells us that the whole universal activity of creation may be conceived as such a kind of sacrifice,—yajna.

Related words

Devayana

Pitryana

Sanskrit

Pañcāgnividya — पञ्चाग्निविद्या

pañcāgnividya - पञ्चाग्निविद्या

Pancikarana

Variant spellings

pancikarana

pañcīkarana

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pañcīkaraṇa — ... quintuplication.

1. The theory that every physical object contains all the five elements in various proportions. In the Upaniṣads there was reference only to three elements, but the Vedānta extended it to five elements. (See Brahma-sūtra II.iv.22.) Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta employs this theory to explain their theory of error known as “cognition of the real” (satkhyāti).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pañcīkaraṇa -

making into 5, causing anything to contain all the 5 elements

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Pancikarana: The way the five basic elements supposedly are blended together so as to appear as actual physical elements.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

99. The compounding takes place thus: Each of the five elements, viz., ether etc., is divided into two equal parts; of the ten parts thus produced five—being the first half of each element—are each sub-divided into four equal parts. Then leaving one half of each element, to the other half is added one of these quarters from each of the other four elements.

[At the time of creation the five elements remain in an uncompounded state. As such they cannot produce the phenomenal objects of the universe. These subtle elements are then said to remain in the Apanchikrita state. Afterwards these elements combine with one another in a certain ratio, viz., half of itself plus one-eighth of each of the other four.]

103. At that time¹ ether manifests² sound; air manifests sound and touch; fire sound, touch and form; water sound, touch, form and taste; and earth manifests sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

[¹ At that time—When they are compounded.

² Manifests—Sound, which lies in a potential state in ether, manifests at the time of Panchikarana. Thus each succeeding element has a special property of its own to which are added those of the preceding elements.]

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

The story of the process of pancikarana or equalization of the five factors is described by Prof. Lacombe as follows:

The great elements do not enter as such into the composition of individual realities, but undergo first a sort of shaking-up which is called quintipartition--pancikarana. Each of them is divided by the Creator into two parts and each of these halves again into four parts. Each of these quarters is afterwards mixed with the half that remains intact of each of the four elements. This takes place in such a way that each element becomes already composed as follows: 1/2 element plus 1/8 of each of the other four elements. And these are the composite elements which serve the constitution of individual things. The dominating proportion of the primitive element safeguards its authenticity. But the addition of the bits of the other elements gives account of the participation of all things with all things and explains certain anomalies of perception.” (p. 325, O’Lacombe:L’Absolu selon le Vedanta, (Paris 1937). Our translation.)

Although the above process of how actualization of elemental principles as individual entities is graphic enough, the reference to the Creator therein gives it a theological flavour which is due to the fact that this version of pancikarana is taken from the writings of Ramanuja and his followers such as Srinivasa Dipika, rather than from the more strictly philosophical Sankara school. In the Vivekacudamani (verse 88), Sankara attributes pancikarana to actions in previous births. The same process of pancikarana is accepted in the other Vedantic schools.

Pancikarana and tanmatras

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

74. Having united with parts of one another, they become gross, and become the cause for the formation of the gross body. Their subtle essence constitutes the sense-objects, five in number, such as sound etc., which contribute to the enjoyment of the experimenter, the individual ego.

Commentary by Chinmayananda: ... now we are told how they [the subtle elements], by a process of mutual combination, condense to a grossness sufficient to become perceptible to the sense-organs. The process by which the subtle elements become the five gross elements ... is called in Sanskrit, Panchikaranam, a pentamerous self-duplication and mutual combination.

This process is explained in Vedanta as taking place in four distinct stages of self-division and mutual combinations. The rudimentary subtle elements are constituted of units called tanmatras. There are five distinct tanmatras each for the five great elements—Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Each tanmatra (unit of each of the five elements), in the first stage of its grossification, shows a tendency to divide itself into two halves. In the second stage, each tanmatra of the five elements bifurcates and separates into two equal parts.

In the third stage, one half of all the five elements remains intact while the other half (of each element) gets divided into four equal parts. Thus ... we have in its third stage, half a tanmatra remaining intact ..., and the other half divided into four equal parts, each constituting therefore, 1/8th of the original tanmatra.

In the fourth stage of its development, each half tanmatra combines with 1/8th tanmatra of all the other elements, constituting one unit of the gross element. Thus ... one half of Ether joins with four 1/8th bits borrowed from the other four elements (i.e. 1/2 Ether+1/8 Air+ 1/8 Fire+1/8 Water+1/8 Earth), which then constitute one unit of the gross Akasa (Ether). Similarly, half of Air plus 1/8th bits borrowed from Ether, Fire, Water and Earth, becomes one unit of gross Air. Thus is the combination in each of the five elements.

This process is called Panchikarana, the pentamerous self-division and combination process. Out of the gross elements the physical body is formed. But the sense-objects of sound, touch, form, taste and smell are constituted of nothing other than the subtle tanmatras of the rudimentary elements. The gross elements provide the instrument for the enjoyment of the subtle elements. All these arrangements are made so that the ego-centre may experience a life of happiness or misery as directed by the store-house of his vasanas.

The enjoyer or sufferer (ego) is the Self conditioned by the mind and the intellect. This conditioning can never bring about any real bondage to the Self just as any harm done to my reflection in the mirror can never harm me.

Related words

Mahabhuta
Tanmatra

Sanskrit

Pañcīkarana — पञ्चीकरण
pañcīkarana - पञ्चीकरण

Para

Variant spellings

para
parā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Parā — ... higher; universal; beyond; supreme; transcendent

1. According to Sāṅkhya, it is one of the nine kinds of laziness or contentment (tuṣṭi). Here it refers to the idea that no exertion toward liberation is necessary because of the troubles which come of earning one's living.
2. According to Vaiśeṣika, it is a type of quality (guṇa) representing universality.
3. A term employed in the Upaniṣads to describe knowledge relating to Reality.
4. Generally four stages of sound are distinguished: supreme sound (parā); visible sound, which can be heard as "om" (paśyantī); middle sound, which refers to a variety of basic sounds (mātrkā) that are very subtle (madhyama); and manifest sound (vaikhāra), which is the grossest level of sound and is what is heard in ordinary speech.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

parā -

a foreign country, abroad;

a species of plant;

N. of a sound in the first of its 4 stages;

measure of time;

N. of a river;

of a goddess;

remotest distance;

highest point or degree;

final beatitude;

the number 10,000,000,000 (as the full age of Brahmā);
any chief matter or paramount object;
the wider or more extended or remoter meaning of a word;
(in logic) genus;
existence (regarded as the common property of all things)

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Para: The transcendental.

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Para: Beyond; pertaining to the Ultimate or Supreme; as opposed to the immanent here and now aspect of reality which is apara..
It could mean transcendent. (cognizant with English word " far ").

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 57.

Sri Bhagavan said that sushumna is the name mostly mentioned in scriptures. Other names also occur; e.g., para, atma, amrita.
It is also stated that sushumna becomes leena (merged in para). So it may be said that para is the terminology of jnana, whereas sushumna is that of Yoga.

...

D.: Several terms are used in the holy books - Atman, Paramatman, Para, etc. What is the gradation in them?

M.: They mean the same to the user of the words. But they are understood differently by persons according to their development.

D.: But why do they use so many words to mean the same thing?

M.: It is according to circumstances. They all mean the Self. Para means 'not relative' or 'beyond the relative', that is to say, the Absolute.

...

M.: The general opinion is that para (sound) comes from the Muladhara (the solar plexus) at the bottom of the spine. All sounds beginning from vaikhar (thought form) are contained in para which proceeds from Kundalini; and Kundalini is not different from the Heart. In fact the whole shadadhara (six-fold centre) is contained in the heart. The sushumna with its source Kundalini is included in the Heart.

Related words

Opposite: Apara

Sanskrit

Parā — परा

parā - परा

Nataraja. Wisdom's frame of reference: ... para and apara would correspond to many pairs of words in the West, such as immanent and transcendent or pure and practical, the intelligible or the visible, the noumenal and the phenomenal, etc. We have preferred to refer them to the two axes, each with a positive and negative, so as to tally more correctly with a scientifically revised theory of knowledge.

Parabrahman

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Parabrahman — ... the supreme Being; the Divine as transcendent; that which is beyond all dualities

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is the supracosmic Divine who supports with its timeless and spaceless existence the entire cosmic manifestation of its own being in time and space. It is infinite, attributeless, and without name and form.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

parabrahman -
the Supreme Spirit or Brahman

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In connection with That which is beyond Duality or Trinity — the Supernal, Parabrahman, Paramasiva, God-Reality — it should be stressed that it is taught that there is no Fall from It, nor any Return to It. For It IS. It can be “expressed” only by Silence.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Para-brahman: The higher brahman. Sankara conceives of two aspects of brahman. The lower brahman (apara brahman) is the ultimate Reality having the form of the world for its attributes. The higher brahman is attributeless, and hence inconceivable.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Para Brahman ... That which is beyond Brahman. The self-enduring, eternal, self-sufficient cause of all causes, the essence of everything in the cosmos. In the Vedic style of writing, Para Brahman is referred to as tat (that) as opposed to the manifest universe called idam (this). Para Brahman means Supreme Brahman, or Supreme Cosmic Spirit, or Godhead. Although an ineffable entity, it could be said to be that which contains and pervades the universe. Para Brahman, from beyond, encompasses the transcendent and immanent ultimate reality, Brahman. The Absolute Truth is both subject and object, so there is no qualitative difference. Terms like Parameshvara, Ishvara, Bhagavan, Brahman, Paramatma are held to be synonymous with Para Brahman.

Para-brahman and apara-brahman

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Dialectics

Para and apara Brahman, which refer to the transcendent and immanent aspects of the Absolute, or rather to the relativistic and the absolutist aspects of the Absolute, have to be dialectically revalued again in terms of the neutral Absolute.

Parabrahman and Om

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. The Word That is God

“The sages Angiras and Sanatkumara asked the renowned sage Atharvan: ‘Which is the form of meditation that came to be fore-mostly employed by seekers after liberation? What should be the object of meditation by such seekers?’ Atharvan replied: ‘The form of meditation that came to manifest as the foremost of all, for the regeneration of all seekers, was the First Word, indicative of Brahman: the Syllable Om. Meditation on Om should be resorted to by seekers after liberation. This Syllable is the Parabrahman, Which it designates. Omkara is the Higher as well as the Lower Brahman,’ as the Sruti says.⁶ The four Vedas are the four feet of Om. This Syllable is the Supreme Brahman.” (Atharvashikha Upanishad 1:1,2).

... Here it is plainly stated that japa and meditation of Om comprise the original yoga practiced by the Vedic Rishis at the beginning of the human race. Moreover, this yoga was not worked out by them, but was manifested to their inner awareness even before the Vedas were revealed to them. Om Yoga is the real Path of the Masters that “should be resorted to by seekers after liberation.” Om is the Supreme God, as well as the primal Name of the Supreme. Om is both the Relative and the Absolute, encompassing the entire range of being.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Parabrahman — from para = “supreme” + brahman = “Absolute”.

Wikipedia

para-brahman - from para “beyond” + Brahman (neuter) “universal self or spirit”.

Related words

Opposite: Apara-brahman

Nirguna-brahman

Sanskrit

Parabrahman — परब्रह्मन्

parabrahman - परब्रह्मन्

Paramanu

Variant spellings

paramanu
paramāṇu

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Paramāṇu — ... atom

1. The minutest conceivable particle of matter which cannot be further divided.
2. According to Buddhism, it consists of the fourfold substratum of color, smell, taste, and contact. It is the minutest form of rūpa. It cannot be divided, seen, analyzed, tasted, or felt. Yet it is not permanent, but a mere momentary flash into being. Single atoms are called drayaparamāṇu and compound atoms are called sañghāta-paramāṇu. Seven para-māṇus combine together to form an aṇu and in this form it becomes visible.
3. According to Vaiśeṣika, the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) comprise the four kinds of atoms. They differ qualitatively, with their respective qualities being smell, taste, color, and touch. Yet the atoms have no parts and are nonspatial. The smallest visible substance is constituted of three dyads called a tryaṇuka. Two atoms constitute a dyad (dvyaṇuka).
4. According to Sāṅkhya, atoms are of five types: (space, air, fire, water, earth—ākāśa, vāyu, tejas, ap, and bhūtādi). They are generated from the subtle elements (tanmātra).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

paramāṇu -

an infinitesimal particle or atom (30 are said to form a mote in a sun-beam);
the passing of a sun-beam past an atom of matter;
1/8 of a Mātrā

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Paramāṇu ... atom/ the smallest possible division of matter, beyond which further division is impossible, or that whole which has no parts; a positional reality with no magnitude, that is, no length, breadth, or thickness; (in Vaiśeṣika) the ultimates of all things, the first four Eternal Realities (dravyas), viz, (1) Earth (pṛthivī), (2) Water (āpas), (3) Fire (tejas), and (4) Air (vāyu)

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Saundaryalahari of Sankaracarya

According to the Nyaya and Vaisesika schools of Indian philosophy, the basic material of the physical universe is paramanu. Para- means absolute and anu means a monad. It has no dimensions except a mathematical location.

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Pramanu, anu, vayu

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Saundaryalahari of Sankaracarya

Only by the coming together or contact and structural cohesion of several paramanus is one anu or atom generated. Vayu is the field for generation of anus or atoms.

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

paramāṇu - compounded of parama + aṇu

Related words

Anu

Sanskrit

Paramāṇu — परमाणु

paramāṇu - परमाणु

Paramarthika

Variant spellings

paramarthika

paramārthika

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Paramārthika — ... the Absolute; the absolutely real

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is the highest of the three levels of reality. It represents the absolute truth. (See vyāvahārika and prātibhāsika.) This term is contextual for it is used with regard to the Absolute for the purpose of distinguishing it from all else.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

Paramarthika: This is contrasted with vyavaharika. The pure, rational or idealist aspect of life which has little or nothing to do with social or other obligations or necessities. (Parama, ultimate; and artika, as the aim.)

Prasad. Three Acharyas and Narayana Guru tradition

Paramarthika : That which is related to paramartha, the absolute Reality or the highest goal of life, (parama = “highest”, artha = “reality”, “purpose”, “meaning”).

Descriptions

Paramarthika, vyavaharika, pratibhasika - three types of reality

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

There are three orders of reality in Vedānta, namely the pāramāthika or absolute, vyavahārika or practical ordinary experience, and prātibhāsika, illusory. The first one represents the absolute truth; the other two are false impressions due to dosa [defect, imperfection]. The difference between vyavahārika and prātibhāsika is that the dosa of the vyavahārika perception is neither discovered nor removed until salvation, whereas the dosa of the prātibhāsika reality which occurs in many extraneous forms (such as defect of the senses, sleep, etc.) is perceived in the world of our ordinary experience, and thus the prātibhāsika experience lasts for a much shorter period than the vyavahārika. But just as the vyavahārika world is regarded as phenomenal modifications of the ajñāna, as apart from our subjective experience and even before it, so the illusion (e.g. of silver in the conch-shell) is also regarded as a modification of avidyā, an undefinable creation of the object of illusion, by the agency of the dosa.

Encyclopedia of philosophy

Advaita views reality as a threefold entity that includes the illusory (pratibhasika, such as dreams), worldly experience (vyavaharika), and absolute reality (paramarthikasatta).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

All visible things are the product of willing. Only where there is willing is there any object. If there is no willing there is nothing at all. The snake imagined on the basis of a rope is merely a product of willing. For a man who has the presentiment of a snake, a piece of rope lying in a place badly lit seems like a snake. When a lamp is brought and the object is examined, there is no snake in the rope. If we now inquire where the snake was, we can see that it has its being only in the will. This snake has neither a work-a-day reality (vyāvahārika) nor an absolute reality (pāramāthika). It has only a reflected eidetic (prātibhāsika) status. In the same way as with this eidetic snake, if we consider any other of the many objects presented to us we conclude that they are only products of the will. ... In the same way as this eidetic snake came from the vitalistic will (of the individual), (so too) this work-a-day world is the product of the will of the Highest Lord. All things, as presentiments of the will are unreal. When knowledge comes they are destroyed. But the difference we should note here is that the snake-rope is of the nature of vital presentiment of the will. When the right knowledge which belongs to the living being is operative they (i.e., snake and rope) get abolished. But in the case of this

work-a-day world, having its origin in the will of the Highest Lord, even after we come to know of it as unreal we cannot abolish it completely because the Lord's willing is stronger than individual vital willing and because all beings are caught and helplessly spun around by the will of the Lord. It is only the will of the Lord that can abolish altogether this collective presentiment (called) the visible world. In spite of this, however, those great souls who have attained to the experience of reality through Self-knowledge, know the unreality of the world in respect of the three aspects of time whether past, present or future. Because it arises from the will and is also dissolved by the will the world is non-existent in the same way as the snake supposed in the basis of the rope. By bringing in the analogy of the rope and snake we have to understand that the world was not before or after but only present in the intermediate period when nescience prevailed and knowledge had not asserted itself. What is not present in the past and in future can certainly be said to be non-existent in the present.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

... the purpose of the whole philosophy is to indicate the underlying Reality whether of the jagrat, svapna and sushupti states, or the individual souls, the world and God.

There are three outlooks possible:-

- (1) The Vyavaharika: The man sees the world in all its variety, surmises the creator and believes in himself as the subject. All these are thus reduced to the three fundamentals, jagat, jiva and Isvara. He learns the existence of the creator and tries to reach him in order to gain immortality. If one is thus released from bondage, there are all other individuals existing as before who should work out their own salvation. He more or less admits the One Reality underlying all these phenomena. The phenomena are due to the play of maya. Maya is the sakti of Isvara or the activity of Reality. Thus, existence of different souls, objects, etc., do not clash with the advaitic point of view.
- (2) The Pratibhasika: The jagat, jiva and Isvara are all cognised by the seer only. They do not have any existence independent of him. So there is only one jiva, be it the individual or God. All else is simply a myth.
- (3) The Paramarthika: i.e., ajatavada (no-creation doctrine) which admits of no second. There is no reality or absence of it, no seeking or gaining, no bondage or liberation and so on.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Katha Upanishad

There are three kinds of realities: pratibhasika, vyavaharika and paramarthika. The world of waking appears to have a practical value, a utility; but it is as much a world of ignorance as the world of dream from the point of view of paramarthika-satta. The objects are much more real than the dream objects. Our present happiness and sorrows seem to be more meaningful than dream happiness or dream sorrows. The fact is that both are avidya or ignorance—waking and dreaming. In sleep which is avarana [a veil], as well as in dream or waking which are vikshepa [multiplicity], ignorance prevails.

... The empirical values and realities of the world are reflections of the paramarthika-satta, or Eternal Reality. These three, pratibhasika, vyavaharika and paramarthika, are but three expressions of the One. Just as light can pass through a clear, coloured or broken glass and get reflected accordingly, the one Reality can reveal Itself in different ways. All these manifestations: matter, body, mind; earth, water, fire, air, ether etc., are rays, varying in intensity, of the same Light from which all lights come.

See also:

in Satya: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

paramārthika — from parama = “highest” + artha = “purpose”

Related words

Pratibhasika

Vyavaharika

Sanskrit

Paramārthika — परमार्थिक

paramārthika - परमार्थिकि

Paramarthika satyam

Definitions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

[Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Paramarthika satyam: absolute reality.

Sivananda tradition

[Krishnananda. Commentary on the Katha Upanishad](#)

In the case of the Atman, existence is general and absolute. This is paramarthika-satta.

Descriptions

See: Paramarthika, vyavaharika, pratibhasika - three types of reality

Related words

Pratibhasika satyam

Vyavaharika satyam

Paramatman

Variant spellings

paramatman
paramātman

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Paramātman — ... the supreme Self; Brahman; God; the Absolute

1. According to Sāṅkhya, the conscious individual (puruṣa) is called paramātman.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

paramātman -

all the heart (only instr. = parameṇa cetasā);

the Supreme Spirit

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Paramatman (“the highest self”). Term generally used as a synonym for Brahman, the unqualified and undifferentiated reality that is seen as the source of all things, and the sole true power in the universe. This name, through its inclusion of the Self (atman) as part of the term, also emphasizes the identity in kind between Brahman and atman, between Supreme Reality and the individual Self.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Paramatma: The Supreme or the Absolutely conceived Self. Can be equated cosmologically with the concept of Brahman, or ethically with Ananda or Bliss as a supreme value.

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

“The yogi seeks to realize the Paramatman, the Supreme Soul. His ideal is the union of the embodied soul and the Supreme Soul. He withdraws his mind from sense-objects and tries to concentrate it on the Paramatman. Therefore, during the first stage of his spiritual discipline, he retires into solitude and with undivided attention practises meditation in a fixed posture.

“But the Reality is one and the same. The difference is only in name. He who is Brahman is verily Atman, and again, He is the Bhagavan. He is Brahman to the followers of the path of knowledge, Paramatman to the yogis, and Bhagavan to the lovers of God.”

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

a young man well-read and earnest, with a strong belief in the existence of Paramatman (Supreme Self) as different from the Jivatman (individual self), raised some questions.

Sri Bhagavan clinched his various doubts by this one statement: Remove the upadhis (adjuncts), jiva and parama, from the Atman and say if you still find the difference. If later these doubts still persist ask yourself, “Who is the doubter? Who is the thinker?” Find him. These doubts will vanish.

...

D.: Several terms are used in the holy books - Atman, Paramatman, Para, etc. What is the gradation in them?

M.: They mean the same to the user of the words. But they are understood differently by persons according to their development.

D.: But why do they use so many words to mean the same thing?

M.: It is according to circumstances. They all mean the Self. Para means ‘not relative’ or ‘beyond the relative’, that is to say, the Absolute.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

The supreme spirit (Paramātman), different from prakṛti and its modifications, having ‘for its essential characteristic pure consciousness is unparticled, manifests this infinity of reality and unreality—the underlying essence of the notion “I”, “I” — manifests itself in the conditions, waking and the rest, as the witness (or subject) of buddhi.137

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

This Atman, then, revels in all the three states of Consciousness as the ego, the “I, I, I”. In the waking state “I” am conscious of my waking-world, in the dream state, “I” am conscious of my dream-world, and in the deep-sleep state “I” am conscious of the absence of everything. So this Consciousness in us, the Paramatman, expresses at all times in the form of “I, I, I” but never gets involved in the happenings around. It is the Knowing Principle—the Witness, observing all thoughts and experiences of the mind and the intellect.

See: Jivatman and Paramatman

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

paramātman - from parama = “highest” + ātma = “Self

Related words

Atman
Jivatman

Sanskrit

Paramātman — परमात्मन्
paramātman - परमात्मन्

Parinama

Variant spellings

parinama
pariṇāma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pariṇāma — ... change; modification; transformation; evolution; development; ripening; changing

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pariṇāma -

change, alteration, transformation into (instr.), development, evolution;

ripeness, maturity;

alteration of food, digestion;

withering, fading;

lapse (of time);

decline (of age), growing old;

result, consequence, issue, end;

(in rhet.) a figure of speech by which the properties of any object are transferred to that with which it is compared;

N. of a holy man

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Dhole

8. When a substance is changed from its former condition into a different form it is called Parinama, as curdled milk, jar, and gold respectively, in which their original form and condition are changed.

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda

8. Parinama is the change of one state of the same substance into another, as milk into curd, clay into a pot and gold into an earring.

See also:

Material and efficient cause

in Brahma-sutra: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

in Parinama-vada: [Prasad. Darsanamala of Narayana Guru](#)

Related words

Parinama-vada

Vivarta

Sanskrit

Parināma — परिणाम

parināma - परिणाम

Parinama-vada

Variant spellings

parinama-vada

parināma-vāda

parināmavāda

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Parināma-vāda — ... transformation theory

1. The theory that the cause is continually transforming itself into its effects.

2. According to Brahma-parināma-vāda, the world is a transformation of the Absolute (Brahman), and according to prakṛti-parināmavāda, the world is a transformation of primordial Nature (prakṛti).

3. According to Sāṅkhya, causation is the manifestation of what is in a latent condition in the cause. That is, the effect exists already in the cause in a potential state, and the causal operation only makes patent what is latent in the cause. This theory is also called satkārya-vāda. Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta also accepts this theory.

4. Śaiva Siddhānta holds that the world is a transformation of the primordial Nature (prakṛti-parināma-vāda).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pariṇāmavāda -
the 'doctrine of evolution', the Sāṃkhya doctrine

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

parinama vada: the theory of Brahman changing into the world

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Parinamavada (“transformation-relationship”). Philosophical perspective that explains the relationship between the Ultimate Reality or realities and the perceivable world, and describes the world as a genuine transformation of this reality.

This position is espoused by proponents of the Samkhya, Vishishthadvaita Vedanta, and Bhedabhada philosophical schools. All three of these are proponents of a causal model called satkaryavada. The satkaryavada model assumes that effects preexist in their causes, and that, when these effects appear, they are transformations (parinama) of those causes. The classic example for this model is the transformation of milk to curds, butter, and clarified butter: each of these effects was already present in the cause, emerges from it through a natural transformation of that cause, and is causally related to it.

All three schools believe that the world as perceived is real and has some single ultimate source behind it: for the Samkhyas, the first principles are purusha and prakrti, for the Vishishthadvaita school, the god Vishnu, and for the Bhedabhada school, Brahman. All believe that real things come into being because these first principles undergo real transformations. Parinamavada allows for an explanation of the phenomenal world that compromises the transcendence of these first principles by making them part of the world. Philosophically, their difficulties arise in describing how the transcendent can become mundane, and then become transcendent again.

The transformation relationship is vehemently opposed by the Advaita Vedanta philosophical school, which upholds a philosophical position known as monism (the belief that a single Ultimate Reality lies behind all things, and that all things are merely differing forms of that reality). Advaita proponents claim that reality is nondual (advaita)—that is, that all things are “actually” the formless, unqualified Brahman, despite the appearance of difference and diversity in the world. Since Brahman is the only real thing, and Brahman never changes, the parinama model is a fundamental misunderstanding of the ultimate nature of things, since it assumes real change. The Advaita proponents’ explanation for the nature of the relationship and the world is known as vivartavada (“illusory manifestation”), in which the ultimate appears to become transformed but in reality never changes.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Darsanamala of Narayana Guru

The process in which the causal substance undergoes irreversible intrinsic change to assume the form of an effect, is known as parināma (evolution). Milk curdling, for example, is a parināma. The content of milk undergoes total change to become curd, and curd can never be brought back to the milkform. Similarly, when Ātmā, the causal substance is thought of as undergoing basic

change to appear as the world, the theory is known as parināma-vāda (the theory of evolution). Certain Upanisadic texts, for instance, depict pictures interpretable as parināma, as when these say, from Ātmū emerged space (ākāśa), from space air (vayu), from air fire (agni), from fire water (ap), from water earth (prthivī), from earth vegetation (osadhayah), from vegetation food (annam), and from food living beings. Though some Vedāntins treat this creation picture as involving evolution, strict non-dualists (advaitins) treat this as a portrayal of a hierarchy of apparent forms ranging from the most subtle to the most gross. It indirectly admits also that cause is always subtler and effect grosser.

...
Sāmkhya is the one school of Indian Philosophy that bases itself on the evolution theory.

See also:

in Vivarta-vada: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Related words

Parinama
Vivarta-vada

Sanskrit

Pariṇāma-vāda — परिणामवाद
pariṇāma-vāda - परिणामवाद

Patanjali

Name

Patañjali — पतञ्जलि
Patañjali - पतञ्जलि

Descriptions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Patañjali — ... name of a philosopher and the greatest exponent of the Yoga philosophy

1. He is the author of the Yoga Sūtras. There is a Patañjali who is the reputed author of the Mahābhāṣya, the great commentary on Paṇini's Sūtras on grammar.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

patañjali -

N. of a celebrated grammarian (author of the Mahābhāṣya);

of a philosopher (the propounder of the Yoga philosophy);
of a physician &c.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Patanjali (c. second century B.C.E.) author of Yoga Sutra. In Indian tradition two books are ascribed to Patanjali: the Mahabhashya (the primary commentary to the grammar of Panini) and the commentary on the YOGA SUTRA. Western scholarship, however, dates the first work to around 200 B.C.E., and the Yoga Sutra to around 200 C.E., making it impossible for the two Patanjalis to be the same. Tradition has it that Patanjali was an incarnation of the divine serpent ADISHESHA, upon whom VISHNU reclines between ages on the MILK OCEAN. Patanjali's name, it is said, is from this serpent, which in very tiny form fell (pat) onto the palm (anjali) of either Panini himself or his mother, Gonika, or fell from her womb (anjali) (the word anjali has many meanings). Patanjali is sometimes also referred to as Gonikaputra (son of Gonika). Iconographically, Patanjali is depicted with the lower body of a snake and a canopy of five serpent heads over his head. He is shown offering anjali MUDRA with his palms joined. This clearly refers to the second element of his name.

Encyclopedia of religion

PATAÑJALI THE GRAMMARIAN (fl. c. 140 BCE) was a Sanskrit grammarian and author of the Mahabhasya, the major commentary on Panini's Astadhyayi. Patanjali's bhasya ("commentary") focuses on Panini's work both directly and indirectly, for it evaluates both Panini's verses and those of Katyayana's Varttika, the first notable commentary on the Astadhyayi. Panini, Katyayana, and Patanjali have often been grouped together in a kind of grammatical lineage; Panini and Patanjali, however, remain by far the foremost authorities on the Sanskrit language.

Wikipedia

Patanjali (fl. 150 BCE or 2nd c. BCE) is the compiler of the Yoga Sutras, an important collection of aphorisms on Yoga practice, and also the author of the Mahābhāṣya, a major commentary on Panini's Ashtadhyayi. However, whether these two works are that of the same author or not remains in some doubt.



Patañjali as an incarnation of Adi Seshha
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Patanjali.jpg>

Yoga of Patanjali and Advaita Vedanta

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

When we think of the subject of yoga in the context of Indian spirituality, the most canonical or authoritative textbook, which all correct scholars or practitioners have to keep in mind, is Patanjali's series of aphorisms called the Yogasutras. Although Patanjali is thus an authority, his yoga, which is sometimes also called Raja Yoga, is considered defective in the full context of Advaita Vedanta. Patanjali's Yoga is not countenanced with favour in the Brahmasutras of Badarayana, nor in the Yoga Vasistha, which is perhaps the latest authoritative textbook of yoga. The Yoga Vasistha contains an explicit disavowal of the astanga yoga of Patanjali, where Rama is asked by his guru Vasistha, to treat his own teaching as the final authority. Vasistha speaks in terms of sapta bhumikas, or seven grounds of consciousness, which he defines elaborately in more than one place. The main objection to the Patanjali system of Yoga, by Vedantic texts such as the Bhagavadgita, is that its epistemology and methodology are necessarily vitiated by their being based on the Samkhya dualism of Kapila. In the thought of Kapila and Patanjali, and their respective schools of Samkhya and Yoga, there still persists a vestige of duality between nature (prakrti) and spirit (purusa). This duality is essentially the same as that between matter and mind. Advaita, on the other hand, cannot tolerate even the slightest taint of duality between these two factors. The avowed purpose of Advaita is to abolish all duality whether between causes and effects, means and ends or between disciplines and their results. ... Patanjali's Yogasutras itself has been commented upon by Vyasa in what is known as the Vyasa bhasya, which is an attempt to abolish the duality which persisted as an implicit genetic element of error in Patanjali's original approach. The well-known Bhojavarttika of Bhojaraja and the Tattva Vaisaradl of Vacaspati Misra pushed this revaluation still further, and Advaitic notions of yoga have also been further revised and made up to date in the writings of Sankaracarya and Narayana Guru.

Life

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The founder of the Yoga was Patañjali. He did not discover the science of the Yoga, for it is an art that has been used since the beginning of time. Its techniques and teachings have been accumulated through a ceaseless stream of adepts, self-fulfilled personalities, who have handed it down from generation to generation through a group of devoted followers. Patañjali is credited with having given us the present literary form of the Yoga doctrine in his famous treatise, the Yogasūtra. However, he indicates that there must have been a previous account by the opening sutra which says, "Now a revised text of Yoga." According to the Yājñavalkya Smṛti, Hiranyagarbha was the original teacher of the Yoga; however, Patañjali is traditionally accepted as the founder of the Yoga. Very little is known of the life of Patañjali, and the few fragments that are available are so full of legend, that they cannot be relied upon. There is considerable controversy over the identity of Patañjali. Some authorities claim that he is the same Patañjali who wrote the famous commentary called the Mahābhāṣya on the grammar of Pāṇini, but the available evidence is too conflicting to warrant a settled opinion. There is no reliable source to determine the time when Patañjali flourished; so he is assigned to various periods ranging from the third century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.

Teachings

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

The most characteristic description of yoga would be the word *nirodha*, which, in this context [stable psychophysical states of consciousness, conventionally named *chakras* in the discipline of yoga], means ‘restraint of the outgoing mental processes’, which, through chains of natural associations, keep the mind distracted and wandering from one item of interest to another. Patanjali’s definition of Yoga is based on this basic concept of restraint (*Yogasutras*, I.2.). According to Patanjali, there are eight stages (*as-tanga*) by which a yogi practises the discipline of meditation (11.29). It begins with the lowest physical limit, where control is indicated by the word *yama*, meaning ‘inward withdrawal of tendencies’. After *yama* comes *niyama* which applies to a slightly higher level of the personality, and which means ‘restraint or control conditioned by rules’. Then comes *asana* which refers to the correct posture for restraining the mind. *Pranayama*, the fourth stage in the process, refers to the regulation of the outgoing and incoming breaths, in order to subdue the vital tendencies which are at the basis of the function of breathing so that they do not obstruct the process of meditation (*dhyana*), which is one of the stages to follow. The fifth stage of Patanjali’s Yoga is *pratyahara* which is a negative process of withdrawal — from the side of the non-Self to the Self — of the outgoing tendencies. In *dharana*, sustained concentration or contemplation, a first degree participation is established between the Self and the non-Self. *Dhyana*, which is given as the seventh stage in the *Yogasutras*, underlines a sustained state of *dharana*. Finally, the eighth stage is called *samadhi*. The word *sama* suggests equality and *dhi* suggests intellect. The intellect is thus expected to attain to a certain equality or equilibrium with itself. The cancellability of the Self and the non-Self is implied here.

Texts

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

The fundamental text of Yoga philosophy is the very popular, widely studied and quoted *Yogasutras* of Patañjali (300). An ancient (475) commentary, the *Yogabhaṣya*, is ascribed to someone named Vyasa, and Vacaspati Misra (940) has written a commentary on that named *Tattvavaisaradi*.

Encyclopedia of religion

One of the most important of ... various meditational traditions found precise articulation by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutra*, written probably during the Gupta period (320–540 CE), with important later commentaries such as the sixteenth-century *Yogavarttika* of Vijnanabhikshu.

Related words

Yoga

Pitryana

Variant spellings

pitryana
pitryāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pitryāna — ... path of the ancestors.

1. The way of the ancestors in which the individual soul journeys until, after death, it once more enters a womb to be born again.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pitryāṇa -

trodden by or leading to the Pitṛis (path);

(Ved.) the path leading to the Pitṛis;

(Ved.) the vehicle of the Pitṛis, a car to convey virtuous persons after their decease to heaven

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Pitryana: The path of the manes. One of the two paths through which the departed souls supposedly travel to the other world, from where they would be returning. Also called kṛṣṇa gati (the black path) and dhūma-marga (the path of smoke).

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of religion

Those who have not achieved ultimate self-realization but have lived a life of sinless piety and devotion, through sacrifices, penance, and charity, go along the path of the ancestors (pitryana) to the world of the moon, where they become rain and subsequently food: "Gods feed on them, and when that passes away from them, they start on their return journey to the reborn as human beings. . . Thus do they rotate." Evildoers are reborn as insects and vermin. According to the Chandogya Upanisad, they are reborn as dogs and pigs.

See: Devayana and pitriyana

See: Devayana, pitriyana and the third path

Related words

Devayana

Pancagnividya

Sanskrit

Pitryāna — पितृयान

Prajapati

Variant spellings

Prajapati
prajāpati

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prajāpati — ... lord of creatures; creator; lord of becoming

1. God who divided himself into male and female. The highest manifestation of the Absolute (Brahman), who is known by such names as Hiraṇyagarbha, Sutrātman, Prāṇa, and so on.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prajāpati -

'lord of creatures', N. of Savitṛi, Soma, Agni, Indra &c.;

a divinity presiding over procreation, protector of life;

lord of creatures, creator ... (N. of a supreme god above or among the Vedic deities ... but in later times also applied to Viṣṇu, Śiva, Time personified, the sun, fire, &c., and to various progenitors, esp. to the 10 lords of created beings first created by Brahmā, viz. Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaka, Kratu, Vasishṭha, Pracetas or Daksha, Bṛiḡu, Nārada ..., of whom some authorities count only the first 7, others the last 3);

a father;

a king, prince;

a son-in-law;

the planet Mars;

a species of insect

Dictionary - Runes

Prajapati: (Skr.) "Lord of creatures", originally applied to various Vedic gods, it assumed as early as the Rig Veda the importance of a first philosophical principle of creation, and later of time as suggestive of gestation and productive periodicity. K.F.L.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Prajapati, "lord of all born beings," was a Vedic divinity of some importance. In the period of the BRAHMANAS his status rose even higher, as he was ritually identified with the cosmic PURUSHA, the source of all reality.

In the Rig Veda, the cosmic Purusha allowed himself to be dismembered to create all reality. This story was ritually reenacted each year in the AGNICHAYANA—the ritual building of the fire altar—but in the ritual Prajapati's name is substituted for Puru-

sha's. Prajapati retained his aggrandized status in the UPANISHADS, but in later Hindu mythology he reverts to the status of "lord of all born beings." In some cases, BRAHMA, the creator god, takes on his role.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Prajapati: Literally, "the lord of those who are born." Name applied to the Creator as the progenitor of all living beings, and represents an ontological version of Brahma the Creator.

Descriptions

General

Deussen. Outlines of Indian Philosophy

It is characteristic of the way in which Indian religion developed that a mere philosophical abstraction such as Prajapati might put in the background all the other gods and occupy in the time of the Brahmanas the highest place in the Hindu pantheon. Prajapati in this period is considered as the father of gods, men and demons, as the creator and ruler of the world. Numerous passages of the Brahmanas, intended to recommend some ritual usage, describe the rite or formula as produced by Prajapati and employed by him in the creation of the world. Such passages regularly begin with the phrase that in the beginning Prajapati alone was, that he performed penance and thereby worthily prepared himself for creating the different gods, the worlds and the various implements and materials of sacrifice. All the gods depend on him ; in him they take refuge when harassed by the demons; and to him as arbitrator they come if some quarrel about their relative dignity arises. Into these details we will not enter; we will here only point out that the Indian idea of creation is essentially different from that current in the Christian world. Prajapati does not create a world; he transforms himself, his body and his limbs into the different parts of the universe. Therefore in creating he is swallowed up, he falls to pieces, and is restored by the performance of some rite which is in this way recommended. In later texts we observe a tendency to get rid of Prajapati whether by deriving him from a still higher principle, such as the primordial waters, the Non-ent preceding his existence, or by explaining him away and identifying him with the creating mind, the creating word, the sacrifice or the year as principles of the world. In older passages Prajapati creates, among other ritual objects, the Brahman; later passages on the other hand make him dependent on the Brahman.

Lurker. Dictionary of Gods

Prajapati ('Lord of the creatures'). In the Rigveda, the name of the divine creator of the world. In the Atharvaveda he is said to be the creator of heaven and earth. The world arises as an emanation from his inexhaustible being. His function as a progenitor is underlined in the Mahabharata where he appears as protective lord of the sexual organ. Occasionally, he takes the place of → Varuṇa, whose sacred animal, the tortoise, can be one of the forms Prajapati may assume. In Hinduism, Prajapati is understood as one of the names of the god → Brahman.

Hume. The thirteen Upanishads

Prajāpati (literally ' Lord of creatures') began to rise towards the end of the Vedic period, increased in prominence through the Brahmanic.and continued on into the Upanishadic [period].

...

SECOND BRAHMANA [Brihadaranyaka upanishad]

The three cardinal virtues

1. The threefold offspring of Prajāpati—gods, men, and devils (asura)—dwelt with their father Prajāpati as students of sacred knowledge (brahmacarya).

Having lived the life of a student of sacred knowledge, the gods said: ‘Speak to us, sir.’ To them then he spoke this syllable, ‘Da.’ ‘Did you understand?’ ‘We did understand,’ said they. ‘You said to us, “Restraining yourselves (damyata).”’ ‘Yes (Om)!’ said he. ‘You did understand.’

2. So then the men said to him: ‘Speak to us, sir.’ To them then he spoke this syllable, ‘Da.’ ‘Did you understand?’ ‘We did understand,’ said they. ‘You said to us, “Give (datta).”’ ‘Yes (Om)!’ said he. ‘You did understand.’

3. So then the devils said to him: ‘Speak to us, sir.’ To them then he spoke this syllable, ‘Da.’ ‘Did you understand?’ ‘We did understand,’ said they. ‘You said to us, “Be compassionate (dayadhvam).”’ ‘Yes (Om)!’ said he. ‘You did understand.’

This same thing does the divine voice here, thunder, repeat: Da ! Da ! Da ! that is, restrain yourselves, give, be compassionate. One should practise this same triad : self-restraint, giving, compassion.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prajāpati - from prajā = “creation” + pati = “lord”

Related words

Brahman

Hiranyagarbha

Purusa

Sanskrit

Prajāpati — प्रजापति

prajāpati - प्रजापति

Prajna

Variant spellings

prajna

prajñā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prajñā — ... wisdom; intuitive wisdom; gnosis

1. The intuitive wisdom, the highest knowledge, according to Mahāyāna Buddhism.
2. It is one of the six virtues of Buddhism.
3. The individual form of the self as the witness of the bare nescience in the state of sleep. It is also known as ānandamaya. The experiencer in deep sleep is called the prajñā when there is no determinate knowledge, but only pure bliss and pure consciousness.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prajñā -

-janati, to know, understand (esp. a way or mode of action), discern, distinguish, know about, be acquainted with ...; to find out, discover, perceive, learn ..., to show or point out (the way) ... ; to summon, invite

Ramakrishna tradition

Sarvananda. Mandukya Upanishad

11. Prajna, whose field is deep sleep, is the letter 'M', the third part of Om, because they are alike the measure¹ and the end² of the others. One who knows this, measures everything by his knowledge and comprehends everything within himself.

[NOTES — 1. Measure -When the syllable Om is uttered and re-uttered, the first two elements of it, A and U, seem to sink into M, the third element, and come out of it again on the re-utterance of the syllable. So also waking and dream states seem to subside in sleep, here identified with Prajna, and emerge from it afterwards. Hence M and Prajna are compared to a measure into which grain is put and from which it is measured out afterwards.

2. End — When the syllable Om is uttered, its first two elements seem to merge or end in M. So also waking and dream seem to merge into deep sleep, here identified with Prajna.]

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

When you are deep asleep, consciousness is filling that state which has within it no division of subject and object, and yet it has all the possibilities of becoming the dream or the wakeful through the slightest stimulation. Prajna, or the seed ground of all this universe, is within you as the basis of consciousness. It opens up as every form in the dream, and it unfolds as everything seen in the external world.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Prajna—It is the name of the Jiva or individual soul while in a state of profound sleep. ... In the last state the Jiva remains, temporarily, in a state of unity with Brahman, but covered with ignorance.

Karapatra. Advaita Bodha Deepika

... in deep sleep asprajna he experiences ignorance.

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The experiencer of susupti. That the Prajna, in deep sleep, enjoys bliss is viewed from waking state.

See: Visva, Taijasa, Prajna

See also:

in Jiva: Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Etymology

Ramakrishna tradition

Sarvananda. Mandukya Upanishad

the Prajna (lit; one who knows properly)

Related words

Sushupti

Taijasa

Visva

Sanskrit

Prajñā — प्रज्ञा

prajñā - प्रज्ञा

Prajnanam Brahma

Variant spellings

Prajnanam Brahma

prajñānam brahma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prajñānam-brahma — ... “Consciousness is the Absolute (Brahman)”

1. A mahā-vākya (Great Saying) which occurs in the Aitareya Upaniṣad of the Rg Veda.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Prajnanam Brahman (“Wisdom is Brahman”). In the Hindu philosophical tradition, one of the “great utterances” (mahavakyas) expressing the ultimate truth. The truth here is the identity of prajnanam (ultimate wisdom) and Brahman (Supreme Reality); this identity is the heart of the speculative texts called the Upanishads. Aside from their importance in a philosophical context, as encapsulating fundamental truths, the four mahavakyas were also appropriated as identifying symbols by the four divisions of the Dashanami Sanyasi ascetics. Each division had a different mahavakya, just as each had a different Veda, a different primary monastic center, and a different paradigmatic ascetic quality. Prajnanam Brahman is the mahavakya associated with the Bhogawara division of the Dashanami Sanyasis.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

One of these [mananavakyas, the dictums for meditation] is prajnanam brahma. When you are deep asleep, consciousness is filling that state which has within it no division of subject and object, and yet it has all the possibilities of becoming the dream or the wakeful through the slightest stimulation. Prajna, or the seed ground of all this universe, is within you as the basis of consciousness. It opens up as every form in the dream, and it unfolds as everything seen in the external world. Knowing this you say, “All these variations which I see here are all modifications of my own prajna. Prajnanam brahma: all the variations that I see in the form of this cosmic universe are none other than the Absolute.”

This universe is not a separate thing, it is an extension of our own self. It is not something that can be rejected. It is to be endeared to us. This world is our Self.

...

As long as you are within the frame of reference called the transactional, you have to give full validation to every item in it. It is here that the spiritual life of some people fails, because in the name of spirituality, in the name of philosophy, or in the name of realization, they belittle the validity of transactions. This ontological error is a big problem. To correct it, prajnanam brahma is given, to remind you that what is out there as your experience is born of the same reality that has produced you and your mind. Not until you realize this can you be at ease with the external world.

See: Mahavakyas as used for instruction

Related words

Aitareya Upanishad
Maha-Vakya
Rig Veda

Sanskrit

Prajñānam-brahma — प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म
prajñānam brahma - प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म

Prakriti

Variant spellings

prakriti
prakṛti
prakṛti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prakṛti — ... primal Nature; primordial Nature; creatrix.

1. According to Sāṅkhya, it is also called pradhāna and avyakta; matter is one of the two categories basic to its system. It is fundamentally active, but nonconscious. It is fundamentally one and imperceptible. It is the source of the universe and can be inferred from its effects. It is a composite of three constituents called gunas (sattva, rajas, and tamas).
2. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, it is one of the six substances. Unlike in Sāṅkhya, the qualities (guṇa) are the qualities of primal Nature (prakṛti) and not its constituents. These qualities are inseparable from it, but not identical with it. It is inseparably related to God (īśvara) and dependent upon Him, unlike the independent prakṛti of Sāṅkhya. It is the dwelling place of the individual, and through it, of God himself. Sāṅkhya's prakṛti is infinite, but here it is limited above by the eternal manifestation (nityavibhūti).
3. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is a principle of illusion (māyā), and therefore not fundamentally real. It is a phenomenon but not a phantasm, however,
4. According to Dvaita Vedānta, it is the material cause of the world and one of the twenty substances (dravya).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prakṛti -

'making or placing before or at first', the original or natural form or condition of anything, original or primary substance;
cause original source;
origin, extraction;
nature, character, constitution, temper, disposition;

fundamental form, pattern, standard, model, rule (esp. in ritual);
 (in the Sāṃkhya phil.) the original producer of (or rather passive power of creating) the material world (consisting of 3 constituent essences or Guṇas called sattva, rajas and tamas), Nature (distinguished from puruṣa, Spirit as Māyā is distinguished from Brahman in the Vedāntas);
 the 8 producers or primary essences which evolve the whole visible world (viz. avyakta, buddhi or mahat, ahaṃkāra, and the 5 tanmātras or subtle elements ; rarely the 5 elements alone);
 (in mythol.) a goddess, the personified will of the Supreme in the creation (hence the same with the Śakti or personified energy or wife of a deity, as Lakshmi, Durgā &c.; also considered as identical with the Supreme Being);
 N. of a class of deities under Manu Raibhya;
 a king's ministers, the body of ministers or counsellors, ministry;
 the subjects of a king, citizens, artisans &c.;
 the constituent elements or powers of the state (of which are usually enumerated, viz. king minister, allies, treasure, army, territory, fortresses);
 the various sovereigns to be considered in case of war;
 the crude or elementary form of a word, base, root, an uninflected word;
 N. of 2 classes of metres;
 (in arithm.) a co-efficient multiplier;
 (in anat.) temperament, the predominance of one of the humours at the time of generation;
 the third nature, a eunuch;
 matter, affair;
 the male or female organ of generation;
 a woman or womankind;
 a mother;
 an animal;
 N. of a woman

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Prakriti. In the list of 24 categories of reality in SAMKHYA and YOGA, prakriti refers to nature or the phenomenal universe. It is seen as an eternal reality that always existed and always will exist. That is to say, phenomenal reality is not a created entity but is an eternal real that always was and always will be. Prakriti is seen as an unconscious force that creates and dissolves universes; when a universe is dissolved, prakriti becomes an inert unmanifest reality, which will once again come forward to produce a new creation. The task of Samkhya and most yogas is to learn how to dissociate the intellect, the highest discriminatory faculty, as much as possible from the whirl of prakriti, phenomenal existence.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Prakriti ("nature"). One of the two fundamental principles in the Samkhya school, the other being purusha ("person"). Samkhya espouses an atheistic philosophical dualism, in which purusha and prakriti—roughly, spirit and nature—are the source of all things. Prakriti is better conceived of as force or power rather than a specific material object. It contains within it three different forces with three different qualities (guna): sattva tends toward the good, rajas towards activity or passion, and tamas towards darkness and decay. In the primal prakriti these forces are in perfect equilibrium, each perfectly balancing the others, but when prakriti's equilibri-

um is disturbed, it sets in motion a pattern of evolution that creates both the exterior physical world and the interior psychological world. All of these evolutes— material or psychic—have a differing balance of the three gunas, which ultimately determines their character as wholesome, active, or unwholesome.

Wikipedia

Prakriti is, according to the Bhagavad Gita, the basic nature of intelligence by which the Universe exists and functions. It is described in Bhagavad Gita as the “primal motive force”. It is the essential constituent of the universe and is at the basis of all the activity of the creation. It is composed of the three gunas.

Prakriti also means nature. Nature can be described as environment. It can also be used to denote the ‘feminine’ in sense of the ‘male’ being the purusha.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Prakriti. Primordial Nature; the material substratum of the creation, consisting of sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Prakriti is closely associated with the concept of Maya within Vedic scripture.

Mulaprakriti can be translated as “the root of nature” or “root of Prakriti”; it is a closer definition of ‘basic matter; and is often defined as the essence of matter, that aspect of the Absolute which underlines all the objective aspect of Nature. While plain Prakriti encompasses classical earth element, i.e. solid matter, Mulaprakriti includes any and all classical elements, including any considered not discovered yet (some tattvas.)

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

In the Seventh Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, prakriti or nature is said to consist of eight basic principles: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego. These are actually the evolutes of prakriti, which in the evaluation of Vedanta can be combined with purusa into one purusottama, a cosmic being or entity. Prakriti in its unexpanded form consists of sattva, rajas and tamas taken as a whole. These three gunas are primeval causes, and not the effects of anything. Then there are the five tanmatras, things-in-themselves, which are the praktis of the five gross elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

We all use the word Nature, and the old Hindu philosophers called it by two different names, Prakriti, which is almost the same as the English word ‘Nature,’ and by the more scientific name, Avyaktam (undifferentiated), from which everything proceeds, out of which come atoms and molecules, matter and force, and mind and intellect.

See: Gunas, prakriti, maya

Prakriti and Brahman

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Prakriti: Nature. Literally, “that which is always in an active state.” This activeness is inherent in the ultimate Reality or brahman. Brahman in its active state is called prakriti.

Prakriti and Maya

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

The Samkhya philosophers describe the universe as the modification of Prakṛti, or Nature. According to them the cause manifests itself as the effect. The effect, before it is produced, exists as the cause. According to another school of philosophers, which includes the Dualists and the Theists.. the universe did not exist before it was created. The effect is non-existent before it is produced. Sankara, on the other hand, points out the utter impossibility of the finite mind’s ever understanding the nature of the universe in terms of the causal relationship. He speaks of the universe as māyā because—as every thoughtful man knows, even while perceiving it with his senses—its nature is impermanence. When Sankara calls the universe māyā, he is only stating a fact, namely, the fact, that the One appears inexplicably as many. When a snake is beheld in place of a rope, the phenomenon may be described as māyā; this, however, does not imply any explanation of how or why the rope should thus appear. It states only a tangible fact. In the same sense, a mirage is māyā, dream objects are māyā, the creation is māyā.

Vedāntists use such terms as avidyā, ajñāna, and Prakṛti as practically synonymous with māyā. The word māyā generally signifies the cosmic illusion on account of which Brahman, or Pure Consciousness, appears as the Creator of the universe. Under the influence of avidyā, or nescience, Atman, or pure Consciousness, appears as the Jivā, or individualized self. Ajñāna is the ignorance which makes the Absolute appear as the relative or the One as the many. The word Prakṛti (matter or Nature) is used to denote māyā as the material out of which the universe has been created. But in actual practice these distinctions are not always maintained. The words are often interchanged.

See: Purusha and Prakriti

See also:

Sankhya

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

prakṛti — from the verb root kṛ = “to make, to do” + pra = “forth”.

Related words

Avyakta

Jada

Maya

Purusa

Sankhya

Sanskrit

Prakṛti — प्रकृति

prakṛti - प्रकृति

Evolution of Prakriti

General

[Encyclopedia of philosophy](#)

The original state of equipose is pradhana, meaning “the inferred one” because its existence is claimed on the basis of inference by analogy from experience. The first evolute is Mahat (the Great One) or buddhi (the subtle material that forms the basis of consciousness). Next comes ahamkara (the basis of individuation or self-sense), and then evolution takes two directions where either sattva or tamas predominates. Through the sattva route evolve manas (mind, or perhaps better brain), the five organs of perception, and the five organs of action. Through the tamas route evolve the five subtle elements (essences of sound, touch, taste, smell, and sight), and the five gross elements (ether, air, light, water, and earth) that are the constituents of all gross matter.

[Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy](#)

Sāmkhya believes that before this world came into being there was a state of dissolution-- a state in which the guna compounds had disintegrated into a state of disunion and had by their mutual opposition produced an equilibrium the prakṛti. Then later on disturbance arose in the prakṛti, and as a result of that a process of unequal aggregation of the gunas in varying proportions took place, which brought forth the creation of the manifold. Prakṛti, the state of perfect homogeneity and incoherence of the gunas, thus gradually evolved and became more and more determinate, differentiated, heterogeneous, and coherent.

...

But how or rather why prakrti should be disturbed is the most knotty point in Sāmkhya. It is postulated that the prakrti or the sum-total of the gunas is so connected with the purusas, and there is such an inherent teleology or blind purpose in the lifeless prakrti, that all its evolution and transformations take place for the sake of the diverse purusas, to serve the enjoyment of pleasures and sufferance of pain through experiences, and finally leading them to absolute freedom or mukti. A return of this manifold world into the quiescent state (pralaya) of prakrti takes place when the karmas of all purusas collectively require that there should be such a temporary cessation of all experience. At such a moment the guna compounds are gradually broken, and there is a backward movement (pratisañcara) till everything is reduced to the gunas in their elementary disintegrated state when their mutual opposition brings about their equilibrium. This equilibrium however is not a mere passive state, but one of utmost tension; there is intense activity, but the activity here does not lead to the generation of new things and qualities (visadrsha-parināma)...

Wikipedia

Sankhya theorizes that Prakriti is the source of the world of becoming. It is pure potentiality that evolves itself successively into twenty four tattvas or principles. The evolution itself is possible because Prakriti is always in a state of tension among its constituent strands -

Sattva - a template of balance or equilibrium;

Rajas - a template of expansion or activity;

Tamas - a template of inertia or resistance to action.

All macrocosmic and microcosmic creation uses these templates. The twenty four principles that evolve are -

Prakriti - The most subtle potentiality that is behind whatever is created in the physical universe, also called "primordial Matter". It is also a state of equilibrium amongst the Three Gunas.

Mahat - first product of evolution from Prakriti, pure potentiality. Mahat is also considered to be the principle responsible for the rise of buddhi or intelligence in living beings.

Ahamkara or ego-sense - second product of evolution. It is responsible for the self-sense in living beings. It is also one's identification with the outer world and its content.

"Panch Tanmatras" are a simultaneous product from Mahat Tattva, along with the Ahamkara. They are the subtle form of Panch Mahabhutas which result from grossification or Panchikaran of the Tanmatras. Each of these Tanmatras are made of all three Gunas.

Manas or "Antahkaran" evolves from the total sum of the sattva aspect of Panch Tanmatras or the "Ahamkara".

Panch jnana indriyas or five sense organs - also evolves from the sattva aspect of Ahamkara.

Pancha karma indriya or five organs of action - The organs of action are hands, legs, vocal apparatus, urino- genital organ and anus. They evolve from the rajas aspect of Ahamkara.

Pancha mahabhuta or five great substances - ether, air, fire, water and earth. They evolve from the "tamas" aspect of the "Ahamkara". This is the revealed aspect of the physical universe.

The evolution of primal nature is also considered to be purposeful - Prakrti evolves for the spirit in bondage. The spirit who is always free is only a witness to the evolution, even though due to the absence of discriminate knowledge, he misidentifies himself with it.

The evolution obeys causality relationships, with primal Nature itself being the material cause of all physical creation. The cause and effect theory of Sankhya is called Satkaarya-vaada (theory of existent causes), and holds that nothing can really be created from or destroyed into nothingness - all evolution is simply the transformation of primal Nature from one form to another.

The evolution of matter occurs when the relative strengths of the attributes change. The evolution ceases when the spirit realizes that it is distinct from primal Nature and thus cannot evolve. This destroys the purpose of evolution, thus stopping Prakriti from evolving for Purusha.

Sankhyan cosmology describes how life emerges in the universe; the relationship between Purusha and Prakriti is crucial to Patanjali's yoga system. The evolution of forms at the basis of Sankhya is quite remarkable. The strands of Sankhyan thought can be traced back to the Vedic speculation of creation. It is also frequently mentioned in the Mahabharata and Yogavasishtha.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

Prakriti ... is progressing in successive rises and falls. The stage of going back to the balance, to the perfect equilibrium, is called the end of a cycle. The whole kalpa, the evolution and the involution, has been compared by theistic writers in India to the outbreathing and inbreathing of God; God, as it were, breathes out the universe, and it returns into Him again. When it quiets down, what becomes of the universe? It still exists, only in finer form as it is called in Sanskrit, Karana, the causal state. Causation, time and space are still there, only they are potential. This return to an undifferentiated condition constitutes involution. Involution and evolution are eternally going on, so that when we speak of a beginning, we refer only to the beginning of a cycle.

The most extraneous part of the universe is what in modern times we call gross matter. The ancient Hindus called it the bhutas, the external elements. One of these, according to them, is the cause of the rest, for every other element is produced out of this one, and this element has been called akasa. This is somewhat similar to the modern idea of ether, though not exactly the same. Akasa is the primal element out of which every gross thing proceeds, and along with it there is something else called Prana... The Prana and the Akasa exist as long as creation lasts. They combine and recombine and form all gross manifestations until at the end of the cycle all these subside and go back to the unmanifested form of Akasa and Prana. There is in the Rig-Veda, the oldest scriptures in existence, a beautiful passage describing creation, which is most poetical: When there was neither aught nor naught, when darkness was rolling over darkness, what existed? And the answer is given: It (the Eternal One) then existed without motion. Prana and Akasa were latent in that Eternal One, but there was no phenomenal manifestation. This state is called Avyaktam which literally means 'without vibration,' or unmanifested. At the beginning of a new cycle of evolution, this Avyaktam begins to vibrate, and blow after blow is given by prana to the akasa causing condensation and gradually through the forces of attraction and repulsion, atoms are formed. These in turn condense into molecules and finally into the different gross elements of which every object in nature is composed.

We generally find these things very curiously translated; people do not go to the ancient philosophers or to their commentators for their translations and have not learning enough to understand for themselves. They translate the elements as 'air,' 'fire,' and so on. If they would go to the commentators they would find that they do not mean anything of the sort. The akasa, by the repeated blows of prana produces vayu or the vibratory state of the akasa, which in turn produces gaseous matter. The vibrations growing more and more rapid generate heat, which in Sanskrit is called tejas. Gradually it is cooled off and the gaseous substance becomes liquid, apa, and finally solid, prithivi. We have first akasa vibrating, then comes heat, then it becomes liquefied, and when still more condensed it appears as solid matter. It goes back to the unmanifested condition in exactly the reverse way. The solids will be converted into liquid and the liquid into a mass of heat, that will slowly go back into the gaseous state, then disintegration of atoms will begin and finally the equilibrium of all forces will be reached, when vibration will stop and thus the cycle of evolution, which in Sanskrit is called kalpa, will be at an end.

... the whole universe itself built, as it were, layer after layer; first undifferentiated Prakriti (Avyaktam), and that changes into universal intelligence (Mahat) and that again is changed into universal egoism (Ahamkara), and that changes into universal sensible matter. That matter changes into universal sense-organs, again changes into universal fine particles, and these in turn combine and become this gross universe. That is the cosmic plan, according to the Samkhyas and what is in the cosmos or macrocosm, must be in the individual or microcosm.

Take an individual man. He has first a part of undifferentiated nature in him, and that material nature in him becomes changed into Mahat—a small particle of the universal intelligence, and that small particle of the universal intelligence in him becomes changed into egoism—a particle of the universal egoism. This egoism in turn becomes changed into the sense-organs, and the tanmatras, and out of the latter combining, he manufactures his world, his body. I want this to be clear, because it is the first stepping stone to Vedanta, and it is absolutely necessary for you to know, because this is the basis of the different systems of philosophy of the whole world.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

Prakriti, which is the objectivity of the purusha, i.e. consciousness, is constituted of three properties, called sattva, rajas and tamas. Tamas is inertia, pure inactivity; rajas is dynamism, distraction and action; and sattva is balance and harmony. The permutation and combination of these three gunas are the very substance of prakriti. The redness of a flower is a quality of the flower, but the redness itself is not the flower; whereas the three strands of a rope are not the quality of the rope, the strands themselves are the rope. In the same way, the three gunas that are mentioned – sattva, rajas and tamas – are the very substance of prakriti, and they are the very essence of movement in this world. These three gunas, by permutation and combination, create a situation of transparency in the cosmos, and the indivisible consciousness gets reflected, as it were, in this transparency, which is suddha tattva. It is the beginning of the process of the creation of the universe. It is a dream condition, as it were, where sketches of the future creation are drawn on the canvas of the mind itself. Thus, from the point of view of Vedanta terminology, there is a coming down of consciousness, which is Absolute, to the state of Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat, or in the language of Sankhya, prakriti becomes mahat, and mahat becomes ahankara. Up to this level, from the top level to the Virat, or from the level of consciousness to ahankara, there is a universal awareness. Virat is universally aware. Hiranyagarbha and Isvara are universally aware. Mahat is universally aware, and the ahankara that is spoken of in Sankhya parlance is not the egoism of the human individual. It is the self-consciousness of the cosmos itself.

A tragic event takes place. The one indivisible ahankara, or Virat, gets divided into a three-partite state, as it were – the object, the subject, and the connecting link between the object and subject. These are known as the adhibhuta, adhyatma and adhidaiva. Thus, we see there is a world outside on account of the division that has taken place, and we are set aside as subjects perceiving the object outside, not being aware that there is a connecting link, which is called the adhidaiva, between the object and the subject. Then there is a continuous solidification of this objectivity into tanmatras, called sabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, gandha – prithvi, ap, teja, vayu, akasha – the five elements; and we have come down into the solidity which is this earth.

See also:

Pralaya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pralaya — ... periodic cosmic dissolution

1. It is a period of repose or reabsorption. It is of three types: eternal (nitya), which is the sleep in which every effort dissolves for the time being; occasional (naimittika), which occurs at the end of a day of Brahmā; and prākṛta, which occurs at the end of an epoch of Brahmā. The dissolution and reabsorption of the universe at the end of a kalpa. The passive phase or potential period when all manifestations are dormant.
2. All the Indian schools, excepting the Mīmāṃsā school, accept this theory.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pralaya -

dissolution, reabsorption, destruction, annihilation;
death;
the destruction of the whole world, at the end of a Kalpa;
setting (of the stars);
end;
cause of dissolution;
fainting, loss of sense or consciousness;
sleepiness;
N. of the syllable om

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Pralaya (fr. pr. pra, before, first + laya, melting, dissolution), the dissolution and reabsorption of the universe at the end of a Kalpa; (in Kāśmir Saivism) this is the transcendental phase of consciousness, the passive phase, the potential period when all manifestations are dormant.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Pralaya. In Hindu mythology, the dissolution of the universe that comes at the end of the kalpa or Day of Brahma. Pralaya is considered the “night” of Brahma, and lasts for the same amount of time as the day (by one estimate, 4.32 billion years). The

approach of this “night” is preceded by the destruction of the earth, first by fire, and then by torrential rains that transform the entire planet into one vast ocean. During this time the only living thing is the god Vishnu, who reclines on the back of his serpent vehicle Shesha, deep in a yogic trance. When the time again comes for creation, a lotus sprouts from his navel, which opens to reveal Brahma, and the world begins anew.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The present period is one which is called in Hindu tradition “Pralaya”, meaning “Dissolution”. “Laya” is “the merging of one thing in another.” “Pra” means both “before” and “fulfilment”. Pralaya means both the merging of the Ahankaric scheme of appearance with the Scheme of Tradition, and the merging of the soul in God. Both these matters are focussed in the House of the Spiritual Pole, Aquarius. Literalists have explained Pralaya as meaning only the dissolution of the material universe or of the earth. Such an explanation does not serve any purpose whatsoever, whether it be one of common sense or of spirituality. The figures and data which are found in Hindu tradition with reference to Ages and Cycles cannot possibly be considered from any other angle than that of symbolism. About this anon. Pralaya or “Dissolution” does not apply to material matters (except in as far as it may mean physical death) but to sacred tradition. The Mysteries have been blacked out. The Mystery-teachings have become hidden in the Darkness of the Earth and in the Sterility of the Midwinter of human destiny. The Three Grey Sisters alone know the way to the Abode of the Nymphs, and they will not show the Path if they are not forced to do so. The Revelation of the Mysteries in the human soul brings the shining of the Light of the Ether in the Darkness of the Earth. Who will hear and who will see ? Who will put an end to Pralaya, to the Black-out of the Light within his own self? Who will find the Treasure and give it to the world, as a Light to guide others?

...

The last Age of the Fall ends in the period of Pralaya. From the point of view of Genesis this period is the First Day, Capricorn and Aquarius: “And the earth was chaotic and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (1; 2). Though there are in that period many — too many — scriptures, mysteries and myths, their meaning has been lost and there is no Tradition and no Culture. The Tradition is in a state of Pralaya or dissolution — of “chaos” as far as its outer aspects are concerned. The same applies to man’s inner life, his “intermediate worlds”. This is based on the appearance of nature in a colder climate. In a Northern winter the vegetable kingdom is at rest and appears like dead, and the animals are invisible, since they are hibernating in caves, holes or stables. That time of the year provided in early cultures the supreme opportunity for finding the Light of God within the Self. It was the best time of the year for quiet prayer and meditation, “to find oneself”. It is the time for the Inaction praised by the Sages of China and India. It is the time when the greatest Sin is Idleness or the neglect of the spiritual life. Life is supported by the stores of food gathered during the autumn.

It is deeply significant that for “seers” this Age is the Age of the Seventh Day of Genesis, the Sabbath, the Day of Rest in which is the Hour of Immortality in Oneness with the Spiritual Pole.

...

Like the Pralaya of Hindu tradition, “the end of the world” also comprises the end of the knowledge of a symbolic Tradition.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

According to the Vedanta there occurs at the end of each Kalpa a Pralaya or dissolution of the universe, and Brahman is then reduced to its causal condition (Kâranâvasthâ), containing both soul and matter in an Avyakta (undeveloped) state. At the end of this Pralaya, however, Brahman creates or lets out of himself a new world, matter becomes gross and visible once more, and souls become active and re-embodied, though with a higher enlightenment (Vikâsa), and all this according to their previous merits and

demerits. Brahman has then assumed its new Kâryâvsthâ or effective state which lasts for another Kalpa. But all this refers to the world of change and unreality only. It is the world of Karman, the temporary produce of Nescience, of Avidyâ, or Maya, it is not yet real reality. In the Samkhya philosophy these Pralayas take place whenever the three Gunas of Prakriti recover their equipoise, while creation results from the upsetting of the equipoise between them. What is truly eternal, is not affected by the cosmic illusion, or at least is so for a time only, and may recover at any moment its self-knowledge, that is, its self-being, and its freedom from all conditions and fetters.

...

The idea of the reabsorption of the world at the end of a Kalpa (eon) and its emergence again in the next Kalpa, does not occur as yet in the old Upanishads ... but in the Bhagavad-gîtâ IX, 7, the idea of Pralayas, absorptions, and of Kalpas or ages, of their end and their beginning (Kalpakshaye and Kalpâdau), are already quite familiar to the poets.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

The pralaya, or the dissolution of the cosmos that will take place at the end of the yugas – that is the night of Brahma.

There are two kinds of dissolution. There is dissolution of all life everywhere, but not dissolution of the elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether; they remain. The dissolution of all life takes place after one day of Brahma; and then he sleeps. When Brahma wakes up, he creates beings once again – gods, celestials, angels, men, beasts, etc. – as he has done previously. But there is another kind of dissolution which dissolves everything. The whole cosmos is dissolved, including the five elements. After one hundred years of Brahma, the entire universe is dissolved, and Brahma also gets dissolved. He enters the Absolute.

See also: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

pralaya - from the verb root lî = "to dissolve" + pra = "away".

Related words

Kalpa

Yuga

Sanskrit

Pralaya — प्रलय

pralaya - प्रलय

Prama

Variant spellings

prama
pramā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pramā — ... valid knowledge; true knowledge

1. According to Nyāya, it is true presentational knowledge (yathā-rthānu-bhava). It is a definite and assured cognition of an object which is true and presentational in character.
2. According to the Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika schools, it is the identity of content between a cognition and the cognitum. This is a realist view which posits that the object determines the cognition's validity.
3. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is knowledge which possesses noncontradictedness (abādhita) and novelty (or sometimes just the former).
4. According to Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, it is primary and original knowledge (anadhigata).
5. According to Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā, it is immediate experience (anubhūti).
6. According to Vaiśeṣika, it is the unique operative cause of both true presentational knowledge and memory.
7. According to Jainism, it is immediate presentational knowledge and mediate knowledge insofar as they are true.
8. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, all knowledge is of the real. Its mark is that it is practically useful.
9. According to Sāṅkhya, it is knowledge not previously known (anadhigata), free from error, and above doubt.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

Prama or right knowledge means in Vedānta the acquirement of such new knowledge as has not been contradicted by experience (abādhita). There is thus no absolute definition of truth. A knowledge acquired can be said to be true only so long as it is not contradicted. Thus the world appearance though it is very true now, may be rendered false, when this is contradicted by right knowledge of Brahman as the one reality. Thus the knowledge of the world appearance is true now, but not true absolutely. The only absolute truth is the pure consciousness which is never contradicted in any experience at any time. The truth of our world-knowledge is thus to be tested by finding out whether it will be contradicted at any stage of world experience or not.

... prama or right knowledge is never produced, it always exists, but it manifests itself differently under different circumstances.

...

Right knowledge (prama) in Vedanta is the knowledge of an object which has not been found contradicted (abādhitārthaviṣaya-jñānantva). Except when specially expressed otherwise, prama is generally considered as being excludent of memory and applies to previously unacquired (anadhigata) and uncontradicted knowledge.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Prama means "certitude." The definition of pramana is pramakaranam karanam pramanam: "the cause by which one arrives at certitude is the right method, pramana." Valid testimonials of methodology are called pramana. Pramana is a spontaneous function coming from the witnessing consciousness that provides certitude about the nature of the thing perceived or even the idea thought of. In the empirical world, certitude is more or less a conventional common consent that most members of a group give to the description of an object of knowledge that can be empirically experienced. For instance, it is generally agreed that salt has a certain taste that is agreeable when moderately used in certain dishes. When a pinch of common salt is shown to a person, it is usually recognized to be salt.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

pramā - from the verb root mā = "to measure" + pra = "before or forward".

Related words

Pramana

Sanskrit

Pramā — प्रमा

pramā - प्रमा

Pramana

Variant spellings

pramana

pramāṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pramāṇa — ... means of valid knowledge; logical proof; means of cognition

1. It is the instrument (karaṇa) of valid knowledge. As the cause, so the effect (mānādhīnāmeyasiddhih). According to each system, the number of pramāṇas accepted as valid will depend upon the types of knowledge that are recognized.
2. The Cārvāka (Materialist) school accepts perception {pratyakṣa} as the only means of valid knowledge. The Buddhists and Vaiśeṣika accept perception and inference (anumāna). The Jainas, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, and Dvaita Vedānta accept perception, inference, and verbal testimony (śabda). Nyāya accepts perception, inference, verbal testimony, and comparison (upamāna). The Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā school accepts perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, and presumption (arthāpatti). The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā and Advaita accept perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, presumption, and noncognition (anupalabdhi). Śaiva Siddhānta accepts Śiva-cit-śakti as the only valid means of knowledge, though, as secondary means, it accepts the traditional first three pramāṇas. Dvaita Vedānta calls the sources of valid knowledge as anu-pramāṇa; kevala-pramāṇa is defined as the knowledge of an object as it is. Dvaita recognizes perception, inference, and verbal testimony as anu-pramāṇa.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pramāṇa -

measure, scale, standard;

prosodical length (of a vowel);

measure in music;

accordance of the movements in dancing with music and song;

measure of physical strength;

the first term in a rule of three sum;

the measure of a square i.e. a side of it;

principal, capital (opp. to interest);

principal, capital (opp. to interest);

a means of acquiring Pramā or certain knowledge (6 in the Vedānta, viz. pratyakṣa, perception by the senses; anumāna, inference; upamāna, analogy or comparison; śabda or āpta-vacana, verbal authority, revelation; an-upalabdhi or abhāva-pratyakṣa, non-perception or negative proof; arthāpatti, inference from circumstances; the Nyāya admits only 4, excluding the last two; the Sāṅkhya only 3, viz. pratyakṣa, anumāna and śabda; other schools increase the number to 9 by adding sambhava, equivalence; aitihya, tradition or fallible testimony; and ceṣṭā, gesture;

any proof or testimony or evidence;

a correct notion, right perception;

oneness, unity;

= nitya;

N. of a large fig-tree on the bank of the Ganges

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The Philosophy of a Guru

The measures applied in the validity of truth in

Vedānta are six: viz.: pratyakṣa (what is directly given to the senses); anumāna (inference); arthapatti (hypothetical postulation); anupalabdhi (impossibility of a conclusion); upamāna (analogy); and śabda or āgama (scriptural assent).

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

PRAMANA

To the question “how can one know something?” all Indian philosophers would answer unanimously: by having a means of knowledge. This answer may sound almost tautological and no two significant philosophers would understand the term in exactly the same manner. Nevertheless, the term pramana played a crucial role in structuring the Indian epistemologies. It is around this concept, its definitions, and its varieties that Indian philosophy developed in its most dynamic period (roughly from the fifth to the twelfth century). The most important means of knowledge are sense perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana), and verbal communication (sabda), under which sacred writings such as the Vedas or the teaching of the Buddha are subsumed.

What are the means of knowledge (pramana)?

The number of means of knowledge that are accepted by the different schools of thought varies strongly. Madhyamaka Buddhists like Nagarjuna, skeptics like Jayarasi, and monists of the Advaita-Vedanta tradition like Sriharsha, all of whom deny the possibility of knowledge, obviously accept no means of knowledge to be reliable. All other schools admit that sense perception is a means of knowledge. The materialist school (Lokayata) is distinguished from other schools by its claim that only sense perception is valid. The Vaiseshikas and the Buddhists after Dignaga (fifth century) admit two means of knowledge, namely, perception and inference. The Samkhyas admit verbal communication by a trustworthy person (aptavacana) besides these two; Buddhist philosophers before Dignaga, for example, Vasubandhu, also admit verbal communication to be a means of knowledge. Philosophers of the Nyaya tradition, with the notable exception of Bhasarvajna (ninth century), also admit analogy (upamana) as a fourth means of knowledge. The same position was held by certain Buddhists. The Prabhakara Mimamsakas accept five means of knowledge: the previously mentioned four and presumption (arthapatti). The Bhatta Mimamsakas and Advaita-Vedantins admit six means of knowledge: the previously mentioned five and absence (abhava) or nonperception (anupalabdhi). In nonphilosophical texts one also encounters inclusion (sambhava) and tradition (aitihya) as means of knowledge.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The Advaita recognizes all the six pramāṇas mentioned in connection with the Kumārila school of Mīmāṃsā and generally agrees with it in matters of detail also. Of the points of difference between the two, it will suffice to touch upon only the following here, all of them having reference to verbal testimony:—

(i) The Mīmāṃsā rejects the view that the Veda was ever composed by anybody, and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika ascribes its authorship to Īśvara. The position of Śamkara in regard to this point, like that of the other Vedantins, is midway between the two. Like the Mimāṃsaka, but unlike the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, he admits that the Veda is apauruṣeya; but he re-defines that word so as to make it signify not that the Veda has no author and is eternal, but that it is produced or, more properly, resuscitated at the beginning of each kalpa by one that cannot interfere either with its content or with the order of its words. ... the first promulgator of the Veda in every cycle who is God repeats it anew, but precisely as it was in earlier cycles. That is, the Veda is self-existent in this view also; only it is not the self-same Veda that always is, but a series of what may be described as re-issues of an eternal edition which goes back to beginningless time. This ... is not in substance different from the Mīmāṃsā view, excepting that it finds a place for God in the doctrine.

(ii) Śamkara, following Kumārila, admits śabda to be a pramāṇa outside the Veda also; but he does not restrict its independent logical validity, within the Veda, to injunctive statements. Assertive propositions found there may be equally valid, so that there is nothing in the nature of the Veda as verbal testimony to preclude it from treating directly of matters of fact (bhūta-vastu) like Brahman or the highest reality. Statements like Tat tvam asi which occur in the Upaniṣads thereby acquire independent logical value here; and there is no need to subordinate them in one way or another to ritualistic commands as in the Mīmāṃsā.

(iii) The truth revealed by the scriptures, contrary to what the Mīmāṃsaka thinks, is here the fundamental unity of Being. ... The primary aim of perception, like that of the other pramāṇas, is, according to Śamkara, to serve empirical purposes. It gives no guarantee for metaphysical validity, so that what we commonly hold real may not be truly so. 'Common knowledge is true,' he says, 'so long only as the identity of oneself with Brahman is not realized, as dreams are until one does not awake.' In other words, the transcendental ideality of the world does not exclude its empirical reality.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Pramana. In Indian philosophy, a means by which human beings can gain true and accurate knowledge, generally classified as one of three types: Perception (pratyaksha), which includes magical or yogic insight as well as direct sensory perception; inference (anumana), which ultimately depends upon direct experience; and testimony (shabda), which can be either scriptural or the instruction of one's teacher. Some philosophical schools also include a fourth source, analogy (upamana), but those who do not recognize this categorize it as another form of inference. The first three are accepted by all philosophical schools except for the materialists, who recognize only perception. The Purva Mimamsa school affirms two additional pramanas — presumption (arthapatti), and knowledge from absence (abhava)— which they argue give one knowledge. The root meaning of this term comes from the verb "to measure"; thus these are tools for measuring and interpreting the world we experience.

Wikipedia

Different systems of Hindu philosophy accept different categories of pramanas.

Pramana forms one part of a tripuṭi (trio) concerning Pramā (the correct knowledge of any object arrived at by thorough reasoning, Sanskrit), namely,

Pramāta, the subject, the knower

Pramāṇa, the means of obtaining the knowledge

Prameya, the object, the knowable

...

In Advaita Vedanta the following pramanas are accepted:

Pratyakṣa — the knowledge gained by means of the senses

Anumāna — the knowledge gained by means of inference

Upamāna — the knowledge gained by means of analogy

Arthāpatti — the knowledge gained by superimposing the known knowledge on an appearing knowledge that does not concur with the known knowledge

Anupalabdi — non-apprehension and skepticism in the face of non-apprehension

Āgama — the knowledge gained by means of texts such as Vedas (also known as Āptavākya, Śabda pramana)

See: Avidya and pramanas

Pramanas in Advaita Vedanta

Pratyaksha

pratyakṣa - perception

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pratyakṣa — ... perception (from the verb root akṣ = “to reach, penetrate, embrace” + prati = “against, back”)

1. It is a valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa) for every school of Indian philosophy.

2. According to Nyāya, it is knowledge generated by sense-object contact. Later Naiyāyikas defined it as direct apprehension so as to include God’s perception and the supernormal perception of yogins.

3. What distinguishes it from all other types of cognition is its immediacy. Two stages are distinguished: indeterminate (nirvikalpa) and determinate (savikalpa). Generally, the former is bare awareness of an object, while the latter is a cognition of an object that is qualified. The former gives isolated sense data, while the latter compounds these elements and subject-predicate knowledge arises.

...

12. According to Advaita Vedānta, indeterminate (nirvikalpa) perception presents the Absolute (Brahman) alone as its cognition. It is knowledge which does not apprehend any relatedness of the substantive and its qualifying attribute. Thus, it is not necessarily the first or initial perception but any perception which is indeterminate. Examples of this include “Thou art that” (tat tvam asi) or “This is that Devadatta” (so’yam devadattaḥ).

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

The first Pramāna, Pratyaksha, is what we mean by sensuous perception, though it is also used in the sense of what can be perceived by the senses, the Drishta, i. e. what is seen. It is explained (Sāṃkhya-Sūtra I, 89) as cognition which arises from contact (with objects) and represents their form.

It is generally explained by Indriyārtha-samnikarsha, contact of the senses and their respective objects, and is said to involve really three stages, contact of the sense-organ with its object, and at the same time union of the sense with Manas, mind, and union of Manas, mind, with Atman, Self. There is a distinction made between two kinds of Pratyaksha, called Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa, with doubt and without doubt. The former seems to consist in our seeing an object, and then declaring that it is this or that ; the latter in simply accepting a thing such as it is, without any previous idea of it, such as when we awake from sleep, see a tiger, and at once run away. Each sense working by itself, and on its own objects only, is the Asādhâranakâraṇa, the special or exclusive instrument of the knowledge conveyed by it. Sound, for instance, is heard by the ear only, and is conveyed by Akâsa or ether. But not every sound is brought into immediate contact with the ear; it is transmitted through the ether, as we are told, by means of waves (Vîkita), so that we may perceive the beating of a distant drum, one wave propelling the other across the vast ocean of ether, till it strikes the shore, i.e. the ear.

Anumana

anumāna - inference

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Anumāna — ... inference; syllogism; instrument of inference (from the verb root mā = “to measure, prepare, display” + anu = “along, after”)

1. Literally it means “after-knowledge,” that is, knowledge which “follows other knowledge.” Inferential knowledge is knowledge that results through the instrumentation of some other knowledge .
2. It is the efficient instrument of inferential cognition.

...

7. There are five conditions to be fulfilled in a valid inference: the reason must be present in the minor term; the reason must be found wherever the major term is found; the reason must not be found wherever the major term is not found; the reason must not be related to something absurd; and the reason must not be contradicted by an equally strong middle term.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Anumana (“measuring after”). In Indian philosophy this is the term for an inference, which is generally accepted as one of the pramanas, the means by which human beings can gain true and accurate knowledge. The word’s literal meaning reflects the Indian conviction that any inference must be grounded in perception (pratyaksha), the most direct means of knowledge, and must ultimately appeal to perception for evidence.

A classic inference includes three terms: a hypothesis (pratijna), a reason (hetu), and examples (drshtanta), each of which is made up of parts. One part of the hypothesis is the idea to be proved (sadhya), which is predicated on a certain class of objects, called the paksha. In the statement “there is fire on this mountain,” the sadhya is the assertion that there is fire, and the paksha is the particular mountain. The object mentioned in the paksha must also appear in the second term, the hetu, along with the stated reason. In the example cited above, the hetu could be “because there is smoke on this mountain.”

As proof, it was necessary to cite positive and negative examples, known as the sapaksha and vipaksha, respectively. An appropriate sapaksha could be “like kitchen,” since ancient kitchens had both fire and smoke; a vipaksha could be “unlike lake,” since lakes contain neither of these.

This general form of an inference is subject to numerous tests for validity; one of the most important of these is vyapti, the requirement that the reason given must account for all cases of the idea to be proved.

Sabda

śabda pramāṇa - verbal testimony

āptavākya

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śabda — ... verbal testimony; verbal knowledge; sound; word; scriptural authority (from the verb root śabd = “sound”)

1. It is one of the valid means of knowledge. (See pramāṇa.)
2. It is one of the five subtle essence of the elements. (See tanmātra.)
3. According to Nyāya, it is the testimony of a trustworthy person— one who knows the truth and communicates it correctly.
4. According to Advaita Vedānta, the truth revealed by śabda is the fundamental unity of Being.
5. According to Mīmāṃsā, its purport lies in the injunctive texts of the ritual sections of the Vedas.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

Sabda or word, another Pramāna, is explained to be instruction given by one that can be trusted (Aptopadesa); this one that can be trusted being for the Yedântists the Veda, but for the Sâmkhya and other systems, any other person also endowed with authority and therefore considered as trustworthy.

...

Samkara ... replies, ' that although with regard to some things reasoning is known to be well founded, ... the true nature of the cause of the world on which final emancipation depends cannot, on account of its excessive abstruseness, even be thought of without the help of the holy texts; for it cannot become the object of perception because it does not possess qualities such as form and the like, and, as it is devoid of characteristic signs or qualities, it cannot lend itself to inference and other means of right knowledge.'

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

The means of knowledge such as perception and so on that the knower has, are not helpful [for the inquiry about the real nature of "I", ātmā]; they are the means for objects other than the knower. Therefore for knowing the ātmā you require a pramāna from outside. And that pramāna is śabda which reveals the nature of ātmā, destroying the ignorance of it.

Upamana

upamāna - comparison

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Upamāna — ... comparison; analogy

1. The distinctive cause of the valid cognition of similarity. Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and Advaita Vedānta admit comparison as an independent means of valid knowledge (pramāṇa).
2. Nyāya says, it is the knowledge gained from a word which signifies a thing, hitherto unknown, and on the strength of its similarity with some other known thing, it becomes known.
3. Mīmāṃsā says, it is the knowledge which is gained by inferring that the unknown object presently being perceived is similar to an object which has been perceived before and is remembered.
4. Advaita Vedānta agrees with Mīmāṃsā as far as it goes. But the former also includes in its definition the knowledge of the similarity between the perceived object to the remembered one. Mīmāṃsā stops with the knowledge of the similarity between the remembered object to the perceived one.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Comparison (upamāna). This is commonly rendered as 'analogy' in English, but the student should be careful not to confound it with reasoning by analogy.

...

When a person who is familiar with the cow (say) casually comes across a gavaya, an animal of the same species, and notices the resemblance of the latter to the former, he discovers that the cow is also similar to the gavaya. It is this second resemblance or, to be more exact, the recollected cow characterized by it that is known through upamāna. This view, no doubt, renders the pramāṇa liable to be classed under inference. But the Mīmāṃsaka defends his position by pointing out that the basis for inference, viz. a knowledge of inductive relation (vyāpti) is not needed here. The relevant major premise here would signify that if one thing,

say B, is similar to another, say A, that other is similar to the first. As giving expression to a general truth, it implies the simultaneous observation of both A and B. But the conditions of upamāṇa do not require it, as even a person who has never seen two similar things together but meets with a cow and thereafter a gavaya in the manner described above is able to arrive at the conclusion in question. A matter of metaphysical importance here is that 'similarity' (sādṛśya) is conceived as dual, the similarity of A to B being distinct from that of B to A.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Upamana ("analogy"). According to some philosophical schools, upamana was one of the pramanas, or the means by which human beings can gain true and accurate knowledge. The classic example of this pramana describes a traveler going to a certain region who is told that he will encounter a certain animal that looks somewhat like a cow; upon going there this analogy helps him identify the animal. Some philosophical schools deny that this is a separate pramana and classify it as a variety of inference (anumana). Those who accept it as a fourth pramana—primarily the Nyaya- Vaisheshika school—stress that according to the rules of inference, a valid inference must be grounded in previous perceptions. In the case of the traveler, his ability to identify is not based on any differences drawn from previous perceptions of that type of animal, since he has never before seen the type of animal he actually encounters. He knows what it is because it looks "somewhat like a cow." Thus an additional pramana was needed to account for this. See also: philosophy.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

COMPARISON (upamana) is defined as knowledge of a thing derived from its similarity to another thing previously well known. For example, one is told that a water-buffalo resembles a cow. Then one goes into a region where the water-buffalo lives, and on seeing an animal resembling a cow, one concludes that it must be a water-buffalo.

Arthapatti

arthāpatti - presumption

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

There is no agreed translation for this means of knowledge, and it is rendered by presumption, supposition, implication, negative implication, circumstantial evidence, and so on. The two most common examples for arthāpatti are: (1) Knowing that someone is alive and not finding him or her at home, one concludes that he or she is outside. (2) One is told that fat Devadatta does not eat during the day, and one concludes that he eats at night. The two examples are distinguished as presumption based on something seen (drṣṭārthāpatti) and presumption based on something heard (śrutārthāpatti). In later texts one distinguishes six types of presumption according to the six means of knowledge on which a presumption can be based.

The examples mentioned in this connection seem construed and artificial and are not taken from an actual philosophical discourse or from everyday life. For instance, presumption based on inference is illustrated as follows: One knows by inference that the sun moves (its movement cannot be perceived, but is inferred because it changes its place in the sky). However, things that move usually possess limbs such as legs. Thus, a conflict between two means of knowledge arises, and this conflict is resolved by the presumption that the sun has a moving power. Conflict or apparent contradiction (anupapatti) between two means of knowledge is the essential ingredient of arthapatti, and the resulting presumption resolves the conflict. The contradiction must be apparent. If the contradiction is real, for example, two awarenesses about the same object, one perceiving it as silver and the other as mother-of-pearl, the way of resolving it is by rejecting one of the alternatives as false, not by making a new supposition. Among the important philosophical schools, only the Mimamsa and Vedanta accepted presumption as an independent means of knowledge.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Arthapatti (“presumption”). All Indian philosophical schools concern themselves with codifying the pramanas, that is, the means by which human beings can gain true and accurate knowledge. Almost all schools consider perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana), and authoritative testimony (shabda) as pramanas; the Purva Mimamsa school, one of the six schools of traditional Hindu philosophy, posited two others: abhava (“knowledge from absence”) and arthapatti.

Arthapatti is an inference from circumstance in which a judgment is made about one case based solely on similarities to related cases. An example would be when a traveler is presumed to have reached her destination, since the train’s arrival time has passed. According to Indian philosophy, this is not a true inference since the judgment must always be confirmed by direct perception, in this case that the train had actually reached its destination. The Purva Mimamsas justified this new pramana by arguing that this knowledge could not be accounted for by any of the existing pramanas and thus required this new one to explain it. The other schools were not inclined to accept it, since its presumptive nature could often lead to error.

Anupalabdhi

anupalabdhi - non-apprehension

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Anupalabdhi — ... noncognition; nonapprehension; nonperception

1. The Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsākas and the Advaita Vedāntins hold that nonexistence (abhāva) is known through noncognition. The absence of an object is known due to its nonperception. It is the specific cause of an immediate knowledge of nonexistence. It is based upon the presumption that nonexistence is a separate category. The above two schools are the only schools to accept noncognition as a separate valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa). Even as positive apprehension of some existent through a valid means of knowledge is a way of cognizing, so is the nonapprehension of something another way of cognizing according to these two schools. The critics say that this is merely a variant of perception and not really a separate source of cognition. However, as it is the specific cause of an immediate knowledge of nonexistence which is not produced by any other means of knowledge, it deserves a place in the list of valid pramāṇas (or so claim the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsākas and the Advaita Vedāntins).

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Non-apprehension (anupalabdhi). —This is the specific pramāṇa by which negation, not nothing, is known, e.g. the absence of a jar or of atoms somewhere. ... The word anupalabdhi means the ‘absence of apprehension,’ i.e. the absence of knowledge derived through any of the five foregoing pramāṇas. This means that, as knowledge got through any of the pramāṇas points to the existence (bhāva) of objects, the absence of such knowledge indicates, other conditions remaining the same, their non-existence (abhāva). Only it should be remembered that the absence, to serve as the index of non-existence, must be aided by the mental presentation of the relevant object. There may be several objects not found in a particular place; but we think of the absence of that alone among them all, which some other circumstance has made us think of.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

pramāṇa - from the verb root mā = “to measure” and pra = “before or forward”

Encyclopedia of philosophy

pramāṇa (a derivate of pra-mā [3rd sg. pres. pramimīte], “apprehend”).

Related words

Abhava

Agama

Prama

Prameya

Sabda

Sanskrit

Pramāṇa — प्रमाण

pramāṇa - प्रमाण

Prameya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prameya — ... object of cognition; object of knowledge

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prameya -

to be measured, measurable (also = limited, small, insignificant ...), to be ascertained or proved, provable;

that of which a correct notion should be formed;

an object of certain knowledge, the thing to be proved or the topic to be discussed

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Prameya ... an object of right knowledge, (in Nyāya) twelve are listed, viz. Soul (ātma), Body (śarira), Senses (indriya), Objects (artha), Intelligence (buddhi), Intellect (manas), Activity (pravṛtti), Fault (doṣa), Rebirth (pretyabhāva), Fruit (phala), Pain (duḥkha), and Release (apavarga); one of the sixteen categories listed in the Nyāya philosophy. Prāṇa (fr. pr. pra, before, first + ana, breath)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Prameya from prefix pra, before, first - + meya, measurable < root mā, to measure.

Related words

Pramana

Sanskrit

Prameya — प्रमेय

prameya - प्रमेय

Prana

Variant spellings

prana

prāṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prāṇa — ... vital air; life breath; vitality

1. It is that air which is perceptible in the mouth and nostrils. Or, it is the principle of vitality in the individual organism, whereby it is said to be all-pervading, invisible, and the life duration of all.

2. The five vital airs (prāṇa) are known as prāṇa, the air which rises upwards; apāna, that which moves downwards; vyāna, that by which these two are held; samāna, that which carries the grosser material of food to apāna and brings the subtler material to each limb; and udāna, that which brings up or carries down what has been drunk or eaten.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prāṇa -

filled, full;

the breath of life, breath, respiration spirit vitality;

m. pl. life;

a vital organ vital air (3 in number, viz. prāṇa, apāna and vyāna ... ; usually 5, viz. the preceding with samāna and, udāna ... ; or with the other vital organs 6 ... ; or 7 ... ; or 9 ... ; or 10 ... ; pl. the 5 organs of vitality or sensation, viz. prāṇa, vāc, cakṣus, śrotra, manas, collectively ... ; or = nose, mouth, eyes and ears;

air inhaled, wind;

breath (as a sign of strength), vigour, energy, power;

a breath (as a measure of time, or the time requisite for the pronunciation of 10 long syllables = 1/6 Vināḍikā);

(in Sāṃkhya) the spirit (= puruṣa);

(in Vedānta) the spirit identified with the totality of dreaming spirits;

poetical inspiration;

myrrh;
a N. of the letter y;
of a Sāman;
of Brahmā;
of Vishṇu;
of a Vasu;
of a son of the Vasu Dhara;
of a Marut;
of a son of Dhātri

Wikipedia

Prana is one of the five organs of vitality or sensation, viz. prana “breath”, vac “speech”, caksus “sight”, shrotra “hearing”, and manas “thought” (nose, mouth, eyes, ears and mind; ChUp. 2.7.1).

In Vedantic philosophy, it is the notion of a vital, life-sustaining force of living beings and vital energy, comparable to the Chinese notion of Qi. Prana is a central concept in Ayurveda and Yoga where it is believed to flow through a network of fine subtle channels called nadis. Its most subtle material form is the breath, but is also to be found in blood, and its most concentrated form is semen in men and vaginal fluid in women. The Pranamaya-kosha is one of the five Koshas or “sheaths” of the Atman.

Prana was first expounded in the Upanishads, where it is part of the worldly, physical realm, sustaining the body and the mother of thought and thus also of the mind. Prana suffuses all living forms but is not itself the Atman or individual soul. In the Ayurveda, the Sun and sunshine are held to be a source of Prana.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Prana - The vital energy considered instrumental in producing all aspects of animation, ranging from simple tactual sensations or reflex functions to the transcendental experience of Self-awareness. At the gross level it refers to the breath, and at the subtle level the mind.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

An aspect of Spirit in Hindu tradition is Prana. The teachings about Prana have mystified many generations, because the word may mean a great variety of things. The particular meaning in any given context has to be gauged from the number attached to it: whether Prana is One, or whether there is question of two, five, seven, or more Pranas. From the Supreme Spirit down to animal magnetism and the air that is breathed, the whole Cosmos is pervaded by Prana. The entire process of Creation and Dissolution, apart from that of Maintenance, has been expressed in the symbolism of Prana in the in- and out-breathing of God.

For mention of the Prana, as the One Life and Spirit, one should go back to early traditions. In the Aitareya Aranyaka (II; 2,1) it is stated that “The Prana shines upon the world in the form of a Person.” In the Yoga-Vasishta (Via ; 24,28) it is said that “the gener-

al name of the vital air in the Hridaya is Prana.” The Hridaya is the Heart of Hearts. The Prana in the form of a Person is the “Cosmic Man”.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Pranayama

The spiritual energy that animates an organism from the most elementary to the most complex, is called prana. ‘That which causes life’ is the literal meaning of prana. It has two functions, keeping alive and assigning function. That which animates the most elementary parts of matter so as to structure them in various combinations and mutations is prana. Its operation as the vital energies and breath in the human body is only a very fragmentary aspect of prana. It should be looked upon as a cosmic force and not as a local energy. At the same time it should not be mistaken for life. It is true that life cannot function without prana, just as mind cannot operate without a brain. When prana is stilled in the body we experience catalepsy. The factor which most differentiates prana is that it vibrates and throbs. Like jiva, or life, prana has no desire or special goal. It lends itself to be used by jiva.

...

The animating prana of the body is a corporation of five vial energies called vayus. These are prana, apana, samana, udana, and vyana.

... All the five vayus are the same prana and are separately named only to indicate the five different functions.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

Prana cannot work alone without the help of akasa. All that we know of it is motion or vibration. Every movement that we see is a modification of this prana, and everything that we know in the form of matter, either as form or as resistance, is a modification of this akasa. The prana cannot exist alone, or act without a medium, and in every state of it, whether as pure prana, or when it changes into other forces of nature, as gravitation or centrifugal attraction, it can never be separate from akasa. You have never seen force without matter or matter without force; what we call force and matter being simply the gross manifestations of the two, and these when superfine, the old philosophers have called, prana and akasa. Prana you can call in English, life or vital energy, but you must not restrict it to the life of man, nor should you identify it with the spirit, Atman. Thus creation is a product of prana and akasa and it is without beginning and end; it cannot have either, for it is eternally going on.

Vivekananda. Raja Yoga

... out of this Prâṇa is evolved everything that we call energy, everything that we call force. It is the Prâṇa that is manifesting as motion; it is the Prâṇa that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism. It is the Pṛâṇḍ that is manifesting as the actions of the body, as the nerve currents, as thought force. From thought, down to the lowest physical force, everything is but the manifestation of Prâṇa. The sum-total of all force in the universe, mental or physical, when resolved back to its original state, is called Prâṇa.

The Five Pranas

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Prana or Spirit subdivides itself in Manifestation. Pranas. In the Prasna Upanishad (II) we read: “The Supreme Prana declared: Do not be deluded. I alone, dividing myself into five parts, hold this body and support it”. The “five parts” of Prana relate to

the Five Elements. They are known as Pranadi. In the Yogic tradition of Patanjali their names are given as follows: Prana, Apana, Udana, Vyana and Samana. The mastery of these Five Pranas gives extraordinary powers. ... The references to the Five Pranas are partly “physiological” statements of which the symbolic nature is overlooked by literalists. These references are, however, not entirely symbolical. The Pranas refer to the interrelationship of Spirit and its sheaths, including the physical body. The word Prana is generally translated by “vital air”, “vital energy”, or “magnetism”.

The Five Pranas are the following. The fifth is called Apana and is considered to be “the seizer of food”, and “the vital energy that works throughout the alimentary canal and the digestive organs.” Apa means “down, out”. It is located in the sphere of the anus, or the digestive system. It is the Prana of the Element Earth, that is to say, of the physical body.

The fourth Prana, called Vyana, is considered to be “the energy working through the nervous system and in the blood-circulation.” It is said to be “the father of Apana”. Vyana means “to breathe in different directions”, “to distribute breath over the whole body”. It is “not located anywhere in particular but pervades the whole body”. It is the Prana of the emotional plane, the Element Water.

The third Prana, called Samana, is considered to be “the Prana which controls assimilation and distributes the food, etc., equally to all parts.” Patanjali (III;40) says: “By mastery of Samana comes light-radiance.” Samana is located “between the heart and the navel”. The meaning of “food” has been considered previously. The solar plexus or Fire-centre is situated between the heart and the navel. It is one which produces “light-radiance” when it and the other Centres work in perfect co-ordination. The “digestive fire” may cause great trouble until the time when it truly becomes the Solar Fire which gives the name to the Solar plexus. Samana also means ‘virtuous, middling, possessing honour, uniform’. It is the Prana of the moral sphere of the lower mind.

The second Prana, called Prana, relates to the Plane of Air or Spirit. It is Prana in the sense most commonly used in the scriptures. The Gheranda Samhita says (V; 61) “It moves always in the heart.” For its Centre is the Anahata Chakra, the Heart Centre. The first Prana is called Udana. Patanjali (III; 39) describes it as follows: “By mastery of the Udana, the Yogi does not sink in water, or in swamps, he can walk on thorns and he gains the power of ascension.” Since it applies to mastery of the Plane of Ether, it is clear that sinking in the waters of the emotional life and in the swamps of the lower mind is no more possible, and that the thorns of the earth cannot hurt his feet. The power of ascension pertains to Air or Spirit. Udana is also considered to be “the Prana that carries the soul after death to the different states according to its actions.” The Four Elements are within the domain of death; the Ether, however, is an aeviternal state. In the after-death and pre-natal state, the future prearranges itself out of the past in the Ether. Udana is said to “pervade the whole system”. Or, alternatively, it “rules the region of the body above the throat”, or, in other words, the head. It is also said to “control the Sukshma Sarira” or “subtle body”, which again confirms what has been said previously.

Wikipedia

In Yoga, the three main channels of prana are the Ida, the Pingala and the Sushumna. Ida relates to the left side of the body, terminating at the left nostril and pingala to the right side of the body, terminating at the right nostril. In some practices, alternate nostril breathing balances the prana that flows within the body. When prana enters a period of uplifted, intensified activity, the Yogic tradition refers to it as Pranotthana.

...

In Ayurveda, the Prana is further classified into subcategories, referred to as prana vayus. According to Hindu philosophy these are the vital principles of basic energy and subtle faculties of an individual that sustain physiological processes. There are five pranas or vital currents in the Hindu system:

Prana : Responsible for the beating of the heart and breathing. Prana enters the body through the breath and is sent to every cell through the circulatory system.

Apana : Responsible for the elimination of waste products from the body through the lungs and excretory systems.

Udana : Responsible for producing sounds through the vocal apparatus, as in speaking, singing, laughing, and crying. Also it represents the conscious energy required to produce the vocal sounds corresponding to the intent of the being. Hence Samyama on udana gives the higher centers total control over the body.

Samana : Responsible for the digestion of food and cell metabolism (i.e. the repair and manufacture of new cells and growth). Samana also includes the heat regulating processes of the body. Auras are projections of this current. By meditational practices one can see auras of light around every being. Yogis who do special practise on samana can produce a blazing aura at will.

Vyana : Responsible for the expansion and contraction processes of the body, e.g. the voluntary muscular system.

Sankara

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Dhole

Prana (vital air) ... for a variety of function is divided into

- (a) 'Prana' the air situated at the tip of the nose.
- (b) 'Apana' the air residing in the anus.
- (c) 'Samana' which helps the digestion of food.
- (d) 'Udana' situated in the throat.
- (e) 'Vyana' which resides in all parts of the body.

See: Pranamaya kosa, prana, karmendriyas

See also:

in Prakriti: **Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion**

in Akasa: **Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga**

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

prāṇa — from the verb root an = “to breathe” + pra = “forth”.

Wikipedia

Prana - “vital life” (from the root prā “to fill”, cognate to Latin plenus “full”)

V. S. Apte provides fourteen different meanings for the word prana (Devanagari: प्राण, prāna) including these:

Breath, respiration

The breath of life, vital air, principle of life (usually plural in this sense, there being five such vital airs generally assumed, but three, six, seven, nine, and even ten are also spoken of)

Energy, vigor

The spirit or soul

Of these meanings, the concept of “vital air” is used by Bhattacharyya to describe the concept as used in Sanskrit texts dealing with pranayama. Thomas McEvilley translates “prana” as “spirit- energy”. Its most subtle material form is the breath, but is also to be found in blood, and its most concentrated form is semen in men and vaginal fluid in women.

Related words

Akasa

Pranayama

Vayu

Sanskrit

Prāṇa — प्राण

prāṇa - प्राण

Pranava

See: OM

Sanskrit

Pranava — प्राणव

pranava प्राणव [lit. “to sound out loudly”]

Pranamaya-kosa

Variant spellings

pranamaya-kosa

pranamaya-kosha

prāṇamaya-kośa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prāṇamaya-kośa — ... the sheath of vital air

1. The second sheath encasing the body, with its instrumentality of vital airs and the nervous system. It is located within the physical sheath. It is permeated by mental, consciousness, and bliss sheaths.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prāṇamayakośa -

the vital case (one of the cases or investitures of the soul)

Wikipedia

Pranamaya kosha. Pranamaya means composed of prana, the vital principle, the force that vitalizes and holds together the body and the mind. It pervades the whole organism, its one physical manifestation is the breath. As long as this vital principle exists in the organisms, life continues. Coupled with the five organs of action it forms the vital sheath. In the Vivekachoodamani it is a modification of vayu or air, it enters into and comes out of the body.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The senses with the prana and the karmendriyas form the pranamayakosa (sense-sheath).

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

Conditioned by the five organs of action this vitality [prana] becomes the prānamaya sheath through which the embodied ego performs all the actions of the material body. 167

The prānamaya, being the modification of life-breath and the comer and goer, in and out, like air-currents, is also not the ātman, because it cannot by itself discriminate between good and evil, or the real self and another, it is always dependent on another (the self). 168

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

88. These five vital forces such as Prana etc., together with the organs of action, constitute the vital sheath (Pranamayakosha). Its active nature shows that it is the product of the particles of Rajas. [Pranamayakosha—Pranamayameans consisting of the Pranas or vital forces.]

Diagram: The five sheaths (pancha-kosas)

Related words

Kosha

Suksma sarira

Sanskrit

Prāṇamaya-kośa — प्राणमयकोश

prāṇamaya-kośa - प्राणमयकोश

Pranayama

Variant spellings

pranayama
prāṇāyāma

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prāṇāyāma — ... control of the breath

1. One of the eight limbs of rāja-yoga. ... The control of the breath helps to bring the mind under control. It is the technique of regulating and restraining the function of breathing.
2. Control of breath has three aspects: inhalation (recaka), retention (kumbhaka), and exhalation (pūraka). The practice of prāṇāyāma aims at making the span of pūraka, recaka, and kumbhaka longer. There are also prāṇāyāmas for purifying the blood, vitalizing the inner organs, etc.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prāṇāyāma -

(also pl.) N. of the three 'breath-exercises' performed during Saṁdhyā (see pūraka, recaka, kumbhaka)

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Pranayama (lit. breath control) is one of the elements in the eightfold path of YOGA found in PATANJALI's YOGA SUTRA and other sources. Watching the breath is an element of virtually every yoga that emerged in India, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain. The practice of PRANAYAMA is one of not only focusing on the breath but learning to control it in its three phases of inhalation (puraka), exhalation (recaka), and suspension of breath between the two (kumbhaka). Each must be controlled so that the three fill equal durations of time. One must gradually develop the ability to prolong all three.

Wikipedia

Pranayama is a Sanskrit word meaning "restraint of the prana or breath". The word is composed of two Sanskrit words, Prāna, life force, or vital energy, particularly, the breath, and "āyāma", to suspend or restrain. It is often translated as control of the life force (prana). When used as a technical term in yoga, it is often translated more specifically as "breath control". Literal translations include A. A. Macdonell's "suspension of breath" and I. K. Taimni's "regulation of breath".

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Pranayama: Restraining the breath during the mental recitation of sacred formulas. The fourth of the eight steps for attainment according to the Yoga System.

Nitya. Pranayama

Pranayama is not a breathing exercise. It is a discipline to prepare a person for self-realization through yoga. In the initial steps of this discipline the aspirant regulates his or her outgoing and incoming breath; for this reason many people think that it is an exercise in breathing.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Fifth Lesson [of the Gheranda Samhita] is on Pranayama, “the restraining of the breath”. ... It is focussed in the Element Air, the Spirit. Gheranda says that by the practice of Pranayama a man becomes like a God. “(2) Four things are necessary in practising Pranayama. First, a good place; second, a suitable time; third, moderate food; and, lastly, the purification of the Nadis (the subtle channels of Prana).” — The “good place” refers to the suitable material conditions to be fulfilled. A number of verses deal with this from various angles. The “suitable time” has emotional implications. The teachings following under this head refer to the various seasons of the year. In general spring and autumn are recommended for beginning the practice of Yoga, or, in other words, after the two equinoxes, and the other four seasons of the year — the winter, the cold, the hot, and the rainy season — are condemned for making a beginning. As is well known, the emotional and imaginative life and the manifestation of various desires are intimately linked with the seasons of the year-cycle. In India these are six in number. “Moderation of diet” refers to the lower mental plane, that of the “animal man”. “Food” is connected with the “gastric fire”. ... With the fourth subdivision, the purification of the Nadis or subtle spiritual channels, the Element Air proper is indicated. Detailed symbolical instructions, again referring to the various planes, are given.

The 57th verse runs: “By Pranayama is attained the Power of levitation, by Pranayama diseases are cured, by Pranayama the Sakti is awakened, by Pranayama is obtained the calmness of the mind and exaltation of inner powers; by this, the mind becomes full of bliss; verily the practitioner of Pranayama is happy.” For, indeed, it concerns the Sphere of the Spirit, in which the soul rises on high, and, while ascending, leaves worldliness behind, — the Sphere of Mercury, the Healer of diseases, caused by the antics of the Ahankara in lower Spheres, — the Sphere of Spirit in which the inner powers are exalted and in which the Voice of the Tradition and the Music of the Spheres are heard. That Sphere is one of happiness indeed.

The Samhita next proceeds to enumerate the Ten Vayus or “vital airs”. The Five Pranadi Vayus “belong to the Inner body” (62). They are Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana and Udana. ... The Five Nagadi Vayus, “belonging to the Outer body”, are Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadatta and Dhananjaya. The symbolic implications of these manifestations of Spirit are rather important. Their group of ten refers to the Ten Houses of Manifestation. ... The Organs of Knowledge or Perception work with the Pranas of the Outer body, and the Organs of Action work with the Pranas of the Inner body.

Wikipedia

Some scholars distinguish between hatha and raja yoga varieties of pranayama, with the former variety usually prescribed for the beginner. According to Taimni, hatha yogic pranayama involves manipulation of pranic currents through breath regulation for bringing about the control of chitta-vrittis and changes in consciousness, whereas raja yogic pranayama involves the control of chitta-vrittis by consciousness directly through the will of the mind. Students qualified to practice pranayama are therefore always initiated first in the techniques of hatha pranayama.

...

Pranayama is the fourth 'limb' of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga mentioned in verse 2.29 in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Patanjali discusses his specific approach to pranayama in verses 2.49 through 2.51, and devotes verses 2.52 and 2.53 to explaining the benefits of the practice. Patanjali does not fully elucidate the nature of prana, and the theory and practice of pranayama seem to have undergone significant development after him. He presents pranayama as essentially an exercise that is preliminary to concentration, as do the earlier Buddhist texts.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Pranayama

Only young children under twelve should not practise pranayama. Young and old, the weak and the chronically ill, may all take advantage of pranayama.

... When pranayama becomes an accomplished fact, it ceases to be a practice. Thereafter, it becomes a spontaneous manifestation which will keep the yogi in a perennial state of harmony within his psychosomatic system, as well as in this relation with the external world. As mind is the conscious aspect of prana, pranayama is the common contributive factor in all the other yogic disciplines, such as withdrawal of interest from sense objects, concentration, sustaining singular modality, and absorption and realization.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Later on Sri Bhagavan said: "Control of breath may be internal or external."

The antah pranayama (the internal breath-regulation) is as follows:-

Naham chinta (I-am-not-the-body idea) is rechaka (exhalation).

Koham (who am I?) is puraka (inhalation).

Soham (I am He) is kumbhaka (retention of breath).

Doing thus, the breath becomes automatically controlled.

Bahih pranayama (external control) is for one not endowed with strength to control the mind. There is no way so sure as that; or a sadhu's company. The external practice must be resorted to by a wise man if he does not enjoy a sadhu's company. If in a sadhu's company the sadhu provides the needed strength, though unseen by others, Pranayama need not be exactly as described in hatha Yoga. If engaged in japa, dhyana, bhakti, etc., just a little control of breath will suffice to control the mind. The mind is the rider and the breath the horse. Pranayama is a check on the horse. By that check the rider is checked.

Pranayama may be done just a little. To watch the breath is one way of doing it. The mind abstracted from other activities is engaged in watching the breath. That controls the breath; and in its turn the mind is controlled.

If unable to do so, rechaka and puraka need not be practised. Breath may be retained a short while in japa, dhyana, etc. Then, too, good results will follow.

See: Vayu and pranayama

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

Macdonell gives the etymology as prāna + āyāma and defines it as “ suspension of breath (sts. pl.)”.

Apte’s definition of āyāmah derives it from ā + yām and provides several variant meanings for it when used in compounds. The first three meanings have to do with “length”, “expansion, extension”, and “stretching, extending”, but in the specific case of use in the compound prānāyāma he defines āyāmah as meaning “restrain, control, stopping”.

An alternative etymology for the compound is cited by Ramamurti Mishra, who says that:

“Expansion of individual energy into cosmic energy is called prānāyāma (prāna, energy + ayām, expansion).”

The word “yama” (Devanagari: यम, yāma) means “cessation” or more generally “control” or “restraint”.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Pranayama

The compound word pranayama can be divided into prana. meaning the vital energy that animates the body, and Syama, meaning its conservation. Corjsevari recommended of retention, kumbhaka,

Related words

Prana

Sanskrit

Prānāyāma — प्राणायाम

prānāyāma - प्राणायाम

Prapanca

Variant spellings

prapanca

prapancha

prapañca

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prapañca —... the world; world appearance

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prapañca -

expansion, development, manifestation;
manifoldness, diversity;
amplification, prolixity, diffuseness, copiousness;
manifestation of or form of (gen.);
appearance, phenomenon;
(in phil.) the expansion of the universe, the visible world;
mutual false praise;
ludicrous dialogue;
(in gram.) the repetition of an obscure rule in a clearer form;
deceit, trick, fraud, error;
opposition, reversion

General

Deussen. The System of the Vedanta

prapanca - the spatial extension (of the sense-world)

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Prapanca: The phenomenal world.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

The world as such (the prapanca) consists of names, forms and actions.

...

The world is said to be false—a mere product of maya. ... The world-appearance is said to be “is” or existing, since it appears to be so for the time the state of ignorance persists in us. Since it exists for a time it is sat (is), but since it does not exist for all times it is asat (is not). This is the appearance, the falsehood of the world-appearance (jagatprapanca) that it is neither sat nor asat in an absolute sense. ... the being (sat), the Brahman ... appears as the world; but ... when the Brahman, the being, the reality, is once directly realized, the conviction comes that the world never existed.

...

The world-appearance is not however so illusory as the perception of silver in the conch-shell, for the latter type of worldly illusions is called pratibhasika, as they are contradicted by other later experiences, whereas the illusion of world-appearance is never contradicted in this worldly stage and is thus called vyavaharika (from vyavahara, practice, i.e. that on which is based all our practical movements). So long as the right knowledge of the Brahman as the only reality does not dawn, the world-appearance runs on in an orderly manner uncontradicted by the accumulated experience of all men, and as such it must be held to be true. It is only be-

cause there comes such a stage in which the worldappearance ceases to manifest itself that we have to say that from the ultimate and absolute point of view the world-appearance is false and unreal.

...

the notion of reality cannot be derived from the senses, nor can it be defined as that which is the content of right knowledge, for we cannot have any conception of right knowledge without a conception of reality, and no conception of reality without a conception of right knowledge. The conception of reality comprehends within it the notions of unalterability, absoluteness, and independence, which cannot be had directly from experience, as this gives only an appearance but cannot certify its truth. Judged from this point of view it will be evident that the true reality in all our experience is the one self-luminous flash of consciousness which is all through identical with itself in all its manifestations of appearance. Our present experience of the world-appearance cannot in any way guarantee that it will not be contradicted at some later stage. What really persists in all experience is the being (sat) and not its forms. ... Being is thus said to be the basis (adhithana) on which the illusions appear. This being is not different with different things but one in all appearances. Our perceptions of the world-appearance could have been taken as a guarantee of their reality, if the reality which is supposed of them could-be perceived by the senses, and if inference and sruti (scriptures) did not point the other way. Perception can of course invalidate inference, but it can do so only when its own validity has been ascertained in an undoubted and uncontested manner. But this is not the case with our perceptions of the world-appearance, for our present perceptions cannot prove that these will never be contradicted in future, and inference and sruti are also against it. The mere fact that I perceive the world-appearance cannot prove that what I perceive is true or real, if it is contradicted by inference. We all perceive the sun to be small, but our perception in this case is contradicted by inference and we have hence to admit that our perceptions are erroneous.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Mandukya Upanishad

It is only up to the gate of Thuriya that we have the plurality and the experience of the plurality. Prapancha which is constituted of the pluralistic world of mortality is experienced only in the waking-state, the dream-state and the deep-sleep-state. Once these three states are transcended, we enter into the world of Reality and there, at Thuriya the worlds of finitude and change, mortality and sorrows, imperfections and deceits, limitations and tears have no entry.

Related words

Brahman
Jagat

Sanskrit

Prapañca — प्रपञ्च

prapañca - प्रपञ्च

Prashna Upanishad

Title

Praśna Upaniṣad — प्रश्नोपनिषद्

Praśna Upaniṣad - प्रश्न उपनिषद्

Praśnopaniṣad - प्रश्नोपनिषद्

Prashna Upanishad

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Praśna Upaniṣad — ... “questions”

1. This Upaniṣad is so-called because it is in the form of questions (praśna) and answers. It consists of six sections in the form of six questions put to a seer (ṛṣi) by six disciples seeking knowledge of the Absolute (Brahman) and the seer’s answers to their questions. The subjects dealt with include the ultimate cause of this world, the supreme Being, the nature and power of the sound Om, the relation of the Supreme to the things of the world. This Upaniṣad belongs to the Atharva Veda. Some important personages in this Upaniṣad include Pippalāda, Satyakāma, Sukeśā, Gārgya, Kauśalya, Bhārgava, and Kabandhi.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Prashna (“Question”) Upanishad. One of the later and more developed upanishads, the speculative religious texts that form the latest stratum of the oldest Hindu sacred texts, the Vedas. As with most of the upanishads, the Prashna Upanishad’s underlying concern is to investigate ultimate questions, in particular the nature of the Self (atman). Considered one of the later upanishads, the Prashna Upanishad is similar to the earliest upanishads, the Brhadaranyaka and the Chandogya, but is far shorter, and the text is much more focused.

Wikipedia

The Prashna Upanishad is one of the earlier, “primary” Upanishads commented upon by Shankara. It is a Mukhya Upanishad, associated with the Atharvaveda. It figures as number 4 in the Muktika canon of 108 Upanishads.

Synopsis

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Like the older upanishads, the Prashna is written as a dialogue. It takes the form of a conversation between the sage Pippalada and six questioners. In each section (called a prashna in the text) one of the hearers asks a question, to which Pippalada replies. The six sections all have different themes: the nature of time, prana as the most important human power, the nature of life after death, sleep, meditation, the sound Om, and the nature of the Self. In this way, it uses the older dialogue form to advance a far more developed and cohesive philosophical perspective.

Wikipedia

In Sanskrit, “Prashna” means question. This book consists of six questions and their answers, hence the name. It is in the form of question-answers. except first and last questions, all other questions are actually a group of smaller sub-questions. As narrated in the beginning of this Upanishad, Six pupils interested in knowing divinity or Brahman come to sage Pippalada and request him to clarify their spiritual doubts. Instead of answering immediately, Pippalada asks them to take up penance and Brahmacharya for one year at his place. Upon completion of one year, pupils ask the sage, then the sage answers their questions.

The pupils who ask questions are:

The son of Bharadwaja the Sukesha

The son of Shibi the Satyakama

The descendant of Garga the Sauryayanee

The son of Ashwala the Kausalya

Bhargava of the country of Vidarbha belonging to Bhrigu Gotra

The son of Katya the Kabandhi

Each of them asks one question to Pippalada and answer(s) to it forms a chapter in the Upanishad.

The questions

The first question is asked by Kabandhi concerned with the root cause of the universe.

The second question asked by Bhargava is concerned with the supremacy of vital Force of Life or Prana over other sense organs of human being.

The third question asked by Kausalya is concerned with the origin and functioning of Vital Force of Life.

The fourth question asked by Sauryayanee of Garga Gotra is related to Dream world of the sleeping person.

The fifth question is concerned with fruits one gets by meditating on holy syllable OM.

The sixth and last question is concerned with the being by whom all this known and unknown universe got created and who has sixteen vital things (kala) or who is called as Shodashakala Purusha.

First Question

First question asked by Kabandhi puts forth an important issue of spirituality. What is the root cause of this world? In fact, Kabandhi's question is literally “From where (which root) these people are born?” Pippalada answers as if the question were asked about the root cause of the world. He says that Prajapati created a union of Prana and Rayi in order to create world and their intermixing or mating produced all the things in the world. Max Müller has translated this union as Spirit and Matter. Term Rayi can be interpreted as all subtle and gross physical Matter and Prana can be taken as intangible spirit or active life force. Pippalada extols the greatness of Prana. Finally explains that Food represents Rayi (Matter) and from food, Semen is produced and from semen people are born.

Second Question

Second question is asked by Bhargava of Vidarbha. Question is concerned with relation between senses and Vital Life Force Prana in the body. Pippalada explains that Prana is the main sustainer of the body through an example. The question is “how many divine elements hold the body?, which among them makes body living?, who is great among them?” As an answer, Pippalada says that once space, air, fire (heat), water and earth (gross matter) and speech, mind, eye and ear said in pride that they sustain and hold the body. Then Prana (Life Force) tells “Do not be proud, I hold and sustain the body by dividing myself as five forms”. But other divine elements did not believe this, then Prana tried to stand up in anger, all other divine elements also rose along with

Prana automatically, just like pulled up by string, as if when king bee raises all other worker bees also raise along with it. Then other divine elements realized who their master is and from who they derive their strength. They start pacifying Prana by praising. Rest of the answer tells about the greatness of Prana in the form of praise. Different forms of this “Vital Life Energy” (Prana) are described in the praise. Fire, Air, Indra, Rain, Earth etc are told be different forms Prana and is also told to be supporting outer world in the form of luminous Sun. Pippalada also tells that both inner and outer worlds are under the control of Prana.

Third Question

After learning that Prana is the main sustainer of the body and universe, Kausalya the son of Ashvala, asks the third question about origin of Prana. The question is “ From whom Prana originates? How does he comes into body?, How does he stays by dividing himself? How he leaves the body? How he supports outer and inner worlds?” Pippalada answers that Prana originates from Atman (soul), the way like shadow of the person originates. Prana comes to body by Atmans will. He divides himself into five forms called Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana etc and performs various functions in the body. There are Nadi’s (subtle channels of energy) in the heart in which Prana in the form of Udana circulates. Through one of the Nadi’s, Udana carries life to heaven during death, if man has done Punya (Good deeds), and to Naraka (Hell) if he has done Papa(sin), and to earth (human world) if both (Papa and Punya) are present. Being in the form of sun, Prana gives light to eye for seeing, thus he supports outer world by assuming form of sun.

Fourth Question

Asked by Souryayanee Gargya, this question is concerned with dream world of human being. Exact question is “Which elements in Human being actually sleep? Which are awake at that time (while sleeping)? Among these who sees the dream, who feels bliss in it? In whom all these elements merge finally as their final destination?” Following answer is given. The way all sun rays go back into sun at the time of sunset, so are all the senses of man go back into their master the Mind. But still the five Prana’s (Vyana, Upana etc.) are awake. The one who sees the dream is mind. During dream less deep sleep this mind merges into Supreme Reality the Akshara, or Brahman. It is final refuge of elements, then Self feels bliss.

Fifth Question

What fruit does one get who regularly meditates on holy syllable OM till his/her death ? Is the fifth question of Shaibya Satyakama. Pippalada answers that OM indicates supreme reality the Para Brahman and one who meditates will merge into Para Brahman.

Sixth Question

Final and last question asked by son of Bharadwaja the Sukesha, is about a vedic divine being called “Shodashakala Purusha” or “Person with sixteen divine attributes”. Pippalada answers that Shodashakala Purusha is within the body and explains its greatness and says “So far do I know this Highest Brahman, there is nothing higher than it”.

Conclusion

The answers to each of the questions are developed by Pippalada, within a perspective of great depth. The language and concepts of the answers are often abstruse and esoteric, but one may get from them glimpses that are rational and perceptive. Thus, in answering the question on the origin of life, Pippalada starts with the origin of all existence in terms of matter and energy, and develops the answer step by step, till in the last one, he gives as the most direct and immediate origin of life, the sperm of the species. The answer to the last question is, that the ultimate supreme source of all existence is Brahman.

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Related words

Atharva Veda

Upanishads

Prasthana-traya

Variant spellings

prasthana-traya

prasthāna-traya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prasthāna-traya — ... “the triple canon or foundation” (of Vedānta)

1. It consists of the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and the Brahmasūtra. These works form the primary (śruti), the secondary (smṛti), and the logical foundations (nyāya-prasthāna) of Vedānta, and all teach the same doctrine—i.e., Brahman/Ātman.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Osborne. The collected works of Ramana Maharshi

Unfortunately, however, there is no such happiness which has not the taint of sorrow. It is precisely for the purpose of pointing out the straight path to true happiness that Lord Siva, taking on the guise of Sri Shankaracharya, wrote the commentaries on the Triple Canon (Prasthana Traya) of the Vedanta, which extols the excellence of this bliss; and that he demonstrated it by his own

example in life. These commentaries, however, are of little use to those ardent seekers who are intent upon realizing the bliss of Liberation but have not the scholarship necessary for studying them.

It is for such as these that Sri Shankara revealed the essence of the commentaries in this short treatise, The Crown Gem of Discrimination [Vivekachudamani], explaining in detail the points that have to be grasped by those who seek Liberation, and thereby directing them to the true and direct path.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Lessons on the Upanishads

the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavadgita – constitute what is usually known as Prastana Trayi, the tripod of Indian thought. The whole of Indian philosophy in its highest reaches is to be found in these three great fundamental texts: the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavadgita.

Ten Upanishads are the foundation. These ten are: the Isavasya Upanishad, the Kena Upanishad, the Katha Upanishad, the Prasna Upanishad, the Mundaka Upanishad, the Mandukya Upanishad, the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Aitareya Upanishad, the Chhandogya Upanishad and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. This is the usual sequence in which these ten important Upanishads are traditionally recounted, but modern scholars have a different sequence. They consider the oldest as the best and the later ones as less important. Western scholars, especially, have introduced this new system of placing the Upanishads in a novel order, or sequence, considering the prose Upanishads as older and the versified ones as later.

Related words

Bhagavad Gita
Brahma-sutras
Upanishad

Sanskrit

Prasthāna-traya — प्रस्थानत्रय
prasthāna-traya - प्रस्थानत्रय

Pratibhasika

Variant spellings

pratibhasika
prātibhāsika

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Prātibhāsika — ... apparent; illusory

1. The truth that exists only in appearance—e.g., a mirage or a rope/snake.
2. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is one of three levels of reality from the relative point of view. (See vyāvahārika and pāramārthika.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

prātibhāsika -

having only the appearance of anything, existing only in appearance

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Pratibhasika satya: illusory reality as it appears to a particular individual.

...

Pratibhasika satya (illusory) - Illusion of a serpent in a coiled rope. The appearance is real to the man who thinks so. This phenomenon appears at a point of time and under certain circumstances.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Integrated Science of the Absolute

Prātibhāsika is an appearance given to partial and feeble-minded individuals such as cowards under special circumstances.

... Between the vyāvahārika and the pāramārthika (ultimate reality) there is an infinite number of quasi-stable possibilities of error, all of which can be classed under prātibhāsika (a reflection of a reflection of the truth of the Absolute).

See: Paramarthika, vyavaharika, pratibhasika - three types of reality

Related words

Adhyasa

Paramarthika

Vyavaharika

Sanskrit

Prātibhāsika — प्रतिभासिक

prātibhāsika - प्रातभिसकि

Pratibhasika satyam

See: Pratibhasika

Preyas

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Preyas — ... pleasing; worldly gain

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

preyas -

(compar. fr. priya) dearer , more agreeable , more desired;

a lover;

a dear friend;

(in rhet.) flattery

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Preyas: The common name for the aggregate of worldly values.

Descriptions

See: Shreyas and preyas

Related words

Sreyas

Sanskrit

Preyas — प्रेयस्

preyas - प्रेयस्

Prithivi

Variant spellings

prithivi
prthivi
pṛthvī

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pṛthvī — ... the earth (see mahā-bhūtā)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

pṛthvī -
the earth (also as an element);
great cardamoms;
N. of 2 kinds of metre

Wikipedia

Prithvi (Sanskrit: pṛthvī, also pṛthivī) is the Hindu earth and mother goddess. According to one tradition, she is the personification of the Earth, and to another its Mother, being Prithivi Tattwa, the essence of the element earth. Prithvi is also called Dhra, Dharti, Dhritri, meaning that which holds everything. As Prithvi Devi, she is one of two wives of Lord Vishnu. His other wife is Lakshmi. Prithvi is another form of Laxmi. Another name for Her is Bhumi or Bhudevi or Bhuma Devi. As Prithvi Mata “Mother Earth” she contrasts with Dyaus Pita “father sky”. In the Rigveda, Earth and Sky are frequently addressed in the dual, probably indicating the idea of two complementary half- shells. She is the wife of Dyaus Pita (‘father Dyaus’). (The widespread belief that these two were originally a single deity appears to be mistaken. See Dyavapṛthivi). She is the mother of Indra and Agni. According to a tradition, when Indra killed Dyaus Pita, she applauded and married him. She is associated with the cow. Prithu, an incarnation of Vishnu, milked her in the cow’s form to get food from her. Prithvi also appears in Early Buddhism where she appears in the Pali Canon, dispelling the temptation figure Mara by attesting to Gautama Buddha’s worthiness to attain enlightenment.

Descriptions

General

Lurker. Dictionary of Gods

Prithivi (‘the wide (earth)’) In India, the earth, felt as a mother and symbolized in the form of the cow; in Vedism, revered together with the god of heaven →Dyaus. Among her children are the dawn (→ Usas) and fire (→ Agni). When she gave birth to → Indra, the earth quaked.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Prithivi is earth, one of the five ELEMENTS (mahabhutas) of reality. The word is also a name of the earth goddess in the Vedas. In the RIG VEDA and ATHARVA VEDA prithivi, or the “Earth,” is called the mother, while the sky is considered father. Together they are frequently called parents, or even the parents of the gods; frequently the Sun is mentioned as their child. The Earth is seen as protecting, sustaining, and nourishing but is only rarely referred to without reference to the sky. In later Hindu mythology the earth goddess was called Bhumi Devi.

See also:

in Mahabhutas: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Diagram: Mahabhutas

Etymology

General

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

The word Prithivi, denoting the Earth, the Goddess of the Earth, and the Earth-Cow, means etymologically “the broad”, “the wide (world)”.

Related words

Bhumi
Gandha
Mahabhuta

Sanskrit

Pr̥thvī — पृथ्वी

pr̥thvī - पृथ्वी

Priya

Variant spellings

priya
pritam

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Priyam — ... dear; pleasing

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

priya -

beloved, dear to (gen. loc. dat. or comp.), liked, favourite, wanted, own;

dear, expensive, high in price;

fond of attached or devoted to;

a friend;

a lover, husband;

a son-in-law;

a kind of deer;

N. of 2 medicinal plants

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Priya: Anything of value capable of giving pleasure whether applied to things, persons or ideas. Asti, Bhati and Priya are the three philosophical categories pertaining to the Real which can exist, enter consciousness and be desireable, respectively.

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

It is obvious from this verse that the jnani is a yogi, for he is “continually united” with God through his yoga practice. He is devoted to God and to no other for two reasons. First, he values God above all else. Second he knows that God alone is real, that all else is unreal and therefore unworthy of his dedication. But his valuation is not an impersonal “factoid.” Rather, God is dear to him and he is dear to God. Priya means both “dear” and “beloved.” Actually, Krishna uses two words: atyartham priya: “exceedingly dear”– even “extraordinarily dear.” So God fills the heart and mind of the jnani, just as God is fully intent on him. As Solomon sang: “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” (Song of Solomon 2:16. See also: 6:3 and 7:10)

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Ananda is felt after the cessation of thoughts in sleep. It is also manifest on other occasions as love, joy, etc., priya, moda and pramoda. But they are all chitta vrittis (modes of mind).

When a man is walking in the street his mind is full of fleeting thoughts. Suppose he passes a bazaar where some fine mangoes are for sale. He likes the mangoes and purchases them. He is next anxious to taste them. So he hastens home and eats them and

feels happy. When the fleeting thoughts give way to the pleasure at the sight of mangoes, it is priya, when he gets them as his own, the pleasure is moda; lastly, when he eats them, the pleasure is pramoda.

All the three kinds of pleasure are owing to the disappearance of other thoughts.

...

Pleasures are priya, moda and pra-moda. When a desired object is near at hand there arises priya: when it is taken possession of moda arises; when it is being enjoyed pra-moda prevails.

See also:

in Anandamaya kosha: [Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani](#)

Related words

Ananda

Sanskrit

Priyam — प्रियम्

priyam - प्रियम्

Puranas

Variant spellings

purana

purāṇa

Descriptions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Purāṇa — ... “ancient”; old

1. There are eighteen major Purāṇas, or sacred books, containing stories, legends, and hymns about the creation of the universe, the incarnations of God, and the instructions of various deities as well as the spiritual legacies of ancient sages and kings.

2. The legendary histories of India and the repositories of popular religious creeds. They traditionally deal with five topics: creation (sarga), dissolution (pratisarga), lineage (vamśa), epochs (manvantarāṇi), and the legends of future lineage (vamaśānucaritam).

The eighteen major Purāṇas are divided into three categories. Those which are sattvic and honor Viṣṇu are Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata, Padma, Nārādīya, Garuda, and Varāha. Those which are rajasic and honor Brahmā are Brahmā, Brahmavaivarta, Bhaviṣya, Brahmānda, Vāmana, Mārkaṇḍeya. Those which are tamasic and honor Śiva are Śiva (Vāyu), Matsya, Linga, Skanda, Agni, and Kūrma.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

purāṇa -

belonging to ancient or olden times, ancient, old (also = withered, worn out, opp. to nūtana, nava);

a Karsha or measure of silver (= 16 Paṇas of cowries);

N. of a Rishi;

pl. the ancients;

a thing or event of the past, an ancient tale or legend, old traditional history;

N. of a class of sacred works (supposed to have been compiled by the poet Vyāsa and to treat of 5 topics [cf. pañca-lakṣaṇa];

the chief Purāṇas are 18, grouped in 3 divisions: viz. 1. Rājasa exalting Brahmā [e.g. the Brahma, Brahmāṇḍa, Brahmavaivarta,

Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhaviṣhya, Vāmana]; 2. Sāttvika exalting Viṣṇu [e.g. the Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata, Nārādīya, Garuḍa, Padma, Varāha];

3. Tāmasa exalting Śiva [e.g. the Śiva, Liṅga, Skanda, Agni or in place of it the Vāyu, Matsya, Kūrma]; by some the Padma are

divided into 4, and by others into 6 groups;

N. of work (containing an index of the contents of a number of Padma and some other works.)

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

puranas

A purana is a story about the deeds and life of a divinity. These stories supply a rich backdrop to Hinduism, and, together with the epics, the RAMAYANA and MAHABHARATA, form the mythological infrastructure of the culture. Jains have their own puranic literature, but it dwells on the lives of the great teachers, the TIRTHANKARAS and other holy personages who have broken the bonds of karma, rather than on the gods.

There are 18 traditional puranas in Hinduism, all written in SANSKRIT. Though their names could be taken to indicate a sectarian focus (as, for example, the Shiva Purana), most often they contain both SHAIVITE and Vaishnavite stories. At times stories outline the supremacy of the GODDESS, such as those in the Markandeya Purana, but even these are juxtaposed with stories from the other two sects.

Included in the category of purana are very important local stories, usually in Sanskrit, but sometimes in local languages. In particular, the Tamil language of South India contains many stories like this. These sthala puranas, or puranas of "place," tell the origin stories of the vast number of local divinities who populate the Indian landscape. An example of this would be the Tiruvilayadal Puranam, written in Tamil in the 16th century, which tells the story of MINAKSHI from the Brahminical point of view, showing how she became subordinated to SHIVA, who became her husband.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Purana. ("old") An important genre of smṛti texts, and the repository of traditional Indian mythology. The smṛtis, or "remembered," texts were a class of literature that, although deemed important, was considered less authoritative than the śrūtis, or "heard" texts. In brief, the śrūtis denoted the Vedas, the oldest and most authoritative Hindu religious texts, whereas the smṛtis included the two great epics, namely the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the dharma literature, the Bhagavad Gita, and the compendia known as the puranas.

According to one traditional definition, a purana should contain accounts of at least five essential things: the creation of the earth, its dissolution and recreation, origins of the gods and patriarchs, the reigns of the Manvantaras, and the reigns of the Solar and Lunar Lines. In practice, the puranas are compendia of all types of sacred lore, from mythic tales to ritual instruction to exaltation

of various sacred sites (tirthas) and actions. Individual puranas are usually highly sectarian and intended to promote the worship of one of the Hindu gods, whether Vishnu, Shiva, or the Goddess. By tradition the major puranas number eighteen, but there are hundreds of minor works. Along with the epics, the puranas are the storehouses of the mythic tales that are the common religious currency for traditional Hindus. In this respect the puranas are much more influential than any of the Vedas, because the tales in the puranas are common knowledge. The contents of the Vedas, though more authoritative, are less well known. Judgments on the importance of individual puranas vary according to sectarian persuasion, but some of the most important puranas are the Agni Purana, Shiva Purana, Brahma Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Harivamsha, and Markandeya Purana.

Wikipedia

The Puranas are a group of important Hindu (or Jain and Buddhist) religious texts, notably consisting of narratives of the history of the universe from creation to destruction, genealogies of kings, heroes, sages, and demigods, and descriptions of Hindu cosmology, philosophy, and geography.

Puranas usually give prominence to a particular deity, employing an abundance of religious and philosophical concepts. They are usually written in the form of stories related by one person to another. The Puranas are available in vernacular translations and are disseminated by Brahmin scholars, who read from them and tell their stories, usually in Katha sessions (in which a traveling brahmin settles for a few weeks in a temple and narrates parts of a Purana, usually with a Bhakti perspective)....

According to Matsya Purana, they are said to narrate five subjects, called Pancha Lakshana pañcalaksana...:

1. Sarga: the creation of the universe.
 2. Pratisarga: secondary creations, mostly recreations after dissolution.
 3. Vamśa: genealogy of the gods and sages.
 4. Manvañtara: the creation of the human race and the first human beings. The epoch of the Manus' rule, 71 celestial Yugas or 308,448,000 years.
 5. Vamśānucaritam: the histories of the patriarchs of the lunar and solar dynasties.
- ... The Puranic genealogies indicate, for example, that Sradhdhadeva Manu lived 95 generations before the Bharata war. In Arrian's Indica, Megasthenes is quoted as stating that the Indians counted from "Dionysos" (Shiva) to "Sandracottus" (Chandragupta Maurya) "a hundred and fifty- three kings over six thousand and forty-three years."

Mahapuranas

General

Wikipedia

Of the many texts designated 'Puranas' the most important are the Mahāpurāṇas. These are always said to be eighteen in number, divided into three groups of six, though in fact they are not always counted in the same way.

...

The Mahapuranas are frequently classified according the three aspects of the divine Trimurti.

Vaiṣṇava Puranas: Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Nāradeya Purana, Garuda Purana, Padma Purana, Varaha Purana, Vāmana Purana, Kūrma Purana, Matsya Purana, Kalki Purana

Brāhma Puranas: Brahma Purana, Brahmānda Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Mārkaṇḍeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana,

Śaiva Puranas: Shiva Purana, Linga Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana, Vāyu Purana.

According to the Padma Purana, the texts may be classified in accordance with the three gunas or qualities...

Sattva (“truth; purity”): Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Naradeya Purana, Garuda Purana, Padma Purana, Varaha Purana.
Rajas (“dimness; passion”): Brahmanda Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana, Brahma Purana.

Tamas (“darkness; ignorance”): Matsya Purana, Kurma purana, Linga Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana.

Upapuranas

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Upapurāṇas are lesser or ancillary texts: these are sometimes also said to be eighteen in number, with still less agreement as to the canonical titles. Few have been critically edited. They include: Sanat-kumara, Narasimha, Brihan-naradiya, Siva-rahasya, Durvasa, Kapila, Vamana, Bhargava, Varuna, Kalika, Samba, Nandi, Surya, Parasara, Vasishtha, Devi-Bhagavata, Ganesha, Mudgala, and Hamsa.

The Ganesha and Mudgala Puranas are devoted to Ganesha. The Devi-Bhagavata Purana, which extols the goddess Durga, has become (along with the Devi Mahatmya of the Mārkandeya Purana) a basic text for Devi worshippers.

There are many others all over the Indian subcontinent.

Sthala Puranas

General

[Wikipedia](#)

This corpus of texts tells of the origins and traditions of particular Tamil Shiva temples or shrines. There are numerous Sthala Puranas, most written in vernaculars, some with Sanskrit versions as well. The 275 Shiva Sthalams of the continent have puranas for each, famously glorified in the Tamil literature Tevaram. Some appear in Sanskrit versions in the Mahapuranas or Upapuranas.

Kula Puranas

General

[Wikipedia](#)

These Puranas deal with a caste’s origin myth, stories, and legends (the word kula means “family” or “tribe” in Sanskrit). They are important sources for caste identity though usually contested by rival castes. This subgenre is usually in the vernacular and may at times remain oral. These have been little researched, though they are documented in the caste section of the British Census of India Report and the various Gazetteers.

Jain and Buddhist Puranas

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Jain Puranas deal with Jain myths, history and legends and form a major part of early Kannada literature. The best known is the Mahapurana of Acharya Jinasena. Among Buddhist Puranas, Swayambhu Purana narrates the mythological history of Nepal and describes Buddhist pilgrimage sites inside the Kathmandu Valley.

See also:

in Shastras: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Author(s)

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Vyasa, the narrator of the Mahabharata, is traditionally considered the compiler of the Puranas. However, the earliest written versions date from the time of the Gupta Empire (third-fifth century CE) and much material may be dated, through historical references and other means, to this period and the succeeding centuries. The texts were probably written all over India.

The date of the production of the written texts does not define the date of origin of the Puranas. On one hand, they existed in some oral form before being written while at the same time, they have been incrementally modified well into the 16th century and perhaps down to the present day.

An early reference is found in the Chandogya Upanishad (circa 500BCE.) The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad refers to purana as the “fifth Veda”, reflecting the early religious importance of these myths, presumably then in purely oral form. The term also appears in the Atharvaveda.

Common ideas are found throughout the corpus but it is not possible to trace the lines of influence of one Purana upon another so the corpus is best viewed as a synchronous whole.

Texts

Agni Purana

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Agni Purana, (Sanskrit: अग्निपुराण, Agni Purāṇa) one of the 18 Mahapuranas, a genre of Hindu religious texts, contains descriptions and details of various incarnations (avatars) of Vishnu. It also has details account about Rama, Krishna, Prithvi, and the stars. It has a number of verses dealing with ritual worship, cosmology and astrology, history, warfare, sections on grammar and meter, law, medicine, and martial arts. Tradition has it that it was originally recited by Agni to the sage Vasishtha.

15,400 verses Contains details of Vastu Shastra and Gemology.

The text is divided into 383 chapters. The athāgnipurāṇa pariśiṣṭam is an appendix of another six chapters.

The text is medieval (post-Gupta), and has been dated to anywhere between the 8th and the 11th centuries.

Text

The extant text comprises 383 chapters. The last chapter of the text gives a list of 50 topics discussed in the text.

Outline

After the customary opening (Chapter 1), the text describes the 10 avatars of Vishnu in detail. Chapters 2–4 deal with the Matsya, the Kurma and the Varaha avatars respectively. The next seven chapters (5–11) summarise the seven Kandas of the Ramayana. Chapter 12 summarises Harivamsha. Chapters 13–15 narrate the story of the Mahabharata. Chapter 16 describes Buddha and Kalki as the avatars of Vishnu. Chapters 17–20 describe the five essential characteristics of a Purana. Chapters 21–70 consist a discussion between Narada, Agni, Hayagriva, and Bhagavan. These chapters deal with the religious bathing, construction of a Kunda (sacrificial pit), the Mudras (the positions of fingers during worship), the mode of worship of Vasudeva, Sankarshana,

Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, consecration of an image, architecture of a temple, iconography of the images, the worship of Salagrama, the rules for the installation of the images and repair of a temple.

The subject of chapter 71 is the worship of Ganesha. Chapters 72–105 relate to the worship of the Lingam and the several manifestations of Devi. These chapters also contain discussions on the method of establishing Agni (sacrificial fire), Canda worship, Kapila worship and consecration of a temple. Chapter 106 discusses Vastu related to the cities. Chapter 107 is devoted to the creation of Svayambhuva Manu. Chapter 108 is the Bhuvana-Kosha (description of the universe). Chapters 109–116 describe a number of Tirthas. Chapter 117 deals with the ancestral rites. Chapters 118–120 describe the Puranic concepts on the geography of India and other parts of the world as well as the Puranic perceptions about the distances between various regions of the world. Chapters 121–149 deal with various aspects of astronomy and astrology. Chapter 150 deals with the periods of the Manvantaras and the names of the Manus.

Chapters 151–167 deal with the duties associated the different varnas. Chapters 168–174 discuss about the expiations for various kinds of sins. Chapter 175–207 describe about the performances of a number of Vratas. Chapters 208–217 describe various religious gifts and vows. Chapters 218–248 deal with various aspects of statecraft. Chapters 249–252 discuss in detail Dhanurveda or archery, and weapons associated with it. Chapters 254–258 expound on the Vyavahara (judicature and law). This part of the text is literally same as the Mitakshara. The next chapters (259–271) deal with miscellaneous topics regarding the perusal of the Vedas. Chapter 272 deals with the gifts to be made when the Puranas are read. This chapter contains a list of the Puranas and the number of verses each Purana contains. Chapters 273–278 deal with the genealogy of the Puranic dynasties.

Chapters 279–300 deal with the various branches of medicine. Chapters 301–316 deal with the worship of Surya and various mantras (chants), out of which chapters 309–314 deal with mantras for worshipping of the goddess Tvarita. In Chapters 317–326 Ishvara speaks to Skanda regarding the worship of Shiva's ganas: Vagishvari, Aghora, Pashupata, Rudra, and Gauri. Chapter 327 instructs on the glorification of establishing a linga in a temple. Chapters 328–335 summarise Pingala sutras on metrics and an unknown commentary on it. Chapter 336 has rudimentary discussion about Vedic phonetics.

The subject of the next two chapters (337–337) is poetics and rhetoric. Chapter 338 contains a list of the different types of Sanskrit drama. Chapters 339–340 deal with the four ritis or styles of displaying sentiments and emotions during acting. Chapters 341–342 expound on the actions and movements of the limbs of an actor and definitions of the dramatic representations. Discussions regarding the various figures of speech are found in chapters 343-45. The definitions found in these chapters are same as those of the Kavyadarsha of Dandin. The merits and demerits of a composition are discussed in chapters 346–347.

Chapter 348 consists a list of monosyllabic words. The following chapters (349–359) deal with the rules of Sanskrit grammar, which is an abstract of the Chandra Vyakarana. Chapters 360–367 are basically a lexicon on the pattern of the Amarakosha. Chapters 369–370 consist of discussions on human anatomy. Chapter 371 describes various types of Narakas. Chapters 372–376 deal with both Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga. The subject of the chapters 377–380 is the philosophy of Vedanta and knowledge of Brahma. Chapter 381 gives the gist of the Bhagavad Gita. Chapter 382 is a version of the Yama Gita. Chapter 383's verses glorify the Agni Purana.

Bhagavata Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa (Devanāgarī: भागवतपुराण, also known as Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, or Bhāgavata) is one of the “Maha” Puranic texts of Hindu literature, with its primary focus on bhakti (devotion) to the incarnations of Vishnu, particularly Krishna. The Sanskrit text comprises twelve skandas (cantos or books) and some 18,000 verses. The Bhāgavata includes many stories well known in Hindu tradition, including the various avatars of Vishnu and the life of Krishna. It was the first Purana to be translated into a European language, with three French translations between 1840 and 1857.

Like all Puranas, the Bhāgavata is a product of oral tradition, its extant version usually dated to the ninth or tenth century CE. The text itself credits Veda Vyasa with its authorship.

The intense and personal bhakti described in the Bhāgavata is directed toward Krishna as God in human form. The tenth book (or canto), which is dedicated to Krishna, takes up about one quarter of the entire Bhāgavata. It includes the most comprehensive collection of stories about the life of Krishna, showing him in all the stages and conditions of human life. It also includes instruction in the practice of bhakti, an analysis of bhakti, and descriptions of the different types of bhakti.

The Bhāgavata takes the form of a story recounting Vyasa’s work being recited for the first time by his son Śuka to the dying King Parikshit, who owes his life to Krishna. Longing to hear of Krishna before he dies, Śuka recites the Bhāgavata to Parikshit over the course of seven days.

... Scholarly consensus holds that the text was completed no later than around 1000 CE.

Synopsis

General

Wikipedia

The Bhāgavata is a recounting of events by the storyteller Ugrasrava Sauti (Sūta) to Saunaka and other sages assembled in the Naimisha Forest.

... Sūta recounts the first recital of Vyasa’s work, given by Vyasa’s son Śuka to King Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna. Parikshit, who owed his life to Krishna, had angered a rishi’s son for being disrespectful to the rishi’s father. He was cursed to be bitten by a poisonous snake and had only seven days to live. Fasting by the banks of the Ganges River, and with Krishna no longer alive, Parikshit longed to hear of him. The Bhāgavata introduces the life of Parikshit as background, thus bringing Krishna into the story, and is presented as part of Śuka’s recital over the course of seven days. It concludes with Śuka asking Parikshit the standard, “What more do you want?” (12.5.13) Completely satisfied with what he has heard and his purpose in life fulfilled, Parikshit dies.

Book 1

The first book introduces the Bhāgavata, with Saunaka gathering the sages in Naimisha Forest to hear Sūta praise bhakti to Krishna and describe the ten avatars of Vishnu. Sūta tells the story of the life of Parikshit, son of Abhimanyu, beginning while still in his mother’s womb, where Krishna protected him from the Brahmastra weapon of Ashwatthama. The conclusion of Parikshit’s life introduces the main storyline of the Bhāgavata—a curse is placed on Parikshit that will cause him to die within seven days. Parikshit retires to the bank of the Ganges to fast until his death, with several sages gathered around him, including Śuka, son of Vyasa. Parikshit asks Śuka what he should do to prepare for death. Śuka’s response constitutes the main part of the Bhāgavata.

Book 2

Śuka tells Parikishit that when one is about to die, they should become free of the fear of death and let go of all attachments to pleasure, home, and family. They should control the breath and mind and concentrate on the sacred Aum. The development of yoga and bhakti, different types of dharana, the nature of Bhagavan, and the liberation of a yogi upon his death are also explained by Śuka. In response to Parikshit's questions, Śuka describes creation and the avatars of Vishnu, concluding with a description of the ten characteristics of a Purana.

Book 3

Vidura's pilgrimage to various holy places provides the backdrop for the stories and spiritual teachings in Book 3. Near the Yamuna River Vidura meets Uddhava, who gives him the news of the Kurukshetra War and the death of Krishna. Next he meets the sage Maitreya, who gives instruction on the creation of the world, the divisions of time, and other subjects. The story of the birth of Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha is told, including the latter's death at the hands of Varaha, the boar avatar of Vishnu. An important story is the tale of Devahuti and her son Kapila—Kapila's Samkhya teachings help lead her to final liberation.

Book 4

The story of Daksha and his sacrifice is told, in which he mocks Shiva in front of Dakshayani—his own daughter and Shiva's consort—resulting in Dakshayani's self-immolation, which later came to be known by one of her names, Sati. The legend of Dhruva's penance and devotion to Vishnu is also recounted, along with the related story of king Prithu. The book ends with the recounting of the renunciation and liberation of the Pracetas brothers.

Book 5

The story of Manu's sons and their children leads eventually to Bharat and a description of the world, the sun and its course, the moon and the planets, the regions below the earth, and the twenty-eight hells (naraka).

Book 6

Book 6 includes the story of Ajāmila, who reached heaven as a reward for uttering the syllables “Na-ra-ya-na” on his deathbed, even though he was only intending to call his son. The story of the son of the Praceta brothers is also recounted, along with the victory of Indra over Viśvarūpa. Book 6 ends with the birth of the Maruts.

Book 7

The main portion of the seventh book is dedicated to the well known story of Hiranyakaśipu, his son Prahlada, and the death of Hiranyakaśipu at the hands of Narasimha, an avatar of Vishnu. This version expands on the story of Prahlada as told in the Vishnu Purana, and is the form that is most commonly told in Hinduism. Prahlada is considered a great devotee of Vishnu, and describes the process of bhakti toward Bhagavan. Book seven also includes a discussion of the dharma involved with the different varnas and with the four ashramas (stages) of life.

Book 8

The description of the six past Manvantaras (ages or time periods of Manu) and the seven future ages of Manu includes several stories, many involving the avatars of Vishnu. Nine chapters are dedicated to the oft told story of Vishnu's Vamana (dwarf) avatar and his defeat of Bali. The story of the churning of the ocean of milk is also recounted, which is done with the help of the Kurma avatar of Vishnu.

Book 9

The current age of Manu is described at length, including the traditional history of the Solar Dynasty founded by Ikshvaku and the Lunar Dynasty of Pururavas. A long history of dynasties is described—Panchala, Magadha, Kuru, Anu, Druhyus, Turvasu, and others—leading up to the Yadu dynasty and the birth of Krishna to his parents Vasudeva and Devaki.

Book 10

The tenth book, dedicated to Krishna, is responsible for the widespread popularity of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Book Ten includes the most enduring images and stories of Krishna: the mischievous child who steals butter; the godlike child who holds the entire universe within himself; the boy who can slay demons and move an entire mountain with one finger; the cowherd who is the love of all the gopis, making them leave all their duties to follow him.

The tenth book is by far the lengthiest, taking up almost one quarter of the entire Bhāgavata. While the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita show Krishna in various roles as teacher and diplomat, book 10 shows Krishna simply engaging in lila, or divine and intimate play with his devotees...

Book 11

The destruction of the Yadava dynasty, including Krishna and all his kinsmen, is caused by the curse of a brahmin—instigated by Krishna himself. The Yadavas kill each other in a drunken fight and Krishna dies as a result of the same curse, the result of a metal-tipped arrow striking his foot. The last chapter describes Krishna's ascent to Vaikuntha. Book eleven also includes the so-called Uddhava Gita, the last discourse of Krishna which he addresses to his dear friend Uddhava. Canto or Book 11 section 7-9 discusses the pastimes and realizations of an Avadhuta.

Book 12

The future rulers of Magadha are predicted, along with the evils of Kali Yuga and the future destruction of the world (pralaya). The main story ends with the death of King Parikshit—cursed to die from snakebite—and the thwarted snake sacrifice of his son Janamejaya. The text finally concludes with a second description of the ten characteristics of a purana, the life of Markandeya, a summary of the Bhāgavata, and the assurance that it is the greatest among puranas.

Bhavishya Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Bhavishya Purana (Sanskrit: भवष्य पुराण Bhaṛṣya Purāṇa) is one of the eighteen major Hindu Puranas. It is written in Sanskrit and attributed to Rishi Vyasa, the compiler of the Vedas. The title Bhavishya Purana signifies a work that contains prophecies regarding the future (Sanskrit: bhavishya). Despite being labelled a Purana, purāṇa meaning “tales of ancient times”, the work relates only a few legends. It is one of several Puranas in which a list of royal dynasties of the “past” are followed by lists of kings predicted to rule in the future.

The text ... is a composite of material ranging from very old to very recent. Portions of the ... are drawn from the law book of Manu, including the account of Creation which it contains. The Bhavishya Purana is classified as one of the ten Shaiva puranas. ... it is classified in the rajas category, which contains Puranas whose central deity is Brahma.

... The greater part of the work deals with brahmanical ceremonies and feasts, the duties of castes, some accounts of snake myths, and other matters. It also covers the duties of women, good and bad signs of people, and methods of worshipping Brahma, Ganesha, Skanda, and the Snakes. A considerable section deals with Sun worship in a place called “Śākadvīpa” which may be a reference to Scythia.

... A. K. Ramanujan mentions finding references to Christ (as Isha Putra), Moses, and Queen Victoria in the “appropriately up-to-date Bhaṛṣya Purāṇa” and cites this as an example of the fact that:

“In spite of repeated efforts to impose schemes and canons on them from time to time, Purāṇas are open systems.”

Brahma Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Brahma Purana (Sanskrit: ब्रह्मपुराण, Brahma Purāṇa) is one of the major eighteen Mahapuranas... The extant text comprises 246 chapters. It is divided into two parts... The first part narrates the story behind the creation of the cosmos, details the life and deeds of Rama and Krishna. Chapters 70–175 deal with Gautami Mahatmya (Glorification of the Godavari River). The second part contains the details about the Purushottama Tirtha, which is one of the holy places.

[In] Brahma Purana ... the Rajas guna prevails. It is the first of the eighteen Puranas in all the lists, except that of the Padma Purana.

Brahmanda Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Brahmāṇḍa Purana (The history of the universe) (Sanskrit: ब्रह्माण्डपुराण, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa) is one of the eighteen Mahapuranas ... and has been assigned the eighteenth place in almost all the lists of the Puranas.

Brahma in Sanskrit means “the biggest” or “the universe”, anda/andam means Egg. So, Brahmāṇḍa means the “Biggest Egg” signifying the life from which Universe is born.

The Brahmāṇḍa Purana gets its name from the account of Brahmāṇḍa (the Biggest cosmic egg) and the future cosmic ages revealed by Brahma. It deals with the origin of the Universe as told by Brahma. In the beginning, there was a golden egg, and the prapanca (Universe with its activities) was formed out of it. Portions of Adhyatma Ramayana, references to Radha and Krishna. ... The Venkateshvara Press, Bombay edition of the text, published in 1906 comprises 14,286 verses. It is divided into two distinct parts.

Brahma Vaivarta Purana

General

Wikipedia

Brahma Vaivarta Purana, (Sanskrit: ब्रह्मवैवर्तपुराणम्, brahma-vaivarta purāṇa) one of the major eighteen Puranas, a Hindu religious text, is divided into four parts. First part describes the creation of the universe and all beings, the second part relates to description and histories of different goddesses. The third part is mostly devoted to life and deeds of Ganesha, and the last part details the life and deeds of Krishna.

Structure and content

Brahma Vaivarta Purana was written in Banga (ancient name for the region of Bengal). Recited by Suta to the sages at the forest of Naimisharanya. First part is called Brahma Khanda and describes Brahma and his sons, especially Narada. Second part called Prakriti Khanda, deals with the goddesses or saktis who are manifestations of Prakriti. The third part, Ganesha Khanda, is about Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati. ... The fourth and last part is called Krsna Janma Khanda – a canto about birth and life of Krishna, Svayam bhagavan.

Krishna and creation of the universe

Brahma Vaivarta Purana declares Krishna to be the supreme God,(para-Brahman) who lives in Goloka and who with Rasesvari (Radha) has created this universe. They are married by Brahma. All Vedas and related scriptures mention the para-Brahman to be the supreme God but this Purana specifies that this supreme God is Krishna. He created the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva... This Purana takes a view on the creation that is slightly different to other Puranas. The fully developed legend of Radha and Krishna appears in both the Narada-pancaratra and this Purana.

Garuda Purana

General

Wikipedia

Garuda Purana (Devanagari: गरुड पुराण) is one of the Puranas which are part of the Hindu body of texts known as smriti. It is a Vaishnava Purana and its first part contains a dialog between Vishnu and Garuda, the King of Birds. The second half contains details of life after death, funeral rites and the metaphysics of reincarnation, thus it is recited as a part Antyesti (Antim Sanskar) or funeral rites (funeral liturgy) in Hinduism.

... This Purana deals with astronomy, medicine, grammar, and gemstone structure and qualities.

... the twenty-two avataras of Vishnu.

The first incarnation was a young boy. In this form, Vishnu adopted celibacy (brahmacharya) and performed difficult tapasya (meditation).

The second incarnation was as a boar (varaha). In this form, Vishnu rescued the earth from the underworld.

The third incarnation was as a great sage (devarishi). In this form, Vishnu spread the knowledge of several texts (tantras).

The fourth incarnation was as two sages named Nara-Narayana.

The fifth incarnation was as the great sage Kapila. Kapila taught his disciple Asuri the wonderful philosophy known as Samkhya yoga.

The sixth incarnation was as the sage Dattatreya, the son of Atri and Anasuya.

The seventh incarnation took place in the manvantra known as svayambhuva. Vishnu was born as the son of Ruchi and Akuti and performed many yajnas (sacrifices).

In the eighth incarnation, Vishnu was born as Urukrama, the son of Nabhi and Meru. He taught everyone the righteous way of life.

In the ninth incarnation, Vishnu became the king Prithu and restored foodgrains and herbs to the earth.

The tenth of Vishnu's incarnations was as a fish (matsya). He saved Vaivasvata Manu from the flood that enveloped the world.

In the eleventh incarnation, Vishnu adopted the form of a turtle (kurma). This was to help out the gods (devas) and demons (asuras) in the churning of the ocean (samudra manthana).

The twelfth incarnation was as Dhanvantari, physician of the gods and the originator of medicine.

The thirteenth was Mohini avatara. In this form, Vishnu adopted the body of a beautiful woman to charm and rob the asuras of the amrita (a life-giving drink).

In the fourteenth incarnation, Vishnu became Narasimha, a being who was half-man and half-lion, to kill the evil asura Hiranyakashipu.

The fifteenth incarnation witnessed Vishnu's adoption of the form of dwarf (Vamana). This was to hoodwink the asura King Bali and restore the heaven to gods.

In the sixteenth incarnation, Vishnu became Parashurama, killed all the wicked Kshatriyas in the world twenty-one times.

The seventeenth incarnation was as Vedavyasa, the son of Parashara and Satyavati. Vedavyasa divided and classified the Vedas.

Vishnu's eighteen incarnation was as the sage Narada.

The nineteenth incarnation was Rama. This incarnation is thought to be a bit contradictory, (Parshuram was present in the swayamvar of Sita) but it is not. Parshuram was ardh-avatara(Half incarnation) & Rama was poorna manav Avatara (Full Incarnation as a Human Soul).

The twentieth incarnation was Balarama.

In the twenty-first incarnation, Vishnu was Krishna .

The twenty-second incarnation is yet to come. And Vishnu will come to destroy evil in the world and restore righteousness”.

There have been several other incarnations of Vishnu. But the ones mentioned above are the major ones.

Harivamsa

General

Wikipedia

The Harivamsha (also Harivamsa; Sanskrit Harivaṃśa हरविंश”the lineage of Hari (Vishnu)”) ... containing 16,374 verses... The text is also known as Harivaṃśa Puraṇa. This text is believed as a khila (appendix or supplement) to the Mahabharata and is traditionally ascribed to Krishna Dvaipayana Veda Vyasa. ... The first book describes the creation of the cosmos and the legendary history of the kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties leading up to the birth of Krishna. The next book recounts the history of Krishna down to the events prior to the Mahabharata. The last section provides a list of future kings and a description of Kaliyuga.

Kurma Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Kurma Purana (Sanskrit: कूर्म पुराण, Kūrma Purāṇa} is one of the eighteen Mahapuranas ... It is believed to have been directly narrated by the Lord Vishnu to the sage Narada, and it contains the details about the Kurma Avatar. Narada is believed to have stated the contents of this Purana to Suta, who narrated this Purana to an assembly of great sages.

... According to the tradition, the Kūrma Purāṇa originally consisted of four saṃhitās (sections): the Brāhmī Saṃhitā, the Bhāgavatī Saṃhitā, the Saurī Saṃhitā and the Vaiṣṇavī Saṃhitā. The extant text would correspond to the Brāhmī Saṃhitā.

The Nārada Purāṇa (I.106. 1-22) gives a brief overview of these four sections. According to this work, the Brāhmī Saṃhitā consisted of 6,000 ślokas (verses) and its contents agrees completely with the extant Kūrma Purāṇa. The Bhāgavatī Saṃhitā consisted of 4,000 ślokas ... This section had dealt with the duties of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and the mixed castes.

The Saurī Saṃhitā had 2,000 ślokas ... This section had dealt with the six magic acts: śānti, vaśīkaraṇa, stambhana, vidveṣaṇa, uccāṭana and Māraṇa. The Vaiṣṇavī Saṃhitā had 5,000 ślokas ... dealing with mokṣa dharma.

Linga Purana

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Linga Purana is one of the major eighteen Puranas, a Hindu religious text. The extant text is divided into two parts, comprising 108 and 55 chapters respectively. These parts contain the description regarding the origin of universe, origin of the linga, and emergence of Brahma and Vishnu, and all the Vedas from the Linga. In this Purana, Shiva directly tells sometimes the importance of worship of Linga and the correct rituals to be followed during the puja of the linga.

... “The distinctive sign through which it is possible to recognize the nature of someone is called a linga.” (Shiva Purana)

Markandeya Purana

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Markandeya Purana (Sanskrit: मारुकण्डेय पुराण) is one of the major eighteen Mahapuranas... It is written in the style of a dialogue between the ancient sage Markandeya and Jaimini, a disciple of Vyasa.

The three early printed editions of this text vary from one another. The Calcutta edition ends abruptly in chapter 136, leaving the narrative of Dama halfway. The Bombay and Poona editions have complete narrative of Dama, which ends in chapter 137.

The text begins with the four questions put forth by Jaimini to Markandeya, after he approached the latter for the solution of some doubts raised in his mind after studying the Mahabharata. Markandeya refers him to the four wise birds living in the Vindhyas.

Consequently, the four wise birds speak to Jaimini in chapters 4–44. The chapters 53–100 contain the accounts of the 14 Manvantaras (the periods of the Manus) of which 13 chapters (ch.81–93) are together known as the Devi Mahatmya (Glorification of the Great Goddess), which is embedded in this Purana. The chapters 111–137 have dealt with the genealogies of the Puranic dynasties.

Matsya Purana

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Matsya Purana is the sixteenth purana of the Hindu scriptures. During the period of mahapralaya, Lord Vishnu had taken Matsya Avatar (fish incarnation) to save the seeds of all lives and Manu. Matsya Purana contains a comprehensive description of Manu and Matsya avatar.

This Purana is the story of the Matsya Avatar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu, Manu who was the King of Dravidadesa, and the first Mahapralaya (Great Deluge). In the end, Manu and all those he saves are safe in a large ship that he builds, atop the high Malaya Mountains. A number of Hindu scholars have taken the progression of forms assumed by Vishnu in the narrative, from fish to turtle to boar to “half-man, half-lion”, to dwarf human, to human with an axe, to princely human, to Krishna (bringer of scripture) to Buddha (the enlightened one) to Kalki (the future human yet to come) as an analogy for evolution.

Naradiya Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Naradiya Purana (Sanskrit: नारदीय पुराण, Nārādīya Purāṇa) or Narada Purana (Sanskrit: नारद पुराण, Nārada Purāṇa) is one of the major eighteen Mahapuranas, ... It deals with the places of pilgrimages. It is in the style of dialogue between the sage Narada, and Sanatkumara. During the course of the dialogue between the two, Narada explains to Sanatkumara the major places of pilgrimages, their location, and significance.

...

Narada Purana contains some of the famous stories that are well-known and that occur in other puranas also. Some of the important stories narrated by Narada are:

Story of Markandeya

Markandeya is a son of Sage Mrikandu, who is born with the grace of Lord Vishnu. He become as very great devotee of Lord Vishnu and composed a purana which goes by his name as Markandeya Purana. Vishnu grants him a boon so that Markandeya lives eternally, so much so that he even survives the Pralaya (end of cosmic cycle).

This account as narrated in Narada Purana differs from the popular story (as it occurs in Linga purana) that Markandeya was a devotee of Lord Shiva and overcomes death with the grace of Lord Shiva.

Padma Purana

General

Wikipedia

Padma Purana (Devanagari: पद्म पुराण), one of the major eighteen Puranas, a Hindu religious text, is divided into five parts. In the first part of the text, sage Pulastya explains to Bhishma about religion and the essence of the religion. The second part describes in detail Prithvi (earth). In the third part, a description of the cosmos is given, including creation, and description of India (Bharata Varsha). The fourth part describes the life and deeds of Rama. The fifth part is in the style of a dialogue between Shiva and his consort, Parvati, and deals with the essential knowledge about religion.

... dating to roughly between the 8th and the 11th centuries.

Shiva Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Shiva Purana (Sanskrit: शक्तिपुराण, Śiva Purāṇa) ... According to a tradition which is stated in the Vāyaviya Saṁhitā (the Venkateshvara Press edition) of this text, the original text was known as the Śaiva Purāṇa.

According to tradition, it originally consisted 12 Saṁhitās and 100,000 ślokas (verses). After the reconstruction and the abridgement by Vedavyasa, the extant text comprises 24000 ślokas (verses), which he taught to his disciple Romaharshana (or Lomaharshana).

Several recensions of this text exist.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shiva Purana. One of the eighteen traditional puranas ... Most of the puranas stress the worship of one deity as supreme over all others and as this one's name clearly shows it is focused on the worship of Shiva. The Shiva Purana is one of the longer and larger puranas. It gives an exhaustive account of Shiva's mythic deeds—many of which have become the common mythology for many traditional Hindus—as well as instructions for how, where, and when Shiva is to be worshiped.

Skanda Purana

General

Wikipedia

The longest Purana, it is an extraordinarily meticulous pilgrimage guide, containing geographical locations of pilgrimage centers in India, with related legends, parables, hymns and stories.

... The text is devoted mainly to the lilas of Subramanya, a son of Shiva and Parvati. It also contains a number of legends about Shiva, and the holy places associated with him. This Mahapurana was recited by Sage Vyasa, and is available in distinct parts, sometimes fragmented too. It also describes the Shaiva tradition in Hemakuta region (near Vijayanagar) of Karnataka, Kashi Khanda describes the Shaiva tradition of Varanasi, and the Utkala Khanda part states about Puruṣottamakṣetramāhātmya of Orissa.

...

Some of the popular narratives described in the Skanda Purana are:

The yagna (sacrifice) of Prajapati Daksha

The churning of ocean and the emergence of Amrita (Ambrosia)

The story of demon Tarakasura

The birth of Goddess Parvati and Her marriage to Lord Shiva

The Birth of Skanda (or Kartikeya)

The killing of demon Tarakasura by Skanda

The killing of Pralambasura

The queries of Karamdham

The killing of demons Shumbh, Nishimbh and Mahishasura

An account of Vishnukund

The story of Padmavati

A description of various holy places associated with Shiva and Skanda

The story of Trishanku and sage Vishvamitra

A description of Narakas (Hell)

A description of Jyotirlingas – the important holy shrines associated with Lord Shiva.

A description of Navadurgas

Vamana Purana

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Vamana Purana, (Sanskrit: वामन पुराण, Vāmana Purāṇa), one of the eighteen Mahapuranas ... is devoted to the Vamana Avatar of Vishnu. It has a eulogy praising both Vishnu and Shiva.

There are ten characteristics evident in Vamana Purana (in fact, in all or most of the Puraans).

They are:

Sarga

Visarga

Sthaana

Poshana

Uti

Vritti

Raksha

Manvantara

Vansha

Upaashraya

Sarga deals with the descriptions of the origin of this universe. Visarg enlightens us as to how a living thing transforms itself from one species to another. Sthaan, Poshan, Uti and Vritti deal with the descriptions of various means which are employed by a man for his survival. Raksha describes about the various incarnations of Lord Vishnu which he takes for the protection of the human-kind. Manvantara deals with the complete description of the history of the whole Manvantara period. Vansh describe about the lineage of all the kings including Lord Brahma. Upaashraya enlightens us on the real meaning of Brahma.

...

Mostly describes about North India and areas around Kurukshetra.

Varaha Purana

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Varaha Purana (Sanskrit: वराह पुराण, Varāha Purāṇa) is one of the major eighteen Mahapuranas... It describes in detail about the Varaha incarnation (Avatar) of Vishnu, and narrates about the rescue of the Prithvi.

Vayu Purana

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Vayu Purana (Hindi: वायु पुराण, Vāyu Purāṇa) is a Shaiva Purana ... dedicated to the god Vayu (the wind god), containing about 24,000 shlokas.

...

The Vayu Purana deals with the following topics: creation and re-creation of the universe; measurement of the Kala (time); Origin of Agni, Varuna and a number of gods; origin and descendants of Atri, Bhrigu, Angiras and some other sages, daityas, rakshasas, gandharvas and pitrs; origin of animals, birds, trees and creepers; genealogies of the ancient kings descended from Vaivasvata Manu and Ila and the kings of Kaliyuga ending with the Gupta dynasty; detailed geography of the earth divided into seven dvipas and further sub-divided into the varshas; accounts of inhabitants of different dvipas; names and description of the seven Patalas (netherworlds); description of the solar system and the movements of the celestial bodies; description of the four yugas and fourteen manvantaras. It also contains chapters on music, various shakhas of the Vedas, Pashupata-yoga, duties of the people belong to different castes and funeral rites.

Vishnu Purana

General

Wikipedia

The Vishnu Purana (Sanskrit: वशिष्णु पुराण, Viṣṇu Purāṇa) is a religious Hindu text and one of the eighteen Mahapuranas. It is considered one of the most important Puranas and has been given the name Puranaratna (gem of Puranas). Presented as a dialogue between Parashara and his disciple Maitreya and divided into six parts, the major topics discussed include creation myths, stories of battles fought between asuras and devas, the Avatars (divine descents) of Vishnu and genealogy and stories of legendary kings.

...

The text starts with detailed stories of creation and introduces the concept of four yugas. The tale of Rudra, an elaborate story of the Samudra Manthana, or the churning of the ocean, the Story of Dhruva, an ardent devotee of Vishnu, and stories of ancient kings Vena and Prithu are also discussed in the first section. Tales of Prithu's descendants, the Prachetas, the famous story of Hiranyakashipu and Prahlada, some topological details of the known world with mentions of lands, tribes, mountains and rivers, concepts of the universe, and the stories of the many births of Jadabharata are the major topics discussed in the next book. The third section discusses the stories of Manvantara (cycles of creation and destruction), the sages Vyasa and Yajnavalkya, Surya (the sun god), Yama (the god of the dead), devotees Shatadhanu and Shaivya, the four classes (varnas) and the four stages of life (ashramas) and details of many rituals. The fourth section gives a detailed account of all the famous Kings from the solar and lunar dynasties of ancient India, and also lists the names of kings who 'would appear' in the age of Kali (demon). The second list contains the name of historical kings of Magadha, including kings from the Shishunaga, Nanda and Maurya dynasties. The next section details the different events in the life of Lord Sri Krishna, starting from His birth, through His childhood, until the moment He left the earth and the prominent destruction of the Yadava clan. The sixth and last section mainly discusses the impending age of Kali, the concepts of universal destruction that would eventually follow, and the importance of the Puranas in general.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

purāṇa - from the verb root pur - "to go before, precede".

Publications

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The first printed edition of the text was edited by Rajendralal Mitra in the 1870s (Calcutta : Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1870–1879, 3 volumes; Bibliotheca Indica, 65, 1–3). The entire text extends to slightly below one million characters.

An English translation was published in two volumes by Manmatha Nath Dutt in 1903–04.

Bhagavata Purana

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada has written a multi-volume edition that includes english translation and commentary.

Translation also available in more than 40 languages. For free online reading, see: <http://www.vedabase.net>

The first translation of the Bhagavata into French was made by Eugene Burnouf in 1840.

Swami Tapasyananda has written an English translation in four volumes.

Swami Prabhavananda wrote an English version that is part translation, part summary and paraphrase, titled The Wisdom of God: Srimat Bhagavatam.

Gita Press has a two-volume English and Hindi translation (with Sanskrit text and English translation).

Kamala Subramanian has written a concise version of this book in English.

Edwin Bryant published an English translation of Book X in 2003, through Penguin Books.

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Brahma-vaivarta puranam. Translated into English by Rajendra Nath Sen, Publisher - DIVINE Books, Delhi

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Vol 2: Harivamsa Parva - Chapter 26 to 55

Vol 3: Vishnu Parva - Chapter 1 to 36

Vol 4: Vishnu Parva - Chapter 37 to 61

Vol 5: Vishnu Parva - Chapter 62 89

Vol 6: Vishnu Parva - Chapter 90 to 120

The Harivamsa Mahapurana: text with English translation. Translated by K.P. A. Menon. With Sanskrit mulam. Published by Nag Publishers (Delhi) (2008).

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Version without Devanagari characters available online at <http://www.indologie.uzh.ch/text/hv.html>

thanks to Dr. Peter Schreiner of the University of Zurich, who has scanned and OCR'ed the original text of Langlois.

Version (corrected) including Devanagari characters prepared by Gilles Schaufelberger, working on the files received from Dr. Peter Schreiner.

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Related words

Shastras

Smriti

Vyasa

External links

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Sanskrit

Purāṇa — पुराण

purāṇa - पुराण

Purusa

Variant spellings

purusa

purusha

puruṣa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Puruṣa — ... spirit; individual soul; “person”; the indwelling form of God; cosmic person

1. One of the two basic categories of the Sāṅkhya system. It is pure consciousness, unattached and unrelated to anything. It is nonactive, unchanging, eternal, and pure. There are an infinite number of individual souls.

2. According to Kashmir Śaivism, it is enveloped in the five sheaths of time, restriction, desire, knowledge, and portion of time (kāla, niyati, rāga, vidyā, and kalā). It is the universal Self appearing under limitation as the many individual souls.

3. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is fundamentally one. It is the eternal witness, the modificationless, the one who knows the body. Really speaking, the supreme Self (paramātman) is the one and the only puruṣa.

4. The Puruṣa-sūkta describes the primal puruṣa as thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed, immanent and transcendent, covering the earth on all sides and extending beyond the length of ten fingers, all that is, has been, and will be. One-fourth of him is all beings, three-fourths of him are what is immortal in heaven.

5. Depending on the context, the word may refer to either the “individual soul” or “God, Supreme.”

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

puruṣa -

a man, male, human being (pl. people, mankind);

a person;
a friend;
a follower of the Sāṃkhya Philosophy;
a member or representative of a race or generation;
the height or measure of a man (= 5 Aratnis = 120 Aṅgulas);
the pupil of the eye;
(also with narayana) the primaeval man as the soul and original source of the universe;
the personal and animating principle in men and other beings, the soul or spirit;
the Supreme Being or Soul of the universe (sometimes with para, parama, or uttama ; also identified with Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Durgā);
(in Sāṃkhya) the Spirit as passive and a spectator of the Prakṛiti or creative force;
the, 'spirit' or fragrant exhalation of plants;
(with sapta) N. of the divine or active principles from the minute portions of which the universe was formed;
N. of a Pāda in the Mahā-nāmnī verses;
of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th signs of the zodiac;
of a son of Manu Cākshusha;
of one of the 18 attendants of the sun;
N. of the Brāhmins of Krauñca-dvīpa;
N. of 5 princely personages or miraculous persons born under partic. constellations;
N. of mount Meru

Dictionary - Runes

Purusa: (Skr.) "Man", a symbol for the world in the Veda. One of the two cardinal principles of the Sankhya and Yoga, representing pure spirituality, consciousness, and self. Various theories prevail in Indian philosophy, some semi-physical, others psycho-physical, or logical, taking the term to denote a real self or an entity produced by maya.

Two meanings: [Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

The term purusha has two meanings. In the ancient RIG VEDA, X. 90, the Purusha (usually spelled in English with a capital P) is the divine being who existed before time and was sacrificed to create both the transcendent and the material realms. The major Vedic ritual, the AGNICHAYANA, was seen as a reenactment of this primordial creation, and Purusha was seen as being sacrificed once again to mirror the myth. In that context the Purusha began to be called PRAJAPATI.

The second sense of the word purusha is found in the SAMKHYA and YOGA traditions, where purusha is the individual self. In the early understanding the purushas were infinite in number and all eternally distinct from one another. In the later understanding, affected by VEDANTIC thinking, the purushas merged with the ultimate self, or ATMAN, when they achieved liberation. In current yoga, the term purusha is just another term for atman or "worldly self."

Wikipedia

In some lineages of Hinduism, Purusha (Sanskrit puruṣa, पुरुष "man, Cosmic man", in Sutra literature also called pums "man") is the "Self" which pervades the universe. The Vedic divinities are interpretations of the many facets of Purusha. According to the

Rigvedic Purusha sukta, Purusha was dismembered by the devas—his mind is the Moon, his eyes are the Sun, and his breath is the wind.

In the Rigveda, Purusha is described as a primeval giant that is sacrificed by the gods and from whose body the world and the varnas (classes) are built. He is described as having a thousand heads and a thousand feet. He emanated Virat, the female creative principle, from which he is reborn in turn after the world was made out of his parts.

In the sacrifice of Purusha, the Vedic chants were first created. The horses and cows were born, the Brahmins were made from Purusha's mouth, the Ksatriya from his arms, the Vaisyas from his thighs, and the Shudras from his feet. The Moon was born from his mind, the Sun from his eyes, the heavens from his skull. Indra and Agni emerged from his mouth.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Purusa: Literally, "person." The word is used both in universal and particular senses. In the universal sense, He is the cosmic person who has the entire cosmos for his body. In this sense He is often called virat-purusa.

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Purusa - The primordial spirit which is contradistinctive of anything having form, mass or any other physical property: It is self-luminous, and by mere proximity enables prakriti to manifest.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Purusha ("person"). One of the two fundamental first principles in the Samkhya philosophical school, the other one being prakrti ("nature"). Samkhya upholds an atheistic philosophical dualism in which the twin principles of purusha and prakrti—roughly, spirit and nature—are the source of all things. Purusha is conceived as conscious but completely inactive and unchanging. It is the passive witness to the myriad transformations of prakrti going on around it, and as the source of consciousness purusha is ultimately identified with a person's true Self (atman). Thus purusha is inferred as plural, given the plurality of conscious beings and the fact that one person can gain final enlightenment while all the rest remain in bondage. According to the Samkhyas, the ultimate source of bondage lies in people's failure to distinguish between purusha and prakrti and in identifying the Self with the latter rather than the former.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In European folklore there is the fairy-tale of Tom Thumb or Little Thumb and the Giants. He was also the youngest son. His story is full of interesting symbolism.

The Thumbling is found in all traditions. In Alchemy he was called the Homunculus. He is often referred to in the Upanishads. For instance the Kathopanishad (IV; 12) states: "The Purusha (Man) of the size of a thumb resides in the middle of the body (atmani) as the Lord of the past and future, (he who knows him) fears no more." This "Man of the size of a thumb" is also said to reside "in the heart", that is to say, in the Centre of the Spirit.

But, though he resides in the Heart Centre, he represents the Lord of that Heart, the Quintessence of the Spirit, and is, from different points of view, the forerunner, the representative, the reflection, or the pre-natal stage of the Divine Child of the Ether-Sphere.

The symbolism of the thumb has been noted before. The four fingers represent the Four Elements and the thumb the Ether. The thumb is, even in popular tradition, a symbol of domination and will. It stands for the domination of Jupiter. Lord of the Ether. It represents the Will of God.

For the purpose of fighting against the lower nature the Little Man of the Spirit descends to the Sphere of the Solar plexus.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

The Purusha is looking on at all these changes. He himself is never impure; but by implication, by what the Vedantists call *adhyasa*, or reflection, he appears to be so—as when a red flower is held before a piece of crystal, the crystal will look red, or with a blue flower the crystal will look blue and yet the crystal itself is colourless. There are many Purushas or Selves; each pure and perfect, and it is all these various divisions of gross matter and fine matter that are imposing on them and making them appear variously coloured.

Sankara tradition

Sitarama. Aitareya and Taittiriya Upanishads

He thought “ These indeed are the worlds; I shall create the protectors of the worlds”. He gathered the Purusha from out of the waters only and fashioned him. (3)

Com. — Having thus created the four worlds, the places where all living beings were to enjoy the fruits of their action, He, the Lord, thought again “ Indeed these worlds, Ambhas etc. created by me would perish without protectors. Therefore I shall create protectors of the worlds for the protection of these.” Thus thinking, he from out of the waters alone, i.e. from the five elements the most important of which was water and from which he created the worlds Ambhas etc., gathered the Purusha, i.e., one in the form of a man having head etc., just as a potter gathers a lump of clay from the earth, and fashions him by giving him the appropriate limbs.

He brooded over him. Of him so brooded over, the mouth came forth, just as is the case with an egg when it is hatched; from his mouth, speech; and from speech, fire. Then his nostrils came forth; from his nostrils, Prana; and from Prana, air. His eyes came forth; from his eyes, sight; from sight, the sun. His ears came forth; from his ears, sound; and from sound, the cardinal points (*disah*). His skin came forth; from the skin, hair; from the hair, herbs and big trees, the lords of the forests. His heart came forth; from the heart, the mind; and from the mind, the moon. The navel came forth; from the navel, the Apana, and from Apana, death. His generative organ came forth; from the generative organ, semen; and from semen, water. (4)

...

There is a space within the heart. There, is He, the Purusha, knowable only by the mind, Immortal, Resplendent.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

... the Puruṣha is etymologically that which exists in anybody, or that which animates anybody. It may be an individual body or a Universal Body. In either case it is known as the Puruṣha. It may be the Puruṣha that is individual when we merely call it the Puruṣha, otherwise we call it Puruṣhottama.

Purusha and Prakriti

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Purusha and Prakriti are only the bifurcation of the one Supreme. They are surmised because the student has the sense of duality deep rooted. The same Gita also says that Purushottama lies beyond Purusha and Prakriti.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

Prakriti is undergoing all these changes for the enjoyment and the benefit of the Self, so that it will realise its free nature. ... The father of all psychologists, Kapila, denies the existence of God as Creator. His idea is that a personal God is quite unnecessary; Prakriti is sufficient to work out all that is good. ... But he admits a peculiar kind of God. He says, we are all struggling to get free, and when man becomes free, he can, as it were, melt away into Prakriti for the time being, to come out at the beginning of the next cycle an omniscient and omnipotent being and be its ruler. In that sense he can be called God. ... So wherever the word God is mentioned in our Scriptures—the Vedas, Kapila says, it means those perfected souls who have become free. ... Kapila, the founder of the Samkhya, was dualistic. His analysis of the universe, so far as it goes, is really marvellous. He was the father of Hindu evolutionists, and all the later philosophical systems are simply outcomes of his thought.

... what then is this Purusha? It is neither intelligence nor Buddhi (will), but yet it is the cause of both these; it is His presence that sets them all vibrating and combining. Purusha may be likened to some of those substances which by their mere presence promote chemical reaction, as in the case of cyanide of potassium which is added when gold is being smelted. The cyanide of potassium remains separate and unaffected, but its presence is absolutely necessary to the success of the process. So with the Purusha. It does not mix with Prakriti; it is not intelligence, or Mahat, or any one of its modifications but the Self, the Pure, the Perfect. 'I am the Witness and through My witnessing Prakriti is producing all that is sentient and all that is insentient.' (Gita, IX. 10.)

Whence then is this sentiency in Prakriti? Its basis is in the Purusha, and it is the very nature of the Purusha. It is that which cannot be expressed or understood, but which is material of all that we call knowledge. This Purusha is not consciousness, because consciousness is a compound, but whatever is radiant and good in this consciousness belongs to it. Sentiency is in the Purusha, but the Purusha is not intelligence, not knowing—it is the very condition in which knowledge is possible. The Chit in the Purusha, plus Prakriti is what is known to us as intelligence and consciousness. All the joy and happiness and light in the universe belongs to the Purusha, but it is a compound because it is that Purusha plus Prakriti. 'Wherever there is any happiness, wherever there is any bliss, there is one spark of that immortality, which is Purusha.' (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, IV, iii-32) This Purusha is the great attraction of the universe; untouched by, and unconnected with the universe; yet it attracts the whole universe. You see a man going after gold, because therein is a spark of the Purusha, even though he knows it not. When a man desires children, or a woman a husband, what is the attracting power? That spark of Purusha behind the child and the husband. It is there, behind everything, only overlaid with matter. Nothing else can attract. 'In this world of insentiency that Purusha alone is sentient.' (Katha Upanishad, V. 13.) This is the Purusha of the Samkhyas.

See: **Buddhi and purusha**

Related words

Bhokta
Jiva
Kshetrajna
Prajapati
Prakriti
Purusottama
Sankhya

Sanskrit

Puruṣa — पुरुष
puruṣa - पुरुष

Purushartha, the four goals of human life

Variant spellings

purushartha
puruṣārtha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Purusārtha — ... the four goals of human life.

1. The Hindu theory of values. They are wealth (artha), desire (kāma), righteousness (dharma), and liberation (mokṣa). The first is the economic value, the second is the psychological value, the third is the moral value, and the fourth is the spiritual value.
2. Wealth (artha), the economic value, and desire (kāma), the hedonistic or acquisitive value, are the secular values of life. Dharma tells how the secular life should be lived. It is the ethical or moral value. And along with mokṣa, it is a spiritual value. Dharma is the instrumental value leading to mokṣa. All the four values are truly vital and must be integrated. Artha and kāma are means values or instrumental values for life's goal. Dharma is the regulative and integrating value. Mokṣa is an intrinsic and end value.
3. Purusārtha may be viewed from two aspects. Primarily, it signifies something to be attained for its own sake. This is the intrinsic aspect. It also involves whatever serves as a means to it. This is the instrumental aspect. Thus, it may be defined as an end which is consciously sought to be accomplished either for its own sake or for the sake of utilizing it as a means to the accomplishment of a further end.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Aims of Life (purushartha) Four general goals that Hindu society has accepted as legitimate ends for all human beings: artha (wealth and power), kama (desire, especially sexual desire), dharma (righteousness or religious duty), and moksha (final liberation)

of the soul from the cycle of reincarnation). Hindus have affirmed that all of these are worthy ends, but have generally accepted that the last goal is qualitatively different from the other three, which are more strongly interrelated. There is nothing wrong with seeking money or pleasure, and Hindu culture affirms both of these aims with the understanding that their pursuit and enjoyment should ultimately be regulated by a commitment to dharma. Although there are paths to moksha that allow one to remain in the world, it is generally accepted that a person pursuing moksha will be less attentive to worldly desires because they are incompatible with this ultimate goal.

Wikipedia

In Hinduism, *puruṣārtha* (Sanskrit पुरुषार्थ: “that which is sought by man; human purpose, aim, or end”) refers to a goal, end or aim of human existence. There are generally considered to be four such *puruṣārthas*, namely:

Dharma: “(religious, social and/or moral) righteousness, both spiritual and ritual”

Artha: “(material and/or financial) prosperity as well as pursuit of meaning”

Kāma: “(sensory and/or sexual) pleasure as well as spiritual love”

Mokṣa: “(spiritual) liberation; or renunciation as well as detachment”

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

Dharma or duty and righteousness is the moral end of life. Kama or love is the emotional end of life. Artha or wealth is the material end of life.

Wikipedia

Origins

The notion that proper living entails the pursuit of four goals or ends first took shape in the literary traditions of the Dharmaśāstras and the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Early texts treating the goals of human life commonly refer to *kāma*, *artha* and *dharma* as the “trivarga” or “three categories” of possible human pursuits.

... Each of the four canonical *puruṣārthas* was subjected to a process of examination and elaboration which produced several key works in the history of Indian philosophy, including the Kamasutra of Vātsyāyana (treating *kāma*, particularly as “sexual gratification”), the Arthashastra of Kauṭilya (treating *artha* as “material pursuits”), the Dharmaśāstras of various authors, most notably Manu (treating *dharma* as “religious, social and personal ethics”) and the principle sūtras of the six orthodox schools of philosophy or darśanas, all of which are principally concerned with the attainment of *mokṣa*, often referred to as the *parama-puruṣārtha* or “chief end of human life”.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. *The Allegories and Symbolism in Valmiki’s Ramayana*

The basic tenets of sanatana dharma are dharma, artha, kama and moksa.

... Dhar means to sustain or uphold. Dharma is that which makes a thing what it is. In the hydrogen atom while the balance is kept between the positively charged proton and negatively charged electron, it remains a hydrogen atom. If its structure is tampered with, it leads to catastrophe. The same is true of everything in this world. So the first teaching given by the seers of India is famil-

iarization with the dharma which has constituted each element. By knowing the action-reaction properties implied in dharma, many things can be created and many things can be destroyed also.

... To discriminate the right nature of dharma we should place it in a context where its meaning (artha) can be discerned. Dharma can never be understood except in terms of its artha. In the course of time, artha became wrongly understood as wealth. The instrumentality of meaning came to be mistaken for meaning itself just as in the modern world the exchange value of things has been superimposed on the use value and people think of value as money. That simple error has caused grievous damage to the judging faculty of human beings. If exchange value is taken as value value, one will make serious mistakes. One cannot find a substitute for one's father or mother, wife or child. Values of intrinsic worth cannot be placed within an exchange system.

A person is a guru or a teacher only when he adheres to his dharma of teaching in full. A judge can function as a judge only if he can administer justice without partiality. Thus, in whichever capacity a person functions, we can discern their dharma by placing them in a meaningful context. The clay with which bricks are made has the dharma that it can be strong and solid to support another brick and thus make a foundation or superstructure of a building. That is the intrinsic nature of clay. It cannot be substituted by gold. Where clay is valued, its value is unique. When an ornament is to be made, clay is of no use and gold is needed. When the Gita speaks of clay and gold representing ultimate values, that makes sense only when clay and gold are each placed in their own transactional realm of value.

These secrets are now unknown because both dharma and artha can be concealed if a person has a hang-up of desire (kama). There is a difference between what a person desires and what is desirable. Only when the dharma and meaning are properly conceived does one opt for the desirable. If one's inner vision becomes confounded with hedonistic desires, wrong meaning is read into the unknown aspects of dharma. But in the Gita, the Lord also says, where the desire is not opposed to dharma and its meaning then the Absolute itself is the desire (kama). When dharma, artha, and kama bring a fulfillment to the jiva by which the light of the Self is actualized from moment to moment, that person is living in unbounded liberty (moksa).

Related words

Artha
Dharma
Kama
Moksha

Sanskrit

Puruṣārtha — पुरुषार्थ
puruṣārtha - पुरुषार्थ

Purusottama

Variant spellings

purusottama
purushottama

puruṣottama

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Puruṣottama — ... the supreme self; the Lord

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

puruṣottama -

the best of men, an excellent or superior man;

the best of servants, a good attendant;

the highest being, Supreme Spirit, N. of Viṣṇu or Kṛiṣṇa;

kṣetra;

(with Jainas) an Arhat;

N. of the fourth black Vāsudeva;

N. of sev. authors and various men

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Purusottama: The Absolute principle or Godhead as distinct from demigods and divinities of various religious expressions. Purusa, in the Samkhya Philosophy, is the spiritual principle as contrasted with prakṛti or material nature. When Advaita revalues this concept of purusa in an effort to raise it above all taints of dualistic implications, the idea of purusottama arises, as in Chapter XV of the Bhagavad- Gita, where there is transcendence of both the eternal and the transient aspects of knowledge.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The word purusa is to be examined from several angles. That which dwells in different bodies is the purusa - this is a Samkhyan concept which speaks of the plurality of purusas. The same is revalued in the Upanisads and in the Bhagavad Gītā. The Gītā makes a distinction between the ksara (perishable) purusa and the aksara (imperishable) purusa. The perishable aspect of prakṛti is superimposed on purusa, when true knowledge prevails, that superimposition can no longer be maintained. The spirit is imperishable but all the phenomenal superimpositions made on it are transient. Even the aksara (imperishable) purusa has in it only a fragment of the Supreme. That is why the Gītā upholds a third purusa, purusottama.

We should note the distinction drawn between these in the fifteenth chapter of the Gītā, Purusottama Yoga.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

The term Purushottama is the well-known name of the Lord described above. After showing that the name is meaningful by pointing to its etymological significance, the Lord reveals Himself thus, 'I am the Lord unsurpassed.'

18. Because I surpass the perishable and am higher even than the imperishable, therefore I am proclaimed Purushottama (Highest Spirit) in the world and in the Veda.

I transcend the Tree of illusory samsara called Asvattha (Kshara) and I am higher even than the imperishable (Akshara) which constitutes the seed of illusory samsara. Since I transcend both the Kshara and the Akshara, I am well-known as Purushottama in the world and in the Veda, i.e. the devotees know Me as Purushottama and the sages too incorporate this name in their poetries etc. and describe Me by the name Purushottama. (18)

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

Prajapati said: "This is the great truth, O Indra. This is the Atman. Now do you understand what the Atman is? This is the Supreme Person, if you would call It a person." It is not a person actually. We call it a person only by way of expression, explanation for the purpose of helping the understanding of the immature mind. It is the Supreme Being. That is how we translate the term Uttama-purusha, occurring here. Superior to the transitory purushas, we have the universal Purusha. The word Uttama-purusha occurs in the Bhagavad-Gita also in its fifteenth chapter, where we are told that there are two purushas, the kshara and the akshara, and that there is the third, the supreme one, the Purushottama or the Uttama-purusha, which means to say that there is something transcending both the perishable universe and the imperishable, immanent consciousness.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

puruṣottama - from puruṣa = "spirit, person" + uttama == "highest"

Related words

Purusa

Sanskrit

Puruṣottama — पुरुषोत्तम

puruṣottama - पुरुषोत्तम

Purva Mimansa

See: Mimansa

Purva paksa

Variant spellings

purva-paksa
purva paksha
pūrva-pakṣa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Pūrva-pakṣa —... prima facie view; the opponent's view; prior viewpoint

1. Generally, in all Indian philosophical work, first, the opponent's view is given, and then, after this view is rejected, one gives the final view (siddhānta).

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Purva-Pakshin : (from purva-paksha, prior side). The anterior position of doubt represented by the disciple in his dialogue- relations with the Guru. The Guru's finalized standpoint in the argument is the Siddha-anta, meaning the attained end, or conclusion.

Descriptions

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Mundaka Upanishad

... important rule ... a teacher has to first present all prevalent erroneous notions and negate them. Paksa is a contention. Pūrva-paksa is a contention presented as an objection to siddhānta, the right conclusion. Every teacher should follow this rule. Otherwise, there will always be vagueness in understanding. The more he is able to negate the wrong notions that are available, the closer he is to the truth. The whole process is the removal of various notions, because people have swallowed lots of beliefs. These things have to be negated. Then only one's mind will become ready to see when the vastu is unfolded.

Sanskrit

Pūrva-pakṣa — पूर्वपक्ष

pūrva-pakṣa - पूर्वपक्ष

R

Rajas

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

rajas -

coloured or dim space, the sphere of vapour or mist, region of clouds, atmosphere, air, firmament (in Veda one of the divisions of the world and distinguished from div or svar, 'the sphere of light', and rocanā divaḥ, 'the ethereal spaces', which are beyond the rajas, as ether is beyond the air; often rajas, = 'the whole expanse of heaven or sky', divided into a lower and upper stratum, the rajas uparam or pārthivam and the rajas uttamam or paramam or divyam; hence du. rajasī, 'the lower and higher atmospheres'; sometimes also three ... even six such spheres are enumerated, hence pl. rajṣṃsi, 'the skies');

vapour, mist, clouds, gloom, dimness, darkness;

impurity, dirt, dust, any small particle of matter;

the dust or pollen of flowers;

cultivated or ploughed land (as 'dusty' or 'dirty'), arable land, fields;

the impurity i.e. the menstrual discharge of a woman;

the 'darkening' quality, passion, emotion, affection;

(in phil.) the second of the three Guṇas or qualities (the other two being sattva, goodness, and tamas, darkness; ... ; rajas is sometimes identified with tejas; it is said to predominate in air, and to be active, urgent, and variable);

'light' or 'day' or 'world' or 'water';

a kind of plant;

tin;

autumn;

sperm;

safflower;

N. of a Rishi (son of Vasishṭha)

Wikipedia

Rajas guna (in Sanskrit rajas, or rajoguna) is responsible for motion, energy and preservation and thereby upholds and maintains the activity of the other two gunas; sattva and tamas. Rajas is the force which promotes or upholds the activity of the other aspects of Nature (prakriti) such as one or more of the following: (1) action; (2) change, mutation; (3) passion, excitement; (4) birth, creation, generation. If a person or thing tends to be extremely active, excitable, or passionate, that person or thing could be said to have a preponderance of rajas. It is contrasted with the quality of tamas, which is the quality of inactivity, darkness, and laziness, and with sattva, which is the quality of purity, clarity, calmness and creativity. Rajas is viewed as being more positive than tamas,

and less positive than sattva; except, perhaps, for one who has “transcended the gunas” and achieved equanimity in all fields of relative life.

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

The Guna or “Quality” of Rajas is that of “motion, activity, passion, etc.” The function of Rajas sets the Universe in motion. It associates with Sattva in order to reveal Consciousness, and with Tamas in order to veil Consciousness.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Rajas (“passion”). One of the three fundamental qualities (gunas) believed to be present in all things, the other two gunas being sattva (“goodness”) and tamas (“darkness”). According to this model, differing proportions of these qualities account for differences in the properties of concrete things, and in the range of individual human capacities and tendencies. Unlike sattva and tamas, which, respectively, carry exclusively good and bad associations, rajas and its effects can be either positive or negative, depending on context. Rajas is negative, for example, when it leads to an enslavement to the passions that may blind one to careful and conscious thought. Alternately, the energies derived from passion can also engender useful activity and industriousness. The notion of the gunas originated in the metaphysics of the Samkhya school, one of the six schools of traditional Hindu philosophy, and although much of Samkhya metaphysics connected with the gunas has long been discredited, the idea of the gunas and their qualities has become a pervasive assumption in Indian culture.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. *The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*

It is the very nature of rajas to involve a man in many worldly activities. That is why rajas degenerates into tamas. If a man is entangled in too many activities he surely forgets God. He becomes more and more attached to ‘woman and gold’.

...

Men with rajas entangle themselves in many activities. Such a man has clothes all spick and span. His house is immaculately clean. A portrait of the Queen hangs on a wall in his drawing-room. When he worships God he wears a silk cloth. He has a string of rudraksha beads around his neck, and in between the beads he puts a few gold ones. When someone comes to visit the worship hall in visitor: ‘Please come this way, sir. There are other things too—the floor of white marble and the natmandir with its exquisite carvings.’ When he gives in charity he makes a show of it.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. *Vivekachudamani*

111. Rajas has projecting power (Vikshepasakti). Activity is its very nature. From it the initial flow of activity has originated. From it, mental modifications such as attachment and grief are also continuously produced.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

The Rajas attitude of Maya creates the agitations of the mind (Vikshepa). Maya expressed at the mental level manifests in the form of mental agitations. The Maya which creates restlessness in the mind is called Rajoguna, from which all activities are born.

When the mind is active, we act in the world outside. When the mind is quiet, all actions end. During deep-sleep, the mind is at rest and is calm, therefore, no activity is taking place. Activities are only possible when the mind is active. A mental picture exists before every activity. Our association with objects and beings creates more and more attachment. We see a possibility—until it becomes an agitation. Then desires and passions arise in the mind. To satisfy them, man has to act in the world outside. For it takes less exertion to yield to them than to fight them. From this activity alone the mind's various attitudes are born. Thus the mind gains its experiences of joys and sorrows. The nature of Avidya when expressed in a given personality is called Rajoguna.

Rajoguna creates agitations in the mind. Due to these mental agitations, objectively we act in the world and subjectively we experience desires, passions, lust and consequently, joys and sorrows.

112. Desire, anger, greed, hypocrisy, arrogance, jealousy, egoism, envy, etc.— these are the dreadful attributes of Rajas, from which the wordly tendencies of man are produced. Rajas is therefore the cause for bondage in life.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

Objectively, all actions arise out of the Rajoguna aspect of Maya. Reactions arising subjectively in the human personality are explained in this verse.

...

Rajas generates agitations (Vikshepa), and these very agitations of the mind veil (Avarana) the Self in us. When a Rajasic man gets exhausted due to his own over-exertion, he gets tired and feels sleepy—a state when he is about to enter Tamas. That is, Rajas must necessarily lapse into Tamas. Once the higher Awareness is “veiled”, we are apt to act foolishly and get more and more entangled in the mad pursuit of objects of pleasure.

See also:

in Avarana: [Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda](#)

in Ishvara: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

in Vikshepa: [Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani](#)

Related words

Broader term: Guna

Sattva

Tamas

Vikshepa

Sanskrit

Rajas — रजस्

rajas - रजस्

Rama

Name

Rama

Ram

rāma - राम

Rāma — राम

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Rāma — ... “pleasing”; “delight”; the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa; an incarnation of Viṣṇu (from the verb root ram = “pleasing, to delight”)

1. The seventh divine descent or incarnation of Viṣṇu, whose life story is told in the Rāmāyaṇa. A name of the all-pervasive supreme Reality. He was the perfect embodiment of righteousness (dharma).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

rāma -

(prob. ‘causing rest’, and in most meanings fr. root ram) dark, dark-coloured, black;

white (?);

pleasing, pleasant, charming, lovely, beautiful;

a kind of deer ;

a horse;

a lover;

pleasure, joy, delight;

N. of Varuṇa;

N. of various mythical personages (in Veda two Rāmas are mentioned with the patr. Mārgaveya and Aupatasvini; another Rāmas with the patr. Jāmadagnya [cf. below] is the supposed author of ṚV.; in later times three Rāmas are celebrated, viz. 1. Parazu-rāma, who forms the 6th Avatāra of Viṣṇu and is sometimes called Jāmadagnya, as son of the sage Jamad-agni by Reṇukā, and sometimes Bhārgava, as descended from Bhṛigu; 2. Rāma-candra; 3. Bala-rāma, ‘the strong Rāma’, also called Halayudha and regarded as elder brother of Kṛishṇa accord. to Jainas a Rāma is enumerated among the 9 white Balas; and in VP. a Rāmas is mentioned among the 7 Rishis of the 8th Manv-antara) ṚV. &c. &c. N. of a king of Malla-pura;

of a king of Śṛiṅga-vera and patron of Nāgeśa;

various authors and teachers;

N. of the number ‘three’ (on account of the 3 Rāmas);

N. of a people

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Rama (Ram) is a god worshipped over all of India. He is considered to be an AVATAR or descended form of Lord VISHNU. Rama's full story is told in the RAMAYANA epic.

In that famous epic, the gods ask Vishnu to incarnate in the world as a man, in order to kill the demon Ravana, who was tormenting all the worlds. Ravana has a boon that he cannot be killed by any god or demon, but, in his arrogance, he never imagines he can be killed by a human. Thus the avatar of Rama is arranged.

Rama is born to Dasharatha, king of AYODHYA, and his wife, Kaushalya. In his youth Rama is sent to the sage Vishvamitra's hermitage to help defend it from beings who are trying to disrupt the sacred Vedic rites. There he slays the female being Tataka who was tormenting the sages. He receives certain celestial weapons and is obliged to kill the demons Marica and Subahu.

Rama later wins a contest to bend the bow of SHIVA; as his prize he wins the hand of SITA, daughter of the king of VIDEHA.

In Ayodhya another wife of Dasharatha, Kaikeyi, plots to have her son, Bharata, put on the throne in place of Rama. As a result Rama is forced into exile for 14 years. His wife, Sita, and his brother, Lakshmana, follow him.

During his exile Rama's wife, Sita, is abducted by the demon king Ravana and taken to the island of Lanka. Making friends with a group of monkeys, including the faithful HANUMAN, Rama carries out his divine duty in defeating Ravana and winning back his wife. When he doubts her faithfulness, Sita passes a trial by fire. She is taken back, and the rule of Rama begins in all its perfection. Some versions of the Ramayana, such as the Kambaramayanam in Tamil, end at this point.

In other versions the story continues. New questions are raised concerning Sita's faithfulness, and Rama has his brother Lakshmana take her to the forest. He does not realize that she is pregnant with twins. Rama's sons Kusha and Lava are born in the forest ASHRAM of Valmiki. Eventually, they end up in a war with Rama's troops and defeat them.

At this point Rama realizes he has sons and wants Sita to return to live with him. She goes before him and in disgust at her two rejections asks the Earth to swallow her up. Rama continues his just rule and dies, as all avatars must, being human forms of the divinity. Rama is worshipped throughout India and celebrated in regional folklore and high culture alike. Sita is always included, and Hanuman and Lakshmana are rarely omitted in any iconographic or pictorial presentation.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Rama (Rama Avatar). The seventh avatar or incarnation of the god Vishnu, the crown prince of the Solar Line and the protagonist of the Ramayana, one of the two great Indian epics. As with all of Vishnu's avatars, Rama is born to destroy a being powerful enough to throw the cosmos out of balance, in this case Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka. The focal conflict in the Ramayana is Rama's quest to regain his wife Sita, who has been kidnapped by Ravana. The climactic sequence of the epic features Rama's struggle with Ravana, Ravana's death, and the reestablishment of cosmic equilibrium, signified by Rama's ascension to divine kingship.

Unlike the god Krishna, whose divine play (lila) often subverts or ignores accepted social values, Rama is a pillar of society. As a whole the Ramayana tends to espouse and uphold the traditional social values of religious duty (dharma), social hierarchy (varna), and the stages of life (ashrama). As the epic's protagonist, Rama is the epitome of all these values. He is solid, dependable, stable, righteous, and predictable.

In Hindu culture Rama is the model of the perfect son, and he shows this by being utterly devoted to his parents, giving far greater weight to his duties as a son than as a husband. Unlike Krishna, who has multiple liaisons with his female devotees (bhakta), all in the name of divine play, Rama is married and monogamous. When the time comes for battle, he is the fiercest of combatants, incarnating the warrior (kshatriya) ideal of using strength to uphold justice, protect the righteous, and punish the wicked. In all these things he personifies some of the most deeply embedded values of Hindu culture.

Yet there are also some unsettling incidents, particularly in the Valmiki Ramayana, the epic's earliest version. These incidents either feature Rama inexplicably stepping out of character or else point to problematic tensions in traditional Hindu values. In an attempt to help the monkey-king Sugriva against his rival Bali, Rama shoots Bali in the back from a concealed place— an action incompatible with the notion of fair and honorable warfare. His actions in enforcing the existing social order also show its oppressive and restrictive nature. In one incident, Rama kills a low-status shudra whom he finds performing physical asceticism (tapas), a privilege reserved for his betters, and has molten lead poured in the ears of another shudra who was discovered listening to the sacred Vedas—a forbidden act for such a person. Both incidents show the hierarchical nature of idealized Hindu society, and the king's role in preserving and sustaining this hierarchy. When Rama and his brother Lakshmana are propositioned by Ravana's sister Shurpanakha, they first mislead and ridicule her, then mutilate her by cutting off her ears and nose. These actions seem incompatible with the kshatriya ethic of respect for women and the righteous use of force, and prompt Ravana to kidnap Sita in revenge. Perhaps the most troubling questions arise from Rama's behavior toward his wife Sita. Immediately after being liberated from enslavement, she undergoes an ordeal by fire, from which her emergence unscathed upholds her claim that she remained chaste while being held captive. Despite this definitive proof, Rama later insists on a second test, in which Sita, in protest, is swallowed up by the earth. Thus, the picture of Rama conveyed by the epic is of a figure righteous by the standards of his time but on occasion rigid and inflexible.

In later versions of the Ramayana, particularly the Ramcharitmanas by the poet-saint Tulsidas (1532–1623?), this picture subtly shifts, possibly in an attempt to soften or remove these troubling incidents. Certain changes in Tulsidas's text also highlight the centrality of devotion (bhakti) over all other religious attitudes. Tulsidas's Rama is more explicitly portrayed as God incarnate, a figure who is aware of his divine status and whose actions are undertaken for the benefit of his devotees. This Rama is still concerned with social values, particularly the kshatriya obligation to uphold and protect religious duty (dharma). Yet this ethic is in tension with—and sometimes in opposition to—the importance of bhakti, which is portrayed as the ultimate religious goal. These subtle shifts in the later text point to an occasional conflict between two differing ideals—dharma and bhakti— both of which are affirmed as essential.

Wikipedia

Rama ... or Ramachandra is the seventh avatar of the god Vishnu in Hinduism, and a king of Ayodhya in Hindu scriptures. In few Rama-centric sects, Rama is considered the Supreme Being, rather than an avatar. Rama was born in Suryavansha (Ikshvaku Vansh) later known as Raghuvansha after king Raghu. Based on Puranic genealogy, Rama is believed by Hindus to have lived in the second Yuga called Treta Yuga, before Krishna who was born towards the end of Dwapara Yuga. Rama is traditionally considered to have appeared in the last quarter of Treta Yuga.

Rama is one of the many popular figures and deities in Hinduism, specifically Vaishnavism and Vaishnava religious scriptures in South and Southeast Asia. In Ayodhya, the Indian city believed to be the birthplace of Rama, he is also worshipped as an infant or Rama Lalla. Most of the details of Rama's life come from the Ramayana, one of the two great epics of India. Born as the eldest son of Kausalya and Dasharatha, king of Ayodhya, Rama is referred to within Hinduism as Maryada Purushottama, literally

the Perfect Man or Lord of Self-Control or Lord of Virtue. Rama is the husband of Sita, whom Hindus consider to be an Avatar of Lakshmi and the embodiment of perfect womanhood.

The primary source of the life ... of Rama is the epic Ramayana composed by the Rishi Valmiki. The Vishnu Purana also recounts Rama as Vishnu's seventh avatar, and in the Bhagavata Purana ... the story of the Ramayana is again recounted in brief up to ... the slaying of Ravana and Prince Rama's return to Ayodhya. Additionally, the tales of Rama are reverently spoken of in the epic Mahabharata.

The epic had many versions across India's regions. However, other scriptures in Sanskrit reflect the life of Ramayana. The followers of Madhvacharya believe that an older version of the Ramayana, the mula-Ramayana, previously existed but is no longer extant. They consider it to be more authoritative than the version by Valmiki. Another important shortened version of the epic in Sanskrit is the Adhyatma Ramayana.

See also:

in Vishnu: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Related words

Dharma

Vishnu

Ramakrishna

Name

General

[Encyclopedia of religion](#)

Born Gadadhar Chatterjee

Wikipedia

Ramakrishna, born Gadadhar Chattopadhyay.

He is also referred to as "Paramahansa" by his devotees, as such he is popularly known as Ramkrishna Paramhansa.

The official biographies write that the name Ramakrishna was given by Mathura Biswas—chief patron at Dakshineswar Kali Temple, it has also been suggested that this name was given by his own parents.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ramakrishna, Sri (1836–1886) influential mystic and priest of goddess Kali. Recognized as one of the greatest spiritual geniuses of modern Hinduism, Sri Ramakrishna was influential through his own example and through the work of his disciple Swami VIVEKANANDA.

Encyclopedia of religion

RAMAKRISHNA (1834/6–1886) was a Hindu ecstatic and mystic, and to many Hindus a “supremely realized self” (paramahansa) and an avatara, or incarnation of the divine. Through his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, his gospel of the truth of all religions became a source of inspiration for modern Hindu universalism.

Wikipedia

Ramakrishna ... was a famous mystic of 19th-century India. His religious school of thought led to the formation of the Ramakrishna Mission by his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda – both were influential figures in the Bengali Renaissance as well as the Hindu renaissance during the 19th and 20th centuries. Many of his disciples and devotees believe he was an Avatar or incarnation of God...

Ramakrishna was born in a poor Brahmin Vaishnava family in rural Bengal. He became a priest of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, dedicated to the goddess Kali, which had the influence of the main strands of Bengali bhakti tradition. The most widely known amongst his first spiritual teachers was an ascetic woman, called Bhairavi Brahmani skilled in Tantra and Vaishnava bhakti. Later an Advaita Vedantin ascetic taught him non-dual meditation, and according to Ramakrishna, he experienced nirvikalpa samadhi under his guidance. Ramakrishna also experimented with other religions, notably Islam and Christianity, and said that they all lead to the same God. Though he quit conventional education, he attracted the attention of the middle class, upper middle class and numerous Bengali intellectuals.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Love and Blessings

I ... read in Swami Vivekananda's biography. His guru Sri Ramakrishna was not a sannyasi of any regular order and didn't wear ochre clothes, but when he passed away Vivekananda conducted a homam (fire ceremony) in which he burned his own clothes and hair. After that he assumed the name Vivekananda and gave sannyasa to all his brother disciples.

Biography

Dates

18 February 1836 – 16 August 1886

Place of birth

The village of Kamarpukur, in the Hooghly district of West Bengal, India.

Life

Childhood

General

Wikipedia

Ramakrishna was born on 18 February 1836, in the village of Kamarpukur, in the Hooghly district of West Bengal, into a very poor but pious, orthodox brahmin family...

Ramakrishna attended a village school with some regularity for 12 years, he later rejected the traditional schooling saying that he was not interested in a “bread-winning education”. Kamarpukur, being a transit-point in well-established pilgrimage routes to Puri, brought him into contact with renunciates and holy men. He became well-versed in the Puranas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavata Purana, hearing them from wandering monks and the Kathaks—a class of men in ancient India who preached and sang the Purāṇas...

Ramakrishna describes his first spiritual ecstasy at the age of six: while walking along the paddy fields, a flock of white cranes flying against a backdrop of dark thunder clouds caught his vision. He reportedly became so absorbed by this scene that he lost outward consciousness and experienced indescribable joy in that state. Ramakrishna reportedly had experiences of similar nature a few other times in his childhood ... From his tenth or eleventh year on, the trances became common, and by the final years of his life, Ramakrishna’s samādhi periods occurred almost daily.

Ramakrishna’s father died in 1843, after which time family responsibilities fell on his elder brother Ramkumar. ... When Ramakrishna was in his teens, the family’s financial position worsened. Ramkumar started a Sanskrit school in Calcutta and also served as a priest. Ramakrishna moved to Calcutta in 1852 with Ramkumar to assist in the priestly work.

Later life

General

Encyclopedia of religion

His father’s death in 1843 increased Ramakrishna’s dependence upon his mother, while the role of father figure was assumed by his eldest brother, Ramkumar, whom he followed to Calcutta in 1852. Ramkumar became adviser to a wealthy widow, herself a Sakta, or devotee of śakti (the divine power symbolized as the Goddess), who was building a temple to the Divine Mother Kali at Dakshineswar, just north of the city. Though dedicated to Kali, the temple also included shrines to Siva and to Radha-Krsna, thus combining the major strands of Hindu devotional religion. Ramkumar was appointed the temple’s chief priest and Ramakrishna became priest to Radha-Krsna.

Wikipedia

Priest at Dakshineswar Kali Temple

In 1855 Ramkumar was appointed as the priest of Dakshineswar Kali Temple, built by Rani Rashmoni—a rich woman of Calcutta... Ramakrishna, along with his nephew Hriday, became assistants to Ramkumar, with Ramakrishna given the task of decorating the deity. When Ramkumar died in 1856, Ramakrishna took his place as the priest of the Kali temple.

Marriage

Rumors spread to Kamarpukur that Ramakrishna had become unstable as a result of his spiritual exercises at Dakshineswar. Ramakrishna’s mother and his elder brother Rameswar decided to get him married... Ramakrishna reportedly mentioned that they could find the bride at the house of Ramchandra Mukherjee in Jayrambati, three miles to the north-west of Kamarpukur. The

five-year-old bride, Saradamani Mukhopadhyaya (later known as Sarada Devi, 1853–1920) was found and the marriage was duly solemnised in 1859. Ramakrishna was 23 at this point, but the age difference was typical for 19th century rural Bengal. ... she became a strong follower of his teachings. After the marriage, Sarada stayed at Jayrambati and joined Ramakrishna in Dakshineswar at the age of 18.

By the time his bride joined him, Ramakrishna had already embraced the monastic life of a sannyasi; as a result, the marriage was never consummated. As a priest Ramakrishna performed the ritual ceremony—the Shodashi Puja—where Sarada Devi was made to sit in the seat of goddess Kali, and worshiped as the Divine mother.

After his marriage Ramakrishna returned to Calcutta and resumed the charges of the temple again, and continued his sadhana.

Religious practices and teachers

Tantra

General

Wikipedia

In 1861, Ramakrishna accepted Bhairavi Brahmani, an orange-robed, middle-aged female ascetic, as a teacher. She carried with her the Raghuvir Shila, a stone icon representing Ram and all Vaishnava deities. She was thoroughly conversant with the texts of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and practiced Tantra. According to the Bhairavi, Ramakrishna was experiencing phenomena that accompany mahabhava—the supreme attitude of loving devotion towards the divine—and quoting from the bhakti shastras, she said that other religious figures like Radha and Chaitanya had similar experiences.

The Bhairavi initiated Ramakrishna into Tantra. Tantrism focuses on the worship of shakti and the object of Tantric training is to transcend the barriers between the holy and unholy as a means of achieving liberation and to see all aspects of the natural world as manifestations of the divine shakti. Under her guidance, Ramakrishna went through sixty four major tantric sadhanas which were completed in 1863. He began with mantra rituals such as japa and purascarana and many other rituals designed to purify the mind and establish self-control. He later proceeded towards tantric sadhanas, which generally include a set of heterodox practices called vamachara (left-hand path), which utilize as a means of liberation, activities like eating of parched grain, fish and meat along with drinking of wine and sexual intercourse. According to Ramakrishna and his biographers, Ramakrishna did not directly participate in the last two of those activities, all that he needed was a suggestion of them to produce the desired result. Ramakrishna acknowledged the left-hand tantric path, though it had “undesirable features”, as one of the “valid roads to God-realization”, he consistently cautioned his devotees and disciples against associating with it. The Bhairavi also taught Ramakrishna the kumari-puja, a form of ritual in which the Virgin Goddess is worshiped symbolically in the form of a young girl. Under the tutelage of the Bhairavi, Ramakrishna also learnt Kundalini Yoga. The Bhairavi, with the yogic techniques and the tantra played an important part in the initial spiritual development of Ramakrishna.

Vaishnava Bhakti

General

Wikipedia

The Vaishnava Bhakti traditions speak of five different moods, referred to as bhāvas—different attitudes that a devotee can take up to express his love for God. They are: śānta, the “peaceful attitude”; dāsyā, the attitude of a servant; sakhya, the attitude of a friend; vātsalya, the attitude of a mother toward her child; and madhura, the attitude of a woman towards her lover.

At some point in the period between his vision of Kali and his marriage, Ramakrishna practiced *dāsya bhāva*, during which he worshiped Rama with the attitude of Hanuman, the monkey-god, who is considered to be the ideal devotee and servant of Rama. According to Ramakrishna, towards the end of this sadhana, he had a vision of Sita, the consort of Rama, merging into his body. In 1864, Ramakrishna practiced *vātsalya bhāva* under a Vaishnava guru Jatadhari. During this period, he worshipped a metal image of Ramlālā (Rama as a child) in the attitude of a mother. According to Ramakrishna, he could feel the presence of child Rama as a living God in the metal image.

Ramakrishna later engaged in the practice of *madhura bhāva*—the attitude of the Gopis and Radha towards Krishna. During the practise of this bhava, Ramakrishna dressed himself in women’s attire for several days and regarded himself as one of the Gopis of Vrindavan. According to Sri Ramakrishna, *madhura bhava* is practised to root out the idea of sex, which is seen as an impediment in spiritual life. According to Ramakrishna, towards the end of this sadhana, he attained *savikalpa samadhi*—vision and union with Krishna.

Ramakrishna visited Nadia, the home of Chaitanya and Nityananda, the 15th-century founders of Bengali Gaudiya Vaishnava bhakti. According to Ramakrishna, he had an intense vision of two young boys merging into his body. Earlier, after his vision of Kali, he is said to have cultivated the *Santa bhava*—the child attitude — towards Kali.

Vedanta

General

Wikipedia

In 1865, Ramakrishna was initiated into *sannyasa* by Tota Puri, an itinerant monk who trained Ramakrishna in Advaita Vedanta, the Hindu philosophy which emphasizes non-dualism.

Totapuri first guided Ramakrishna through the rites of *sannyasa*—renunciation of all ties to the world. Then he instructed him in the teaching of *advaita*—that “Brahman alone is real, and the world is illusory; I have no separate existence; I am that Brahman alone.” Under the guidance of Totapuri, Ramakrishna reportedly experienced *nirvikalpa samadhi*, which is considered to be the highest state in spiritual realisation.

Totapuri stayed with Ramakrishna for nearly eleven months and instructed him further in the teachings of *advaita*. Ramakrishna said that this period of *nirvikalpa samadhi* came to an end when he received a command from the Mother Kali to “remain in *Bhavamukha*; for the enlightenment of the people”. *Bhavamukha* being a state of existence intermediate between *samādhi* and normal consciousness.

Islam and Christianity

General

Wikipedia

In 1866, Govinda Roy, a Hindu guru who practiced Sufism, initiated Ramakrishna into Islam. Ramakrishna said that he “devoutly repeated the name of Allah, wore a cloth like the Arab Moslems, said their prayer five times daily, and felt disinclined even to see images of the Hindu gods and goddesses, much less worship them—for the Hindu way of thinking had disappeared altogether from my mind.” According to Ramakrishna, after three days of practice he had a vision of a “radiant personage with grave countenance and white beard resembling the Prophet and merging with his body”.

At the end of 1873 he started the practice of Christianity, when his devotee Shambu Charan Mallik read the Bible to him. Ramakrishna said that for several days he was filled with Christian thoughts and no longer thought of going to the Kali temple. Ra-

makrishna describes of a vision in which the picture of Madonna and Child Jesus became alive and had a vision in which Jesus merged with his body. In his own room amongst other divine pictures was one of Christ, and he burnt incense before it morning and evening. There was also a picture showing Jesus Christ saving St Peter from drowning in the water.

Death

General

[Wikipedia](#)

In the beginning of 1885 Ramakrishna suffered from clergyman's throat, which gradually developed into throat cancer. He was moved to Shyampukur near Calcutta, where some of the best physicians of the time, including Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, were engaged. When his condition aggravated he was relocated to a large garden house at Cossipore on December 11, 1885. During his last days, he was looked after by his monastic disciples and Sarada Devi. Ramakrishna was advised by the doctors to keep the strictest silence, but ignoring their advice, he incessantly conversed with visitors. According to traditional accounts, before his death, Ramakrishna transferred his spiritual powers to Vivekananda and reassured Vivekananda of his avataric status. Ramakrishna asked Vivekananda to look after the welfare of the disciples, saying, "keep my boys together" and asked him to "teach them". Ramakrishna also asked other monastic disciples to look upon Vivekananda as their leader. Ramakrishna's condition gradually worsened and he expired in the early morning hours of August 16, 1886 at the Cossipore garden house. According to his disciples, this was mahasamadhi.

Teachings

General

[Encyclopedia of religion](#)

Ramakrishna left no written work, but his conversations from 1882 to 1886 were recorded in Bengali by Mahendranath Gupta, writing under the pseudonym "M," and published as *Sri Sri Ramakrsna Kathamrta* (Holy nectar of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings). The five-volume Bengali text is widely read in Bengal. Elsewhere, readers discover the Kathamrta through Swami Nikhilananda's translation, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

Ramakrishna's followers maintain that his realization of the nondual absolute under Totapuri was the culmination of his spiritual quest and provides the basis for his teaching of the truth of all religions as paths leading to this ultimate goal. In his teachings, however, he stressed that withdrawal from the world as advocated by Advaita produces a "knower," or jnani, who is negative and self-centered. Ramakrishna contrasted the jnani with the vijnani, the "complete knower" who does not reject the world as an illusory distraction from the absolute but who sees it as the play (lila) of the Divine Mother. Ramakrishna saw merit in both positions. The formless absolute is real, but so is the Divine Mother, or sakti, who is ever at play in the world of form. Viewing brahman and sakti as two sides of the same reality, Ramakrishna affirmed the reality of the goal sought by the followers of Sankara, while also making clear that his own ideal was a complete knowledge that realizes the reality of the One who is both beyond change and playfully active.

Wikipedia

Ramakrishna's teachings were imparted in rustic Bengali, using stories and parables. These teachings made a powerful impact on Calcutta's intellectuals, despite the fact that his preachings were far removed from issues of modernism or national independence. His spiritual movement indirectly aided nationalism, as it rejected caste distinctions and religious prejudices.

In the Calcutta scene of the mid to late nineteenth century, Ramakrishna was opinionated on the subject of Chakri. Chakri can be described as a type of low-paying servitude done by educated men—typically government or commerce-related clerical positions. On a basic level, Ramakrishna saw this system as a corrupt form of European social organization that forced educated men to be servants not only to their bosses at the office but also to their wives at home. What Ramakrishna saw as the primary detriment of Chakri, however, was that it forced workers into a rigid, impersonal clock-based time structure. He saw the imposition of strict adherence to each second on the watch as a roadblock to spirituality. Despite this, however, Ramakrishna demonstrated that Bhakti could be practiced as an inner retreat to experience solace in the face of Western-style discipline and often discrimination in the workplace.

Ramakrishna emphasised God-realisation as the supreme goal of all living beings. Ramakrishna taught that kamini-kanchana is an obstacle to God-realization. Kamini-kanchana literally translates to “woman and gold.” ... Ramakrishna also cautioned his women disciples against purusa-kanchana (“man and gold”) and Tyagananda writes that Ramakrishna used Kamini-Kanchana as “cautionary words” instructing his disciples to conquer the “lust inside the mind.”

Ramakrishna looked upon the world as Maya and he explained that avidya maya represents dark forces of creation (e.g. sensual desire, evil passions, greed, lust and cruelty), which keep people on lower planes of consciousness. These forces are responsible for human entrapment in the cycle of birth and death, and they must be fought and vanquished. Vidya maya, on the other hand, represents higher forces of creation (e.g. spiritual virtues, enlightening qualities, kindness, purity, love, and devotion), which elevate human beings to the higher planes of consciousness.

Ramakrishna practised several religions, including Islam and Christianity, and taught that in spite of the differences, all religions are valid and true and they lead to the same ultimate goal—God. Ramakrishna's taught that jatra jiv tatra Shiv (wherever there is a living being, there is Shiva). His teaching, “Jive daya noy, Shiv gyane jiv seba” (not kindness to living beings, but serving the living being as Shiva Himself) is considered as the inspiration for the philanthropic work carried out by his chief disciple Vivekananda.

Ramakrishna used rustic colloquial Bengali in his conversations. According to contemporary reports, Ramakrishna's linguistic style was unique, even to those who spoke Bengali. It contained obscure local words and idioms from village Bengali, interspersed with philosophical Sanskrit terms and references to the Vedas, Puranas, Tantras. For that reason, according to philosopher Lex Hixon, his speeches cannot be literally translated into English or any other language. Scholar Amiya P. Sen argued that certain terms that Ramakrishna may have used only in a metaphysical sense are being improperly invested with new, contemporaneous meanings. Ramakrishna was skilled with words and had an extraordinary style of preaching and instructing, which may have helped convey his ideas to even the most skeptical temple visitors. His speeches reportedly revealed a sense of joy and fun, but he was not at a loss when debating with intellectual philosophers. Philosopher Arindam Chakrabarti contrasted Ramakrishna's talkativeness with Buddha's legendary reticence, and compared his teaching style to that of Socrates.

Ramakrishna's explicitly sexual language shocked 19th-century Westerners, even scholars Max Müller who were otherwise his admirers. Müller wrote that his language was at times “abominably filthy”. He admitted however that such direct speech was natural to contemporary Hindus, “where certain classes of men walk stark naked”, and should not be considered intentional filthiness

or obscenity. Citing examples of classical poems like Bhartrihari, the Bible, Homer, and Shakespeare, Müller felt that few of the sayings would have to be bowdlerized.

Religious school of thought

Several scholars have tried to associate Ramakrishna with a particular religious school of thought—Bhakti, Tantra and Vedanta. In his influential 1896 essay “A real mahatma: Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Dev” and his 1899 book *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*, the German philologist and Orientalist Max Müller portrayed Ramakrishna as “a wonderful mixture of God and man” and as “...a Bhakta, a worshipper or lover of the deity, much more than a Gñânin or a knower.”

In London and New York in 1896, Swami Vivekananda delivered his famous address on Ramakrishna entitled “My Master.” He said of his master: “this great intellect never learnt even to write his own name, but the most brilliant graduates of our university found in him an intellectual giant.” ...

Disciples

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Devotees and disciples

Most of Ramakrishna’s prominent disciples came between 1879–1885, and were influenced by his style of preaching and instruction.

His chief disciples consisted of:

Grihastas or The householders—Mahendranath Gupta, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Akshay Kumar Sen and others.

Monastic disciples who renounced their family and became the earliest monks of the Ramakrishna order—Narendranath Dutta (Swami Vivekananda), Rakhai Chandra Ghosh (Swami Brahmananda), Kaliprasad Chandra (Swami Abhedananda), Taraknath Ghoshal (Swami Shivananda), Sashibhushan Chakravarty (Swami Ramakrishnananda), Saratchandra Chakravarty (Swami Saradananda), Tulasi Charan Dutta (Swami Nirmalananda), Gangadhar Ghatak (Swami Akhandananda), Hari Prasana (Swami Vijnanananda) and others.

A small group of women disciples including Gauri Ma and Yogin Ma. A few of them were initiated into sanyasa through mantra deeksha. Among the women, Ramakrishna emphasized service to other women rather than tapasya (practice of austerities).

Gauri Ma founded the Saradesvari Ashrama at Barrackpur, which was dedicated to the education and uplift of women.

As his name spread, an ever-shifting crowd of all classes and castes visited Ramakrishna. According to Kathamrita it included, childless widows, young school-boys, aged pensioners, Hindu scholars and religious figures, men betrayed by lovers, people with suicidal tendencies, small-time businessmen, and people “dreading the grind of samsaric life”. Ramakrishna’s primary biographers, describe him as talkative. According to the biographers, for hours Ramakrishna would reminisce about his own eventful spiritual life, tell tales, explain Vedantic doctrines with extremely mundane illustrations, raise questions and answer them himself, crack jokes, sing songs, and mimic the ways of all types of worldly people, keeping the visitors were enthralled. In preparation for monastic life, Ramakrishna ordered his monastic disciples to beg their food from door to door without distinction of caste. He gave them the saffron robe, the sign of the Sanyasi, and initiated them with Mantra Deeksha.

Works

Organizations

General

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

He did not found a movement or establish an organization, although he was the inspiration of a generation of Indian Hindus... His famous disciple Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at Belur Math, near Calcutta (Kolkata) to propagate the teachings of his guru. Sarada Devi, his widow, also began to assert the leadership role that Ramakrishna had specified for her, and she became known as the mother of the movement that Ramakrishna inspired. These missions offer spiritual, medical, and educational services to the people of India. Outside India, in 18 countries on five continents, the same organization is known as the Vedanta Society and is headed by swamis initiated and trained at Belur Math.

Wikipedia

Several organizations have been established in the name of Ramakrishna. The Ramakrishna Math and Mission is one of the main organizations founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897. The Mission conducts extensive work in health care, disaster relief, rural management, tribal welfare, elementary and higher education. The movement is considered as one of the revitalization movements of India. Other organizations include the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society founded by Swami Abhedananda in 1923, the Ramakrishna Sarada Math founded by a rebel group in 1929, the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission formed by Swami Nityananda in 1976, and the Sri Sarada Math and Ramakrishna Sarada Mission founded in 1959 as a sister organization by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Related words

Bhakti

Ramana Maharshi

Name

Ramana Maharshi
Ramana Maharishi
Venkataraman Ayyar
born Venkataraman Iyer

Descriptions

General

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950) advaita Vedanta teacher and mystic. Ramana Maharshi was a GURU of international renown from southern India who taught the nondual philosophy of ADVAITAVEDANTA....

Without any training by a teacher or any personal discipline, he attained a profound experience of the true Self and realized that the body dies but consciousness is not touched by death. He saw the real “I” as immortal consciousness, as a powerful living truth experienced directly. Thereafter, all attention was drawn to this “I” or Self and he remained conscious of his identity with the absolute at all times. All fear of death was permanently extinguished.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ramana Maharishi (1879–1950). Modern Hindu sage, whose life and message reiterated the fundamental insight of the ancient speculative Upanishads, namely, that the inner Self (atman) is identical with Supreme Reality (Brahman).

Wikipedia

Sri Ramana Maharshi ... was a Hindu spiritual master (“jnani”). ... Although born a Brahmin, he declared himself an “Atiasrami”, a Sastraic state of non-attachment to anything in life and beyond all caste restrictions. The ashram that grew around him, Sri Ramana Ashram, is situated at the foothill of Arunchala, to the west to the pilgrimage town of Tiruvannamalai.

Biography

Dates

December 30, 1879 – April 14, 1950

Place of birth

Tiruchuzhi, Tamil Nadu, India

Life

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ramana was born on December 30, 1879, as Venkataraman Ayyar at Tiruchuli near Madurai in the state of Tamil Nadu. He was the son of Shundaram Ayyar, a scribe and country lawyer. The family was religious, giving ritual offerings to the family deity and visiting temples. As a child, Ramana was largely uninterested in school; throughout his life he showed a marked inclination toward introspection and self-analysis.

In 1896, at age 17 he entered an altered state of consciousness that had a profound effect on him. He experienced what he understood to be his own death and return to life...

Ramana ran away from home to the holy mountain Arunachala near Tiruvannamalai. He spent 10 years in silent Self-absorption at the temple there, at the foot of the mountain, and in various caves on the mountain. Throughout these years he remained silent and maintained disciplines of spiritual purification and nonattachment. Against the pleas of his family, he refused to return home. His absorption in higher consciousness was so deep that he neglected care of his body and was at times famished and chewed by insects. Disciples began to gather around him to take care of his physical needs and to gain awareness of his non-dual state of consciousness. His disciples gave him sacred books, and he became conversant with the religious traditions of South India. When Ramana broke his silence, he responded to questions about Self-consciousness. His teaching was given largely through conversations with guests who visited him on the mountain, where his ASHRAM began to develop. His advice to those who sought SELF-REALIZATION was to direct them to the question “Who am I?”—a self-inquiry that he insisted be used tirelessly as

each student discovered deeper and deeper levels of awareness. The aim of this inquiry was for each person to find an awareness of non-duality, in which the oneness of the Self and cosmos could be perceived. He taught that a person who is not attached to the results of action can live in the world as an actor who plays a role in a drama but is immune to emotional disturbance, because the person realizes that action is only play acting on the stage of life.

Ramana remained at Arunachala for the duration of his life, welcoming visitors from East and West, while becoming a living example of nondual consciousness. He died there of cancer on April 14, 1950, sitting in a lotus position. The Ramanashramam exists today as a sanctuary that houses Ramana's grave, his cave residence, and accommodation for many visitors.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Ramana was born into a middle-class Indian family and during his youth demonstrated no unusual abilities. In 1895 he obtained a copy of the Periya Puranam, a text chronicling the lives of the poet-saints known as the Nayanars, and in reading about their lives Ramana began to desire to renounce the world. This inclination was realized the next year, when he imagined the death of his body and reached the conclusion that his real identity was the Self. He left his family and went to the temple of Tiruvannamalai, also known as Arunachala, where he remained until his death fifty-four years later. For some time at the start he was deep in meditation and barely attended to his physical needs. Soon he attracted disciples, through whom his family eventually discovered his whereabouts, although Ramana refused to return home with them when they came to see him. His mother moved to Tiruvannamalai in 1916, and after her death five years later Ramana relocated his dwelling to be near her grave.

Wikipedia

Family Background

Sri Ramana was born in a village called Tiruchuli (Tiruchuzhi) near Aruppukkottai, Madurai in Tamil Nadu, South India on Arudra Darshanam day, into an orthodox Hindu Tamil (Iyer) family, the second of four children of Sundaram Iyer (1845?-1892), from the lineage of Parashara, and Azhagammal (?-1922), and named Venkataraman at birth.

Childhood

Venkataraman seemed a normal child with no apparent signs of future greatness. He was popular, good at sports, very intelligent but lazy at school, indulged in an average amount of mischief, and showed little religious interest. He did have a few unusual traits. When he slept, he went into such a deep state of unconsciousness that his friends could physically assault his body without waking him up. ... When Venkataraman was about 11, his father sent him to live with his paternal uncle Subbaiyar in Dindigul because he wanted his sons to be educated in English so they would be eligible to enter government service, and only Tamil was taught at the village school in Tiruchuzhi. In 1891, when his uncle was transferred to Madurai, Venkataraman and his elder brother Nagaswami moved with him. In Dindigul, Venkataraman attended a British School.

The Awakening

In 1892, Venkataraman's father Sundaram Iyer suddenly fell seriously ill and unexpectedly died several days later at the age of 42. For some hours after his father's death he contemplated the matter of death, and how his father's body was still there, but the 'I' was gone from it.

After leaving Scott's Middle School, Venkataraman went to the American Mission High School. .

... on July 17, 1896, at age 16, Venkataraman had a life-changing experience. He spontaneously initiated a process of self-enquiry that culminated, within a few minutes, in his own permanent awakening...

After this event, he lost interest in school-studies, friends, and relations. Avoiding company, he preferred to sit alone, absorbed in concentration on the Self, and went daily to the Meenakshi Temple, ecstatically devoted to the images of the Gods, tears flowing profusely from his eyes.

The Journey to Arunachala

He decided to leave his home and go to Arunachala. Knowing his family would not permit this, he slipped away...

On the morning of September 1, 1896, Venkataraman boarded the train and traveled the remaining distance. In Tiruvannamalai he went straight to the temple of Arunachaleswara.

Early Life at Arunachala

The first few weeks he spent in the thousand-pillared hall, but shifted to other spots in the temple and eventually to the Patala-lingam vault so that he might remain undisturbed. There, he would spend days absorbed in such deep samādhi that he was unaware of the bites of vermin and pests. Seshadri Swamikal, a local saint, discovered him in the underground vault and tried to protect him. After about six weeks in the Patala-lingam, he was carried out and cleaned up. For the next two months he stayed in the Subramanya Shrine, so unaware of his body and surroundings that food had to be placed in his mouth or he would have starved. From there, he was invited to stay in a mango orchard next to Gurumurtam, a temple about a mile out of Tiruvannamalai, and shortly after his arrival a sadhu named Palaniswami went to see him. Palaniswami's first darshan left him filled with peace and bliss, and from that time on his sole concern was serving Sri Ramana, joining him as his permanent attendant. From Gurumurtam to Virupaksha Cave (1899–1916) to Skandasramam Cave (1916–22), he was the instrument of divine protection for Sri Ramana, who would be without consciousness of the body and lost in inner bliss most of the time. Besides physical protection, Palaniswami would also beg for alms, cook and prepare meals for himself and Sri Ramana, and care for him as needed.

Gradually, despite Sri Ramana's silence, austerities, and desire for privacy, he attracted attention from visitors, and some became his disciples. Eventually, his family discovered his whereabouts. First his uncle Nelliappa Iyer came and pled with him to return home, promising that the family would not disturb his ascetic life. Sri Ramana sat motionless and eventually his uncle gave up. It was at the temple at Pavalakkunru, one of the eastern spurs of Arunachala, that his mother and brother Nagaswami found him in December 1898. Day after day his mother begged him to return, but no amount of weeping and pleading had any visible effect on him...

Soon after this, in February 1899, Sri Ramana moved further up Arunachala where he stayed briefly in Satguru Cave and Guhu Namasivaya Cave before taking up residence at Virupaksha Cave for the next 17 years, using Mango Tree cave during the summers (except for a six month period at Pachaiaamman Koil during the plague epidemic)...

Kavyakantha Sri Ganapati Sastri (literally, "One who has poetry in his throat"), a Vedic scholar of repute in his age with a deep knowledge of the Srutis, Sastras, Tantras, Yoga, and Agama systems, came to visit Sri Ramana in 1907. After receiving instructions from him, he proclaimed him as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Sri Ramana was known by this name from then on.

Discovery by Westerners

It was in 1911 that the first westerner, Frank Humphreys, then a policeman stationed in India, discovered Sri Ramana and wrote articles about him which were first published in The International Psychic Gazette in 1913. However, Sri Ramana only became relatively well known in and out of India after 1934 when Paul Brunton, having first visited Sri Ramana in January 1931, published the book A Search in Secret India, which became very popular. Resulting visitors included Paramahansa Yogananda, Somerset Maugham (whose 1944 novel The Razor's Edge models its spiritual guru after Sri Ramana), Mercedes de Acosta and Arthur Osborne. Sri Ramana's relative fame spread throughout the 1940s. However, even as his fame spread, Sri Ramana was noted for

his belief in the power of silence and his relatively sparse use of speech, as well as his lack of concern for fame or criticism. His lifestyle remained that of a renunciate.

Mother's Arrival

In 1912, while in the company of disciples, he was observed to undergo about a 15 minute period where he showed the outward symptoms of death, which reportedly resulted thereafter in an enhanced ability to engage in practical affairs while remaining in Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In 1916 his mother Alagammal and younger brother Nagasundaram joined Sri Ramana at Tiruvannamalai and followed him when he moved to the larger Skandashram Cave, where Bhagavan lived until the end of 1922. His mother took up the life of a sannyasin, and Sri Ramana began to give her intense, personal instruction, while she took charge of the Ashram kitchen. Ramana's younger brother, Nagasundaram, then became a sannyasi, assuming the name Niranjanananda, becoming known as Chinnaswami (the younger Swami).

Mother's Death

Beginning in 1920, his mother's health deteriorated. On the day of her death, May 19, 1922, at about 8 a.m., Sri Ramana sat beside her. It is reported that throughout the day, he had his right hand on her heart, on the right side of the chest, and his left hand on her head, until her death around 8:00 p.m., when Sri Ramana pronounced her liberated, literally, 'Adangi Vittadu, Addakam' ('absorbed'). Later Sri Ramana said of this: "You see, birth experiences are mental. Thinking is also like that, depending on sanskaras (tendencies). Mother was made to undergo all her future births in a comparatively short time.". Her body was enshrined in a samadhi, on top of which a Siva lingam was installed and given the name Mathrubutheswara [Siva manifesting as mother]. To commemorate the anniversary of Ramana Maharshi's mother's death, a puja, known as her Aradhana or Mahapooja, is performed every year at the Mathrubutheswara.

After this, Sri Ramana often walked from Skandashram to her tomb. Then in December 1922, he came down from Skandashram permanently and settled at the base of the Hill, where Sri Ramanasramam is still located today. At first, there was only one hut at the samadhi, but in 1924 two huts, one opposite the samadhi and the other to the north were erected.

The Later Years

The Sri Ramanasramam grew to include a library, hospital, post-office and many other facilities. Sri Ramana displayed a natural talent for planning building projects...

Sri Ramana was noted for his belief in the power of silence and relatively sparse use of speech. He led a modest and renunciate life, and depended on visitors and devotees for the barest necessities. However, a popular image of him as a person who spent most of his time doing nothing except silently sitting in samadhi is highly inaccurate, according to David Godman, who has written extensively about Sri Ramana. According to Godman, from the period when an Ashram began to rise around him after his mother arrived into his later years, Sri Ramana was actually quite active in Ashram activities until his health failed.

Death

General

Wikipedia

In November 1948, a tiny cancerous lump was found on the Maharshi's arm and was removed in February 1949 by the ashram doctor. Soon, another growth appeared, and another operation was done by an eminent surgeon in March, 1949, with Radium applied. The doctor told Sri Ramana that a complete amputation of the arm to the shoulder was required to save his life, but he refused. A third and fourth operation were performed in August and December 1949, but only weakened him. Other systems of medicine were then tried; all proved fruitless and were stopped by the end of March when devotees gave up all hope. To devotees

who begged him to cure himself for the sake of his followers, Sri Ramana is said to have replied, “Why are you so attached to this body? Let it go” and, “Where can I go? I am here.”

By April 1950, Sri Ramana was too weak to go to the hall, and visiting hours were limited. Visitors would file past the small room where he spent his final days to get one final glimpse. Swami Satyananda, the attendant at the time, reports, “On the evening of 14 April 1950, we were massaging Sri Ramana’s body. At about 5 o’clock, he asked us to help him to sit up. Precisely at that moment devotees started chanting ‘Arunachala Siva, Arunachala Siva’. When Sri Ramana heard this his face lit up with radiant joy. Tears began to flow from his eyes and continued to flow for a long time. I was wiping them from time to time. I was also giving him spoonfuls of water boiled with ginger. The doctor wanted to administer artificial respiration but Sri Ramana waved it away. Sri Ramana’s breathing became gradually slower and slower and at 8:47 p.m. it subsided quietly.”

Teachings

General

Wikipedia

Sri Ramana Maharshi maintained that the purest form of his teachings was the powerful silence which radiated from his presence and quieted the minds of those attuned to it. He gave verbal teachings only for the benefit of those who could not understand his silence (or, perhaps, could not understand how to “tune-in” to his silent state). Silence to Ramana did not mean a state of “not-speaking” but rather it was an active participation in being the Universal Self which generated a transformative power on those who witnessed it in person or even through his photographs. His verbal teachings were said to flow from his direct experience of Atman as the only existing reality. When asked for advice, he recommended self-enquiry as the fastest path to moksha. Though his primary teaching is associated with Non-dualism, Advaita Vedanta, and Jnana yoga, he recommended Bhakti to those he saw were fit for it, and gave his approval to a variety of paths and practices.

...

Sri Ramana’s teachings about self-enquiry, the practice he is most widely associated with, have been classified as the Path of Knowledge (Jnana marga) among the Indian schools of thought. Though his teaching is consistent with and generally associated with Hinduism, the Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta, there are some differences with the traditional Advaitic school, and Sri Ramana gave his approval to a variety of paths and practices from various religions.

His earliest teachings are documented in the book *Nan Yar? (Who am I?)*, first written in Tamil.

Selections from [‘The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One’ by Sri Sadhu Om] follow :

As all living beings desire to be happy always, without misery, as in the case of everyone there is observed supreme love for one’s self, and as happiness alone is the cause for love, in order to gain that happiness which is one’s nature and which is experienced in the state of deep sleep where there is no mind, one should know one’s self. For that, the path of knowledge, the inquiry of the form “Who am I?”, is the principal means.

Knowledge itself is ‘I’. The nature of (this) knowledge is existence-consciousness-bliss.

What is called mind is a wondrous power existing in Self. It projects all thoughts. If we set aside all thoughts and see, there will be no such thing as mind remaining separate; therefore, thought itself is the form of the mind. Other than thoughts, there is no such thing as the mind.

Of all the thoughts that rise in the mind, the thought ‘I’ is the first thought.

That which rises in this body as 'I' is the mind. If one enquires 'In which place in the body does the thought 'I' rise first?', it will be known to be in the heart [spiritual heart is 'two digits to the right from the centre of the chest']. Even if one incessantly thinks 'I', 'I', it will lead to that place (Self)

The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'Who am I?', destroying all other thoughts, will itself finally be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre.

If other thoughts rise, one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire, 'To whom did they arise?', it will be known 'To me'. If one then enquires 'Who am I?', the mind (power of attention) will turn back to its source. By repeatedly practising thus, the power of the mind to abide in its source increases.

The place where even the slightest trace of the 'I' does not exist, alone is Self.

Self itself is God.

Sri Ramana warned against considering self-enquiry as an intellectual exercise. Properly done, it involves fixing the attention firmly and intensely on the feeling of 'I', without thinking. It is perhaps more helpful to see it as 'Self-attention' or 'Self-abiding' (cf. Sri Sadhu Om - The Path of Sri Ramana Part I). The clue to this is in Sri Ramana's own death experience when he was 16. After raising the question 'Who am I?' he "turned his attention very keenly towards himself" (cf. description above). Attention must be fixed on the 'I' until the feeling of duality disappears.

Although he advocated self-enquiry as the fastest means to realization, he also recommended the path of bhakti and self-surrender (to one's Deity or Guru) either concurrently or as an adequate alternative, which would ultimately converge with the path of self-enquiry.

Sri Ramana's teachings and Advaita

Sri Ramana's teachings and the traditional Advaitic school of thought pioneered by Sri Adi Shankara have many things in common. Sri Ramana often mentioned and is known to have encouraged study of the following classical works: Ashtavakra Gita, Ribhu Gita and Essence of Ribhu Gita, Yoga Vasista Sara, Tripura Rahasya, Kaivalya Navaneetam, Advaita Bodha Deepika, and Ellam Ondre. However, there are some practical differences with the traditional Advaitic school, which recommends a negationist neti, neti (Sanskrit, "not this", "not this") path, or mental affirmations that the Self was the only reality, such as "I am Brahman" or "I am He", while Sri Ramana advocates the enquiry "Nan Yar" (Tamil, "Who am I"). Furthermore, unlike the traditional Advaitic school, Sri Ramana strongly discouraged most who came to him from adopting a renunciate lifestyle.

His method of teaching was characterized by the following:

He urged people who came to him to practice self-enquiry;

He directed people to look inward rather than seeking outside themselves for Realization. ("The true Bhagavan resides in your Heart as your true Self. This is who I truly am.");

He viewed all who came to him as the Self rather than as lesser beings. ("The jnani sees no one as an ajnani. All are only jnanis in his sight.");

He charged no money, and was adamant that no one ever ask for money (or anything else) in his name;

He never promoted or called attention to himself. Instead, Sri Ramana remained in one place for 54 years, offering spiritual guidance to anyone of any background who came to him, and asking nothing in return;

He considered humility to be the highest quality;

He said the deep sense of peace one felt around a jnani was the surest indicator of their spiritual state, that equality towards all was a true sign of liberation, and that what a true jnani did was always for others, not themselves.

Teachers in his tradition

He considered his own guru to be the Self, in the form of the sacred mountain Arunachala. Sri Ramana did not publicize himself as a guru, never claimed to have disciples, and never appointed any successors. While a few who came to see him are said to have become enlightened through association, and there are accounts of private acknowledgements, he did not publicly acknowledge any living person as liberated other than his mother at death. Sri Ramana declared himself an atiasrama (beyond all caste and religious restrictions, not attached to anything in life), and did not belong to or promote any lineage. Despite his non-affiliations, there are numerous contemporary teachers who publicly associate themselves with Sri Ramana, and some who assert being in his lineage.

Works

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Although he spoke very seldom, he managed to compose two short works—Self-Enquiry and Who am I?—in which he stated his basic insights.

Wikipedia

In 1902, a government official named Sivaprakasam Pillai, with writing slate in hand, visited the young Swami in the hope of obtaining answers to questions about “How to know one’s true identity”. The fourteen questions put to the young Swami and his answers were Sri Ramana’s first teachings on Self-enquiry, the method for which he became widely known, and were eventually published as ‘Nan Yar?’, or in English, ‘Who am I?’.

The original book was published by Sri Pillai, although the essay version of the book (Sri Ramana Nutrirattu) prepared by Sri Ramana is considered definitive as unlike the original it had the benefit of his revision and review. A careful translation with notes is available in English as ‘The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One’ by Sri Sadhu Om, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramana.

...

Sri Ramana composed The Five Hymns to Arunachala, his magnum opus in devotional lyric poetry. Of them the first is Akshara Mana Malai (the Marital Garland of Letters). It was composed in Tamil in response to the request of a devotee for a song to be sung while wandering in the town for alms. The Marital Garland tells in glowing symbolism of the love and union between the human soul and God, expressing the attitude of the soul that still aspires.

Publications

Who am I? Naan Yaar

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, by Munagal Venkataramiah. Covers the period 1935 to 1939 (ISBN 8-18801-807-4)

Reflections On Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, by S.S. Cohen (ISBN 8-18801-838-4)

The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words, by Arthur Osborne (ISBN 81-88018-15-5)[58]

The Collected Works Of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Contains compositions by Sri Ramana, as well as a large number of adaptations and translations by him of classical advaita works (ISBN 81-88018-06-6)

Day by Day with Bhagavan by A. Devaraja Mudaliar. An account of daily discussions during the period 1945 to 1947 (ISBN 81-88018-82-1).

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Sri Ramana Gita (The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi) translated by Sri Sankaranarayanan (ISBN 81-88018-17-1)
Be as You Are: The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi by David Godman (ISBN 0-14-019062-7)
At the feet of Bhagavan from the diary of T.S. Sundaresa Iyer
Letters from Ramanasram by Suri Nagamma Letters from Ramansram
A Search in Secret India by Paul Brunton The book credited with introducing Bhagavan to followers in the West
Guru Vachaka Kovai The Garland of Guru's Sayings by Sri Muruganar (ISBN 0-97113-718-8)
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The Spiritual Teaching of Ramana Maharshi (ISBN 1-59030-139-0)

Related words

Advaita Vedanta
Moksha

Rasa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Rasa — ... taste; essence; savor; juice; nectar of delight.

1. One of the five elements. (See tanmātra.) It is of six kinds: sweet, acid, salt, pungent, astringent, bitter.
2. The essence of things. The delight of existence.
3. The supreme delight produced in the mind of an appreciator of a work of art whose content is an emotion (bhāva). It results from the interaction of the objective factors (yibhāva, anubhāva, and vyabhicāribhāva) and the subjective factor, a qualified appreciator (sahrdaya) with their essence of emotion (stāyibhāva). The stāyibhāva is the material cause of rasa. The vibhāva, anubhāva, and vyabhicāribhāva are together regarded as the efficient cause of rasa. These latter three excite, articulate, and develop the stāyibhāva of the spectator. Vibhāvas are of two kinds: ālambana and uddipana. The former is made up of the human element

and the latter of the natural element in the situation. The former is the main excitant and the latter a contributory one. Anubhāvas are of two types: sāttvikabhāvas, which cannot be produced at will, and all of the other emotions, which can be produced at will. Vyabhicāribhāva (also called sañcāribhava) is an emotion which accompanies the stāyibhāva.

4. According to Indian aesthetics, there are eight main types of experience: śṛṅgāra (the rasa based on conjugal love), hāsya (the rasa based on mirth), karuna (the rasa based on sorrow), raudra (the rasa based on anger), vīra (the rasa based on fortitude), bhayānaka (the rasa based on fear), bībhatsa (the rasa based on disgust), and adbhuta (the rasa based on wonder). Sometimes it is said that there are two more rasas—peace (śānta) and devotion (bhakti).

5. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, taste is of various types: sweet, sour, pungent (kaṭu), astringent (kaṣāya), and bitter (tikta).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

rasa -

the sap or juice of plants, Juice of fruit, any liquid or fluid, the best or finest or prime part of anything, essence, marrow;

water, liquor, drink;

juice of the sugar-cane, syrup;

any mixture, draught, elixir, potion;

melted butter;

milk;

poison;

nectar;

soup, broth;

a constituent fluid or essential juice of the body, serum, (esp.) the primary juice called chyle (formed from the food and changed by the bile into blood);

mercury, quicksilver (sometimes regarded as a kind of quintessence of the human body, else where as the seminal fluid of Śiva);

semen virile;

myrrh;

any mineral or metallic salt;

a metal or mineral in a state of fusion;

gold;

Vangueria Spinosa;

a species of amaranth;

green onion;

resin;

amṛta;

taste, flavour (as the principal quality of fluids, of which there are 6 original kinds, viz. madhura, sweet; amla, sour; lavaṇa, salt; kaṭuka, pungent; tikta, bitter; and kaṣāya, astringent; sometimes 63 varieties are distinguished, viz. beside the 6 original ones, 15 mixtures of 2, 20 of 3, 15 of 4, 6 of 5, and 1 of 6 flavours);

N. of the number 'six';

any object of taste, condiment, sauce, spice, seasoning;

the tongue (as the organ of taste);

taste or inclination or fondness for (loc. with or scil. upari, or comp.), love, affection, desire;

charm pleasure, delight;

(in rhet.) the taste or character of a work, the feeling or sentiment prevailing in it (from 8 to 10 Rasas are generally enumerated, viz. śṛṅgāra, love; vīra, heroism; bībhatsa, disgust; raudra, anger or fury; hāsya, mirth; bhayānaka, terror; karuṇa, pity; adbhuta, wonder; śānta, tranquillity or contentment; vātsalya, paternal fondness; the last or last two are sometimes omitted; cf. under bhāva);

the prevailing sentiment in human character;

(with Vaiṣṇavas) disposition of the heart or mind, religious sentiment (there are 5 Rasas or Ratis forming the 5 degrees of bhakti q.v., viz. śānti, dāsya, sākhyā, vātsalya, and mādhyā);

a kind of metre;

N. of the sacred syllable, 'Om';

the son of a Nishāda and a Śanakī

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Rasa (taste) is an important Indian aesthetic concept applied to literature, drama, and occasionally mythology. Literally, rasa is the taste, savor, or essence of something. In aesthetics rasa is the essential sentiment embedded in a work of art that evokes a corresponding emotion in the reader, listener, or viewer.

Works of art are often classified according to their predominant rasa. The literature variously lists eight to 11 of them. The most common listed are 10: shringara (love), hasya (mirth), karuna (pity), raudra (anger), vira (heroism), bhayanaka (fear), bibhatsa (disgust), and adbhuta (wonder); some add shanta (tranquillity) and vatsalya (parental fondness).

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Rasa... the subtle element (tanmatra) of flavour.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

“Rasa” ... means “moisture, humidity, the tongue”. The word is derived from the root “ras”, meaning “to feel, be sensible of, to love, to taste, to relish”. “Rasa” means “savour, taste, the sap of plants, juice, emotion, bliss”...

In the Rig-veda (IX; 63; 13; 65; 15) the Rasa is the juice of the Soma-plant. The Rasa is the blissful essence of life. In the Taittiriya Upanishad (11; 7; 1) and the Maitri Upanishad (V; 2) it is self luminous consciousness, ecstasy, and the perfect taste or realization of life.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

The classical theory of aesthetics belonging to Sanskrit culture comprises all enjoyable artistic values within the scope of a fanlike expansion or elaboration of the elements of interest that could be normal to human beings. These are supposed to be the nine essences, called rasas. The nine rasas are srhgara (love), ilira (heroism), hibhatsa (disgust), raudra (anger), hasya (mirth), bhayana-ka (terror), karuna (pity), adbhuta (wonder), and santa (tranquillity). If nine rasas are given to the visual (actual) side, nine rasas

must be given to the auditory (virtual) side too. Thus we have, between visible and audible arts, eighteen rasas spread out like a fan, resembling the order of colours in the spectrum.

See: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

rasa — from the root ras = “To feel, be sensible of”.

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Rasa from the root ras, to taste.

Related words

Ap

Tanmatra

Sanskrit

Rasa — रस

rasa - रस

Rig Veda

Title

R̥g Veda — ऋग्वेद

ऋग्वेद

rgveda

Rigveda

Rik Veda

[Wikipedia](#): Sanskrit: a compound of rc “praise, verse” and veda “knowledge”

Author(s)

According to Hindu tradition, the Rigvedic hymns were collected by Paila under the guidance of Vyāsa, who formed the Rigveda Samhita as we know it.

See also:

in Veda: Author(s)

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

rgveda -

'Hymn - Veda' or 'Veda of praise', the Rig-veda, or most ancient sacred book of the Hindūs (that is, the collective body of sacred verses called Ricas, consisting of 1017 hymns [or with the Vālahkilyas 1028] arranged in eight Ashtakas or in ten Maṇḍalas; Maṇḍalas 2-8 contain groups of hymns, each group ascribed to one author or to the members of one family; the ninth book contains the hymns sung at the Soma ceremonies; the first and tenth contain hymns of a different character, some comparatively modern, composed by a greater variety of individual authors; in its wider sense the term Rig-veda comprehends the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtra works on the ritual connected with the hymns).

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Rig Veda (c. 1500 B.C.E.), which everyone agrees is the most ancient extant Indian text, is the foundational text of Hinduism. It consists of about a thousand hymns. The great majority of the hymns are from five to 20 verses in length...

The religion of the Rig Veda has for a long time been referred to as henotheistic, meaning that the religion was polytheistic, but it recognized each divinity in turn as, in certain ways, supreme. Certainly, later Hinduism continued and enriched this henotheistic concept, and, through time, Hinduism has been able to accept even Christ and Allah as being supreme "in turn." The Rig Veda, though, was the central text in a very powerful ritual tradition. Rituals public and private, with sacred fire always a central feature, were performed to speak to and beseech the divinities. Sacrifices of animals were a regular feature of the larger public rites of the Vedic tradition.

Two other Vedas, the Yajur and Sama Vedas, were based on the Rig Veda. That is, most of their text is from the Rig Veda, but the words of the prior text are reorganized for the purposes of the rituals.

Wikipedia

The Rigveda is an ancient Indian sacred collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns. It is counted among the four canonical sacred texts (śruti) of Hinduism known as the Vedas. Some of its verses are still recited as Hindu prayers, at religious functions and other occasions, putting these among the world's oldest religious texts in continued use...

According to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, the number of syllables in the Rigveda is 432,000, equalling the number of muhurtas (1 day = 30 muhurtas) in forty years. This statement stresses the underlying philosophy of the Vedic books that there is a connection (bandhu) between the astronomical, the physiological, and the spiritual.

Dating and historical context

The dating of Rigveda has been a center of controversies; there is a strong disagreement among scholars. The Rigveda is far more archaic than any other Indo- Aryan text. For this reason, it was in the center of attention of western scholarship from the times of Max Müller and Rudolf Roth onwards. The Rigveda records an early stage of Vedic religion. There are strong linguistic and cultural similarities with the early Iranian Avesta, deriving from the Proto- Indo- Iranian times, often associated with the early Andronovo culture of ca. 2000 BC. The Rigveda's core is accepted to date to the late Bronze Age, making it one of the few examples with an unbroken tradition. Its composition is usually dated to roughly between 1700–1100 BC.[22]. The EIEC (s.v. Indo- Ira-

nian languages, p. 306) gives 1500–1000. It is certain that the hymns post- date Indo-Iranian separation of ca. 2000 BC and probably that of the Indo- Aryan Mitanni documents of c. 1400 BC.[23] Several other evidences also pointed out 1400 BC as the most reasonable date.

The Rigveda describes a mobile, semi- nomadic culture, with horse-drawn chariots, oxen-drawn wagons, and metal (bronze) weapons. The geography described is consistent with that of the Greater Punjab: Rivers flow north to south, the mountains are relatively remote but still visible and reachable (Soma is a plant found in the high mountains, and it has to be purchased from tribal people). Nevertheless, the hymns were certainly composed over a long period, with the oldest (not preserved) elements possibly reaching back to times close to the split of Proto-Indo-Iranian (around 2000 BC) Thus there was some debate over whether the boasts of the destruction of stone forts by the Vedic Aryans and particularly by Indra refer to cities of the Indus Valley civilization or whether they rather hark back to clashes between the early Indo-Aryans with the BMAC in what is now northern Afghanistan and southern Turkmenistan (separated from the upper Indus by the Hindu Kush mountain range, and some 400 km distant). While it is highly likely that the bulk of the Rigvedic hymns were composed in the Punjab, even if based on earlier poetic traditions, there is no mention of either tigers or rice in the Rigveda (as opposed to the later Vedas), suggesting that Vedic culture only penetrated into the plains of India after its completion. Similarly, there is no mention of iron as the term *ayas* occurring in the Rig Veda refers to useful metal in general. The “black metal” (*krsna ayas*) is first mentioned in the post- Rigvedic texts (Atharvaveda etc.). The Iron Age in northern India begins in the 10th century in the Greater Panjab and at the 12th century BC with the Black and Red Ware (BRW) culture. There is a widely accepted timeframe for the beginning codification of the Rigveda by compiling the hymns very late in the Rigvedic or rather in the early post- Rigvedic period, including the arrangement of the individual hymns in ten books, co-eval with and the composition of the younger Veda Samhitas. This time coincides with the early Kuru kingdom, shifting the center of Vedic culture east from the Punjab into what is now Uttar Pradesh. The fixing of the *samhitapatha* (by keeping Sandhi) intact and of the *padapatha* (by dissolving Sandhi out of the earlier metrical text), occurred during the later Brahmana period.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The Rg Veda has ten Upanisads connected with it, the principal ones being: Aitareya and Kausitaki. Relations of Vedas to their objects, four elements, etc.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Rig Veda contains hymns of praise to a pantheon of divinities as well as a few cosmogonic hymns that tell of the creation of the universe. These stories are extremely important for the development of later Hinduism. By far the greatest number of the thousand plus hymns of the Rig Veda are devoted to Indra, king of the gods, a deity connected with rain and storms who holds a thunderbolt, and Agni, the god of fire. The rest of the hymns are devoted to an array of gods, most prominently Mitra, Varuna, Savitri, Soma, and the Ashvins. Less frequently mentioned are the gods who became most important in the later Hindu pantheon, Vishnu and Rudra (one of whose epithets was *shiva*, the benign). A number of goddesses are mentioned, most frequently Ushas,

goddess of the dawn, and Aditi, said to be the mother of the gods. The goddess of speech, Vach (Vak), however, may be most important, since speech is one of the most powerful sacred realities in Hindu tradition, although there are not many references to her.

Wikipedia

The Rigvedic hymns are dedicated to various deities, chief of whom are Indra, a heroic god praised for having slain his enemy Vrtra; Agni, the sacrificial fire; and Soma, the sacred potion or the plant it is made from. Equally prominent gods are the Adityas or Asura gods Mitra-Varuna and Ushas (the dawn). Also invoked are Savitr, Vishnu, Rudra, Pushan, Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati, as well as deified natural phenomena such as Dyaus Pita (the shining sky, Father Heaven), Prithivi (the earth, Mother Earth), Surya (the sun god), Vayu or Vata (the wind), Apas (the waters), Parjanya (the thunder and rain), Vac (the word), many rivers (notably the Sapta Sindhu, and the Sarasvati River). The Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Sadhyas, Ashvins, Maruts, Rbhus, and the Vishvadevas (“all-gods”) as well as the “thirty- three gods” are the groups of deities mentioned.

The hymns mention various further minor gods, persons, concepts, phenomena and items, and contain fragmentary references to possible historical events, notably the struggle between the early Vedic people (known as Vedic Aryans, a subgroup of the Indo-Aryans) and their enemies, the Dasa or Dasyu and their mythical prototypes, the Paṇi (the Bactrian Parna).

Rigveda (padapatha) manuscript in Devanagari, early 19th century...

Mandala 1 comprises 191 hymns. Hymn 1.1 is addressed to Agni, and his name is the first word of the Rigveda. The remaining hymns are mainly addressed to Agni and Indra, as well as Varuna, Mitra, the Ashvins, the Maruts, Usas, Surya, Rbhus, Rudra, Vayu, Brhaspati, Visnu, Heaven and Earth, and all the Gods.

Mandala 2 comprises 43 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra. It is chiefly attributed to the Rishi ṛṭsamada śaunahotra.

Mandala 3 comprises 62 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra and the Vishvadevas. The verse 3.62.10 has great importance in Hinduism as the Gayatri Mantra. Most hymns in this book are attributed to viśvāmitra gāthinaḥ.

Mandala 4 comprises 58 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra as well as the Rbhus, Ashvins, Brhaspati, Vayu, Usas, etc. Most hymns in this book are attributed to vāmadeva gautama.

Mandala 5 comprises 87 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra, the Visvadevas (“all the gods’), the Maruts, the twin- deity Mitra- Varuna and the Asvins. Two hymns each are dedicated to Ushas (the dawn) and to Savitr. Most hymns in this book are attributed to the atri clan.

Mandala 6 comprises 75 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra, all the gods, Pusan, Ashvin, Usas, etc. Most hymns in this book are attributed to the bārhaspatya family of Angirasas.

Mandala 7 comprises 104 hymns, to Agni, Indra, the Visvadevas, the Maruts, Mitra- Varuna, the Asvins, Ushas, Indra-Varuna, Varuna, Vayu (the wind), two each to Sarasvati (ancient river/goddess of learning) and Vishnu, and to others. Most hymns in this book are attributed to vasiṣṭha maitravaruṇi.

Mandala 8 comprises 103 hymns to various gods. Hymns 8.49 to 8.59 are the apocryphal vālakhilya. Hymns 1- 48 and 60- 66 are attributed to the kāṇva clan, the rest to other (Angirasa) poets.

Mandala 9 comprises 114 hymns, entirely devoted to Soma Pavamana, the cleansing of the sacred potion of the Vedic religion.

Mandala 10 comprises additional 191 hymns, frequently in later language, addressed to Agni, Indra and various other deities. It contains the Nadistuti sukta which is in praise of rivers and is important for the reconstruction of the geography of the Vedic civilization and the Purusha sukta which has great significance in Hindu social tradition. It also contains the Nasadiya sukta (10.129),

probably the most celebrated hymn in the west, which deals with creation. The marriage hymns (10.85) and the death hymns (10.10- 18) still are of great importance in the performance of the corresponding Grhya rituals.

Commentaries

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General

Wikipedia

The first published translation of any portion of the Rigveda in any Western language was into Latin, by Friedrich August Rosen (Rigvedae specimen, London 1830). Predating Müller's editio princeps of the text, Rosen was working from manuscripts brought back from India by Colebrooke.

H. H. Wilson was the first to make a complete translation of the Rig Veda into English, published in six volumes during the period 1850-88.[48] Wilson's version was based on the commentary of Sāyaṇa. In 1977, Wilson's edition was enlarged by Nag Sharan Singh (Nag Publishers, Delhi, 2nd ed. 1990).

In 1889, Ralph T.H. Griffith published his translation as The Hymns of the Rig Veda, published in London (1889).

A German translation was published by Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda: aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche Übersetzt, Harvard Oriental Studies, vols. 33–37 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1951-7).

Geldner's translation was the philologically best-informed to date, and a Russian translation based on Geldner's by Tatyana Elizarenkova was published by Nauka 1989-1999

A 2001 revised edition of Wilson's translation was published by Ravi Prakash Arya and K. L. Joshi. The revised edition updates Wilson's translation by replacing obsolete English forms with more modern equivalents, giving the English translation along with the original Sanskrit text in Devanagari script, along with a critical apparatus.

In 2004 the United States' National Endowment for the Humanities funded Joel Brereton and Stephanie W. Jamison as project directors for a new original translation to be issued by Oxford University Press.

Numerous partial translations exist into various languages. Notable examples include:

A. A. Macdonell. Hymns from the Rigveda (Calcutta, London, 1922); A Vedic Reader for Students (Oxford, 1917).

French: A. Langlois, Rig-véda, ou livre des hymnes, Paris 1948-51 ISBN 2-7200-1029-4

Hungarian: Laszlo Forizs, Rigvéda - Teremtéshimnuszok (Creation Hymns of the Rig-Veda), Budapest, 1995 ISBN 963-85349-1-5
Hymns of the Rig-Veda

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty issued a modern selection with a translation of 108 hymns, along with critical apparatus. A bibliography of translations of the Rig Veda appears as an Appendix that work.

A new German translations of books 1 and 2 was presented in 2007 by Michael Witzel and Toshifumi Goto (ISBN 978-3-458-70001-2 / ISBN 978-3-458-70001-3).

A partial Hindi translation by Govind Chandra Pande was published in 2008 (by Lokbharti Booksellers and Distributors, Allahabad, covering books 3-5).

Related words

Aitareya Upanishad

Mahavakya: Prajnanam Brahma

Veda

External links

The Rig Veda - English Translation by Ralph Griffith, 1896

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/>

Rishi

Variant spellings

rishi
r̥ṣi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

R̥ṣi — ... seer; a Vedic sage (from the verb root ṛṣ = “to see”).

1. Individuals who “heard,” perceived, or recorded the Vedic hymns.
2. The seven great seers (r̥ṣi) are Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya, and Vaśiṣṭha. Other great seers include Kaśyapa, Gautama, Jamdagni, Bharadvāja, and Viśvamitra.
3. The three classes of r̥ṣis are Brahmaṛṣis, who are born out of the mind of Brahmā; Devaṛṣis, who are of lower rank than the former; Rājaṛṣis, or kings who became r̥ṣis.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

r̥ṣi -

a singer of sacred hymns, an inspired poet or sage, any person who alone or with others invokes the deities in rhythmical speech or song of a sacred character (e.g. the ancient hymn-singers Kutsa, Atri, Rebha, Agastya, Kuśika, Vasishṭha, Vy-aśva); the Rishis were regarded by later generations as patriarchal sages or saints, occupying the same position in India history as the heroes and patriarchs of other countries, and constitute a peculiar class of beings in the early mythical system, as distinct from gods, men, Asuras, &c.;

they are the authors or rather seers of the Vedic hymns i.e. according to orthodox Hindū ideas they are the inspired personages to whom these hymns were revealed, and such an expression as ‘the Rishi says’ is equivalent to ‘so it stands in the sacred text’;

seven Rishis, sapta R̥ṣayaḥ, or saptar̥ṣayaḥ or saptar̥ṣayaḥ, are often mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas and later works as typical representatives of the character and spirit of the pre-historic or mythical period;

their names are given as follows, Gotama, Bharadvāja, Viśvā-mitra, Jamadagni, Vasishṭha, Kaśyapa, and Atri;

in MBh. xii, Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya, Vasishṭha are given as the names of the Rishis of the first Manvantara, and they are also called Prajāpatīs or patriarchs;

the names of the Rishis of the subsequent Manv-antaras are enumerated in Hariv.;

afterwards three other names are added, viz. Pracetas or Daksha, Bhṛigu, and Nārada, these ten being created by Manu Svāyam-bhuva for the production of all other beings including gods and men;

in astron. the seven Rishis form the constellation of ‘the Great Bear’;

(metaphorically the seven Rishis may stand for the seven senses or the seven vital airs of the body);

a saint or sanctified sage in general, an ascetic, anchorite (this is a later sense; sometimes three orders of these are enumerated, viz. Devarshis, Brahmarshis, and Rājarshis; sometimes seven, four others being added, viz. Maharshis, Paramarshis, Śrutarshis, and Kāṇḍarshis);
the seventh of the eight degrees of Brāhmans;
a hymn or Mantra composed by a Rishi;
the Veda Comm. on MBh. and Pat.;
a symbolical expression for the number seven;
the moon;
an imaginary circle;
a ray of light;
the fish Cyprinus Rishi

[Wikipedia](#)

A rishi denotes a poet-sage through whom the Vedic hymns flowed, credited also as divine scribes. According to post-Vedic tradition the rishi is a “seer” or “shaman” to whom the Vedas were “originally revealed” through states of higher consciousness. The rishis rose into prominence when Hinduism was in its early flowering, perhaps as far back as four thousand years ago.

Descriptions

General

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

A rishi in its most ancient Vedic sense was a seer and an inspired poet. The original rishis were those who saw or called forth the eternal verses of the VEDAS. The Vedas were not seen as written by anyone; the rishis were conduits for them. Most of the Vedic MANTRAS include the name of the rishi who recorded them. Seven of these ancient rishis are seen as the starting points for the orthodox BRAHMIN lineages: Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Vishvamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, and Bharadvaja. In the later epics and Puranas, or mythical lore, rishis inhabited ASHRAMS or retreat places in the wilderness, where they performed their austerities. These rishis were sages, not necessarily connected with the transmission of the Vedas. Some of them were composers or compilers of the epics, such as the rishi VALMIKI who compiled the RAMAYANA, and the rishi VYASA who gave us the MAHABHARATA. The rishis encountered in this later literature often are known for the frightening curses they imposed upon those who had not treated them with due deference and respect. Rishi today is an honorific term, for instance, in the case of MAHARISHI (great rishi) Mahesh Yogi, who founded the TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION movement. Few such people today are considered comparable to the great rishis of the past.

[Wikipedia](#)

In the Vedas, the word denotes an inspired poet of Rigvedic hymns, who alone or with others invokes the deities with poetry of a sacred character. In particular, Rsi refers to the authors of the hymns of the Rigveda. Post-Vedic tradition regards the Rishis as “sages” or saints, constituting a peculiar class of divine human beings in the early mythical system, as distinct from Asuras, Devas and mortal men.

The main rishis recorded in the Brahmanas and the Rigveda-Anukramanis include Gritsamada, Vishvamitra, Vamadeva, Atri, Bharadvaja, Vasishtha, Angiras, Kanva.

Seven Rishis (the Saptarshi) are often mentioned in the Brahmanas and later works as typical representatives of the character and spirit of the pre- historic or mythical period; in Shatapatha Brahmana 14.5.2.6 (Brhad Aranyaka Upanisad), their names are Uddālaka Āruni (also called Gautama), Bharadvaja, Vishvamitra, Jamadagni, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, and Atri. Daksha, Bhṛigu and Nārada were also added to the saptarshis riṣis in Āshvalāyana- Shrauta- Sutra, where these ten principals were created by the first Manu (Svāyambhuva Manu) for producing everyone else.

In Mahabharata 12, on the other hand, there is the post- Vedic list of Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya and Vasishtha. The Mahābhārata list explicitly refers to the saptarshis of the first manvantara (cf. SED by Monier- Williams) and not to those of the present manvantara. Each manvantara had a unique set of saptarshi. In Harivamsha 417ff, the names of the Rishis of each manvantara are enumerated.

In addition to the Saptarsi, there are other classifications of sages. In descending order of precedence, they are Brahmarshi , Maharshi, Rajarshi. Devarsi, Paramrsi, Shrutarsi and Kvndarsi are added in Manusmṛiti iv-94 and xi-236 and in two dramas of Kālidasa.

The Chaturvarga-Chintāmani of Hemādri puts 'risi' at the seventh place in the eight- fold division of Brāhmanas. Amarakosha (the famous Sanskrit synonym lexicon compiled by Amarasimha) mentions seven types of risi : Shrutarshi, Kāndarshi, Paramarshi, Maharshi, Rājarshi, Brahmarshi and Devarshi. Amarakosha strictly distinguishes Rishi from other types of sages, such as sanyāsi, bhikṣu, parivrājaka, tapasvi, muni, brahmachāri, yati, etc.

...

It is generally agreed upon that some of the very greatest of the ancient rishis were in fact women. According to the Sarvanukramanika text, there were as many as 20 women among the authors of the Rig Veda. A female rishi is known as a rishika. There is only one synonym for 'risi': satyavachāh (one who speaks truth). According to tradition, other sages might falter, but a risi was believed to speak truth only, because s/he existed in the Higher World (the unified field of consciousness) according to the Sanskrit 'risi'. Rsis are also called kavi, "brahmán", "kāru", "kīri", "vāghat", "vipra", "yogini" etc.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Rishi — from the verb root drs = "to see".

Wikipedia

In Indian tradition, the word has been derived from the two roots 'rsh'. Sanskrit grammarians (cf. Commentary on Unādi- Sutra, iv, 119) derive this word from the second root which means (1) 'to go, move' (- Dhatupāth of Pānini, xxviii). V. S. Apte gives this particular meaning and derivation, and Monier-Williams also gives the same, with some qualification.

Another form of this root means (2) 'to flow, to move near by flowing'. (All the meanings and derivations cited above are based upon Sanskrit English Dictionary of Monier- Williams). Monier- Williams also quotes Tārānātha who compiled the great (Sanskrit-to- Sanskrit) dictionary named "rsati jñānena samsāra- pāram" (i.e., one who reaches beyond this mundane world by means of spiritual knowledge).

Manfred Mayrhofer in his Etymological Dictionary (I 261) prefers a connection to either rs "pour, flow", Rishi symbolizes intelligence and wisdom. The root has a close Avestan cognate ərəšiš (Yasna 31.5; cf. 40.4) "an ecstatic" (see also Yurodivy, Vates).

However, the Indo- European dictionary of Julius Pokorny connects the word to a PIE root *h3er-s meaning “rise, protrude”, in the sense of “excellent, egregious”.

Monier-Williams tentatively suggests derivation from drś “to see”. Monier- Williams also quotes Hibernian (Irish) form ‘arsan’ (a sage, a man old in wisdom) and ‘arrach’ (old, ancient, aged) as related to rishi. In Sanskrit, forms of the root ‘rish’ become ‘arsh-’ in many words, e.g., arsh. Monier- Williams also conjectures that the root ‘drish’ (to see) might have given rise to an obsolete root ‘rish’ meaning ‘to see’.

Related words

Veda

Sanskrit

R̥ṣi — ऋषि

r̥ṣi - ऋषि

Rita

Variant spellings

rita

r̥ta

ritham

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

R̥ta — ... Truth; Law; Right; Order; “the course of things” .

1. It is the working out of Truth in action. It is the eternal Order, cosmic as well as moral. It is said to be the basis for the later idea of karma.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

r̥ta -

met with, afflicted by (with instr.);

proper, right, fit, apt, suitable, able, brave, honest;

true;

worshipped, respected;

enlightened, luminous;

N. of a Rudra;

of a son of Manu Cākshusha;

of a son of Vijaya;
fixed or settled order, law, rule (esp. in religion);
sacred or pious action or custom, divine law, faith, divine truth;
truth in general, righteousness, right;
figuratively said of gleaning (as the right means of a Brāhman's obtaining a livelihood as opposed to agriculture, which is anṛta);
promise, oath, vow;
truth personified (as an object of worship, and hence enumerated among the sacred objects in the Nir.);
water;
sacrifice;
a particular sacrifice;
the sun;
wealth;
right, duly, properly, expressly, very;
truly, sincerely, indeed

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Rita is a VEDIC concept that means “cosmic order.” VARUNA was most specifically charged with its maintenance, but many other gods such as AGNI and INDRA were sometimes also said to maintain rita. It was understood that the Vedic rituals were necessary to maintain the cosmic order. In fact the greatest of the ancient Vedic rituals, the AGNICHAYANA, or fire ritual, was seen to re-create the entire cosmic order each year. The concept of rita is most important as a precursor to the notion of DHARMA, although the latter was extended into social law and social organization as well.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Vedic Rita is the sustaining principle and power of the higher and lower worlds, comprising the realms of the Devas and of embodied men. It implied that which is “right” — an etymologically distantly connected word. It has been said that Rita, the “right”, originally meant “straight, direct”. The right and the straight or direct are symbolically so intimately related, that in some language there is only one word for these conceptions. Rita includes, of course, “righteousness”. Related more closely to the word Rita is “rite”. Rites are ceremonial expressions of traditions reflecting the Tradition.

...

We understand from Rig-vedic texts that Rita also comprised the ordered course of the “heavenly bodies”. Rita was twofold: it was the “ideal” which had to become “actual” in the world. There is a prayer to Heaven and Earth (III; 54; 3): “May your Rita be actual”. The responsibility for this rested with the Gods. In this connection they were called “the Charioteers of Rita”. Among these Gods the Adityas took the foremost place. ... We read in the Rig-veda (II; 27; 4): “True to Rita, they (the Adityas) exact the debts”. We may say that Krishna did very much the same on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra. Sin was often looked upon as a debt which the Gods had to collect. This was the case because every sin disturbed Rita, whether conscious or unconscious. This disturbance affected not only the sinner himself, but all men, for the world of the soul was known to be in essence one. All forms of wrong-doing

imply the disturbance of the ordered harmony of the inner and outer world, that is to say, of Rita, and the righting of the wrong or the collection of the debt, had to be performed by the Adityas.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

If you once learn how to walk, you need not thereafter consciously guide every step; they automatically come the right way. In the Upanisads it is said that to know the nature of water you need not drain all the seven seas and examine each drop of water; if you know the nature of a cup of water you know the nature of water wherever it is. The homogeneity of the Universal Self and the individual self is maintained by an inner participation. In the Upanisads it is termed rta. It belongs to the phenomenal, while its counterpart, called satya, belongs to the numinous, or the Absolute. If you know the secret of holding together the satya and the rta, you have learned the dharma of the Upanisads, which is different from the dharma of the Vedas and of other forms of religion. Even a little knowledge of the Upanisadic dharma can save you from great peril.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Katha Upanishad

He is within in a universal sense. If you could conceive of the universal within, that would be the atman. He is not internal in a spatial sense, and not external in the sense of time. He is not endless expanse in space, or passage of time endlessly projected forward. The mind is habituated to think in terms of space, time and causality, and thus we try to do the same thing with the atman. Even the topmost heavens are pervaded by Him, so you must bar the idea that He is within the body. He is purest uncontaminated Being, untouched by the dust of earth and heaven. He enlightens the highest heights. And downward from them is the ethereal region, also pervaded by Him. He is the cosmic principle, besides being the life-principle. He is in the five elements. He is also vitality, and all things that move on earth. He is not merely the Pervader, but also the Material of which the universe is made, as well as its material Cause. He is its regulating laws: the physical ones, the biological ones and all the others as well, called rita and satya. The latter is law existing as the atman, the former is the law manifested in this universe. All our laws must be in conformity with rita, and are meant to regulate the movement of people and bring about a balance of forces as manifestations of the supreme Harmoniser. This atman is the largest of all Beings, and also the smallest one, pervading, as the Substance, all alike.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

rta - from the root ṛ = "to rise, tend upward".

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

It has been said (though Ri and R are two distinct letters) that Rita comes from the root "Ar" meaning to order, to arrange, to regulate. In that case the word Rita means the principle and power which brings, regulates and maintains order and harmony in the world. From the root "Ar" come also words meaning "to order", "to ordain", etc. Others have said that Rita comes from the root "i", and means to go the right way, to be pious or virtuous, properly, according to law, usage, right, true, respected, worshipped, law, order, sacred custom, divine law, righteousness, and truth as object of worship.

Related words

Dharma
Satya

Sanskrit

Rta — ऋत
rta - ऋत

Rupa

Variant spellings

rupa
rūpa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Rūpa — ... form; aggregate; body; matter; sight; color.

1. One of the five aggregates.
2. One of the five subtle essence of the elements. (See tanmātra.)
3. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the colors are white, blue, red, green, brown, and variegated (citra). Color belongs only to earth, water, and fire.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

rūpa -

any outward appearance or phenomenon or colour (often pl.), form, shape, figure;
dreamy or phantom shapes;
handsome form, loveliness, grace, beauty, splendour;
handsome form, loveliness, grace, beauty, splendour;
likeness, image, reflection;
circumstances (opp. to 'time' and 'place');
sort, kind;
mode, manner, way;
trace of;
a single specimen or exemplar (and therefore a term for the number 'one');
coin (prob. a rupee);
a show, play, drama;

(in alg.) the arithmetical unit;

(pl.) integer number;

known or absolute number, a known quantity as having specific form (and expressed by rū i.e. first syllable of rūpa);

(in gram.) any form of a noun or verb (as inflected by declension or conjugation);

(in phil.) the quality of colour (one of the 17 or 24 Guṇas of the Vaiśeshikas);

(with Buddhists) material form i.e. the organized body (as one of the 5 constituent elements or Skandhas);

(in dram.) a reflection or remark made under partic. circumstances when the action is at its height;

(only L.) cattle;

a beast;

a sound, word;

rereading a book;

a word of unknown meaning;

N. of a people;

or n. N. of a place

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Rūpa (etymology uncertain), the subtle element (tanmātra) of form.

[Wikipedia](#)

In Hinduism and Buddhism, rūpa generally refers to material objects, particularly in regards to their appearance.

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Rupa: Form, along with nama (name), distinguishes every individual entity in this world. Hence the world is often spoken of as constituted of nama and rupa.

Descriptions

General

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

In Hindu as well as in Buddhist tradition Rupa, meaning form and colour, is that which is seen, that which delights or repulses the eye. Rupa is one of the five categories of sense-objects of Hindu philosophy. The other four are Sabda, Sound, pertaining to the Element Air; Gandha, Smell, pertaining to the Element Fire; Rasa, Taste, pertaining to the Element Water; and Sparta, Touch, pertaining to the Element Earth.

See: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

See also:

in Paramanu: [Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Related words

Nama

Broader term: Namarupa

Svarupa

Tejas

Tanmatra

Sanskrit

Rūpa — रूप

rūpa - रूप

Sabda

Variant spellings

sabda
shabda
śabda

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śabda — ... verbal testimony; verbal knowledge; sound; word; scriptural authority.

1. It is one of the valid means of knowledge. (See pramāna.)
2. It is one of the five subtle essences of the elements. (See tanmatra.)
3. According to Nyāya, it is the testimony of a trustworthy person—one who knows the truth and communicates it correctly.
4. According to Advaita Vedānta, the truth revealed by śabda is the fundamental unity of Being.
5. According to Mīmāṃsā, its purport lies in the injunctive texts of the ritual sections of the Vedas.
6. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, sound is a quality perceived by the ear. It belongs only to either and is of two kinds: noise and alphabet; viz., inarticulate noise (dhvani) and articulate alphabetic sounds (varṇa). Mīmāṃsā holds that varṇa is eternal while Nyāya maintains that every varṇa is produced by God.
7. Generally four stages of sound are distinguished: supreme sound (parā); visible sound, which can be heard as om (paśyantī); middle sound, which refers to a variety of basic sounds (mātrkā) that are very subtle (madhyama); and manifest sound (vaikhāra), which is the grossest level of sound and is what is heard in ordinary speech.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śabda -
sound, noise, voice, tone, note;
a word (śabdena, by word, explicitly, expressly);
speech, language;
the right word, correct expression (opp. to apa-śabda);
the sacred syllable Om;
(in gram.) a declinable word or a word-termination, affix;
a name, appellation, title;
a technical term;
verbal communication or testimony, oral tradition, verbal authority or evidence

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Sabda (possibly fr. I-E onomatopoeic base hop, to make a noise), verbal testimony, a means of correct knowledge (pramāṇa), defined as the instructive assertion of a reliable person; the only means (pramāṇa) admitted by Jaimini in the Mīmāṃsā system; here Sabda means the Word or the first sound in Nature, and is claimed to be eternal; (in Samkhya) the subtle element (tanmatra) of sound.

Wikipedia

Śabda is the Sanskrit for “sound, speech” In Sanskrit grammar, the term refers to an utterance in the sense of linguistic performance.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Sabda: Literally, any sound or word. In the philosophical context, any scriptural utterance, one of the pramanas. The only means that leads to transcendental knowledge. Also called agama and sruti.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shabda (“word”). In Indian philosophy, the general term for authoritative testimony. This is generally accepted as one of the pramanas, the means by which human beings can gain true and accurate knowledge, except by the materialists, who reject all pramanas except perception (pratyaksha). Such authoritative testimony is of two sorts. It most often refers to authoritative scriptural texts, such as the Vedas, but it can also refer to verbal instruction given by one’s guru, which is considered to have equal authority, at least by members of that spiritual lineage. Shabda is an important pramana because it tells people about those things that the other pramanas cannot uncover, such as the nature of the heavens, the course of the soul after death, proper religious life, and so forth. With regard to the liberation of the soul, it is often the most important pramana, since this cannot be discovered in any other way.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The creative Word has sound and meaning, that is, spirit and meaning. In the first Chapter of Genesis we read repeatedly “God said” and “God saw”. The Hindu conception is Sabdartha, which is composed of Sabda, meaning sound, and Artha, implying thought-meaning. The Sabdartha or “Sound-Meaning” manifests as the Nama-rupa or “Name-form”. This applies to the world-of-name-and-form of the intellectual function. The Sabdartha corresponds to the Logos (Word), which has been said to be inseparable thought-word-meaning.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Sound as such is called sabda, and a modification of sabda is called dhvani. In Sanskrit, the entire world of literature is called dhvanya loka, a world that is seen through sound.

See: Akasa and sound

See also:

in Jagrat: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

in Sushupti: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

in Svapna: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Śabda — from the verb root śabd = “sound”.

Related words

Akasa

Broader term: Pramana

Sphota

Broader term: Tanmatra

Sanskrit

Śabda — शब्द

śabda -शब्द

Saccidananda

Variant spellings

saccidananda

saccidānanda

Satchidananda

Sat-cit- ānanda

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Saccidānanda — ... existence/knowledge/bliss; Existence Absolute, Consciousness Absolute, Bliss Absolute

1. According to theistic Vedānta schools and Saivite schools, they are the attributes of God (Brahman).
2. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is the very essence of the Absolute (Brahman).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

saccidānanda -

existence and thought and joy;

consisting of existence and thought and joy;

(pure) 'Existence and Thought and Joy', N. of the One self-existing Spirit (= Brahman);

N. of Viṣṇu as identified with Brahman

Wikipedia

Saccidānanda, Satchidananda, or Sat-cit- ānanda (Sanskrit: सच्चिदानंद) is a compound of three Sanskrit words, Sat (सत्), Cit (चित्), and Ānanda (आनंद) (the ā is of longer vocal length), meaning essence, consciousness, and bliss respectively. The expression is used in yoga and other schools of Indian philosophy to describe the nature of Brahman as experienced by a fully liberated yogi. Orthography may differ depending on whether the word is treated in its compound form and therefore subject to sandhi: sac-cidānanda, or split into its elements: sat-cit- ananda, sac chid ananda, etc. The compound always sounds like: Sach- chid-ānanda, regardless of spelling.

The Vedantic philosophy understands saccidānanda as a synonym of the three fundamental attributes of Brahman.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Sat chit ananda (saccidananda) - The Absolute, Brahman, is defined as existence (sat), subsistence (cit), and value affectivity (ananda). Sat is the generic beingness that is shared by everything that exists. Cit is the self-subsisting principle of consciousness that is experienced as awareness, as well as the knowledge that illuminates and objectifies all items of awareness. Ananda is the innate value which serves both as a principle of affectivity and a norm for the validation of existence.

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Saccidananda (sat+cit+ananda): Existence- consciousness-value-experience; the only positive definition of brahman. See sat, cit, and ananda.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

It is said in the Yogic tradition that in the Sahasrara, the Lotus over the head of the perfected Yogi, the Goddess Kundalini and her Lord, Siva, are united. She is called Chit, Consciousness, and He is called Sat, Reality. They unite in a place within the Sahasrara called the Chandra-loka or "Moon-World". It is the abode of Paramananda, "Supreme Bliss". The name Chandra-loka gives a clue to the nature of the Sahasrara. It is the Sun-aspect of the Moon-Sphere.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Wisdom's frame of reference

Bad translations of Vedantic expressions, loosely employed, such as sat, cit and ananda as corresponding to 'existence', 'knowledge' and 'bliss' respectively, have been substituted by us with 'Existence', 'Subsistence' and 'Value' as the triple expression more correctly understood in the East and in the West at the same time.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

The only independent reality is the Absolute, which is defined in Vedanta as sat, cit and ananda. Sat refers to the ground of all things, whether physical or psychic. Cit refers to the source of illumination. It comprises both luminosity and what is illumined. Ananda is the ground of all values. When conceived of as the Absolute, there is no division between these attributes, which are verbalized only for the sake of convenience...

The Absolute is defined as sat-cit- ananda, existence-awareness-value. You can think of it as the existence of a value in terms of pure awareness, or you can say it is the awareness of the existence of the value, or you can say it is the value of an awareness which exists. It's all up to you; you have your own choice in structuring the meaning. But you cannot take away any one of the three elements. A value that doesn't exist cannot be a value. A value which you do not know is not a value. A knowledge which has no value - you don't want to know it...

One can be permeated with the consciousness of satcitananda. It can be blissful if it is not differentiated, but instead of this generic sense of existence, subsistence and value, we tend to see things individually. When they are broken into bits we have instead asti, this is; bhati, I know it; and priyam, I love it. In Western terms these correspond to cognition, connotation and affection. In the fragmentary notions of asti, bhati and priyam there is scope for a great deal of confusion. We can have "This is, I know it, I dislike it;" or even "This is, I do not know what it is, therefore I do not know if I like it or not." Only when we cultivate an ever-prevailing sense of unity are we out of this confusion. When we identify with the egoistic self we see only through this fragmentation and do not experience satcitananda.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Taittiriya Upanishad

Commentary by Dayananda:

Saccidānanda does not mean 'existence, knowledge, bliss.' Saccidānanda is existence that is the satyam of everything, which is pure caitanyam, that which is limitless, pūrṇa.

Related words

Ananda
Atman
Brahman
Cit
Sat

Sadhana

Variant spellings

sadhana

sāadhanā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sādhana — ... self-effort; spiritual discipline; means; the way

1. Generally “the means to release or liberation.”

2. Jainism is the three jewels (tri-ratna) comprised of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct.

3. Buddhism is the eightfold path (ārya-astāṅga-mārga).

4. Sāṅkhya is discrimination between spirit (purusa) and matter (prakṛti).

5. Yoga is the eight-limbed yoga (aṣṭāṅga-yoga).

6. Mīmāṃsā is action (karma) or injunction (vidhi).

7. Advaita Vedānta is ultimately right knowledge (brahma-jñāna), with the preliminary aids of the fourfold prerequisites (sāadhanacatustaya) and hearing, reflecting upon, and digesting the liberating knowledge (śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana).

8. Viśiṣṭadvaita Vedānta is action (karma yoga) and knowledge (jñānayoga), ultimately culminating in devotion (bhakti-yoga). The other accepted path is total surrender (prapatti).

9. Dvaita Vedānta is discrimination followed by knowledge, followed by grace (vairāgya, jñāna, mähātmya-jñāna, niskāma-karma, bhakti, and prasāda).

10. Saiva Siddhānta is external acts of worship (caryā), then acts of intimate service to God (kriyā), then contemplation and internal worship (yoga), and finally divine knowledge of God (jñāna).

11. Vira Saivism is the eight protections to be observed (aṣṭa-āvarana) and the five codes of conduct (pañcācāra).

12. Kashmir Saivism is divine Self-rememberance (pratyabhijñā) with the means of anupāya, śāmbhavopāya, śāktopāya, and āṇavopāya.

13. Sivādvaita is contemplation (tatkratu-nyāya—one becomes what one contemplates) which leads to the realization of one’s own true and essential nature.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sāadhanā -

accomplishment, performance

sādhana -

leading straight to a goal, guiding well, furthering;

effective, efficient, productive of;

procuring;

conjuring up (a spirit);

denoting, designating, expressive of;

N. of the author of ṚV.;

propitiation, worship, adoration;

the act of mastering, overpowering, subduing;

subduing by charms, conjuring up, summoning (spirits &c.);

subduing a disease, healing, cure;

enforcing payment or recovery (of a debt);

bringing about, carrying out, accomplishment, fulfilment, completion, perfection;

establishment of a truth, proof. argument, demonstration;

reason or premiss (in a syllogism, leading to a conclusion);

any means of effecting or accomplishing, any agent or instrument or implement or utensil or apparatus, an expedient, requisite for;

a means of summoning or conjuring up a spirit (or deity);

means or materials of warfare, military forces, army or portion of an army (sg. and pl.);

conflict, battle;

means of correcting or punishing (as 'a stick', 'rod' &c.);

means of enjoyment, goods, commodities &c;

efficient cause or source (in general);

organ of generation (male or female);

(in gram.) the sense of the instrumental or agent (as expressed by the case of a noun, opp. to the action itself);

preparing, making ready, preparation (of food, poison &c.);

obtaining, procuring, gain, acquisition;

finding out by calculation, computation;

fruit, result;

the conjugational affix or suffix which is placed between the root and terminations;

matter, material, substance, ingredient, drug, medicine; good works, penance, self-mortification, attainment of beatitude; conciliation, propitiation, worship; killing, destroying; killing metals, depriving them by oxydation &c. of their metallic properties [esp. said of mercury]; burning on a funeral pile, obsequies; setting out, proceeding, going; going quickly; going after, following

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sadhana (from the SANSKRIT root sadh, complete, accomplish) is used generically for any spiritual practice but is most frequently used to refer to Hindu TANTRIC practice.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sadhana (“accomplishing”). The most common colloquial Hindu term designating established and regular religious practice. It is given this name because it is through such practice that one gains spiritual attainments. In modern Hindi, the word can also be used to refer to anything to which one has devoted a great deal of time, attention, and hard work.

Wikipedia

Sādhanā (Sanskrit साधना, literally “a means of accomplishing something”) is spiritual practice. It includes a variety of disciplines in Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist traditions that are followed in order to achieve various spiritual or ritual objectives.

The historian N. Bhattacharyya provides a working definition of the benefits of sādhanā as follows:

“... religious sādhanā, which both prevents an excess of worldliness and moulds the mind and disposition (bhāva) into a form which develops the knowledge of dispassion and non-attachment. Sādhanā is a means whereby bondage becomes liberation.”
... The term “sādhanā” means spiritual exertion towards an intended goal. A person undertaking such a practice is known as a sadhu or a sadhaka. The goal of sādhanā is to attain some level of spiritual realization, which can be either enlightenment, pure love of God (prema), liberation (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death (Samsara), or a particular goal such as the blessings of a deity as in the Bhakti traditions.

Sādhanā can involve meditation, chanting of mantra (sometimes with the help of a japa mala), puja to a deity, yajna, and in very rare cases mortification of the flesh or tantric practices such as performing one’s particular sādhanā within a cremation ground.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

This Centre [the Sahasrara] is called the Anubhava Chakra or “pure experience wheel”, in contradistinction to the other six Chakras or Centres, which are called Sadhana Chakras. Sadhana is the practical spiritual Path to Sadhya and Siddhi, which allied words may be rendered by Fullness, Satisfaction, and Achievement, Power. The root “sadh” means “to exert”. Sadhana is spiritual striving. The six lower Chakras are the rungs of the ladder on which the Sadhaka or “striver” exerts himself.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali’s Yoga

The title of the second chapter, Sadhana Pada, refers to the scope and possibilities of the study of Yoga. What we always experience is our confrontation with necessity. Every time we are confronted with a need, the question of how it can be fulfilled arises in our mind. We look for a potential to actualize. A possibility is suggested from inside. Then it is human nature to be hopeful and to look for probabilities. When we pass from a possibility to a probability, the possibility gains more clarity. When several possibilities are hypothesized, we find that certain postulations are more relevant to the given frame of reference than the others. A postulation can be actualized only by testing the validity of a chosen probability. This is a process by which we decide what cause can yield what result. When we see the result manifesting, we move from a postulation to its actuality. Thus we find out for ourselves that actualization of an envisioned result is the revelation of the solution to our problem.

The person who is bent on actualizing the realization of the potential envisaged in a certain probability is called a sadhaka. The postulation is called sadhanam. The actual performance or the exerting of energy in a methodical way to bring the actual from the

potential is sadhana. One sound that is predominant in all these terms is dha. It has dynamic affinity with the sound dhi, which means “the discerning intelligence” in all experiences of certitude. In the case of the Yoga aspirant, the sadhanam being sought is samadhi. Three of the functions of consciousness—the interrogative (manas), recall and remembrance (citta), and the sense of agency known as ego (ahamkara)—are all psychic forces that pull the faculty of judgment in different directions. What is central is the discerning intellect (buddhi), which should stand upright without being swayed by doubt and apprehension. It should not become confused by a plethora of memories and disturbing thoughts and emotions.

To be free of manas, citta, and ahamkara the intellect has to be upright like a pillar (adhana). When a steady state of consciousness is maintained by the intellect, the pull from all sides is met equally. That position is called samadhana or equipoise. When intelligence maintains a continuous neutral position and does not yield to any emotionally tainted memory, the state that is stabilized is called samadhi. Thus both the Samadhi Pada and the Sadhana Pada point us toward the cessation of the modulation of consciousness.

...

sadhana: practice, discipline, means for attainment

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

(To the devotees) “Gather all the information and then plunge in. Suppose a pot has dropped in a certain part of a lake. Locate the spot and dive there.

“One should learn the essence of the scriptures from the guru and then practise sadhana. If one rightly follows spiritual discipline, then one directly sees God. The discipline is said to be rightly followed only when one plunges in. What will a man gain by merely reasoning about the words of the scriptures? Ah, the fools! They reason themselves to death over information about the path. They never take the plunge. What a pity!

“You may say, even though you dive deep you are still in danger of sharks and crocodiles, of lust and anger. But dive after rubbing your body with turmeric powder; then sharks and crocodiles will not come near you. The turmeric is discrimination and renunciation.

...

Three kinds of sadhana

“I practised all sorts of sadhana. There are three classes of sadhana: sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic. In the sattvic sadhana the devotee calls on the Lord with great longing or simply repeats His name; he doesn’t seek any result in return. The rajasic sadhana prescribes many rituals: purascharana, pilgrimage, panchatapa, worship with sixteen articles, and so forth. The tamasic sadhana is a worship of God with the help of tamas. The attitude of a tamasic devotee is this: ‘Hail, Kali! What? Wilt Thou not reveal Thyself to me? If not, I will cut my throat with a knife!’ In this discipline one does not observe conventional purity; it is like some of the disciplines prescribed by the Tantra.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

Sadhana is necessary only if there is a thing other than 'I', Self. Sadhana is required only for one who does not look towards the Self which is permanent, but is deluded by looking at the body, etc., which are transitory and delusive; but not for one who sees the Self and so does not see anything else different. And what else is sadhana for?"...

Sadhana is only to get rid of the bodily and other illusions which are in the way of the self standing up as Self. This delusion arises only by thinking that this bodily world is real, instead of looking at the Self, which is real. Sadhana is only to get rid of this illusion. Otherwise, why should there be sadhana for the Self to attain its own Self? He who has realised his own Self does not recognize anything else."

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

The Yoga Vasishtha prescribes three kinds of sadhana – prana nirodha, chitta-vritti nirodha and brahmabhyasa – which are pranayama, control of the mind, and meditation on the Absolute.

...

It is frightening to conclude that one dies and achieves nothing in spite of all the effort in meditation. Sri Krishna's answer is that nothing dies in spiritual effort. Only the physical body dies; and the spiritual practice that we did or the yoga that we practised was not conducted by the physical body. It is the mind that did the sadhana, and the mind does not die. The deathless individual principle in us will carry itself forward, like a rocket, rising up into a new body where we will find favourable circumstances for the completion of our sadhana and our onward march. Because of the sadhana that we have performed in this life, we will be reborn into a well-to-do family that will not disturb us or place obstacles in front of us. All favourable conditions will be provided to us in the family into which we are born. Due to a premonition of the previous practice, we will suddenly take up the thread from the very point which we left in the previous life. We will be able to grasp things quickly. There are precocious people who immediately understand things, who catch things better than other students. This precocity is due to the experience, learning, practice and goodness that they had in the previous life, which carries them forward.

'''

The highest sadhana is the pouring forth of our soul into the universal soul; then everything shall be taken care of automatically. We need not bother about tomorrow: "What shall I eat? Where is my raiment? How long shall I live? Who will take care of me?" We shall be taken care of; and what is to be done tomorrow shall be told to us tomorrow. Jnanadipena bhasvata: "I shall illumine the personality of these great devotees with the light of wisdom, destroying their ignorance and blessing them with the highest illumination, by which they will know the truths of all things."

This is an introductory oration by Sri Bhagavan Himself in the beginning of the Tenth Chapter, before Arjuna could raise any question.

...

... verses up to the twelfth [B.n., Ch.12] are actual practical suggestions on the way of sadhana. We have a brief pithy statement here of what spiritual practice is, what sadhana is, what the four yogas are, and how we have to conduct ourselves with proportionate attention paid to the different yogas, according to our capacity and perhaps our stage of evolution.

...

There is no show on the part of a spiritual seeker. He never demonstrates himself as a seeker of God, a lover of God, a spiritual seeker. He looks like anybody else in the world. There is nothing special or anything particular that we can cognise in that person. He hides his knowledge and his sadhana. It is said the sadhana that we perform, the mantra that we chant, and the Guru whom we worship should not be revealed to anyone. We should not boast about who our Guru is. It should be known only to us, and to the Guru. We should not announce to the public who our Guru is; we should not tell people what mantra japa we are doing, and our sadhana technique also should not be revealed to other people. If we have an experience in our sadhana, that also should not be told to anybody except our Guru.

...

Varieties of sadhana are mentioned in different places in the Bhagavadgita, and some of the diversities of sadhana are stated in the Fourth Chapter: daivam evapare yajnam yoginah paryupasate, brahmagnav apare yajnam yajjenaivopajuhvati (4.25), etc. Here also there is a brief statement of the varieties of spiritual practice – sadhana.

Some people try to behold the Supreme Being by meditation, pure and simple. Dhyanenatmani pasyanti kechid atamanam atmana (13.24): By intense concentration on the pure Self, some people try to behold the Self in the self. That is, they behold the universal Self in their own self, and they behold their own self in the universal Self. ... Atmana atmanam janati: By the self, the Self is known...

anye sankhyena yogena: There are others who contemplate on the categories of the manifestation of the world as delineated in the Sankhya; that is also a way of sadhana...

Karma-yogena chapare: There are some, like Raja Janaka, who attained perfection only through action, because actually they do not perform any action.

...

Iti te jnanam akhyatam guhyad guhyataram maya, vimrsyaitad aseshena yathecchasi tatha kuru (18.63): "I have told you everything that is necessary. Is there anything left now? I have concluded by the word that God is supreme. Surrender to Him is the final word. Devotion to the Supreme Being is the ultimate sadhana. I have told you the secret of all secrets. Consider deeply the pros and cons and the various aspects of this wisdom that I have imparted to you, and then do what you like." After having said this much, Sri Krishna does not compel Arjuna saying, 'therefore do this'. After saying all these things, He says, "Do whatever is proper according to your opinion." There is freedom even then.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

sādhana — from the verb root sādḥ - "to go straight to the goal".

Related words

Sadhu

Sannyasa

Siddhi

Yoga

Sadhanacatustaya

Variant spellings
sadhanacatuṣṭaya
sādhana-catuṣṭaya

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sādhana-catuṣṭaya — ... the fourfold aid to the study of Vedānta

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, these four comprise the proximate aid to liberation. They are the ability to discriminate between the transient and the eternal (nitya-anitya-vastu-viveka); the absence of desire for securing pleasure or pain either here or elsewhere (iha-amutra-artha-phala-vairāgya); the attainment of calmness, temperance, spirit of renunciation, fortitude, power of concentration of mind, and faith (śama-damādi-sādhana-sampatti); and an intense desire for liberation (mumukṣutva).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sādhanacatuṣṭaya -
(in phil.) four kinds of proof

Sankara tradition

Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda

17. The man who discriminates between the Real and the unreal, whose mind is turned away from the unreal, who possesses calmness and the allied virtues, and who is longing for Liberation, is alone considered qualified to enquire after Brahman.

18. Regarding this, sages have spoken of four means of attainment, which alone being present, the devotion to Brahman succeeds, and in the absence of which, it fails.

19. First is enumerated discrimination between the Real and the unreal; next comes aversion to the enjoyment of fruits (of one's actions) here and hereafter; (next is) the group of six attributes, viz. calmness and the rest; and (last) is clearly the yearning for Liberation.

20. A firm conviction of the mind to the effect that Brahman is real and the universe unreal, is designated as discrimination (Viveka) between the Real and the unreal.

21. Vairagya or renunciation is the desire to give up all transitory enjoyments (ranging) from those of an (animate) body to those of Brahmahood (having already known their defects [limitations]) from observation, instruction and so forth.

22. The resting of the mind steadfastly on its Goal (viz. Brahman) after having detached itself from manifold sense-objects by continually observing their defects, is called Shama or calmness.
23. Turning both kinds of sense-organs away from sense-objects and placing them in their respective centres, is called Dama or self-control. The best Uparati or self-withdrawal consists in the mind-function ceasing to be affected by external objects.
24. The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them, being free (at the same time) from anxiety or lament on their score, is called Titiksha or forbearance.
25. Acceptance by firm judgment as true of what the Scriptures and the Guru instruct, is called by sages Shraddha or faith, by means of which the Reality is perceived.
26. Not the mere indulgence of thought (in curiosity) but the constant concentration of the intellect (or the affirming faculty) on the ever-pure Brahman, is what is called Samadhana or self-settledness.
27. Mumukshuta or yearning for Freedom is the desire to free oneself, by realising one's true nature, from all bondages from that of egoism to that of the body – bondages superimposed by Ignorance.
28. Even though torpid or mediocre, this yearning for Freedom, through the grace of the Guru, may bear fruit (being developed) by means of Vairagya (renunciation), Shama (calmness), and so on.
29. In his case, verily, whose renunciation and yearning for Freedom are intense, calmness and the other practices have (really) their meaning and bear fruit.
30. Where (however) this renunciation and yearning for Freedom are torpid, there calmness and the other practices are as mere appearances, like water in a desert.

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

THE FOUR QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PUPIL

Vedantic teachers maintain that genuine seekers after Knowledge must practise proper disciplines. True knowledge is always accompanied by a direct personal experience. To know Ātman is to realize that the Self of man is Pure Consciousness. To know Brahman is to become Brahman.

Therefore intellectual understanding of Vedanta must be followed by actual transformation of life; otherwise it is of no practical benefit to the aspirant. ...

Seekers of Self-Knowledge are exhorted to practise four disciplines, known in Vedanta philosophy as the sādhanacatuṣṭaya, or four instruments of spiritual knowledge. They are as follows:

- (1) Viveka or discrimination between the Real and the unreal: This is an intuitive and unshakable conviction of the mind that Brahman alone is the real Substance and all other things are unreal and illusory. Discrimination is the first and foremost discipline; without it the second one, namely renunciation, is not possible.
- (2) Vairāgya or renunciation: This is the utter disregard of all pleasures, ranging from the enjoyment of the sensuous objects of this world to the experience of the happiness one expects in heaven after death. From the teachings of the scriptures and personal observation the intelligent aspirant realizes that no pleasure, whether here or hereafter, can have an infinite duration since all pleasures are the results of finite action. Even good actions, such as charity, study, or worship, are finite by nature. Their results, too, are finite. Self-Knowledge ... is not the direct result of any action. It always exists. The Vedantic discipline merely removes ignorance, the barrier to this Knowledge, and the glory of the Self shines forth. This discipline may be compared to a wind that blows

away a dark cloud hiding the radiance of the sun, immediately revealing the solar orb. As the sun is not the product of the wind, so also the Self is not the product of the discipline. But worldly happiness is the direct result of our action.

(3) S'atsampatti, or the six treasures: These form the ethical foundation of spiritual life. Their practice prepares the inner faculties for the cultivation of higher knowledge. They are as follows: (a) S'ama or calmness: the dwelling of the mind on Brahman after it has detached itself from all sense-objects through firm knowledge of their inherent defects. The concrete effect of this discipline upon the aspirant is that he devotes himself entirely to hearing about Brahman from a teacher or from the scriptures, reasoning about the instruction, and then meditating on its meaning. A student of Vedanta, like all true philosophers, must cultivate inner calmness. He treads a very difficult path, often compared to the sharp edge of a razor. He must have convictions but should never be swayed by passions. A Vedantist is often compared to a fire of blazing charcoal, free from smoke and noise, after the wood is consumed, (b) Dama, or self-control: restraining the organs of both perception and action from their respective objects, and keeping them under control. The organs of perception are those of tasting, hearing, smelling, seeing, and touching. The organs of action are those of speaking, grasping, moving about, procreating, and evacuating. Endowed with this virtue, the aspirant engages only in hearing about Brahman, reasoning about it, and meditating upon it. (c) Uparati, or self-settledness: a function of the mind which prevents the sense-organs, restrained by S'ama and Dama, from drifting back to their respective objects. This virtue, according to some Vedantists, means the relinquishment of worldly duties and the acceptance of sannyasa, or monastic life, (d) Titikṣā or forbearance: the endurance of all afflictions arising from the contact of the senses with their objects. A man practising his discipline does not care to relieve his physical suffering nor does he show any anxiety or grief on its score. By means of this discipline the aspirant remains unagitated by heat and cold, pleasure and pain, love and hate, and the other pairs of opposites. (e) Samādhāna, or complete concentration: concentration of the mind (after it has been disciplined by the practice of the above-mentioned virtues) on Brahman as taught by the scriptures and by a competent teacher. (f) śraddhā or faith: a function of the mind which enables the aspirant to accept as true the words of Vedanta as taught by a competent teacher. This is not a mechanical or unquestioning belief. It is rather an affirmative attitude of mind as opposed to the sceptical and negative. Endowed with this virtue the aspirant intuitively believes in the existence of Ultimate Reality and in the eternity of the Soul. Further, he knows that he is capable of making any sacrifice for the realization of Truth. It is said in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad that Naciketa, armed with śraddha, went to the abode of the king of death to seek the knowledge of the hereafter. Without this affirmative attitude of the mind no success is possible in spiritual life.

(4) Mumukṣatram, or longing for Liberation: This is the intense longing of the student to free himself, through the Knowledge of the true Self, from all bondages pertaining to the body, the mind, and the ego—bondages created by ignorance. It must be understood that longing is totally different from restlessness, which is an inferior state of mind. A restless mind shows lack of self-control and also a lack of firm belief in the existence of Truth. Restlessness creates confusion: the longing for Freedom is the result of all the virtues mentioned above. It endows the mind with an intense one-pointedness and enables it to pierce through the thick crust of ignorance. Renunciation and the longing for Freedom are the cardinal virtues through which the others bear their fruit. Without these the mere ethical disciplines give only a veneer of spirituality.

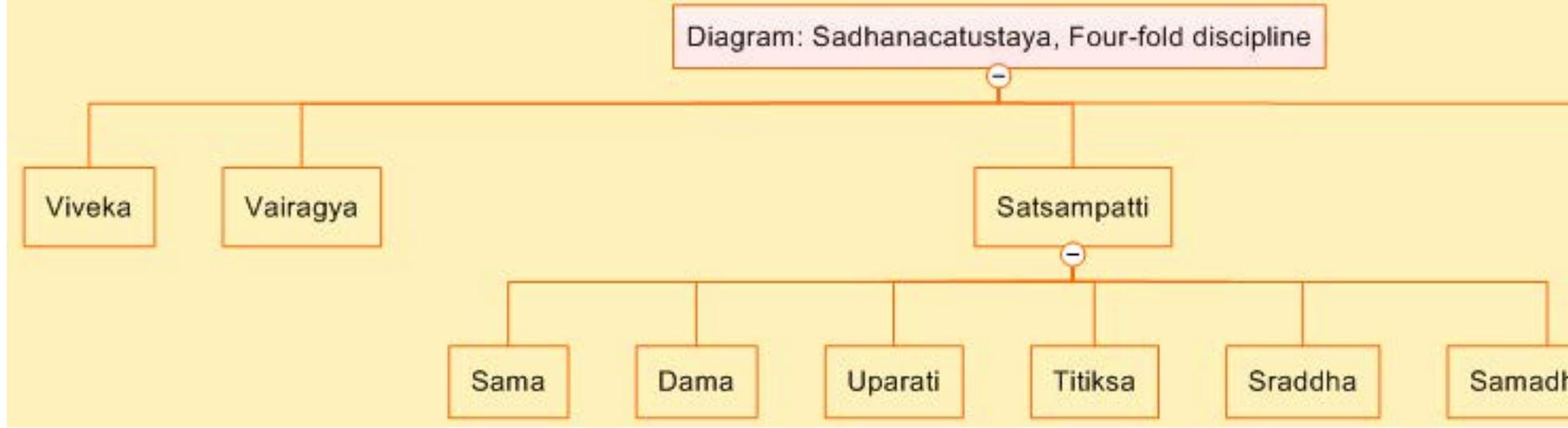
The great Sankara lays emphasis on the cultivation of bhakti or devotion, as supremely necessary to the attainment of Liberation. Bhakti is single-minded zeal and unswerving passion for the realization of Truth. Without this emotional urge, the aspirant often becomes lost in the wilderness of dry intellectualism or finds comfort in the ivory tower of a speculative philosophy. He fails to reach the Goal.

Sanskrit

Sādhana-catustaya — साधनचतुष्टय

sādhana-catustaya - साधनचतुष्टय

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline



Sadhu

Variant spellings

sadhu

sādhu

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sādhu—... holy person; saint; virtuous; good; sage ... ; a monk or ascetic

1. According to Jainism, it is the fourth stage of the ascetic order. They are saints who scrupulously observe the codes of conduct. They are introverts who do not mix freely with others nor give spiritual discourses. Their entire being is fixed on spiritual practices.
2. Any person who is practicing spiritual disciplines (sādhana).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sādhu -

straight, right;

leading straight to a goal, hitting the mark, unerring (as an arrow or thunderbolt);

straightened, not entangled (as threads);

well-disposed, kind, willing, obedient;

successful, effective, efficient (as a hymn or prayer);

ready, prepared (as Soma);

peaceful, secure;

powerful, excellent, good for (loc.) or towards;

fit, proper, right;

good, virtuous, honourable, righteous;

well-born, noble, of honourable or respectable descent;

correct, pure;

classical (as language);

a good or virtuous or honest man;

a holy man, saint, sage, seer;

(with Jainas) a Jina or deified saint;

a jeweller;

a merchant, money-lender, usurer;

(in gram. accord. to some) a derivative or inflected noun;

a saintly woman;

a kind of root;

the good or right or honest, a good &c. thing or act;

gentleness, kindness, benevolence;

straight, aright, regularly;

well, rightly, skilfully, properly, agreeably;

good! well done! bravo!;

well, greatly, in a high degree;

well, enough of. away with (instr.)!;

assuredly, indeed

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sadhu (“virtuous man”). A general term that can be used for any ascetic, although it more often refers to an ascetic who has not undergone formal initiation into an established ascetic order.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

sadhu. A sadhu ... is a renunciant, most commonly a mendicant who wanders in search of alms. Such people are regarded as good, pure, and religiously devoted. The terms sadhu and SANNYASI (more rarely their feminine forms sadhvi and sannyasini) are generally used interchangeably for wandering mendicants.

The name SWAMI is also sometimes used. Customs and characteristics vary greatly among sadhus and depend upon the sect to which they belong. They may be devoted to any divinity or to the BRAHMAN, the ultimate reality. Celibacy is universally required. Sadhus who worship Lord SHIVA may freely partake of hashish and marijuana to inspire their devotional chanting; for all others such drugs are strictly forbidden. Sadhus are very often devoted to a particular GURU (almost always a man) and follow his dictates strictly.

The sadhu or wandering mendicant is a very familiar feature of the Indian landscape and a distinctive aspect of Hinduism. While they are typically welcomed, there has always been some skepticism about their authenticity as well.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

“A great Mahatma was living as a sadhu under a tree in a forest. He always used to keep with him three stones. While sleeping, he used to keep one of them under the head, another under the waist and the third under the legs and cover himself with a sheet. When it rained, the body used to be on the stones and so the water would flow underneath, and the water that fell on the sheet too, would flow down. So there was no disturbance to his sleep; he used to sleep soundly. When sitting, he used to keep the three stones together like a hearth and sit upon them comfortably. Hence snakes and other reptiles did not trouble him nor did he trouble them, for they used to crawl through the slits under the stones. Somebody used to bring him food and he would eat it. And so, there was nothing for him to worry about. “A king, who came to that forest for hunting, saw this sadhu and felt, ‘What a pity! How much must he be suffering by having to adjust his body suitably to those stones and sleep thereon. I must take him home and keep him with me at least one or two days and make him feel comfortable.’ So thinking, he went home and sent two of his soldiers with a palanquin and its bearers, with instructions to invite the sadhu respectfully and bring him to his palace. He also said that if they did not succeed in bringing the sadhu, they would be punished. They came and saw the sadhu and told him that the king had ordered them to bring him to the palace and that he should come. When he showed disinclination to go with them, they said that they would be punished if they returned without him. So they begged of him to come, if only to save them from trouble. As he did not want them to get into trouble on his account, he agreed to go with them. What was there for him to pack up? A kaupeenam,* a sheet and those three stones. He folded and kept the kaupeenam in that sheet, kept those three stones also in the sheet and tied them together. ‘What is this? This Swami is bringing with him some stones when he is going to a Raja’s palace! Is he mad or what?’ thought those soldiers. Anyway, he got into the palanquin with his bundle and came to the king. The Raja saw that bundle, thought it contained some personal effects, took him into the palace with due respect, feasted him properly, arranged a tape cot with a mattress of silk cotton to sleep upon. The sadhu opened his bundle, took out the three stones, spread them on the bed, covered himself with the sheet and slept as usual.

“The next morning the king came, bowed to him with respect and asked, ‘Swami, is it comfortable for you here?’

“Swami: Yes. What is there wanting here? I am always happy.

“King: That is not it, Swami. You were experiencing hardships in the forest by having to sleep on those stones. Here this bed and this house must be giving you happiness. That is why I am asking.

“Swami: The bed that was there is here also. The bed that is here is there also. So I have the same happiness everywhere. There is nothing wanting at any time, either in regard to my sleep or to my happiness.

“The king was puzzled and looked at the cot. He saw that the three stones were on it. Whereupon, the king immediately prostrated before the sadhu and said, ‘Oh Holy Man! Without knowing your greatness I brought you here with the intention of making you happy. I did not know that you are always in a state of happiness, and so I behaved in this foolish manner. Please excuse me and bless me.’ After making up for his mistake in this way, he allowed the sadhu to go his way. This is the story of the sadhu.”

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

sādhu - from the verb root sādḥ = “to go straight to the goal”.

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

sadhu - from Sanskrit fisadhvi, “good”.

Related words

Sadhana

Sannyasin

Sanskrit

Sādhu — साधु

sādhu - साधु

Saguna

Variant spellings

saguna

saguṇa

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Saguṇa — ... with attributes; with qualities.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Saguna (“with qualities”). Anything having distinguishing qualities. In the context of ideas about divinity it refers to particular deities with particular attributes. In the religious traditions based on the ideas of the Upanishads, the speculative texts that are the final texts in the Vedas, any manifestation of a deity with qualities is seen as ultimately inferior to the unqualified (nirguna) Brahman. This assumption is adamantly opposed by certain theistic traditions, such as the Gaudiya Vaishnava religious community, which insists that the highest deity, in this case Krishna, has a particular form (and thus certain qualities).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

saguna -
furnished with (or together with) a string or cord;
furnished with partic. attributes or properties;
having qualities, qualified;
having good qualities or virtues, virtuous;
worldly.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: The Saguna merges into the nirguna in the long run. The saguna purifies the mind and takes one to the final goal.

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

saguna from pr. sa, with + guna

Related words

Opposite: Nirguna
Saguna-brahman

Sanskrit

Saguna — सगुण

saguna - सगुण

Saguna-brahman

Variant spellings

saguna-brahman
saguṇabrahman

Descriptions

General

[Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

... the saguṇa Brahman includes not merely reality but also appearance, which is something less than the real. The element of reality in it is the ultimate of Advaita. It should be carefully noted that this reality is not the mere unity underlying the diversity of the universe, for unity and diversity are relative to each other, and it is impossible to retain the one as real while rejecting the other as an appearance. Both of them are alike appearances and the advaitic Ultimate is what is beyond them—their non-phenomenal ground (nirviśeṣa-vastu). It is for this reason that Śamkara describes his doctrine as advaita or ‘non-duality,’ and not as aikya or ‘unity.’ By discarding the notion of bhedābheda or, more specifically, by refusing to accept a changing Brahman as ultimate, Śamkara differentiates his doctrine from Brahma-pariṇāmavāda advocated by other Vedāntins according to whom both the physical universe and the jivas actually emerge from Brahman. Brahman according to him does not evolve in this sense, but only gives rise to appearances which, though entirely depending upon it, affect it no more than the silver does the shell in which it appears. He thus enunciates a new view of causation which is different from both the pariṇāma-vāda and the ārambha-vāda ... According to it, the cause produces the effect without itself undergoing any change whatsoever. It is vivartavāda or the doctrine of phenomenal development. Viewed in the light of this theory, Brahman only appears as the world. It is the original of which the world ... may be regarded as ‘a translation at the plane of space-time’; and Brahman depends as little for its being on the world as an original work does on its translation. This is what is otherwise known as the Māyā doctrine. Though the doctrine as it appears here naturally shows considerable development in matters of detail, it has ... a definite basis in the Upaniṣads. The charge that it is alien to the Vedānta is therefore really without foundation. Again, by postulating a Reality behind the self-discrepant world of experience, Śamkara differentiates his doctrine from the śūnya-vāda of the Madhyamika. The discrepancy characterizing the saguṇa Brahman or its relativity only degrades it to the level of appearance; it does not dismiss it altogether. ... To use the terminology of the Upaniṣads, the Advaita denies only ‘names’ and ‘forms’ but not that which appears under their guise.

...

Though the ideal of the saguṇa Brahman is ... inadequate to be the ultimate of philosophy, it must not be regarded as useless. We have already seen how it furnishes an ethical ideal by following which the disciple can rise above his congenital limitations and acquire that moral fitness which is indispensable for success in achieving the advaitic goal. Even from the purely theoretic standpoint, it is not without its own value, as is shown for instance by the method followed in the Advaita. This method, we know, starts with the more or less diverse worlds as given in individual experience and discovers as their basis a common one. Systematizing the variety that is manifest in it, it then arrives at unity. And it is only afterwards, since this world of unity in diversity is itself an appearance on the reasoning adopted above, that the doctrine concludes to the spirit which lies beyond it as the sole reality. The contradictions and anomalies of ordinary experience have at first to be resolved at least in the seeming orderliness signified

by the ideal of the saguṇa Brahman, if we are to reach the advaitic ultimate unerringly. Without the synthesis effected in it or, to express the same thing differently, without the jiva's avidyā being universalized as Māyā, we would land ourselves in subjectivism reducing the world to a mere private show, for there would then be no reason for postulating anything beyond what is present to individual consciousness. The Advaitin's criticism of the saguṇa Brahman should accordingly be understood as showing only the inadequacy of that conception to serve as the goal of philosophy and not as signifying that it is valueless. But its value is restricted to the empirical sphere—a view which is entirely in consonance with the general advaitic position that practical utility need not rest on metaphysical validity. It is this distinction that has given rise to what are familiarly known as the 'two grades' of teaching in the Advaita—the higher one of the nirguṇa Brahman (paravidyā) and the lower one of the saguna (apara-vidyā).

Wikipedia

Advaita. According to Advaita as taught by Sankara, saguna brahman refers to the lord identical with his own infinite jnanam. Sankara refers to him by names such as Narayana, Vishnu and Vasudeva as specified in the vedas and upanishads. This saguna brahman is Paramartha, eternal, undecaying and non-differentiated from nirguna brahman. He is not affected even when he appears in this world as he controls the effects of his own maya shakti. Hiranyagarbha, the collection of deities in the Hindu pantheon of gods, is not saguna brahman as popularly misconstrued. Sankara clearly says that hiranyagarbha is called brahman only because of nearness to brahman. After many millions of years, the devotees who reach the worlds of gods (hiranyagarbha), will reach the state of vishnu. This is called advaita siddhi and this state can be reached here and now by one who is free from all desires and blessed by the lord.

Vaishnavism. Saguna Brahman of the various schools of Vaishnavism means Brahman with infinite attributes, including form. Saguna Brahman is immortal, imperishable, eternal, and thus the basis of the impersonal Nirguna Brahman, as clearly stated in the Bhagavad Gita. The personal form indicated is generally Narayana, or Krishna, or Vishnu. Practically all schools of Vaishnavism adhere to this viewpoint.

Other. Goddess Shakti (or Durga, Kali, Gayatri etc.) is seen as the Saguna Brahman in Shaktism. Shiva is the Saguna Brahman of Shaivism. It is also understood that worshippers of a particular personal form of God or Goddess as supreme may see other personal forms as plenary portions or expansions or aspects of Brahman.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Vedanta Revalued and Restated

Vedantic literature abounds in such terms as saguna brahman (the absolute still within the scope of the three qualities) and nirguna brahman (the unqualified Absolute) which are the apara and para brahmans, sometimes also distinguished as the lower or the higher brahmans, respectively. Whatever its implications, the lower brahman is supposed by philosophers like Sankara or Ramanuja to lead to different grades of salvation. Others think that one implies the other, and still others say that, judged by the effect on the votary or contemplative, both are the same.

...

An electric light might burn bright or dim and have still the same light involved. Between the limits, the function of electrical energy can vary, giving us innumerable intermediate gradations. What the infinitesimal calculus recognizes is just this variability; not in quantitative arithmetical terms but in integral or differential terms sometimes expressible in rationally denumerable numbers. When a bulb is supplied with weak light, the filaments inside it are visible, but as the intensity is increased we pass through intermediate stages where the duality between light and darkness is fused and they absorb each other till mere light, stunning and all-inclu-

sive, remains. The vertical stages of the same light might permit degrees of duality till full unity prevails. Between the vijñānavāda (idealism) of the Buddhists, through the saguna brahman (conditioned Absolute) of Vedānta, we have to allow for an epistemology which recognizes dualities of various degrees, till double negation makes the vision fully positive and non-dual. Overfocussed, we can get our own images as meditators into the picture; and when underfocussed, relativistic networks of ramified entities, perceptual or conceptual in status, can fill the field of vision. Laws, logical necessities and intuitive certitudes can be seen to occupy the gamut of visions of the absolute Value, the subjective capacity for the vision being neutralized at each level by the counterpart that meets it, as it were, descending from above.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. *The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*

The Saguna Brahman is meant for the bhaktas. In other words, a bhakta believes that God has attributes and reveals Himself to men as a Person, assuming forms. It is He who listens to our prayers. The prayers that you utter are directed to Him alone. You are bhaktas, not jñanis or Vedantists. It doesn't matter whether you accept God with form or not. It is enough to feel that God is a Person who listens to our prayers, who creates, preserves, and destroys the universe, and who is endowed with infinite power. It is easier to attain God by following the path of devotion.”

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. *Vedantasara*, tr. Ballantyne

The saguna Brahma consists of Brahma associated with ignorance a union which is said to be eternal.

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Even in his theistic hymns Sankara never permits one to forget that Brahman alone is the foundation of all relative ideas and that the effulgence of Pure Consciousness radiates through the vesture of name and form. The devotee catches a glimpse of the Absolute through the form of the Personal God, who is the highest manifestation of the Infinite that a finite mind can comprehend on the relative plane. Sankara reiterates this principle in his philosophy. The beginner learns the art of concentration through worship of the Personal God (Saguna Brahman) and acquires purity of heart through performance of unselfish duties. Endowed then with concentration and purity, he sets himself to the task of acquiring the Knowledge of Brahman and realizes, in the end, the Impersonal Absolute.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. *Mandukya Upanishad*

(26) Om is verily the Lower Brahman and it is also declared to be Supreme Brahman. Pranava is without precedent, without subsequent manifestation, without anything outside itself, unrelated to any effect, and changeless.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

Besides Gaudapada, Vasishta and others—the orthodox or the old-school-of-Advaitins—in Vedānta there is a modern school which allows for the perceived world a relative reality. They call the multiple phenomenal world as the Lower Brahman, which is the Supreme Reality seemingly manifested through properties, actions, qualities, etc. The lower Brahman provides the idol for the

worship of the Upasakas in Vedanta; the Lower Brahman became Saguna Brahman in later Vedantic language. The old-school-of-Vedanta mainly started and led by Gaudapada and Vasishtha, does not accept the Lower Brahman, and insists on saying that the manifestation has never taken place. According to these non-creationists, no relationship can be fixed between the ghost and the post; the ghost is not in any sense a “lower degree manifestation” of the post!

On the contrary, the modern-school-of-Vedanta founded by Sankara and his followers, does permit a relative reality for the manifested world. This is not because Sankara believed that the pluralistic world is in any sense real. In practice these two schools are not mutually competing theories, but, in fact, they play a complementary role to each other. Sankara’s attempt is to guide the Sadhaka in and through the manifested realities to the Unmanifest and the Eternal Truth.

Gaudapada, in this stanza, is emphasising the idea that the Pranava or AUM represents in itself not only the Supreme Reality, the Higher Brahman but also the seemingly manifested-reality, the Lower Brahman.

See also:

in Ishvara: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Related words

Apara-brahman
Brahman
Ishvara
Nirguna-brahman
Saguna

Sanskrit

sagunabrahman - सगुणब्रह्मन्

Sakshin

Variant spellings

sakshin
saksin
sākṣin
sakshi
saksi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sākṣin — ... the witness self; the intuitive faculty

1. According to Dvaita Vedānta, it is the witness consciousness which is the faculty of direct apprehension or perception. It is the purest sense, without defects, and always produces absolutely valid knowledge. It indirectly perceives the objects presented to all the other senses, through the senses, as well as directly perceiving the Self (Ātman), internal organ (antahkarana), and the attributes of the manas or mind (pleasure and pain), ignorance, time, and unmanifested ether. It has two functions: it helps produce knowledge and validity of knowledge. It is the essential attribute of the Self; the Self's own sense organ.

2. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is the witness self and neutral. It is consciousness marked by the internal organ (antahkarana-upahitacaitanya). It is always in relation to consciousness and the witness thereof. It is self-luminous and ever present. It corresponds to the purusa of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga—i.e., as the passive observer of the states of the internal organ. It never appears by itself, but always in association with the internal organ.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sakshin -

... seeing with the eyes, observing, witnessing;

an eye-witness, witness (in law) of or to ... (in phil.) the Ego or subject (as opp. to the object or to that which is external to the mind...)

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sakshin (“witness”). The perceiving consciousness believed to be the inner Self (atman), which observes changes going on around it but is utterly unaffected by them. It is described in a primitive way as early as the Upanishads, the speculative texts that form the final layer of the Vedas, the most authoritative Hindu religious texts. The Katha Upanishad describes the Self as a thumb-sized person inside the head. The Samkhya philosophical school develops this notion in a more subtle and sophisticated way: of its two fundamental first principles, one is the purusha, which is the conscious but inert witness to the transformations of prakrti, or nature. Later philosophical schools such as Vedanta reject the Samkhya school's dualism by collapsing all reality into a single ultimate principle known as Brahman. Vedanta's conception of Brahman as “being-consciousness-bliss” (sacchidananda) also conceives of the Self as the conscious and unchanging witness to the material flux surrounding it.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Drg-Drshya-Viveka

1. The form is perceived and the eye is its perceiver. It (eye) is perceived and the mind is its perceiver. The mind with its modifications is perceived and the Witness (the Self) is verily the perceiver. But It (the Witness) is not perceived (by any other).

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

[The Sakshin is distinct from the perceived objects. But the veiling power of Maya does not enable us to see the distinction and therefore the Sakshin appears to have identified itself with the empirical ego, mind, sense-organs etc.]

... In the foregoing stanzas we have seen, following the methods of agreement and difference, that the word ‘Tvam’ (“Thou” in the Vedic statement, “That Thou Art”) indicates the Witness (Sakshin) which is immutable and changeless and that the word “Tat” indicates Brahman which is unrelated to the phenomena. The attributes generally associated with “Thou” and “That” are mere appearances and hence unreal.

See: Jnana, antahkarana, sakshin

Sakshin and antahkarana

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The psychical element is viewed as wholly inactive. The activity it manifests only seemingly belongs to it and is in reality to be traced to its physical accompaniment, viz. the internal organ. The element of consciousness is known as the sākṣin and corresponds to the puruṣa of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga—the passive observer of the states of the internal organ as they unfold themselves. It appears never by itself, but always in association with the internal organ in its latent or manifest form. The reverse also is true and no internal organ is conceivable without involving a reference to some sākṣin or other. Thus it is only the unity of the passive sākṣin and the active antah-karaṇa that is real for all practical purposes.

Sakshin and jiva

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

That is what knows, feels and wills [sakshin + antahkarana]. In this complex form it is known as the jiva or the empirical self. ... This complex entity is believed to endure in one form or other till the time of release. When at last it breaks up, the internal organ is absorbed by or loses its identity in its source, Māyā, which for the moment we may take to be the same as the prakṛti of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga, and the sākṣin losing its sākṣi-hood ... becomes Brahman indeed. The sākṣin and the jiva are thus not identical, though at the same time they are not quite different either. While the jiva may become the object of self-consciousness on account of the objective element it includes, it is wrong to speak of the sākṣin as knowable, for it is the pure element of awareness in all knowing; and to assume that it is knowable would be to imply another knowing element—a process which leads to the fallacy of infinite regress. But the sākṣin does not therefore remain unrealized, for being self-luminous, by its very nature, it does not require to be made known at all. Its presence is necessarily equivalent to its revelation and it is therefore never missed. ‘That is self-luminousness.’ says the Pañcadaśī, ‘which is revelation without any aid. In other words, the jīva is spirit as immanent in the antah-karaṇa, while the sākṣin is spirit as transcendent.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Drg-Drshya-Viveka

16. The subtle body (lingam) which exists in close proximity to the Witness (Sakshin) identifying itself with the gross body becomes the embodied empirical self, on account of its being affected by the reflection of consciousness.

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

[Empirical self It is that which thinks itself as the agent, enjoyer etc. It is this Jiva that appears to die and be reborn etc. But the Sakshin or Atman is birthless, deathless, immutable and without attributes.]

17. The character of an embodied self appears through false superimposition in the Sakshin also. With the disappearance of the veiling power, the distinction (between the seer and the object) becomes clear and with it the Jiva - character of the Sakshin (witness) disappears.

[1- False superimposition: This is due to the projecting powers of Maya.

2- Sakshin: Thereby the Witness appears as the world-bound Jiva.

3- Also: Though the Sakshin is ever free from all taint of worldliness.

4- Distinction: Through Knowledge one realizes that the Sakshin is ever free from worldliness and is the eternal seer and all other ideas, from the empirical ego to the body, are mere objects and hence negatable.

5- Disappears This is possible only through Knowledge which one acquires from the study and the understanding of the scriptures. Hence scriptures are not futile.]

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

... Jiva in reality is Sakshin and identical with Brahman. The Sakshin considers itself to be Jiva owing to his identification with the Upadhis.

Sakshin and sushupti

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Of the two elements that make up the jiva, one, viz. the antah-karana, is lost in its cause Maya or, to state it more definitely, in that part or aspect of it called avidyā which constitutes the adjunct of individual jivas. What endures then is the sākṣin plus avidyā which is known as the kāraṇa-śarīra or the 'radical adjunct' of the self as distinguished from its subtle body (linga-śarīra). [In place of the two adjuncts of the self as conceived in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga, we thus have three here: (i) kāraṇa-śarīra, (2) linga-śarīra and (3) sthūla śarīra.] Consequently there is in sleep no subject at all as such and no states of consciousness as in dreams or waking. This makes the 'experience' of dreamless sleep quite unique, though occurring normally and almost universally. What we have in that condition is the sākṣin—not the jiva—associated with its own avidyā, in which the internal organ has provisionally merged. In this state also, we must remember, individuality persists; but the individuality then is due to the union of the sākṣin with avidyā and not with the internal organ. The avidyā operates in sleep only partially. It obscures the true character of reality, but does not split it up into a variety of 'names' and 'forms' as in dreams or in waking, since the discontinuous and mutually excluding vṛttis of the internal organ are absent there. The experience of sleep involves a reference to both these elements—continuance of personality and absence of all variety—as is shown by the later reminiscence that one was asleep and did not know anything. Over and above these there is felt in sleep bliss which, according to a fundamental postulate of the system, is the very nature of the self and which,

owing to the absence of all distractions then, becomes manifest. This unalloyed happiness survives even after waking, as shown by the state of repose that continues for a while; but it disappears as man lapses back into the vortex of common life a belief which is Wordthworthian in its character. 'All beings visit that Brahma-world day after day, but not one realizes it.' None of these features of sleep, it must be noted, is 'known' at the time, for no knowledge, whether mediate or immediate, is possible in the absence of the internal organ. But they are nevertheless realized then as shown by the fact of their being recalled afterwards.

See also:

Buddhi and purusha

Related words

Atman
Brahman
Jiva

Sanskrit

Sākṣin — साक्षिन्

sākṣin - साक्षिन्

Sama

Variant spellings

shama
sama
śama

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śama — calmness; tranquility; control of the internal sense organs; same; equal

1. The method of training the mind by quiet persuasion. (See sādhana-catuṣṭaya.)

2. Perfect equality is samatva. To detach the mind from all objective things by continually seeing their imperfection, and to direct it steadfastly toward the Absolute, is called tranquility.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śama -

tranquillity, calmness, rest, equanimity, quietude or quietism, absence of passion, abstraction from eternal objects through intense meditation;

peace, peace with;
Quietism or Tranquillity (personified as a son of Dharma and husband of Prapti);
tranquillization, pacification, allayment, alleviation, cessation, extinction;
absence of sexual passion or excitement, impotence;
alleviation or cure of disease, convalescence;
final happiness, emancipation from all the illusions of existence;
indifference, apathy;
the hand;
imprecation, malediction;
N. of a king of the Nandi-vegas;
of a son of Andhaka;
of a son of Dharma-sūtra;
tame, domestic

Theos Bernard. *Hindu philosophy*

Śama - tranquility or control of thought by withdrawing the mind from worldly affairs.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. *Vedantasara*, tr. Nikhilananda

Shama is the curbing of the mind from all objects except hearing etc.

[Curbing etc.—Shama is that particular Vritti or function of the mind which keeps it in check from the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Hearing etc.—Hearing of the scriptures, thinking of their meaning and meditating on it.]

Sankara. *Vivekachudamani* Tr. Chatterji

The undisturbed concentration of mind [manas] upon the object of perception is called śama.

...

on account of śama egotism is dissolved.

Shankara. *Vivekachudamani*, tr. Madhavananda

22. The resting of the mind steadfastly on its Goal (viz. Brahman) after having detached itself from manifold sense-objects by continually observing their defects, is called Shama or calmness.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

Sama or calmness: the dwelling of the mind on Brahman after it has detached itself from all sense objects through firm knowledge of their inherent defects. The concrete effect of this discipline upon the aspirant is that he devotes himself entirely to hearing about Brahman from a teacher or from the scriptures, reasoning about the instruction, and then meditating on its meaning. A student of Vedanta, like all true philosophers, must cultivate inner calmness. He treads a very difficult path, often compared to the sharp

edge of a razor. He must have convictions but should never be swayed by passions. A Vedantist is often compared to a fire of blazing charcoal, free from smoke and noise, after the wood is consumed.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

22. The mind's abiding in its own goal through dispassion towards the whole host of objects by seeing their limitations again and again, is said to be śama, resolution of the mind.

Commentary by Dayananda:

Śama is resolution of the mind. When you gain a certain maturity in vairāgya, you become more objective. There is a certain subjectivity in every person. To the extent you reduce the subjectivity, to that extent you are objective! It is easy for an objective person to accommodate the world, the people and oneself.

Śama comes from vairāgya which is pointed out here. Vrāta means group. So visaya-vrāta means the group of objects. When one discovers in oneself a dispassion with reference to the various objects in this world or in the other world, then one is objective. Being objective means there is no sobhanādhyāsa; so you do not project upon an object anything more than what it has.

...

When there is vairāgya, the maturity, the overriding objectivity with reference to one's own subjectivity, there is śama, resolution of mind.

Svalakṣye niyatāvasthā manasaḥ śama ucyate - an abiding mind with reference to one's own end, svalakṣya is called śama.

Niyatāvasthā is a state that is abiding. It means an abiding mind. We are dealing with mokṣa-śāstra, therefore the end is ātmā.

Again we are talking about an adhikāri here. He must have, some kind of upāsana, japa or prayer. Therefore svalakṣya can be taken as īśvara, saguna-brahma. When the person does brahma-vicāra the goal is to know nirguṇa-brahma and as a result of that knowledge he understands what is what. But even when he does brahma-vicāra, he does relate to īśvara, for the resolution of the mind. That relating to īśvara, accepting īśvara and his order, resolving one's resistance to that order, is svalakṣya.

When you accept Isvara's order you have an attitude, "Things happen as they should. I do what I can". This attitude helps you to resolve your resistance...

Bhakti is resolving the ego in īśvara. You cannot circumvent this and go to the ātmā straight away. Since you are in the world, you have to settle account with the world. Settling account with the world means to settle many accounts: one's account with one's mother, father, neighbour and so on. And either people are not available to settle accounts or they are not ready to do so. So settling account with the world is impossible. And therefore you put all these people into one basket, īśvara, and settle account with Him straight away.

Settling account with īśvara is to let īśvara come to your heart...

Unless the individual ego settles account with īśvara, it is very difficult for it to come out of its subjectivity. And unless one comes out of that subjectivity, there cannot be objectivity, there cannot be dispassion. Only a dispassionate mind has śama; it stays with what it wants to accomplish.

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

śama - from śam = “to be quiet”

Related words

Dama

Samadhana

Broader term: Satsampatti

Sraddha

Titiksa

Uparati

Vairagya

Vritti

Sanskrit

Śama — शम

śama - शाम

Sama Veda

Title

Sāma Veda — सामवेद

Samaveda

Sama Veda

sāmaveda

सामवेद

Wikipedia: Samaveda, from sāman “melody” + veda “knowledge”

Author(s)

See: Veda Author(s)

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sāmaveda -

‘Veda of chants’, N. of one of the three principal Vedas;

it contains a number of verses or stanzas nearly all of which [except about 78] occur in the Rig-veda and which, modified in various ways, are chanted, mostly, by the Udgātri priests at Soma sacrifices;

the Samhitā of the Sāma-veda consists of two parts;

the first, called Arcika [or Pūrvarcika or Chando-grantha], contains 585 verses disjoined from their proper sequence in the Rig-veda and arranged in 59 Dazatis or decades, which again are subdivided into Prapāthakas and Ardha-prapāthakas;

the second, called Uttararcika or Uttarā-grantha, contains 1225 verses, also chiefly from the Rik-samhitā, but less disjoined than in the first part, and arranged in nine Prapāthakas with Ardha-prapāthakas, mostly, however, grouped in triplets;

the directions for the formation of Sāmans or chants out of these verses are carefully laid down in the Gānas or manuals for chanting, two of which, viz. the Geya-gāna and Araṇya-gāna, are a directory for the Arcika portion, and two, viz. Uha-gāna and Uhya-gāna, for the Uttararcikā;

in Mn. i, 23 the Sāma-veda is described as drawn forth from the sun;

in iv, 124 it is described as having a special reference to the Pitṛis or deceased ancestors, and its sound is therefore said to possess a kind of impurity, whereas the Rig-veda has the gods for his objects and the Yajurveda men;

the Sāma-veda is said to possess 8 Brāhmaṇas

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sama Veda, or “VEDA of the sung chants,” is one of the three original Vedas that form the foundation of Hindu tradition (a fourth Veda was added sometime later). Most of its hymns are devoted to the god SOMA. This god was invoked in many Vedic rituals and was particularly honored by the preparation of a psychedelic substance that took the same name as the god: Soma. The honoring of the god and the preparation of the drug were the particular realm of the Sama Vedic priests.

Any public Vedic ritual required the recitation of passages from the Sama Veda. Many public rites also required the consumption of the Soma drug. The priests of the Sama Veda were known for their sonorous chanting, which is considered the origin of Indian music.

Wikipedia

The Samaveda is second (in the usual order) of the four Vedas, the ancient core Hindu scriptures. Its earliest parts are believed to date from 1000 BC and it ranks next in sanctity and liturgical importance to the Rigveda. It consists of a collection (samhita) of hymns, portions of hymns, and detached verses, all but 75 taken from the Rigveda, to be sung, using specifically indicated melodies called Samagana, by Udgatar priests at sacrifices in which the juice of the Soma plant, clarified and mixed with milk and other ingredients, is offered in libation to various deities.

The verses have been transposed and re-arranged, without reference to their original order, to suit the rituals in which they were to be employed. There are frequent variations from the text of the Rigveda.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

There are sixteen Upanisads associated with the Sama Veda. The most important are Kena and Chāndogya.

Sankara tradition

Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad

Appendix:

Udgātā: The main work of the Udgātā [priest] and his assistants is to chant the Sama-Veda during the Soma sacrifice. Sāma-Veda is also called the Udgītha, but the name particularly refers to the second part of the Sāma-Veda which is chanted by the Udgātā during the sacrifice. In order to understand the various duties of the Udgātā and his assistants it is necessary to know the proper meaning of the Udgītha. The word literally means 'to chant aloud'. It is also the general name for the Sāma-Veda. The word also stands for Om, the three syllabled name of God or the symbol for the Reality. The Sāma songs are divided into five or seven parts. In five parts, it is Prastāva, Udgītha, Pratihāra, Upadrava and Nidhana. To these five are also added the Himkāra and the Omkāra. The Prastāva is sung by the Prastotā, the Udgītha by the Udgātā, the Pratihara by the Pratihartā, the Upadrava again by the Udgātā, and the Nidhana by the priests together. The Himkāra is chanted collectively by all the priests while commencing to chant the Sāma-Veda, along with the Omkāra.

i. Prastotā: During the Soma-sacrifice he chants the Prastāva.

ii. Pratihartā: This priest chants the Pratihāra.

iii. Subrahmanyā: This priest is given that name because he invokes Indra for drinking the Soma juice in the course of the sacrifice. Indra is also called Subrahmanyā. So this priest was named after him. Besides this duty, he has to drive the cart in which the sacrificer and the Adhvaryu sit while going to purchase the Soma creepers, and drive them back to the place of the sacrifice.

Thus are in brief the duties assigned to the various priests at the time of the Soma-sacrifice.

See: Relations of Vedas to their objects, four elements, etc.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Publications

Original language and translation

General

Wikipedia

The Samaveda has been edited and published by Theodor Benfey (Leipzig, 1848, with a German translation) and by Satyavrata Samashrami in Bibl. Ind. (Calcutta, 1873). An English translation is due to Griffith (Benares, 1893). A translation in Hindi by Mridul Kirti called "Samveda Ka Hindi Padyanuvad" has also been published recently.

Griffith, Ralph T. H. The Sāmaveda Saṃhitā. Text, Translation, Commentary & Notes in English. Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith. First published 1893; Revised and enlarged edition, enlarged by Nag Sharan Singh and Surendra Pratap, 1991 (Nag Publishers: Delhi, 1991) ISBN 81-7081-244-5. This edition provides the text in Devanagari with full metrical marks needed for chanting.

Translations

S. V.Ganapati, trans., Sama Veda (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,1992)

Related words

Chandogya Upanishad
Kena Upanishad
Mahavakya: Tal- tvam-asi
Veda

External links

Ralph Griffith, Hymns of the Samaveda 1895, full text, (online at sacred-texts.com)
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/sv.htm>

Samadhana

Variant spellings

samadhana
samādhāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

samādhāna -

putting together, laying, adding (esp. fuel to fire);

composing, adjusting, settling;

reconciliation;

intentness, attention (acc. with root kR, 'to attend'), eagerness;

fixing the mind in abstract contemplation (as on the true nature of spirit), religious meditation, profound absorption or contemplation;

justification of a statement, proof;

(in logic) replying to the Pūrva-paksha;

(in dram.) fixing the germ or leading incident (which gives rise to the whole plot)

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Samādhāna, balanced mental equipoise; freedom from much sleep, laziness, and carelessness.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Samadhana is the constant concentration of the mind, thus restrained, on hearing etc. of the scriptural passages and other objects that are conducive to these. [Other objects—Such virtues as modesty, humility, etc. are meant. Or they may mean the service of the Guru, compiling of the Vedantic books, their preservation, etc.]

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Samādhāna, or complete concentration : concentration of the mind (after it has been disciplined by the practice of the above-mentioned virtues) on Brahman as taught by the scriptures and by a competent teacher.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

Verse : 16

The placing of the mind always and in every manner in Brahman that is pure is said as samādhāna; it is not pacifying of the mind. Commentary by Dayananda: Samādhāna, the sixth of the śama-dama group of qualifications is discussed in this verse. Samādhāna is placing of the buddhi always and in every manner in Brahman which is pure and free from all limitations. Whichever way you look at the Brahman it is pure; it is neither cause nor effect; it is not subject to likes and dislikes; it is not subject to punya and pāpa, much less to doership and enjoyership. Here the placing of the buddhi in Brahman is a figurative expression and it should be properly understood. It is not like placing of a book on the table. It means that the object of inquiry of the buddhi is Brahman. Every other concern finds resolution in this one committed inquiry. Nothing else has any value worthy of one's concern and pursuit.

The śāstra here points out further that amādhāna is not meant for entertaining the mind, na tu cittasya lālanam. Cittasya lālanam can be taken as rocking of the mind. Mind is like a cradle, always going back and forth. Now it thinks of one thing; now it thinks of another thing. This does not really keep you with one subject matter. You require absorption in a given track of thinking, which is called amādhāna.

See also:

in Sadhana: [Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga](#)

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Related words

Dama

Sama

Broader term: Satsampatti

Sraddha

Titiksa

Uparati

Sanskrit

samādhāna - समाधान

Samadhi

Variant spellings

samadhi

samādhī

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Samādhī — ... one-pointedness; concentration; absorption; union; a calm, desireless fixity; a unifying concentration; “equal mind”

1. It is a deep spiritual meditation or a meditative union with the Absolute.

2. A superconscious state where there is complete absorption of the intellect into the object of meditation.

3. A state beyond expression and above all thought. Here speech and mind cannot reach. It is a state of utter calmness in which consciousness is unwavering.

4. It is a limb of Patanjali's rāja-yoga...

5. According to Yoga, it has four aspects: vitarka, vicāra, ānanda, and asmitā. These are called samādhī with knowledge of objects (samprajñātā). There is also a samādhī without any knowledge of objects (asamprajñāta).

6. According to Buddhism, it is of three types: upacāra or preliminary; jhāna or fixed and steady; and appanā or achieved meditation.

7. It has also been divided into samādhī with the mind (savikalpa) and samādhī without any mental modifications (nirvikalpa).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

samādhi -

putting together, joining or combining with (instr.);

a joint or a partic. position of the neck;

union, a whole, aggregate, set;

completion, accomplishment, conclusion;

setting to rights, adjustment, settlement;

justification of a statement, proof;

bringing into harmony, agreement, assent;

intense application or fixing the mind on, intentness, attention;

concentration of the thoughts, profound or abstract meditation, intense contemplation of any particular object (so as to identify the contemplator with the object meditated upon; this is the eighth and last stage of Yoga ...; with Buddhists Samādhi is the fourth and last stage of Dhyāna or intense abstract meditation ...; in the Kāraṇḍa-vyūha several Samādhi are enumerated);

intense absorption or a kind of trance;

a sanctuary or tomb of a saint;

(in rhet.) N. of various figures of speech;

N. of the 17th Kalpa, of the 17th Arhat of the future

Wikipedia

Samadhi is a Hindu and Buddhist technical term that usually denotes higher levels of concentrated meditation, or dhyana, in Yogic schools.

In Hinduism, it is the eighth and final limb of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali. It has been described as a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the consciousness of the experiencing subject becomes one with the experienced object, and in which the mind becomes still (one-pointed or concentrated) though the person remains conscious.

Within Hinduism, Samadhi can also refer to the intentional departure from the physical body at death as well as the mausoleum of a saint, or spiritual leader.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Samadhi refers to the highest state of concentration and absorption in YOGA; the term is used in various yoga traditions. In some systems it is accompanied by a trance, whereby the yogi is completely detached from any external stimuli. Samadhi is a technical term in the yoga of PATANJALI, describing the next stage for the adept after concentration skills (dharana) have been developed and deep involvement in MEDITATION (DHYANA) has been achieved.

There are two levels of samadhi: samprajnata samadhi, in which the yogi is still aware of a degree of worldly differentiation, and asamprajnata samadhi, in which there is a full realization of the self, or PURUSHA, and its consciousness, and there is no involvement in worldly differentiation.

Samprajnata samadhi is said to retain the “seeds” of awareness of the external world of differentiation, while aprajnata samadhi is said to be “seedless”: it no longer engenders thoughts tied to the external world. Neither of these states can be precisely described, because both take consciousness beyond language into indescribable realms. Samprajnata samadhi is seen by Patanjali to have four steps. At the savitarka step the adept can look directly into the essence of real things, but only at the gross level. This step is still bound by conventional understandings, such as that time is divided into past, present, and future.

The second step is nirvitarka. At this point, conventional understandings, verbal and logical associations, cease. One transcends the cognitive or perceptive act itself, and one’s consciousness meets directly with true reality. However, this meeting is still at a gross and not a subtle level.

At the third or savichara level consciousness is able to go beyond the surface of reality to its subtle level. One is still, however, bound by a certain residue of time and space (not as a felt experience, but as categories). Experience at this subtle level engenders the fourth step in this type of samadhi, the nirvichara level, in which consciousness descends into the very essence of the real world, no longer mediated by “concept.”

Beyond the fourth stage of samprajnata samadhi is true asamprajnata samadhi, in which concept is lost completely; there is a direct realization of the consciousness power of the self, with no limitation. This is sometimes also called dharma-meghasamadhi. Here one becomes completely aware that the self and its power of consciousness are not the body. All “knowledge” and all “consciousness” merge into an undifferentiated awareness that is absorbed in being itself. This does not mean that the person cannot and does not exist and act in the world as before. It merely implies that that person’s awareness is no longer in any way affected or perturbed by that worldly reality. The yogi is then in the “isolated state” (kaivalya) and functions on a level beyond ordinary categories.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Seventh Lesson [of the Gheranda Samhita] is on Samadhi Yoga. It is final. After it nothing more can possibly be said. The Moon has presided over numbers throughout the Gheranda Samhita as it does throughout Manifestation. In the final lesson the sixfold division comes out once more, in a final form, in the description of Samadhi or mystic absorption as it is considered to be from the respective angles of the Six Spheres. Beyond them, in what may be called the Sphere of the Supernal Sun, no more division, or multiplicity, or angle of vision, count. No scripture can deal with That.

Samadhi is absorption in Consciousness. It can not take the form of a trance in which consciousness is lost. The traditions of Yoga warn against trance, technically named Nidra. This is a kind of sleep, and is said to be a form of Maya. It might be said to be not a form of the divine quality of Inactivity, but of the sin of Idleness.

Gheranda said: “(1) Samadhi is a great Yoga; it is acquired by great good fortune. It is obtained through the grace and kindness of the Guru, and by intense devotion to him. (2) That Yogi quickly attains this most wonderful practice of Samadhi, who has confidence (or faith) in tradition, faith in his own Guru, faith in his own Atma (Self): and whose mind awakens to intelligence from day to day. (3) Separate the mind from the body, and unite it with the Paramatma (Supreme Self). This is known as Samadhi or Mukti (Liberation) from all states of consciousness.” In other words, Pure Consciousness implies Liberation from the Veils of Consciousness, conditioning the states of consciousness. “(4) I am Brahman (Reality), I am nothing else, the Brahman is verily I, I am not a participator of sorrow, I am Being, Consciousness and Bliss; always free, of One Essence.” This verse forms the climax of the Samhita. The Triad Being-Consciousness- Bliss represents Experience in the Three Worlds: the Sun-Sphere, the Moon-Sphere and the Ether-Sphere, which are One in Essence. The end of all is “I AM THAT I AM”.

Wikipedia

In Hinduism

Samadhi is the main subject of the first part of the Yoga Sutras called Samadhi-pada. According to Vyasa, a major figure in Hinduism and one of the traditional authors of the Mahabharata, “yoga is samadhi.” This is generally interpreted to mean that Samadhi is a state of complete control (samadhana) over the functions and distractions of consciousness.

Samadhi is described in different ways within Hinduism such as the state of being aware of one’s Existence without thinking, in a state of undifferentiated “Beingness” or as an altered state of consciousness that is characterized by bliss (ananda) and joy (sukha).

Furthermore, samadhi has been categorised as:

Laya Samadhi

Savikalpa Samadhi

Nirvikalpa Samadhi

Sahaja Samadhi

Laya Samadhi is a latent (“laya”), potential level of samadhi. It begins in deep meditation or trance—even with movement, such as dancing. This kind of samadhi is a state of joy, deep and general well-being, and peaceful meditation.

Savikalpa Samadhi refers to the initial temporary state of full-valued samadhi. The conscious mind is still active, as is the kalpa, meaning imagination. One should compare this meaning to that of sankalpa, which is “wish.” Kalpa takes on a different, but related, meaning to sankalpa because one must use imagination or consciousness (kalpa) to envision a wish or desire (sankalpa).

Conversely, vikalpa means “against imagination.” At this final level of samadhi, the mind has become quiet and given up its desires and attendant. Vikalpa leads to the Truth, releasing one from any binds of mind (which are mostly imaginations). In Savikalpa Samadhi, we get the taste of Bliss and Beingness, but are still attached to our erroneous identification with the body as well as to our numerous worldly attractions.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the highest transcendent state of consciousness. In this state there is no longer mind, duality, or subject-object relationship or experience. [3] Upon entering Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the differences we saw before have faded and we can see everything as one. In this condition nothing but pure Awareness remains and nothing is missing to take away from Wholeness and Perfection.

Entering samadhi in the beginning takes effort and holding on to a state of samadhi takes even more effort. The beginning stages of samadhi (Laya and Savikalpa Samadhi) are only temporary. By “effort” it is not meant that the mind has to work more. Instead, it means work to control the mind and release the self. Note that normal levels of meditation (mostly the lower levels) can be held automatically, as in “being in the state of meditation” rather than overtly “meditating.” The ability to obtain positive results from meditation is much more difficult than simply meditating. It is recommended to find a qualified spiritual master (guru or yogi) who can teach a meditator about the workings of the mind.

Samadhi is the only stable unchanging reality; all else is ever-changing and does not bring everlasting peace or happiness.

Staying in Nirvikalpa Samadhi is effortless but even from this condition one must eventually return to ego-consciousness. Otherwise, this highest level of Samadhi leads to Nirvana, which means total Unity and the logical end of individual identity (and also death of the body). However, it is entirely possible to stay in Nirvikalpa Samadhi and yet be fully functional in this world. This condition is known as Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Sahaja Samadhi. Only the truly Enlightened can be and remain spontaneously free.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, all attachment to the material world is dissolved. All awareness is withdrawn step by step from the physical, astral and causal bodies until self-realization or oneness with the soul is achieved. During this process, breathing ceases and the heart stops beating[citation needed]. Aware and fully conscious oneness with soul is then achieved in a most loving way, and all cells of the physical body are flooded with the Ocean of Divine Love and Divine Bliss for any period of duration—hours, days, weeks, until the individual shifts his awareness from the soul back to the physical body. Being fully functional in this world, his awareness stays in connection with the Divine. But some “strange” conditions accompany this state—better health (the body is sustained by Divine Grace), better feelings (even for other people who may contact the body which the enlightened soul has reidentified with) and various miraculous happenings may occur in connection with the Enlightened one.

In Bhakti

The Vaishnava Bhakti Schools of Yoga define Samadhi as “complete absorption into the object of one’s love (Krishna).” Rather than thinking of “nothing,” true samadhi is said to be achieved only when one has pure, unmotivated love of God. Thus samadhi can be entered into through meditation on the personal form of God, even while performing daily activities a practitioner can strive for full samadhi.

As leaving the body

Advanced yogis have been said to intentionally leave their bodies as a final attainment or soul-liberation. It is at this time that the soul knows a complete and unbroken union with the Heavenly Godhead, and, being free from the limitations of the body, merges effortlessly into the transcendent amrita of Divine Bliss. It is said that sometimes the yogi leaves the body and returns. Mahasamadhi (literally great samadhi) is a term often used for this intentional departure from the physical body at death. Every infinitesimal piece of attachment or karma is completely surrendered unto God and dissolved into the Divine Ocean of Love. The individual transcends to worlds beyond karma and returns to God, merging into transcendental Bliss.

As mausoleum

Samadhi mandir is also the Hindi name for a temple commemorating the dead (similar to a mausoleum), which may or may not contain the body of the deceased. Samadhi sites are often built in this way to honour people regarded as saints or gurus in Hindu religious traditions wherein such souls are said to have passed into maha-samadhi, (or were already in) samadhi at the time of death.

In Buddhism

Samadhi, or concentration of the mind (one-pointedness of mind, citta-sa-ekaggata), is the third division of the Eightfold Path of the Buddha’s teaching: pañña (wisdom), sila (conduct), samadhi (concentration) - within which it is developed by samatha meditation. Some of Buddhist schools teach of 40 different object meditations, according to the Visuddhimagga, an ancient commentarial text. These objects include the breath (anapanasati meditation), loving kindness (metta meditation), various colours, earth, fire, etc. (kasina meditation).

Important components of Buddhist meditation, frequently discussed by the Buddha, are the successively higher meditative states known as the four jhanas which in the language of the eight-fold path, is “right concentration”. Right concentration has also been defined as concentration arising due to the previous seven steps of the noble eightfold path in the Maha-cattarisaka Sutta.

Four developments of samadhi are mentioned in the Pali Canon:

Jhana

Increased alertness

Insight into the true nature of phenomena (knowledge and vision)

Final liberation

Post-canonical Pali literature identifies three different types of samadhi:

momentary samadhi (khanikasamādhi)

access concentration (upacārasamādhi)

fixed concentration (appanāsamādhi)

Not all types of samadhi are recommended either. Those which focus and multiply the Five Hindrances are not suitable for development.

The Buddhist suttas also mention that samadhi practitioners may develop supernormal powers (abhijna, also see siddhis), and list several that the Buddha developed, but warn that these should not be allowed to distract the practitioner from the larger goal of complete freedom from suffering.

The bliss of Samadhi is not the goal of Buddhism; but it remains an important tool in reaching the goal of enlightenment. It has been said that Samatha/samadhi meditation and vipassana/insight meditation are the two wheels of the chariot of the noble eight-fold path and the Buddha strongly recommended developing them both.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Sutra III:3

In that, when the object alone shines, as if there is a void of one's form, that is samadhi.

Commentary by Nitya: Dharana leads to dhyana and dhyana to samadhi. For dharana, the inner organs are to be trained in a certain way, which consists of two withdrawals. One is the withdrawal of the senses from objects of interest. The other is the withdrawal of one's identity from the ego. Until Self-realization comes, the ego is wrongly identified as the Self. So if the mind is withdrawn from objects of interest, its immediate reaction is to center around the ego. In the case of perceiving external objects, there are certain empirical limitations that prevent a person from seeing what the sense organ does not permit. But in the case of the visualization of one's ego, the stuff of the ego itself is imagination and so egotistic imagination can go wild. Thus it is far safer to perceive an external object than to dwell on one's ego.

The alternative is offered by dharana: dwelling on one of the several spiritually rich imaginations such as an ideal like maitri, karuna, or mudita. Suppose you take fellowship with others for continuous actualization. Significance is not assigned to any particular item to which fellowship is extended. What is important is the unitive vision of seeing all as points of contact in a network of fellowship. In that total abandonment of oneself into the vision of fellowship, the idea "I am" never occurs at all. The intelligence stands unassailed by the data brought in by the senses or by egotistic thrust of wanting to possess anything or anyone. This unflagging steadiness of the intellect between the world outside and the ego inside brings samadhi (absorption).

...

Samadhi is the culmination of the eight steps of discipline enjoined by Patanjali's Yoga Sastra: 1) restraint (yama); 2) commitment to a behavioral pattern (niyama); 3) entering into a psychophysical state or condition that provides a comfortable and stable posture for directing one's attention to observe one's changing inner environment (asana); 4) slowly and gradually translating the involuntary function of respiration into the conscious deliberation of an observing consciousness (pranayama); 5) consciously disciplining one's awareness to delimit the choices of interest within a frame of reference from which extraneous interests are

dropped and a basic interest is again and again promoted (pratyahara); 6) the consequent stabilization of a well scrutinized and emphasized idea of direction (dharana); 7) expansion of the boundaries of awareness in which the conscious observer and his or her consciousness become mutually merged to give the effect of an unmodulated state of pure consciousness, a state of at-onement for beatitude (dhyana); and 8) the equipoise of the state of aloneness (samadhi).

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

As Sri Ramakrishna was singing the song he went into samadhi. Again the half-closed eyes and motionless body that one sees in his photograph. Just a minute before, the devotees had been making merry in his company. Now all eyes were riveted on him. Thus for the second time M. saw the Master in samadhi.

After a long time the Master came back to ordinary consciousness. His face lighted up with a smile, and his body relaxed; his senses began to function in a normal way. He shed tears of joy as he repeated the holy name of Rama. M. wondered whether this very saint was the person who a few minutes earlier had been behaving like a child of five.

...

Parable of salt doll

“In samadhi one attains the Knowledge of Brahman – one realizes Brahman. In that state reasoning stops altogether, and man becomes mute. He has no power to describe the nature of Brahman.

“Once a salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. (All laugh.) It wanted to tell others how deep the water was. But this it could never do, for no sooner did it get into the water than it melted. Now who was there to report the ocean’s depth?”

A DEVOTEE: “Suppose a man has obtained the Knowledge of Brahman in samadhi. Doesn’t he speak any more?”

MASTER: “Sankaracharya retained the ‘ego of Knowledge’ in order to teach others. After the vision of Brahman a man becomes silent. He reasons about It as long as he has not realized It. If you heat butter in a pan on the stove, it makes a sizzling sound as long as the water it contains has not dried up. But when no trace of water is left the clarified butter makes no sound. If you put cooked all sound stops. Just so, a man established in samadhi comes down to the relative plane of consciousness in order to teach others, and then he talks about God.

“The bee buzzes as long as it is not sitting on a flower. It becomes silent when it begins to sip the honey. But sometimes, intoxicated with the honey, it buzzes again.

“An empty pitcher makes a gurgling sound when it is dipped in water. When it fills up it becomes silent. (All laugh.) But if the water is poured from it into another pitcher, then you will hear the sound again. (Laughter.)

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: Does Maharshi enter the nirvikalpa samadhi?

M.: If the eyes are closed, it is nirvikalpa; if open, it is (though differentiated, still in absolute repose) savikalpa. The ever-present state is the natural state sahaja.

...

YOGI RAMIAH’S ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIENCES

Talk 34.

Sitting in Maharshi's presence brings peace of mind. I used to sit in samadhi for three or four hours together. Then I felt my mind took a form and came out from within. By constant practice and meditation it entered the Heart and was merged into it. I conclude that the Heart is the resting place of mind. The result is peace. When the mind is absorbed in the Heart, the Self is realised. This could be felt even at the stage of concentration (dharana).

I asked Maharshi about contemplation. He taught me as follows:- When a man dies the funeral pyre is prepared and the body is laid flat on the pyre. The pyre is lit. The skin is burnt, then the flesh and then the bones until the whole body falls to ashes. What remains thereafter? The mind. The question arises, 'How many are there in this body - one or two?' If two, why do people say 'I' and not 'we'? There is therefore only one. Whence is it born? What is its nature (swarupa)? Enquiring thus the mind also disappears. Then what remains over is seen to be 'I'. The next question is 'Who am I?' The Self alone. This is contemplation. It is how I did it. By this process attachment to the body (dehavasana) is destroyed. The ego vanishes. Self alone shines. One method of getting mind-dissolution (manolaya) is association with great ones - the yoga adepts (Yoga arudhas). They are perfect adepts in samadhi. Self-Realisation has been easy, natural, and perpetual to them. Those moving with them closely and in sympathetic contact gradually absorb the samadhi habit from them.

...

16th October, 1935

Talk 82.

A question was raised about the differences in the various samadhis.

M.: When the senses are merged in darkness it is deep sleep; when merged in light it is samadhi. Just as a passenger when asleep in a carriage is unaware of the motion, the halting or the unharnessing of the horses, so also a Jnani in sahaja samadhi is unaware of the happenings, waking, dream and deep sleep. Here sleep corresponds to the unharnessing of the horses. And samadhi corresponds to the halting of the horses, because the senses are ready to act just as the horses are ready to move after halting.

In samadhi the head does not bend down because the senses are there though inactive; whereas the head bends down in sleep because the senses are merged in darkness. In kevala samadhi, the activities (vital and mental), waking, dream and sleep, are only merged, ready to emerge after regaining the state other than samadhi. In sahaja samadhi the activities, vital and mental, and the three states are destroyed, never to reappear. However, others notice the Jnani active e.g., eating, talking, moving etc. He is not himself aware of these activities, whereas others are aware of his activities. They pertain to his body and not to his Real Self, swarupa. For himself, he is like the sleeping passenger - or like a child interrupted from sound sleep and fed, being unaware of it. The child says the next day that he did not take milk at all and that he went to sleep without it. Even when reminded he cannot be convinced. So also in sahaja samadhi.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

193. Absorption (Samādhi) is of two kinds, viz., that attended with self-consciousness and that without it.

[Absorption—It is a deeper kind of concentration.]

194. Absorption attended with self-consciousness (Savikalpa Samādhi) is that in which the mental state, taking the form of Brahman, the One without a second, rests on It, but without the merging of the distinction of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge.

[This is also called Samprajnāta Samādhi.]

195. In that state the knowledge of the Absolute manifests itself in spite of the consciousness of the relative, as when we know a clay elephant etc., the knowledge of the clay is also present.

[In this state both the phenomenon and the noumenon (or substratum) are present before the mind. The Reality peeps through the vesture of name and form.]

197. Absorption without self-consciousness

(Nirvikalpa Samādhi) is the total mergence in Brahman, the One without a second, of the mental state which has assumed its form, the distinction of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge being in this case obliterated.

[This is also called Asamprajnāta Samādhi. The former kind of absorption deepens into this.]

198. Then, just as when salt has been dissolved in water it is no longer perceived separately, and the water alone remains, similarly the mental state that has assumed the form of Brahman, the One without a second, is no longer perceived, and only the Self remains.

See also:

in Sadhana: [Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga](#)

in Sravana, manana, nididhyasana: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

samādhi - from the verb root dhā = "to hold" + the prefixes ā + sam = "together completely".

[Wikipedia](#)

Samadhi is a Sanskrit term for the state of consciousness induced by complete meditation. Its etymology comes from sam (together or integrated), a (towards), and dha (to get, to hold). Thus the result might be seen to be to acquire integration or wholeness, or truth (samapatti). Another possible etymological breakdown of samādhi is samā (even) and dhi (intellect), a state of total equilibrium (samā) of a detached intellect (dhi).

Related words

Dhyana

Sanskrit

Samādhi — समाधि

samādhi - समाधि

Samsara

Variant spellings

samsara
saṃsāra
samsāra
sansara

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Samsāra — ... empirical existence; the wheel of birth and death; transmigration; the flux of the world; the flow of the world; the objective universe; this world ... ; worldly illusion.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

saṃsāra -
going or wandering through, undergoing transmigration;
course, passage, passing through a succession of states, circuit of mundane existence, transmigration, metempsychosis, the world, secular life, worldly illusion (ā saṃsārāt, 'from the beginning of the world')

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Samsara is the round or cycle of birth and rebirth that all beings are subject to in the Hindu worldview. By extension it is often used to designate the world, where birth and rebirth are the human destiny. The term is also used in JAINISM, Buddhism, and SIKHISM.

The negative evaluation of samsara, so prevalent in Hindu belief, began to color the ancient VEDIC tradition only in the era of UPANISHADS, some of which begin to show attitudes that would directly lead to the development of world-denying philosophies. The Vedic MANTRAS themselves are life-affirming and envision a peaceful, joyful heaven as the result of merit in one's life. There is no trace in them of REINCARNATION, of the hopeless mire of birth and rebirth. Reincarnation appears in the Upanishads, the small texts that were appended to the prose portions (BRAHMANAS) of the Vedas, along with the first evidence of the sense of entrapment in a web of endless births. The Buddhist and Jain traditions also focus on KARMA and the hopeless trap of the world.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Samsara ("wandering"). The cycle of reincarnation, one of the most fundamental assumptions throughout all Indian religion. In the Indian worldview, reincarnation involves a series of births and rebirths in different realms and forms, all based on the quality and quantity of karma, formed through previous actions and patterns of thought. Beings with good karma may be born into the heavens, which are essentially realms of pleasure and carefree enjoyment; those with bad karma may be reborn as animals or as

ghosts, or into realms of punishment, such as hells. Neither pleasure nor punishment is eternal, although they may last an extremely long time. Beings in heaven enjoy the results of their past actions, but when their good karma is exhausted they must take another, lower birth; beings in realms of punishment are paying for their evil deeds, but when this has been done they will take another birth, presumably in some higher status.

Between these two lies the human realm, which comprises infinite possibilities, based on various factors—such as high status or low, wealth or poverty, health or disability, and the religious piety of one's natal family. Varying mixtures of good and bad karma combine for many different human circumstances, and according to popular belief one's present life and body are a record of one's past. The notion that people are, in life, where they deserve to be because of karma can be seen as the basis for the caste system. Fulfilling one's particular social role (svadharma), no matter how humble, not only upholds the social order but is a means for individual spiritual advancement.

The human realm is widely believed to be the best of all for spiritual life, partly because human beings can make rational choices, including the decision to take part in religious life. In this humans are different from animals, which are driven mainly by their instincts, and from ghosts or hell dwellers, who are simply expiating their past acts. At the same time human life, unlike life in the heavens, is full of reverses and sorrow continually reminding human beings about the transience of life and possessions and the need to engage in spiritual development. Embodied existence is a constant cycling from one realm to the next, leaving one body and assuming another, and the inherent uncertainty of this condition has led to the search, dating from the time of the speculative texts known as the Upanishads, for an unchanging state, completely out of this cycle of rebirth. This unchanging state is widely accepted as life's supreme goal, although in any generation very few actively seek it, with most people content to relegate it to some indefinite future lifetime.

Radhakrishnan. Philosophy of Upanishads

The formulation of the theory of samsara or rebirth is no proof that the Upanishads are pessimistic. Life on earth is the means of self-perfection. We have to undergo the discipline of samsara in our efforts towards the higher joy and the complete possession of spiritual truth. That which gives zest to life is the supreme motive of the joy of self-conquest. Samsara is only a succession of spiritual opportunities. Life is a stage in spiritual perfection, a step in the passage to the infinite. It is the time for preparing the soul for eternity. Life is no empty dream and the world no delirium of spirit. In the later versions of rebirth in Indian thought we miss this ennobling ideal, and birth becomes the result of an error of the soul and samsara a dragging chain.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

Commentary by Nataraja: Vedanta does not think in terms of heavenly values, because the alternating process of samsara does not stop completely by going to heaven. One returns to the same worlds of hedonistic values when he descends again from heaven to live comfortably in a suburbia on earth. This is brought out in many places in the Upanisads and the Bhagavadgita. Vedanta believes in a full dose of absolutism, which will cure one once and for all from a recrudescence or lapse into the same malarial, relativistic love of pleasure, whether in heaven or on earth. Emancipation, without any possibility of relapse, is the model held up by Upanisadic teaching; one should not be born again, irrespective of heavenly or earthly values. Such values have to be transcended though not rejected. Nobody should think a comfortable life should be wilfully avoided in favour of austerities that might torture the life within us.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

The bondage of “woman and gold”

MASTER: “ ‘Woman and gold’ is the cause of bondage. ‘Woman and gold’ alone constitutes samsara, the world. It is ‘woman and gold’ that keeps one from seeing God. (Holding the towel in front of his face) Do you see my face any more? Of course not. The towel hides it. No sooner is the covering of ‘woman and gold’ removed than one attains Chidananda, Consciousness and Bliss.

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

There are certain doctrines [in the Upanishads] which are agreed to by all the different sects in India. First, there is the doctrine of Samsâra, or reincarnation of the soul.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

1st December, 1945

(11) WHAT IS MEANT BY SAMSARA?

During the early days of my arrival here, on one day at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a middle-aged Andhra, who had come recently, asked Bhagavan, “Swami, as I repeat Rama Namam (the name of Rama) regularly every morning and every evening for an hour, other thoughts come in, one by one, increase from time to time and ultimately find that I have forgotten my japam. What shall I do?”

“At that time catch hold of that name (Rama Namam)” said Bhagavan. We all laughed. Poor man! He felt grieved and said, “The reasons for these interruption is the samsara (family), is not it? I am therefore thinking of abandoning the samsara.” Bhagavan said, “Oh! Is that so? What really is meant by samsara? Is it within or without?” “Wife, children and others” he said. “Is that all the samsara? What have they done? Please find out first what really is meant by samsara. Afterwards we shall consider the question of abandoning them,” said Bhagavan. He could not reply and so kept quiet, crestfallen.

Bhagavan's heart was full of compassion. With a look full of tender kindness he said, “Supposing you leave your wife and children. If you are here this will become another kind of samsara. Supposing you take to sannyasa. Another kind of samsara comes into existence in the shape of a karra (walking stick), kamandalu (water bowl) and the like. Why all that? Samsara means samsara of the mind. If you leave that samsara, it will be the same thing wherever you are. Nothing troubles you.”

Poor man! He mustered up some courage and said, “Yes, that is it, Swami. How to give up that samsara of the mind?” Bhagavan said, “That is just it; you said you were doing the japam of Rama Namam. During the train of thoughts, you said you were sometimes reminded of the fact that you had forgotten the japam of Rama Namam. Try to remind yourself of that fact as often as possible and catch hold of the name of Rama frequently. Other thoughts will then slowly decrease.

Sankara tradition

Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda

136. By means of a regulated mind and the purified intellect (Buddhi), realise directly thy own Self in the body so as to identify thyself with It, cross the boundless ocean of Samsara whose waves are birth and death, and firmly established in Brahman as thy own essence, be blessed.

...

145. Of the tree of Samsara ignorance is the seed, the identification with the body is its sprout, attachment its tender leaves, work its water, the body its trunk, the vital forces its branches, the organs its twigs, the sense-objects its flowers, various miseries due to diverse works are its fruits, and the individual soul is the bird on it.

...

148. One who is passionately devoted to the authority of the Shrutis acquires steadiness in his Svadharma, which alone conduces to the purity of his mind. The man of pure mind realises the Supreme Self, and by this alone Samsara with its root is destroyed.

...

270. Relinquishing the observance of social formalities, giving up all ideas of trimming up the body, and avoiding too much engrossment with the Scriptures, do away with the superimposition that has come upon thyself.

271. Owing to the desire to run after society, the passion for too much study of the Scriptures and the desire to keep the body in good trim, people cannot attain to proper Realisation.

272. For one who seeks deliverance from the prison of this world (Samsara), those three desires have been designated by the wise as strong iron fetters to shackle one's feet. He who is free from them truly attains to Liberation.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

“Nobody can visualise Him; none recognises Him.” When you behold a form, you are seeing the eternal Absolute. You have nothing else before you. But, you do not recognise Him. You call Him so-and-so. “He is my brother; she is my sister.” And you have your own ways of relating yourself to that form according to your circumstances in society, which is an unfortunate involvement of individuals in other individuals. Samsāra (worldly involvement) is not actually taking of birth in a body, but is not recognising of the meaning in taking birth, and the state of not being able to locate the connection of a form with the Reality that is hidden in it. It is said that Samsāra, or bondage, is not the perception of the world but the non-perception of God. There is no harm in perceiving the world, but there is great harm in not perceiving God. But, we are not perceiving God while we are perceiving the world. The world that we see is nothing but the form of God, and it is He that is fully present in every form. Whenever we touch any object, we are coming in contact with that Being only. If this awareness could be awakened in a person, at that very moment there could be liberation—here and now.

See: Jiva, samsara, Ishvara

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

samsāra - from the verb root sṛ - “to flow” and sam = “together”.

Related words

Karma

Moksha

Sanskrit

Samsāra — संसार

samsāra - संसार

Samskara

Variant spellings

sanskara

samskara

samskāra

sāmskāra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Samskāra — ... latent impression; predisposition; consecration; imprint, innate tendency; innate potency; mold; inborn nature; residual impression; purificatory rite; rite of passage

1. It is a predisposition from past impressions. It is one of the five aggregates according to Buddhism. They are impressions left in the mind after any experience. (See *vāsanā*.)
2. It is one of the twelve links in the causal chain of existence, according to Buddhism.
3. It is a rite performed with the help of sacred syllables (*mantra*) to restore a thing to its original pure state.
4. It is a purificatory rite in connection with an individual's life in Brāhmaṇical Indian society. It includes the sacred thread ceremony, marriage rites, funeral rites, etc.
5. It is of three kinds: velocity (*vega*), by virtue of which an object possesses motion; feeling (*bhāvanā*), by virtue of which there is memory or recognition; and oscillation (*sthitisthāpa-katva*), by means of which a substance returns from a distance to its original position.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sāmskāra -

putting together, forming well, making perfect, accomplishment, embellishment adornment, purification, cleansing, making ready, preparation, dressing (of food), refining (of metals), polishing (of gems), rearing (of animals or plants);
cleansing the body, toilet, attire;
forming the mind, training, education;
correction (also in an astronomical sense *Sūryas.*), correct formation or use of a word;
correctness, purity (esp. of pronunciation or expression);
making sacred, hallowing, consecration;

a sacred or sanctifying ceremony, one which purifies from the taint of sin contracted in the, womb and leading to regeneration (12 such ceremonies are enjoined on the first three or twice-born classes);
the ceremony performed on a dead body (i.e. cremation);
any purificatory ceremony;
the faculty of memory, mental impression or recollection, impression on the mind of acts done in a former state of existence (one of the 24 qualities of the Vaiśeṣikas, including bhāvanā, ‘the faculty of reproductive imagination’);
(pl., with Buddhists) a mental conformation or creation of the mind (such as that of the external world, regarded by it as real, though actually non-existent, and forming the second link in the twelvefold chain of causation or the fourth of the 5 Skandhas);
a polishing stone

Wikipedia

In Hinduism samskaras (singular: samskara) (Sanskrit for impression; under the impulse of previous impressions) are the imprints left on the subconscious mind by experience in this or previous lives, which then color all of life, one’s nature, responses, states of mind, etc.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali’s Yoga

samskara: registered and preserved impressions or conditionings, registration and preservation of impressions, formation of incipient memories, culture.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Samskara: latent mental tendency or inclination, acquired through past experience of any kind.

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

... the fact that they [samskāras] were experienced before has so moulded and given shape to the citta that the citta will try to reproduce them by its own nature even without any such effort on our part. To safeguard against the revival of any undesirable idea or tendency it is therefore necessary that its roots as already left in the citta in the form of samskāras should be eradicated completely by the formation of the habit of a contrary tendency, which if made sufficiently strong will by its own samskāra naturally stop the revival of the previous undesirable samskāras.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Samskara [saṃskāra] (“making perfect”). Collective name for the various life-cycle ceremonies in Hindu society. Although status in Indian society depends most on one’s birth, this alone is not sufficient to become a complete and finished person. In an individual’s development, the raw material given by nature must be refined through the process of culture, or the action of samskaras. This process of transformation begins before birth, with the three prenatal samskaras, and continues to death with the antyeshthi

samskaras. In general, samskaras transform people in two ways: by removing latent or residual impurities, such as the childhood chudakarana samskara, or by generating new capacities and entitlements, such as the upanayana (initiation) and vivaha (marriage) samskaras.

Although different writers in the dharma literature disagree on the number of samskaras, traditionally, sixteen are accepted. Three were prenatal samskaras: one to ensure conception (Garbhadhana), one to ensure the birth of a boy (Pumsavana), and one to ensure an easy delivery and a healthy child (Simantonnayana). Six samskaras were associated with childhood: ritual actions immediately after birth (Jatakarma), name-giving (Namakarana), the first outing (Nishkramana), the first solid food (Annaprashana), head-shaving (Chudakarana), and piercing of the ears (Karnavedha). Five samskaras were connected with life as a celibate student (brahmacharin): beginning of learning (Vidyarambha), adolescent religious initiation (Upanayana), the beginning of Veda study (Vedarambha), the first shave (Keshanta), and the return home at the conclusion of studies (Samavartana). The final two samskaras were marriage, and the last rites for the dead (antyeshti samskara).

These sixteen samskaras were the rites for a twice-born man, whom this literature considered the default person. A twice-born man was one born into one of the three “twice-born” varnas— brahmin, kshatriya, or vaishya—who were ritually eligible for the adolescent religious initiation known as the “second birth.” Women in the twice-born groups would undergo all the rites through the childhood rites, but would have no further rites until marriage, which was considered equal to all samskaras for them. People born outside the twice-born groups—namely, shudras and untouchables—would perform few if any of these rites.

These life cycle rites drive and govern the formation of the individual. In modern times many of these samskaras are still performed, but mainly by brahmins who, because of their traditional role as priests and scholars, conserve this practice to help maintain their traditional prestige.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... a friend goes and gets me a special kind of cookie. At the very sight of it my soul wakes up. “ Ah! There it comes.” If you have them twice or thrice you cannot give them up. On the Japanese sesame cookie it is written “Warning. Habit forming.” Then they say, “But what of that? It’s good for you.” These are called samskara, when an experience is received by the sense organs, and the quality of that experience is condensed and kept in the system as a memory bit. Samskara in Sanskrit means cultured, that something is cultured within you. A raw experience is made into a culture and kept there...

The ancient theory of Indian psychology is that all happenings become samskaras. Samskara means processing or culturing. As in Western psychology, there is a processing or culturing of experience into memory. Each of the cells of our body has within it its own cultured state. In this way we are a sanghata, an aggregate of many processed individual units. Our actions are actually a collective behavior.

If a society of people who dwell in a particular neighborhood changes, the character of the place also changes. Similarly, the samskara or the processing that was going on for some time can be altered or changed when you are exposed to a new situation. Some of the previous conditionings can be erased and new ones made in just the way the Russian physiologist Pavlov spoke of negative conditioning or deconditioning.

Pavlov made a great contribution to psychology with his experiment of dogs salivating at the sound of the dinner bell. In their mind the dogs learned to associate various stimuli with food. This is actually a very good description of samskara. When anything hap-

pens in your life by way of an experience, it leaves an impression. The impression registers its impact on the mind and you can recall it afterwards. The very fact that you can recall it shows that it is already recorded there.

Whatever impressions come in the present life are known as samskaras. Indian psychologists also believe that samskaras can be further processed and consolidated to change them from a subtle to a causal state. A gross experience is first processed to become a subtle thing called memory, but this can be further processed to become part of our causal or seed consciousness.

It is believed that when life passes from one embodied being to another it leaves behind the gross body. It cannot take away even the subtle body, because it is linked inextricably with the corporeal body. All that it can take along with it is the causal body, which is known as lingasarira, the indicative body or individuation. The refined essence of memory that the life form carries over to its new body is called vasana. These incipient memories are the ones with which a newly born child begins to live.

We have within us these two kinds of memories. One is all the colorations and conditionings that have come in the present life, and the other is those conditionings we have brought over from our previous lives. Both of them are lying latent in us like a sprout within a seed. As soon as a proper environment is available, these memories wake up to create a new life situation appropriate to the new environment.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M.: ... Predisposition (samskara) is acquired knowledge and kept in stock. It manifests under favourable circumstances. One with strong samskara understands the thing when presented to him much quicker than another with no samskara or weak samskara...

M.: ... Practice is necessary too. Practice means removal of predispositions. Practice is not for any fresh gain; it is to kill the predispositions. ... Practice removes the samskaras.

D.: But samskaras are infinite and eternal - from beginningless time.

M.: This itself is a samskara. Give up that idea and all samskaras will disappear at once. That is visranti (repose), santi (peace). Peace is ever present. But you hold it down and rise over it and thus disturb it. Then you say, "I want Peace".

D.: Will Peace be gradual?

M.: Yes. Make the mind gradually still (Sanaissanaih uparamet) says the Bhagavad Gita.

Samskaras and jivas

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Maharshi's Gospel

D: Does not death dissolve the individuality of a person, so that there can be no rebirth, just as the rivers discharged into the ocean lose their individualities?

M: But when the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills, they once more flow in the form of rivers and fall into the ocean; so also the individualities during sleep lose their separateness and yet return as individuals according to their samskaras or past tendencies. Even so it is in death; and the individuality of the person with samskaras is not lost.

D: How can that be?

M: See how a tree whose branches have been cut, grows again. So long as the roots of the tree remain unimpaired, the tree will continue to grow. Similarly, the samskaras which have merely sunk into the heart on death, but have not perished for that reason, occasion rebirth at the right time; and that is how jivas are reborn.

D: How could the innumerablejivas and the wide universe whose existence is correlative to that of thejivas, sprout up from such subtlesamskaras sunk in the heart?

M: Just as the big banyan tree sprouts from a tiny seed, so do thejivas and the whole universe with name and form sprout up from the subtlesamskaras.

Etymology

General

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Samskaras (from the Sanskrit samskri, refined, the source of the word SANSKRIT).

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Samskāra from prep. sam, together + (s)kāra, action < root (s)kar, to put together, form well, compose.

Related words

Citta

Vasana

Sanskrit

Saṃskāra — संस्कार

samskāra - संस्कार

Samya

Variant spellings

samya

samyam

sāmya

sama

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

sāmya -

(from 2. sama) equality, evenness, equilibrium, equipoise, equal or normal state;

likeness, sameness, identity with;

equality of rank or position;

homogeneousness (of sounds);

measure, time;
equability towards ... , impartiality, indifference ;
justice (sāmyam ... , 'to act justly towards')

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The seeker will discover that the nearer he approaches to Truth and God-Reality, the simpler everything becomes. Truth or God-Reality is the "simplest" of all things. The Latin "simplex" is related to the Sanskrit "sama", meaning junction, equality, sameness, and to the English "sameness". The root is also in the Latin "semper", meaning always. Divine Reality is sempiternal and has simplicity and sameness at all times.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankaracarya & Gambhirananda. Eight Upanisads

... paramam sāmyam, absolute equality, consisting in nonduality. The equality within the range of duality is indeed inferior to it.
... the reality of the Self is ajam, birthless; sāmyam, equipoised (uniform); viśāradam, holy.

Related words

Anyā

Sanskrit

sāmya -साम्य

Sankalpa

Variant spellings

sankalpa
saṅkalpa
samkalpa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Saṅkalpa — ... wish; volition; resolution; will; determination; intention

1. The dynamic energy of Viṣṇu.
2. One of the four ways a guru gives Saktipāt initiation.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Samkalpa (“intention”). Important ritual sequence at the beginning of many religious rites in which the person performing the rite states his or her identity, the time and place at which the action is being performed, the performer’s intention to carry out this particular ritual act, and the benefits desired from the action. The samkalpa is important as the formal commitment to perform the stated action. For ritual actions that promise several different possible benefits—for example, birth in heaven or final liberation—performing the samkalpa is believed to give one the result one desires.

...

Sankalpa. Spoken ritual performed before a religious act. The person about to perform the act identifies himself by name, tells the location of the act, and gives the lunar calendar date and time. He goes on to describe the religious act and what benefits he wants to receive as a result. Sankalpa is done before rituals such as suicide and doing morning puja to the Ganges. See samkalpa.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

It is Sankalpa (will and imagination, volitional ideation) which creates the worlds and without which the slightest vibration is impossible.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Psychology of Darsanamala

Even after receiving the secret instruction *tat tvam asi*, “That thou art,” from one’s teacher, one may not become a yogi unless this consciousness of the union of the subject and object is continuously realized by perpetuating the retentive idea “That thou art.” This is not possible unless one empties oneself of one’s ego. Personal ego is an aggregate of memories called *vāsana*, and it is always active to produce volitional imagery. This is called *sahkalpa*. *Sañkalpa* is the root cause of all human miseries. An effective step in withholding from being influenced by the *vāsana* is returning again and again to the true nature of the Self. This withdrawal is called *pratyāhāra*.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

To act rightly—to do the right thing in the right way at the right time in the right place—and nothing more: that is the way of the Gita. Therefore, to keep the fruit, the effect, of an act in mind as our purpose, is to deflect ourselves from the right motivation and to entangle ourselves in the net of egotism and the snare of binding deeds. Two forces impel us into this trap: desire (*kama*) and motive (*sankalpa*).

Kama is desire, passion, or lust. The first meaning, that of desire, is uppermost in this part of the Gita, though people can pursue action with a blinding and binding passion, no doubt. However, it is best for us to think mostly of simple desire, since the palest shade of desire can mar our action. Also, desire can be incredibly subtle and undetectable to any but the keenest intelligence... *Sankalpa* is wish, desire, volition, resolution, will, determination, and intention. Yes; all that. Any kind of intentions—including sub-

conscious ones—mar action. Even the slightest wish or hope in relation to the result of an action turns it into a bond. No wonder Krishna says later on: “How hard to break through is this, my Maya!” (7:14)
But when a person becomes absolutely free of kama and sankalpa, his action slips away like a loosened bond. Even more: the binding power of the act is broken so it cannot arise in the future to be a hindrance. Someone in this state then ceases to “make” any more karma.

...

Sankalpa is a strong exercising, or resolution, of the will based on some desire.

... there is the mantra known as the sankalpa which is recited at the beginning of any ritual, stating its purpose and dedication. Its absence would indicate religion that is vague, even purposeless, performed in a rote way simply for the doing of it, or religion whose real purpose is not at all grasped, and is therefore meaningless.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The karma which takes place without effort, i.e., involuntary action, is not binding.

Even a Jnani is acting as seen by his bodily movements. There can be no karma without effort or without intentions (sankalpas).

Therefore there are sankalpas for all. They are of two kinds (1) one, binding - bandha-hetu and the other (2) mukti-hetu - not binding. The former must be given up and the latter must be cultivated. There is no fruit without previous karma; no karma without previous sankalpa. Even mukti must be the result of effort so long as the sense of doership persists.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

sankalpa - from the root klrp - “to be in order, come into existence, determine” + sam = “completely, perfectly”.

Related words

Kama

Karma

Sanskrit

Sankalpa — सङ्कल्प

sankalpa - सङ्कल्प

Sankara

Name

Sankara

Śankara

Shankara
Śaṅkara
Śaṅkarācārya
Śaṅkarācārya
Ādi Śaṅkara - आदिशङ्कर
Śaṅkara Bhagavatpādācārya
Ādi Śaṅkarācārya

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism:

Shankara (“auspicious”). Epithet of the god Shiva. With the honorific suffix acharya (“teacher”), this is also the name of the most significant figure in the Advaita Vedānta philosophical school, Shankaracharya, who is popularly considered to be Shiva incarnate. As noted above, the generally accepted meaning of the name Shankara has intensely positive connotations, yet the verb shank, from which this name is almost certainly derived, has associations with doubt, uncertainty, and anxiety. This sort of ambivalence has a long association with Shiva; the earliest accepted reference, in the Shvetashvatara Upanishad, mentions both his death-dealing arrows, and his kindness to his devotees (bhakta). The traditional meaning of this name may thus be a form of propitiation—knowing that Shiva wields awesome and unpredictable power but describing him as “auspicious” in the hope that he will show his kinder side.

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śaṅkarācārya — ... the great sage and most famous exponent of Advaita Vedānta (from the verb root kr = “to make” and śam = “auspicious” + ācārya = “teacher”).

1. (788-820) The great Indian philosopher and saint who expounded the philosophy of absolute nondualism (Advaita Vedānta). He travelled all over India defeating the contending schools of philosophy, revived Hinduism, and established maths (āśramaś) in the four corners of India.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śaṅkara -
causing prosperity, auspicious, beneficent;
N. of Rudra or Śiva;
of a son of Kazyapa and Danu;
of Skanda;
of a serpent-demon;
of a Cakra-vartin;
N. of various authors and commentators, (esp.) of Śaṅkarācārya;
N. of a female;
a partic. Rāga or musical mode;
Śaṅkarācārya -

N. of various teachers and authors, (esp.) of a celebrated teacher of the Vedānta philosophy and reviver of Brāhmanism (he is thought to have lived between A.D. 788 and 820, but according to tradition he flourished 200 B.C., and was a native of Kerala or Malabar; all accounts describe him as having led an erratic controversial life; his learning and sanctity were in such repute that he was held to have been an incarnation of Śiva, and to have worked various miracles; he is said to have died at the age of thirty-two, and to have had four principal disciples, called Padma-pāda, Hastamalaka, Sureśvara or Mandana, and Troṭaka; another of his disciples, Ananda-giri, wrote a history of his controversial exploits, called Śaṅkara-vijaya; tradition makes him the founder of one of the principal Śaiva sects, the Daśa-nāmi-Daṇḍins or 'Ten-named Mendicants' ...; he is the reputed author of a large number of original works, such as the Atma-bodha, Ananda-laharī, Jñāna-bodhinī, Maṇi-ratna-māī, &c.; and commentaries on the Upanishads, and on the Brahma-mīmāṃsā or Vedānta-sūtra, Bhagavadgītā, and Mahā-bhārata, &c.)

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shankara (seventh century C.E.) founder of Vedanta philosophy.

Shankara was the great seventh-century philosophical genius who created the first widely known school of VEDANTA. He is also known as Shankaracharya.

Shankara was born in Kerala to a family of Nambudiri BRAHMINS, a strict Vedic group. Legend has it that when he was eight years old he wanted to become a renunciant, but his mother would not hear of it. Not long afterward, he was attacked by a crocodile. He cried out to his mother to allow him to renounce the world a moment before death so that he could reach liberation from birth and rebirth. His mother consented, and Shankara was miraculously released from the mouth of the crocodile.

He then proceeded to tour India and debate all those whom he encountered. Eventually he became known as the most brilliant philosopher of his time. Following the lineage of his GURU's guru Gaudpada, he argued that the BRAHMAN of the UPANISHADS was the only reality. He saw the world as a mere trifle, an illusion, or MAYA, unreal from the point of view of the ultimate.

Shankara wrote commentaries on the VEDANTA SUTRA, the Upanishads, and the BHAGAVAD GITA. In a thoroughgoing analysis he found that they all expressed the understanding that only the path of knowledge, the true knowing of the brahman, could lead to liberation. Devotion and works were only secondary pursuits. He initiated a tradition of renunciant yogis (the SHANKARA-CHARYA ORDER) who sought the full realization of the brahman in a state of being, consciousness, and bliss (SAT-CHIT-ANANDA). Shankara's name is also connected strongly to SHAIVISM and to the worship of the GODDESS, through texts that were later attributed to him.

Shankara's system of Vedanta is known as the ADVAITA, or non-dual, VEDANTA, or more properly, Kevala (absolute) advaita Vedanta.

Wikipedia

Adi Shankara (788 CE - 820 CE) was an Indian philosopher who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta, a sub-school of Vedanta. His teachings are based on the unity of the soul and Brahman, in which Brahman is viewed as without attributes. He hailed from Kalady of present day Kerala.

Date of Birth: 788 CE

Place of birth: Kalady, Kerala, India

Date of death: 820 CE

Place of death: Kedarnath, Uttarakhand, India

Guru/Teacher: Govinda Bhagavatpada

Philosophy: Advaita Vedanta

Titles/Honors: Introduced Advaita Vedanta, Hindu Revivalism, Founded Dashanami Sampradaya, Shanmata

Biography

Dates

General

Wikipedia

At least two different dates have been proposed for Shankara:

788–820 CE: This is the mainstream scholarly opinion, placing Shankara in mid to late 8th century CE. These dates are based on records at the Śringeri Śāradā Pītham, which is the only matha to have maintained a relatively unbroken record of its Acharyas; starting with the third Acharya, one can with reasonable confidence date the others from the 8th century to the present. The Sringeri records state that Shankara was born in the 14th year of the reign of “Vikram Aditya”, but it is unclear as to which king this name refers. Though some researchers identify the name with Chandragupta II (4th. c. CE), modern scholarship accepts the Vikram Aditya as being from the Chalukya dynasty of Badami, most likely Vikramaditya II (733–746 CE), which would place him in the middle of the 8th c. The date 788–820 is also among those considered acceptable by Swami Tapasyananda, though he raises a number of questions. It is also acceptable to Keay.

509–477 BCE: This dating, more than a millennium ahead of all others, is based on records of the heads of the Shankara Mathas at Dwaraka matha and Puri matha and the fifth Peetham at Kanchi. However, such an early date is not consistent with the fact that Shankara quotes the Buddhist logician Dharmakirti, who finds mention in Huen Tsang (7th c.). Also, his near-contemporary Kumarila Bhatta is usually dated ca. 8th c. CE. Most scholars feel that due to invasions and other discontinuities, the records of the Dwarka and Puri mathas are not as reliable as those for Sringeri. Thus, while considerable debate exists, the pre-Christian Era dates are usually discounted, and the most likely period for Shankara is during the 8th c. CE.

Place of birth

General

Wikipedia

Veliyanadu village, in central Kerala [India]

Life

General

Wikipedia

Traditional accounts of Adi Shankara’s life can be found in the Shankara Vijayams, which are poetic works that contain a mix of biographical and legendary material, written in the epic style. The most important among these biographies are the Mādhavīya Śāṅkara Vijayam (of Mādhava, c. 14th century), the Cidvilāsīya Śāṅkara Vijayam (of Cidvilāsa, c. between 15th century and 17th century), and the Keraḷīya Śāṅkara Vijayam (of the Kerala region, extant from c. 17th century).

Birth and childhood

Shankara was born to Kaippilly Sivaguru Namboodiri and Aryamba Antharjanam in Melpazhur Mana, Veliyanadu village, in central Kerala. According to lore, it was after his parents, who had been childless for many years, prayed at the Vadakkunnathan temple, Thrissur that Sankara was born under the star Thiruvathira.

His father died while Shankara was very young. Shankara's upanayanam, the initiation into student-life, was performed at the age of five. As a child, Shankara showed remarkable scholarship, mastering the four Vedas by the age of eight.

Sannyasa

From a young age, Shankara was inclined towards sannyasa, but it was only after much persuasion that his mother finally gave her consent. Shankara then left Kerala and travelled towards North India in search of a guru. On the banks of the Narmada River, he met Govinda Bhagavatpada, the disciple of Gaudapada. When Govinda Bhagavatpada asked Shankara's identity, he replied with an extempore verse that brought out the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. Govinda Bhagavatpada was impressed and took Shankara as his disciple.

The guru instructed Shankara to write a commentary on the Brahma Sutras and propagate the Advaita philosophy. Shankara travelled to Kashi, where a young man named Sanandana, hailing from Chola territory in South India, became his first disciple. According to legend, while on his way to the Vishwanath Temple, Sankara came upon an untouchable accompanied by four dogs. When asked to move aside by Shankara's disciples, the untouchable replied: "Do you wish that I move my ever lasting Ātman ("the Self"), or this body made of flesh?" Realizing that the untouchable was none other than god Shiva himself, and his dogs the four Vedas, Shankara prostrated himself before him, composing five shlokas known as Manisha Panchakam.

At Badari he wrote his famous Bhashyas ("commentaries") and Prakarana granthas ("philosophical treatises").

Meeting with Mandana Mishra

One of the most famous debates of Adi Shankara was with the ritualist Mandana Miśra. Mandana Miśra's guru was the famous Mimamsa philosopher, Kumarīla Bhatta. Shankara sought a debate with Kumarīla Bhatta and met him in Prayag where he had buried himself in a slow burning pyre to repent for sins committed against his guru: Kumarīla Bhatta had learned Buddhist philosophy from his Buddhist guru under false pretenses, in order to be able to refute it. Learning anything without the knowledge of one's guru while still under his authority constitutes a sin according to the Vedas. Kumarīla Bhatta thus asked Adi Shankara to proceed to Mahismati (known today as Mahishi Bangaon, Saharsa in Bihar) to meet Mandana Miśra and debate with him instead.

After debating for over fifteen days, with Mandana Miśra's wife Ubhaya Bhāratī acting as referee, Mandana Miśra accepted defeat. Ubhaya Bhāratī then challenged Adi Shankara to have a debate with her in order to 'complete' the victory. Later, Ubhaya Bhāratī conceded defeat in the debate and allowed Mandana Miśra to accept sannyasa with the monastic name Sureśvarācārya, as per the agreed rules of the debate.

Missionary tour

Adi Shankara then travelled with his disciples to Maharashtra and Srisailam. In Srisailam, he composed Shivanandalahari, a devotional hymn in praise of Shiva. The Madhaviya Shankaravijayam says that when Shankara was about to be sacrificed by a Kapalika, the god Narasimha appeared to save Shankara in response to Padmapada's prayer to him. As a result, Adi Shankara composed the Laksmi- Narasimha stotra.

He then travelled to Gokarna, the temple of Hari-Shankara and the Mūkambika temple at Kollur. At Kollur, he accepted as his disciple a boy believed to be dumb by his parents. He gave him the name, Hastāmalakācārya ("one with the amalaka fruit on his palm", i.e., one who has clearly realised the Self). Next, he visited Śrngeri to establish the Śārada Pītham and made Totakācārya his disciple.

After this, Adi Shankara began a Dig-vijaya (tour of conquest) for the propagation of the Advaita philosophy by controverting all philosophies opposed to it. He travelled throughout India, from South India to Kashmir and Nepal, preaching to the local populace and debating philosophy with Hindu, Buddhist and other scholars and monks along the way.

With the Malayali King Sudhanva as companion, Shankara passed through Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Vidarbha. He then started towards Karnataka where he encountered a band of armed Kapalikas. King Sudhanva, with his army, resisted and defeated the Kapalikas. They safely reached Gokarna where Shankara defeated in debate the Shaiva scholar, Neelakanta.

Proceeding to Saurashtra (the ancient Kambhoja) and having visited the shrines of Girnar, Somnath and Prabhasa and explaining the superiority of Vedanta in all these places, he arrived at Dwarka. Bhatta Bhāskara of Ujjayini, the proponent of Bhedābeda philosophy, was humbled. All the scholars of Ujjayini (also known as Avanti) accepted Adi Shankara's philosophy.

He then defeated the Jainas in philosophical debates at a place called Bahlika. Thereafter, the Acharya established his victory over several philosophers and ascetics in Kamboja (region of North Kashmir), Darada (Dabistan) and many regions situated in the desert and crossing mighty peaks, entered Kashmir. Later, he had an encounter with a tantrik, Navagupta at Kamarupa.

Accession to Sarvajnapitha

Adi Shankara visited Sarvajñapītha (Sharada Peeth) in Kashmir (now in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir). The Madhaviya Shankaravijayam states this temple had four doors for scholars from the four cardinal directions. The southern door (representing South India) had never been opened, indicating that no scholar from South India had entered the Sarvajna Pitha. Adi Shankara opened the southern door by defeating in debate all the scholars there in all the various scholastic disciplines such as Mimamsa, Vedanta and other branches of Hindu philosophy; he ascended the throne of Transcendent wisdom of that temple.

Death

General

Wikipedia

Towards the end of his life, Adi Shankara travelled to the Himalayan area of Kedarnath- Badrinath and attained videha mukti ("freedom from embodiment"). There is a samadhi mandir dedicated to Adi Shankara behind the Kedarnath temple. However, there are variant traditions on the location of his last days. One tradition, expounded by Keraliya Shankaravijaya, places his place of death as Vadakkunnathan temple in Thrissur, Kerala. The followers of the Kanchi kamakoti pitha claim that he ascended the Sarvajñapītha and attained videha mukti in Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu).

Teachings

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

... His commentary on the Vedanta Sutras, the Brahmasutra Bhashya, gives the classic formulation of Advaita Vedanta, with its emphasis that the Ultimate Reality is the unqualified (nirguna) Brahman, which is eternal and unchanging, and to which the human soul is identical. The changing phenomenal world (the world we see and sense) is an illusion, created through the superimposition (adhyasa) of mistaken ideas upon the unqualified Brahman. Since Shankaracharya believes that one is released from bondage by replacing this mistaken understanding with the correct one, insight and not action is the means to liberation. This moment of understanding can be described as a flash of realization, but it seems mistaken to characterize Shankaracharya as a mystic. This

is because he strongly emphasizes the authority of the sacred texts as a source of accurate knowledge about the ultimate truth. Although this stress on insight devalues the ultimate worth of ritual action, except in a preparatory role by removing defilements, Shankaracharya also believed that required ritual actions should be performed from a sense of duty. Shankaracharya is as philosophically significant for his silence as for his speech. He gives no definitive answer on many philosophical issues: about whether selves are one or many, about whether the locus of ignorance (avidya) was Brahman or the individual, about the nature of ignorance itself, and about the real nature of the material world. His refusal to take a position on these issues left many different routes open to those who came after him. Shankaracharya himself tended to emphasize epistemological issues—how human beings come to know things, and particularly how to correct the mistaken ideas through which human beings are held in bondage. The image that comes through his writing is of a deeply religious man whose primary concern was to help his hearers destroy their illusions and gain final liberation of the soul (moksha). Given this underlying goal and his acute philosophical mind, one can argue that he was aware of such metaphysical questions but chose to ignore them, since they were unrelated to his primary goal.

Wikipedia

Revival of Advaita Vedanta

Shankara travelled across India and other parts of South Asia to propagate his philosophy through discourses and debates with other thinkers. He founded four mathas (“monasteries”), which helped in the historical development, revival and spread of Advaita Vedanta. Adi Shankara is believed to be the organizer of the Dashanami monastic order and the founder of the Shanmata tradition of worship.

His works in Sanskrit, all of which are extant today, concern themselves with establishing the doctrine of Advaita (Nondualism). He also established the importance of monastic life as sanctioned in the Upanishads and Brahma Sutra, in a time when the Mimamsa school established strict ritualism and ridiculed monasticism. Shankara relied entirely on the Upanishads for reference concerning Brahman and wrote copious commentaries on the Vedic Canon (Brahma Sutra, Principal Upanishads and Bhagavadgita) in support of his thesis. The main opponent in his work is the Mimamsa school of thought, though he also offers some arguments against the views of some other schools like Samkhya and certain schools of Buddhism that he was familiar with.

Philosophy and religious thought

Adi Shankara was the first in its tradition to consolidate the siddhānta (“doctrine”) of Advaita Vedanta. He wrote commentaries on the Prasthanas Trayi. A famous quote from Vivekacūṇāmayi, one of his prakarana granthas that succinctly summarises his philosophy is:

Brahman is the only truth, the spatio-temporal world is an illusion, and there is ultimately no difference between Brahman and individual self.

Advaita Vedanta is based on śāstra (“scriptures”), yukti (“reason”) and anubhava (“experience”), and aided by karmas (“spiritual practices”). This philosophy provides a clear-cut way of life to be followed. Starting from childhood, when learning has to start, the philosophy has to be realised in practice throughout one’s life even up to death. This is the reason why this philosophy is called an experiential philosophy, the underlying tenet being “That thou art”, meaning that ultimately there is no difference between the experiencer and the experienced (the world) as well as the universal spirit (Brahman). Among the followers of Advaita, as well those of other doctrines, there are believed to have appeared Jivanmuktas, ones liberated while alive. These individuals (commonly called Mahatmas, great souls, among Hindus) are those who realised the oneness of their self and the universal spirit called Brahman.

Adi Shankara's Bhashyas (commentaries) on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras are his principal works. Although he mostly adhered to traditional means of commenting on the Brahma Sutra, there are a number of original ideas and arguments to establish that the essence of Upanishads is Advaita. He taught that it was only [citation needed] through direct knowledge that one could realize the Brahman.

Adi Shankara's opponents accused him of teaching Buddhism in the garb of Hinduism, because his non-dualistic ideals seemed rather radical to contemporary Hindu philosophy. However, although Advaita proposes the theory of Maya, explaining the universe as a "trick of a magician", Adi Shankara and his followers see this as a consequence of their basic premise that Brahman alone is real. Their idea of Maya emerges from their belief in the reality of Brahman, as opposed to Buddhist doctrines of emptiness, which emerge from the empirical Buddhist approach of observing the nature of reality.

Shankara on Brahman

According to Adi Shankara, God, the Supreme Cosmic Spirit or Brahman (pronounced [ˈbrəh.mən]; nominative singular Brahma, [ˈbrəh.mə]) is the One, the whole and the only reality. Other than Brahman, everything else, including the universe, material objects and individuals, are false. Brahman is at best described as that infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent, incorporeal, impersonal, transcendent reality that is the divine ground of all Being. Brahman is often described as *neti neti* meaning "not this, not this" because it cannot be correctly described as this or that. It is the origin of this and that, the origin of forces, substances, all of existence, the undefined, the basis of all, unborn, the essential truth, unchanging, eternal, the absolute. How can it be properly described as something in the material world when itself is the basis of reality? Brahman is also beyond the senses, it would be akin a blind man trying to correctly describe color. It (grammatically neutral, but exceptionally treated as masculine), though not a substance, is the basis of the material world, which in turn is its illusionary transformation. Brahman is not the effect of the world. Brahman is said to be the purest knowledge itself, and is illuminant like a source of infinite light.

Due to ignorance (*avidyā*), the Brahman is visible as the material world and its objects. The actual Brahman is attributeless and formless (see *Nirguna Brahman*). It is the Self-existent, the Absolute and the Imperishable (not generally the object of worship but rather of meditation). Brahman is actually indescribable. It is at best "Satchidananda" (merging "Sat" + "Cit" + "Ananda", ie, Infinite Truth, Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Bliss). Also, Brahman is free from any kind of differences. It does not have any *sajātīya* (homogeneous) differences because there is no second Brahman. It does not have any *vijātīya* (heterogeneous) differences because there is nobody in reality existing other than Brahman. It has neither *svagata* (internal) differences, because Brahman is itself homogeneous.

Though Brahman is self-proved, Adi Shankara also proposed some logical proofs:

Shruti — the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras describe Brahman in almost exact manner as Adi Shankara. This is the testimonial proof of Brahman.

Psychological — every person experiences his soul, or *atman*. According to Adi Shankara, *Atman* = Brahman. This argument also proves the omniscience of the Brahman.

Teleological — the world appears very well ordered; the reason for this cannot be an unconscious principle. The reason must be due to the Brahman.

Essential — Brahman is the basis of this created world.

Perceptible feeling — many people, when they achieve the *turiya* state, claim that their soul has become one with everything else.

Works

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Besides the bhāṣya on the Vedānta-sūtra, Śamkara wrote commentaries on the principal Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā. Those especially on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogya Upaniṣads treat of several points that are not dealt with in detail in the Sūtra-bhāṣya and are of immense value in the comprehension and appreciation of the doctrine of Advaita. In addition to them, we have his Upadeśa-sāhasrī, which, though somewhat terse, gives a splendid account of his views.

Wikipedia

Adi Shankara, a Hindu philosopher of the Advaita Vedanta school, wrote many works in his life-time of thirty two years; however, many works thought to be of his authorship are debated and questioned as to their authorship today. His works deal with logically establishing the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta as he saw it in the Upanishads. He formulates the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta by validating his arguments on the basis of quotations from the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures. He gives a high priority to svānubhava (personal experience) of the student. Also, a large portion of his works is polemical in nature. He directs his polemics mostly against the Sankhya, Bauddha, Jaina, Vaisheshika and other non-vedantic Hindu philosophies.

Traditionally, his works are classified under Bhāṣya (commentary), Prakarana grantha (philosophical treatise) and Stotra (devotional hymn). The commentaries serve to provide a consistent interpretation of the scriptural texts from the perspective of Advaita Vedanta. The philosophical treatises provide various methodologies to the student to understand the doctrine. The devotional hymns are rich in poetry and piety, serving to highlight the helplessness of the devotee and the glory of the deity.

Bhāṣya (commentary)

Adi Shankara wrote Bhāṣya (commentaries) on:

Brahmasūtra

Aitareya Upanisad (Rigveda)

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanisad (Śukla Yajurveda)

Īśa Upanisad (Śukla Yajurveda)

Taittirīya Upanisad (Kṛsna Yajurveda)

Katha Upanisad (Kṛsna Yajurveda)

Chāndogya Upanisad (samaveda)

Māndūkya Upanisad (Atharvaveda) and Gaudapāda Kārika

Mundaka Upanisad (Atharvaveda)

Praśna Upanisad (Atharvaveda)

Bhagavadgīta (Mahabhārata)

Vishnu Sahasranama (Mahabhārata)

Gāyatri Mantra

Prakarana grantha (treatise)

Prakaraṇa grantha

Adi Shankara wrote the following treatises:

Vivekacūdāmani (Crest-Jewel of Wisdom)

Upadeśasāhasri (A thousand teachings)

Śataśloki

Daśaśloki

Ekaśloki

Pañcīkarana

Ātma bodha

Aparoksānubhūti

Sādhana Pañcakam

Nirvāna Śatakam

Manīśa Pañcakam

Yati Pañcakam

Vākyasudha

Tattva bodha

Vākya vrtti

Siddhānta Tattva Vindu

Nirguna Mānasa Pūja

Stotra (hymn)

Adi Shankara composed many hymns on Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, Ganesha and Subrahmanya:

Bhaja Govindam, also known as Mohamudgara

Śivānandalahari

Saundaryalahari

Śrī Laksmīnrsimha Karāvalamba Stotram

Śāradā Bhujangam

Kanakadhāra Stotram

Bhavāni Astakam

Śiva Mānasa Pūja

Pandurangashtakam

Subramanya Bhujangam

Editions

A lot of editions of the works of Adi Shankara are available. A few of them are given below:

Collections of Works

Sri Sankara Granthavali - Complete Works of Sri Sankaracarya in the original Sanskrit, v. 1- 10, revised ed., Samata Books, Madras, 1998. (Originally published from Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, 1910ff., under the direction of the Sringeri matha.)

Sankaracaryera Granthamala, v. 1-4, Basumati Sahitya Mandira, Calcutta, 1995. (complete works with Bengali translation and commentary)

Upanishad-bhashya-sangraha, Mahesanusandhana Samsthanam, Mt. Abu, 1979-1986. Sankara's bhashyas on the Katha, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, with Anandagiri's Tikas and other sub-commentaries.

Prakarana-dvadasi, Mahesanusandhana Samsthanam, Mt. Abu, 1981. A collection of twelve prakarana granthas, with commentaries.

A Bouquet of Nondual Texts, by Adi Sankara, Translated by Dr. H. Ramamoorthy and Nome, Society of Abidance in Truth, 2006. A collection of eight texts. This volume contains the Sanskrit original, transliteration, word-for-word meaning and alternative meanings, and complete English verses.

Brahmasutra Bhashya

Edited with Marathi translation, by Kasinath Sastri Lele, Srikrishna Mudranalaya, Wai, 1908.

Edited with vaiyasika-nyayamala of Bharatitirtha, and Marathi commentary, by Vishnu Vaman Bapat Sastri, Pune, 1923.

Selections translated into English, by S. K. Belvalkar, Poona Oriental Series no. 13, Bilvakunja, Pune, 1938.

Edited with Adhikarana-ratnamala of Bharatitirtha, Sri Venkatesvara Mudranalaya, Bombay, 1944.

Translated into English, by V. M. Apte, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1960.

Translated into English, by George Thibaut, Dover, New York, 1962. (reprint of Clarendon Press editions of The Sacred books of the East v.34, 38)

Sri Sankaracarya Granthavali, no. 3, 1964.

Translated into German, by Paul Deussen, G. Olms, Hildesheim, 1966.

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Critically edited by Dinkar Vishnu Gokhale, Oriental Book Agency, Pune, 1931.

Edited with Anandagiri's Tika, by Kasinath Sastri Agashe, Anandasrama, Pune, 1970.

Alladi Mahadeva Sastri, The Bhagavad Gita : with the commentary of Sri Sankaracharya, Samata Books, Madras, 1977.

A. G. Krishna Warriar, Srimad Bhagavad Gita Bhashya of Sri Sankaracarya, Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1983.

Trevor Leggett, Realization of the Supreme Self : the Bhagavad Gita Yogas, (translation of Sankara's commentary), Kegan Paul International, London, 1995.

Upadeshasahasri

Sitarama Mahadeva Phadke, Sankaracaryakrta Upadeshashasri, Rasikaranjana Grantha Prasarak Mandali, Pune, 1911. (with Marathi translation)

Paul Hacker, Unterweisung in der All- Einheits- Lehre der Inder: Gadyaprabandha, (German translation of and notes on the Prose book of the upadeshasahasri) L. Röhrscheid, Bonn, 1949.

Vivekachudamani

Edited with English translation, by Mohini Chatterjee, Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, 1947.

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Organizations

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shankaracharya Order (est. seventh century C.E.).

The Shankaracharya Order is an order of renunciants said to have been founded by the great seventh-century VEDANTA philosopher SHANKARA (also known as Shankaracharya). It is formally known as the Dashanami (10 Names) Order, because its renunciants or SANNYASIS all take one of 10 names: Aranya, Ashrama, Bharati, Giri, Parvata, Puru, Sarasvati, Sagara, Tirtha, and Vana. They also add the affix ANANDA (transcendent bliss). Examples would be Brahmananda (he who has realized the bliss of BRAHMAN) Sarasvati and Agehananda (he who has realized bliss in homelessness) Bharati.

Shankaracharya's aim was to establish a rigorously disciplined, intellectually capable group of mendicants who could challenge and defeat the Buddhists of his time and who would debate the theistic Hindus who clung to Vedic orthodoxy. He established four centers or MATHS in four parts of India for this purpose: the Vimala Pitha at Puri in Orissa, the Jyoti Matha in BADRINATH in the HIMALAYAS, the Kalika Pitha in DVARAKA in Gujarat, and the Sharada Pitha in Shringeri in Karnataka.

It is still said that the Dashanamis of the Shankaracharya Order are the most respected group of religious mendicants in India. They are highly learned in SANSKRIT and VEDANTA philosophy and often are educated in English as well. The order is devoted to noninjury and nonviolence; however, they hired militant mendicants carrying tridents to defend them against attacks by militant Vaishnavite SADHUS or mendicants. Battles between these groups are famous for their carnage. There are currently six "regiments" of Dashanami NAGAS, special naked renunciants who defend the faith.

The heads of the four mathas are all named Shankaracharya. They oversee extensive organizations with schools and social outreach centers. These schools rely on a network of locally trained Sanskrit pandits, experts who train students in the traditions of Hinduism, making these mathas a valuable cultural resource.

Wikipedia

Adi Shankara founded four Maṭhas (Sanskrit: मठ) to guide the Hindu religion. These are at Sringeri in Karnataka in the south, Dwaraka in Gujarat in the west, Puri in Orissa in the east, and Jyotirmath (Joshimath) in Uttarakhand in the north. Hindu tradition states that he put in charge of these mathas his four main disciples: Sureshwaracharya, Hastamalakacharya, Padmapadacharya, and Totakacharya respectively. The heads of the mathas trace their authority back to these figures. Each of the heads of these four mathas takes the title of Shankaracharya ("the learned Shankara") after the first Shankaracharya.

Related words

Advaita Vedanta
Matha

Sankhya

Variant spellings
sankhya

sāṅkhya
samkhya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sāṅkhya — ... the philosophical school which enumerates the ultimate objects of knowledge.

1. Kapila was the founder of this orthodox (āstika) system and the author of the Sāṅkhya sūtra. The earliest authoritative book on classical Sāṅkhya is the Sāṅkhya -kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. The school professes dualistic realism with its two eternal realities, spirit (purusa) and primordial matter (prakṛti). The term Sāṅkhya means both “discriminative knowledge” and “enumeration.”

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sāṅkhya -

N. of one of the three great divisions of Hindū philosophy (ascribed to the sage Kapila, and so called either from ‘discriminating’, in general, or, more probably, from ‘reckoning up’ or ‘enumerating’ twenty-five Tattvas [see tattva] or true entities [twenty-three of which are evolved out of Prakṛiti ‘the primordial Essence’ or ‘first-Producer’], viz. Buddhi, Ahaṁkāra, the five Tanmātras, the five Mahābhūtas and Manas; the twenty-fifth being Purusha or Spirit [sometimes called Soul] which is neither a Producer nor Production ..., but wholly distinct from the twenty-four other Tattvas, and is multitudinous, each separate Purusha by its union with Prakṛiti causing a separate creation out of Prakṛiti, the object of the philosophy being to effect the final liberation of the Purusha or Spirit from the fetters caused by that creation; the Yoga branch of the Sāṅkhya recognizes a Supreme Spirit dominating each separate Purusha; the Tantras identify Prakṛiti with the wives of the gods, esp. with the wife of Śiva; the oldest systematic exposition of the Sāṅkhya seems to have been by an author called Pañca-śikha [the germ, however, being found in the Shasṭi-tantra, of which only scanty fragments are extant]; the original Sūtras were superseded by the Sāṅkhya -kārikā of Īśvara-kṛṣṇa, the oldest manual on the Sāṅkhya system that has come down to us and probably written in the 5th century A.D., while the Sāṅkhya -sūtras or Śiva-pravacana and Tattva-samāsa, ascribed to the sage Kapila, are now thought to belong to as late a date as the 14th or 15th century or perhaps a little later) ŚvetUp. MBh. &c. IW. 73 &c.

Dictionary - Runes

Sankhya: Perhaps the oldest of the major systems of Indian philosophy, founded by Kapila. Originally not theistic, it is realistic in epistemology, dualistic in metaphysics, assuming two moving ultimates, spirit (purusa) and matter (prakṛti) both eternal and uncaused. Prakṛti possesses the three qualities or principles of sattva, rajas, tamas first in equipoise. When this is disturbed, the world in its multifariousness evolves in conjunction with purusa which becomes the plurality of selves in the process. The union (samyoga) of spirit and matter is necessary for world evolution, the inactivity of the former needing the verve of the latter, and the nonintelligence of that needing the guidance of conscious purusa. Successively, prakṛti produces mahat or buddhi, ahamkara, manas, the ten indriyas, five tanmatras and five mahabkutas. K.F.L.

Wikipedia

Sankhya, also Samkhya, is one of the six schools of classical Indian philosophy. Sage Kapila is traditionally considered to be the founder of the Sankhya school, although no historical verification is possible. It is regarded as one of the oldest philosophical systems in India.

Sankhya was one of the six orthodox systems (astika, those systems that recognize vedic authority) of Hindu philosophy.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Samkhya (Sankhya). Samkhya is one of the six orthodox systems of Hinduism that were first developed in ancient times. It is traditionally believed to have originated with the sage KAPILA (c. 500 B.C.E.); its most authoritative text is the Samkhya Karika of Ishvarakrishna (c. 200 C.E.). Today the system has few adherents, and many of its ideas are preserved in YOGA traditions, including modern-day HATHA YOGA. (The word samkhya means “enumerate,” a reference to the precise categories within the philosophy.) Samkhya was dualist: the everyday world of matter and the world of the soul or self were considered to be two completely separate and distinct realms. Early Samkhya was nontheistic; it did not include any divine being or god.

In Samkhya PRAKRITI—nature or the manifest universe—was understood to be eternal. It had always existed and would always exist, though it might from time to time contract into an unmanifest form, awaiting the next manifestation. The selves or souls, which were also eternal but shared nothing in common with nature, were called PURUSHAS. There was an infinite number of them, and they were all separate and distinct from one another.

Each self or soul contained an inexplicable magnetism, which drew prakriti to collect or aggregate around it and give it life, a body, and birth. KARMA, the actions committed in the previous birth, would determine each new aggregation. In spiritual terms, this was seen as a constantly renewed trap for the self; the purpose of Samkhya was to show a way to escape the trap.

Wikipedia

Broadly, the Samkhya system classifies all objects as falling into one of the two categories: Purusha and Prakriti. Metaphysically, Samkhya maintains an intermingled duality between spirit/consciousness (Purusha) and matter (Prakriti).

Purusha

Purusha is the Transcendental Self or Pure Consciousness. It is absolute, independent, free, imperceptible, unknowable, above any experience and beyond any words or explanation. It remains pure, “nonattributive consciousness”. Purusha is neither produced nor does it produce. Unlike Advaita Vedanta and like Purva-Mimamsa, Samkhya believes in plurality of the Purushas.

Prakriti

Prakriti is the first cause of the universe--of everything except the Purusha, which is uncaused, and accounts for whatever is physical, both matter and force. Since it is the first principle (tattva) of the universe, it is called the Pradhana, but, as it is the unconscious and unintelligent principle, it is also called the Jada. It is composed of three essential characteristics (trigunas). These are:

sattva - fineness, lightness, illumination, and joy;

rajas - activity, excitation, and pain;

tamas - coarseness, heavyness, obstruction, and sloth.

All physical events are considered to be manifestations of the evolution of Prakriti, or primal nature (from which all physical bodies are derived). Each sentient being is a Purusha, and is limitless and unrestricted by its physical body. Samsara or bondage arises when the Purusha does not have the discriminate knowledge and so is misled as to its own identity, confusing itself with the physical body, which is actually an evolute of Prakriti. The spirit is liberated when the discriminate knowledge of the difference between conscious Purusha and unconscious Prakriti is realized.

Ishvara (Creationist God)

The Sāmkhyapravacana Sūtra states that there is no philosophical place for a creationist God in this system. It is also argued in this text that the existence of Ishvara cannot be proved and hence cannot be admitted to exist and an unchanging Ishvara as the cause cannot be the source of a changing world as the effect. Almost all modern scholars are of view that the concept of Ishvara was incorporated into the nirishvara (atheistic) Samkhya viewpoint only after it became associated with the Yoga, the Pasupata and the Bhagavata schools of philosophy. This theistic Samkhya philosophy is described in the Mahabharata, the Puranas and the Bhagavad Gita.

Nature of Duality

The Samkhya recognizes only two ultimate entities, Prakriti and Purusha. While the Prakriti is a single entity, the Samkhya admits a plurality of the Purushas. Unintelligent, unmanifest, uncaused, ever-active, imperceptible and eternal Prakriti is alone the final source of the world of objects which is implicitly and potentially contained in its bosom. The Purusha is considered as the intelligent principle, a passive enjoyer (bhokta) and the Prakriti is the enjoyed (bhogya). Samkhya believes that the Purusha cannot be regarded as the source of inanimate world, because an intelligent principle cannot transform itself into the unintelligent world. It is a pluralistic spiritualism, atheistic realism and uncompromising dualism.

Theory of Existence

The Sankhya system is based on Satkaryavada. According to Satkaryavada, the effect pre-exists in the cause. Cause and effect are seen as different temporal aspects of the same thing - the effect lies latent in the cause which in turn seeds the next effect. More specifically, Sankhya system follows the Prakriti- Parinama Vada. Parinama denotes that the effect is a real transformation of the cause. The cause under consideration here is Prakriti or more precisely Mula- Prakriti (Primordial Matter). The Sankhya system is therefore an exponent of an evolutionary theory of matter beginning with primordial matter. In evolution, Prakriti is transformed and differentiated into multiplicity of objects. Evolution is followed by dissolution. In dissolution the physical existence, all the worldly objects mingle back into Prakriti, which now remains as the undifferentiated, primordial substance. This is how the cycles of evolution and dissolution follow each other.

Epistemology

According to the Sankhya school, all knowledge is possible through three pramanas (means of valid knowledge) -

Pratyaksha or Drishtam - direct sense perception,

Anumana - logical inference and

Sabda or Aptavacana - verbal testimony.

Sankhya cites two kinds of perceptions: Indeterminate (nirvikalpa) perceptions and determinate (savikalpa) perceptions.

Indeterminate perceptions are merely impressions without understanding or knowledge. They reveal no knowledge of the form or the name of the object. There is only external awareness about an object. There is cognition of the object, but no discriminative recognition.

For example, a baby's initial experience is full of impression. There is a lot of data from sensory perception, but there is little or no understanding of the inputs. Hence they can be neither differentiated nor labeled. Most of them are indeterminate perceptions. Determinate perceptions are the mature state of perceptions which have been processed and differentiated appropriately. Once the sensations have been processed, categorized, and interpreted properly, they become determinate perceptions. They can lead to identification and also generate knowledge.

Moksha

Like other major systems of Indian philosophy, Sankhya regards ignorance as the root cause of bondage and suffering (Samsara). According to Sankhya, the Purusha is eternal, pure consciousness. Due to ignorance, it identifies itself with the physical body and its constituents - Manas, Ahamkara and Mahat, which are products of Prakriti. Once it becomes free of this false identification and the material bonds, Moksha ensues. Other forms of Sankhya teach that Moksha is attained by one's own development of the higher faculties of discrimination achieved by meditation and other yogic practices as prescribed through the Hindu Vedas. Views of what happens to the soul after liberation vary tremendously, as the Sankhya view is used by many different Hindu sects and is rarely practiced alone.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

There is no philosophy in the world that is not indebted to Kapila, the founder of this Samkhya system. Pythagoras came to India and studied this philosophy and carried some of these ideas to the Greeks. Later it formed the Alexandrian school, and still later formed the basis of Gnostic philosophy. Thus it became divided into two parts: one went to Europe and Alexandria, and the other remained in India and became the basis of all Hindu philosophy, for out of it the system of Vyasa was developed. This was the first rational system that the world saw, this system of Kapila. Every metaphysician in the world must pay homage to him. I want to impress on your mind that as the great father of philosophy, we are bound to listen to him, and respect, what he said.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

The founder of this school is said to have been Kapila. In Gaudapada's commentary he is claimed to have been one of the seven Rishis, the "mind-born" sons of Brahma. He was the irascible sage who reduced to ashes the 60,000 sons of King Sagara. Unlike the Nyaya, this is a synthetic system, as it were, placing things together. It is essentially dualistic. It holds that there are two primary eternal agencies. There is an eternally existing essence, called Prakriti, "that which produces or brings forth every thing else." This is sometimes, not very accurately, rendered by "Nature."

Prakriti is variously called Mula-prakriti, 'root-principle' Amulammulam, (rootless root; 'Pradhna, 'chief one'; Avyakta, 'unevolved evolver', Brahman, 'supreme; Maya, 'power of illusion.' 'Producer, originator' would express the meaning more nearly than 'Nature'. From the absence of a root in the root, the root of all things is rootless.

Prakriti is supposed to be made up of three principles, called Gunas, or cords, supposed to bind the soul. They are Sattva, Rajas, Tamas; or Truth, Passion, and Darkness. These principles enter into all things; and on the relative quantity of each in any object depends the quality of the object.

Souls (Purush) are countless in number; individual, sensitive, eternal, unchangeable. All that is done by Prakriti is done on behalf of soul. In its own nature soul is without qualities, until united with Prakriti. The union of the two is compared to a lame man mounted on a blind man's shoulder; the pair are then both (as it were) capable of perception and movement.

Beginning from the original rootless germ Prakriti, the Sankhya counts up (San-khyati) synthetically (whence its name of 'synthetic enumeration') twenty-three other Tattwas or entities all productions of the first, and evolving themselves spontaneously out of it, as cream out of milk, or milk out of a cow, while it carefully distinguishes them all from a twenty-fifth, Purusha, the soul, which is wholly in its own nature destitute of Gunas, though liable to be bound by the Gunas of Prakriti.

The process is thus stated in the Sankhya-karika: "The root and substance of all things (except soul) is Prakriti. It is no production. Seven things produced by it are also producers. Thence come sixteen productions (vikara). Soul, the twenty-fifth essence, is neither a production nor producer."

According to the Sankhya system, the five grosser elements, (mahabhuta) with their distinguishing properties and corresponding organs of sense, are the following:

Distinguishing	Property	Organ of Sense
1. Akasa, ether	Sound	The Ear
2. Vayu, air	Tangibility	The Skin
3. Tejas, fire, light	Colour	The -Eye
4. Apas, water	Taste	The Tongue
5. Prithivi, earth	Smell	The Nose

There are eleven organs produced by Ahankara, the five organs of sense, ear, skin, eye, tongue, nose; and five organs of action, larynx (the throat), hand, foot, and excretory and generative organs, and an eleventh organ standing between them viz., Manas, 'the mind' which is regarded as an internal organ of perception, volition, and action.

The liberation of Purusha, or soul, from the fetters which bind it in consequence of its union with Prakriti, is done by conveying the correct knowledge of the 24 constituent principles of creation; and rightly discriminating the soul from them. In the Sankhya there is no place for God; and accordingly it is known among Hindus by the name of Niriswara Sankhya, or the Sankhya without the Lord.

The chief exponents of the system are the Sankhya Karika and the Sankhya Pravachana or Sutras.

See: Advaita-Vedanta and Sankhya-Yoga

Sankhya and Vedanta

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Science has been defined as depending on knowledge by measurement. Counting too belongs to the arithmetical world. The Samkhya philosophy of India belongs to the world of counting the categories, numbering twenty five as between nature (prakrti) and spirit (purusha). Enumeration is an integral part of the Samkhya school of philosophy. To the extent that abstraction and generalization are involved in these approaches to truth, they have a place in philosophical speculation, but when we come to the finalized notion of the Absolute, as envisaged in Vedanta, these enumerated items and measurable aspects of reality are to be thrown into the melting pot, so as to reveal the basic reality, which is absolute and devoid of all differentiation. Measuring and numbering fall short of this ultimate notion.

See also:

Yoga and Sankhya

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Related words

Hindu philosophy

Prakriti

Purusa

Yoga

Sanskrit

Sāṅkhya — सङ्ख्य

sāṅkhya - सांख्य

Sannyasa

Variant spellings

sannyasa

sannyāsa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sannyāsa — ... monkhood; renunciation.

1. The stage of renouncing all worldly possessions and ties. The last stage of human life. (See āśrama.) It is of two kinds: vivid-isā-sannyāsa or renunciation preceded by a sense of detachment from the world, and vidvat-sannyāsa which is renunciation par excellence and preceded by the dawn of realization of the Self. In the former, certain rules must be observed but, in the latter, there is absolute freedom.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Many Hindu rituals imply the purification of the personality by Fire. One of them, aiming at the ultimate and perfect purification, is the rite of Sannyasa or “renunciation of the world”. He who renounces worldliness burns up the impurities caused by the Ahankara, the sinful one, on the lower planes, those of Earth, Water and Fire. This idea has been preserved in substance to this day for a man taking Sannyasa is supposed to light his own funeral pyre and cremate himself. He must become “dead to the world”. He burns his Vasanas or attachments and tendencies and the very root of Ahankara or “Ego-action”. He ceases to be separate and is consumed by God. At least that is what the ritual aims at.

The cremation of the bodies of the dead has to be considered in the same light. The bodies of Indian Saints and Sages are generally not cremated, but buried. With regard to them there is no need for the last Fire, since the Fire-purification has already been achieved during their lifetime.

The meaning of Sannyasa.

Sannyasa has been considered in its negative aspect, as implying the renunciation of worldliness and the cremation of the lower man. The positive and higher aspect of Sannyasa is found in the word itself, actually sam-nyasa, meaning “conjoined and complete dedication to the Divine”. It indeed implies the harmonization, synthesis and unification of all the part-personalities of the human soul. It refers to the very last stage of the Path, involving utter dedication to God-Reality. Nyasa is a rite of dedication which forms part of every major religious rite. Hindu tradition teaches what one finds expressed in the Cabalistic work the Zohar (I; 272b), where it is said that “all the members and parts of the human body” correspond with “sacred forms”. During the Nyasa rite the tips of the fingers and the palm of the right hand are put on various parts of the body, in order that they may be filled with the divine life, Chit-Sakti, “Dynamic Consciousness” or “the Consciring Power”, according to the Tantrik explanation. The rite is at the same time a systematic dedication of the body in its parts to God in His Gods, and a sanctification of the body in its parts by identification with the Intelligences which created them. The word “Nyasa” is derived from a word for to “place”. When Nyasa becomes perfect, in other words, when dedication and sanctification has been fully achieved, a man is a Sannyasi — and not until then.

In modern times the Sannyasi way of life has unfortunately fallen into much discredit. Some people adopt it as a way of escape from the world: for negative instead of for positive reasons. Others take it prematurely, and disgrace it by exhibitions of all kinds of Ahankaric weaknesses, the subtlest of which is spiritual pride. And many who are complete frauds put on the sacred fire-coloured cloth of Sannyasa, if not to indulge in vices, then to obtain food and money at the expense of those who still uphold the venerable tradition that the Sannyasi is the Man of God, who has to be shown hospitality like God himself. As a consequence it is found that often true Sannyasins refrain from putting on the ochre cloth, in order to stress the fact that Sannyasa is a state of the soul and that externals do not matter.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The Indian concept of sannyāsa has three historical stages: the prehistoric concept, the medieval concept and the modern concept. Even in the medieval period, the prehistoric concept was held as valid. Similarly, the modern concept also has in it some traditional beliefs. In this Upanisad, the concept is first introduced as a spiritual necessity of the rishi, Yājñavalkya. The Hindu Law of India refers to Yājñavalkya's renunciation in the very beginning because the Hindu Marriage Act is based on Yājñavalkya's smṛti. The common belief in India is that marriage between a man and a woman cannot be dissolved except by the death of one of the spouses. Yet we see the paradox of India's best spiritual teacher announcing to his wives his intention to dissolve his marital relationship with them. In that way, the precedent was set by Yājñavalkya himself. Another convention which came from Yājñavalkya's dissolution of his marriages on the basis of his spiritual purpose was the duty of a husband to make adequate arrangements for the equitable sharing of his possessions among his wives. This is also cited in the Hindu Law, and thus the fourth brāhmaṇa is historically of prime importance in understanding both the status of the householder and of the sannyāsin.

Sannyāsa implies the renunciation of sex, progeny and social security. The recognition of virginity as a spiritual virtue is an archetypal notion which has been regarded as valid in different parts of the world in various cultures. In world religions, this notion became particularly emphasized because of the Buddha's institution of bhikku-hood which made it obligatory for his disciples to accept the vow of chastity. ... Buddha's example was followed by Śankara in the institution of sannyāsa which came to be known as the daśanāmi sannyāsis. The pañcasīla of Buddha which is binding on all members of his sangha became obligatory for Śankara's school of sannyasa also.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

25th November, 1938

Talk 588.

To an Andhra seeker, Sri Bhagavan said: Sannyasa is mentioned for one who is fit. It consists in renunciation not of material objects but of attachment to them. Sannyasa can be practised by anyone even at home. Only one must be fit for it. Again.

A Kutichaka is one who takes sannyasa and lives in a hermitage;

A Bahudaka is one who takes sannyasa and goes to places of pilgrimage;

A Hamsa is an upasaka sannyasi;

A Paramahamsa is a realised sannyasi.

Ramana. Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words

D.: Is it necessary to take sannyasa (a vow of renunciation) in order to attain Self-realisation?

B.: 'Sannyasa' means renouncing one's individuality, not shaving one's head and putting on ochre robes. A man may be a householder but if he does not think he is one he is a sannyasin. On the other hand, he may wear ochre robes and wander about, but so long as he thinks he is a sannyasin he is not one. To think about one's renunciation defeats the purpose of renouncing. What do you mean by 'taking sannyasa'? Do you think it means leaving your home or wearing robes of a certain colour? Wherever you go, even if you fly up into the air, will your mind not go with you? Or, can you leave it behind you and go without it?

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

... in this concluding passage of the Upanishad, we are given the advice that for the sake of this Knowledge one has to dedicate the whole of one's life in a highly disciplined manner. ..

What we usually call the four stages of life, the asramas,—brahmacharya, (celibate student's life), garhasthya (married householder's life), vanaprastha (life of an anchorite), and sannyasa (monkhood)—are hinted at in this passage as the requisite process through which one passes for the maturity of one's mind. And at the same time, a caution also is administered that the whole of one's life has to be lived in such a way that it is a preparation for the spiritual goal. There is often a misconception that the spiritual part of one's life is sannyasa alone and the earlier three stages are not. This is what is refuted by all the Upanishads. All the stages of life right from brahmacharya onwards are preparations for spiritual life. Rather, all of them are necessary stages in one's ascent to the spiritual goal. It is not that the spiritual life commences only from sannyasa abruptly, as it were, and the earlier three stages are disconnected entirely from the spiritual goal. The whole of one's life from birth to death is a spiritual preparation. There is nothing but the Atman, the Spirit in life, and, therefore, no activity can be entirely secular, in the sense of its being bereft of the awareness of God's presence, as one's goal of life. In India particularly we have what are called samskaras, the various ceremonies symbolic of the affiliation of every stage of one's life to the spiritual goal. There is no such thing as an unspiritual aspect of life, whether it be brahmacharya, grahasthya, or vanaprastha. This is a very important advice by which we are told that the whole life of a person, whoever be that person, is an entirely dedicated schooling, as it were, a period of training for the purpose of the final achievement of Liberation. There is no part of life which can be squandered or wasted, or completely cut off from this consciousness of the ideal of one's life.

Sannyasa and tyaga

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

4. Hear now from Me the truth about the relinquishment,
O best of the Bharatas; relinquishment,
O best of men, has verily been declared as three kinds.

Commentary by Sankara: You may understand from My words the truth underlying the divergent views regarding relinquishment and renunciation herein set forth, O virtuous among the Bharatas.

The Lord has used the single word tyaga (relinquishment) here with the idea that it implies the sense of both tyaga and sannyasa. Three kinds = Tamasic etc. as specifically laid down in the sastras.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

Krishna begins the answer to Arjuna's query: "The relinquishment of actions prompted by desire the sages understand as sannyasa. The relinquishment of the fruit of all action the wise declare to be tyaga." (18:2)

Commentary by Krishnananda: Sannyasa in this chapter, then, simply means the giving up of all action motivated by kama, by egocentric desire or emotion (passion). Other actions are permitted the seeker, as are other kinds of desire. For example, mukshutwa, which is intense desire or yearning for liberation (moksha), is permitted, for it arises from the Self, not the ego. Action

which maintains the body—such as eating or taking medicine—with the desire for continued life and good health, is also acceptable, if life and health are desired so sadhana can be continued. So also is any action based on a desire to help others. It is important to understand this, because many unripe aspirants get the mistaken idea that any desire whatsoever is detrimental, and that monks cannot engage in any action—something that is impossible for the living.

Sannyasa, then, is external, even though based on internal disposition. Tyaga, however, is completely mental, a state of both thought and attitude. It is perfect dispassion toward the results of any action—not from disinterest or indifference, but because all actions engaged in are “to be done” in and of themselves. Even if no result comes, it does not matter. It is the simple doing that matters. (Of course, even then, there is a result from having acting in consonance with the cosmic order—Ritam).

See also:

in Vairagya: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

sannyāsa - from sam = “complete” + ni = “down” + ās = “to throw”; hence, “to throw down completely”.

Related words

Ashrama
Brahmacarya
Grihastha
Sadhana
Sannyasin
Tyaga
Vanaprastha

Sanskrit

Sannyāsa — सन्न्यास

sannyāsa - सन्न्यास

Sannyasin

Variant spellings

sannyasin
sannyāsin

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sannyāsin — ... ascetic; monk; homeless mendicant.

1. An ascetic ordained as a monk. A renunciant who has taken the formal vows of renunciation.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Once on the banks of the Ganges in the foothills of the Himalayas, Nataraja Guru and I went for a walk. We came upon a sannyasin's hut. Such huts are not made by the renunciates themselves. They take their advice from the book of Bhartruhari, which says a sannyasin lives like a snake which makes no hole of its own. It goes into a hole made by a rat, eats the rat and makes the hole its home. From Calcutta to the Himalayas, all kinds of sannyasins live in huts on the banks of the Ganges which were put there through the work of a sannyasin called Khalikambhivala. His name means one who has merely a blanket, nothing else. He made the paths and bridges, and arranged for shelters and food along the entire pilgrimage route. Khalikambhivala adhered to his own vow of total poverty, but he was the richest of all. He took it all as a sport, a game. He set up a trust, to which people donate from all over India, to provide for any poor seekers who go there. A sannyasin can go into a hut and take it as a refuge given to him by the kindness of others. When he leaves, another will come along to occupy it.

...The example is given in Vedanta of a burned rope. The charred ashes of a rope still keep the shape of the strands, but as soon as you touch them the shape disintegrates. It still looks like a rope even after it has been burned up, but it crumbles to ashes as soon as you touch it. A sannyasin is like the burned rope: if you touch him he goes away. His existence is a very ephemeral one, as he does not believe he exists.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Tales and parables of Sri Ramakrishna

A wife once said to her husband: "Dear, I am very anxious about my brother. For the past one week he has been thinking of becoming an ascetic, and has been busy preparing for that life. He is trying to reduce gradually all his desires and wants." The husband replied: "Dear, be not anxious about your brother. He will never become a sannyasin. No one can become a sannyasin in that way." "How does one become a sannyasin then?" asked the wife. "Thus" exclaimed the husband; so saying, he tore his flowing dress to pieces, took a piece and tied it round his loin, and told his wife that she and all of her sex were henceforth mothers to him. He left the house, nevermore to return.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Should not a man renounce everything in order that he might get Liberation?

M.: Even better than the man who thinks “I have renounced everything” is the one who does his duty but does not think “I do this” or “I am the doer”. Even a sannyasi who thinks “I am a sannyasi” cannot be a true sannyasi, whereas a householder who does not think “I am a householder” is truly a sannyasi.

Four kinds of sannyasins

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bahudaka (“having much water”). The name for one of four particular types of Hindu ascetics. Each of these four types reflects the ascetic’s supposed means of livelihood, which in practice has been much less important for ascetic identity than organizational affiliation. The Bahudaka is an ascetic who begs for his food at sacred bathing places. The other three types are the Kutichaka, which has lower status than the Bahudaka, and the Hamsa and Paramahamsa, which have higher status.

Kutichaka (“delighting in staying in the house”). One the of four types of Hindu ascetics. ... The Kutichaka is the least prestigious of the four, with the others being (in order of increasing status) Bahudaka, Hamsa, and Paramahamsa. The Kutichaka is described as an ascetic who resides in a house (kuti) erected by himself or his sons and begs for food from his sons and relatives.

Hamsa. The name for the Barheaded Goose (*Anser indicus*), a bird with several important symbolic associations; the most significant is purity and transcendence, since the bird’s color is largely white. It flies at very high altitudes, and it is reputed to nest in Lake Manasarovar in the high Himalayas, the region believed to be the land of the gods. Since it is popularly believed to be able to separate milk and water—drinking for former, and discarding the latter—the hamsa is also a symbol for a discriminating person, who is able to take counsel from many different people, and to separate the good from the bad.

Perhaps because of these associations, the hamsa is also the name for a particular type of Hindu ascetic. The Hamsa ascetics were described as peripatetic—they were directed to stay no more than one night in a village or five nights in a town. They were also directed to perform different sorts of ascetic practices, such as subsisting on cow’s urine or dung, fasting (upavasa) for a month at a time, or observing the chandrayana rite, a fast in which one increases and decreases one’s food consumption according to the waxing and waning of the moon.

Paramahamsa (“supreme Hamsa”). One of four types of Hindu ascetic. ...The Paramahamsa is the most prestigious of the four, the others being (in order of increasing status) Kutichaka, Bahudaka, and Hamsa. Paramahamsas have no fixed abode and always live in an uninhabited place. They are said to have transcended all questions of religious duty (dharma), purity, and impurity (ashaucha), to have broken all attachments to the world, and to be continually immersed in contemplation of the Supreme Brahman.

The word Paramahamsa has a more specialized meaning among the Dashanami Sanyasis, ascetic devotees (bhakta) of the god Shiva whose organization is divided into ten sections, each designated by a particular name. Here the name Paramahamsa refers to an ascetic who comes from one of the three twice-born (dvija) varnas—that is, who is a brahmin, kshatriya, or vaishya, the three social groups with higher symbolic status—and who has been initiated as a Sanyasi in one of the six divisions that will accept non-brahmins. Paramahamsas have higher status in these divisions than the Naga or fighting ascetics, who will initiate shudras, but lower status than the Dandis, who are invariably brahmins.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

RAM (to Gopal): "He [meaning the Master] says that one becomes a kutichaka after being a vahudaka. The sadhu that visits many holy places is called a vahudaka. He whose craving for travel has been satiated and who sits down in one place is called a kutichaka.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

A Kutichaka is one who takes sannyasa and lives in a hermitage;
A Bahudaka is one who takes sannyasa and goes to places of pilgrimage;
A Hamsa is an upasaka sannyasi;
A Paramahamsa is a realised sannyasi.

See also:

in Tyaga: [Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita](#)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

sannyāsa - from sam = "complete" + ni = "down" + ās = "to throw"; hence, "to throw down completely".

Related words

Sadhu
Sannyasa

Sanskrit

Sannyāsin — सन्न्यासिन्

sannyāsin - सन्त्यासन्ति

Sarada

Name

Sarada
Sharada
शारदा

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Goddess of the Tradition, who is now generally called Sarasvati or Sarada, holds a Book and a Rosary in addition to the Vina. Both symbols ... the four main strings of the Vina symbolize the Four Vedas, the Four Elements and the Four Ends of Life.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Sarada: Synonym for the feminine counterpart of the Siva principle, called Shakti, which is a creative urge as viewed in cosmic manifestation or existence. Shakti is “becoming” as against “being” This same principle has been variously described in mild or terrible forms in relation with black Kali, who is time with its consuming terrors personified. Uma, Haimavati and other goddesses also represent Shakti in varying grades, but Saraswati or Sarada is praised by Kalidasa and Sankara as the most refined and cultured personification as visualized in classical Sanskrit and in Vedanta. At the other end of this scale, as the crudest and harshest aspect would come Bhadra Kali.

Sarada and Vedas

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Four Vedas and all they imply are represented in the four main strings of the Indian musical instrument called Vina. The Vina forms the main symbol of the Goddess Sarasvati, the Consort of Brahma, the Creator. It has been previously considered how Creation is associated with Sound. Sri Sankara addressed his Prapanchasara to her as the Devi Sarada: “May Devi Sarada whose limbs divine are garlanded with the eternal, seven-hued primal letters, commencing with A and ending with Ksha, who is the Sole Mistress of all Creation, Who is everlasting and who is the Sole Reality behind Manifestation, elevate and exalt my soul!” Sarada is Goddess of Maya “in her pure unveiled form, Goddess of Wisdom, One with her Lord, Chitrupini or “Consciousness-formed”. She plays “the Harmony of the Spheres” on her instrument — which is the Universe — and sings the Song of Life.

Related words

See: Saraswati

Veda

Saraswati

Name

Saraswati

Sarasvati

sarasvatī

sarasvatī - सरस्वती
Sarasvatī — सरस्वती

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sarasvatī — ... “she of the stream”; the name of Brahma’s consort who presides over speech, knowledge, and the arts; the goddess of wisdom .

1. The name of one of the monastic orders founded by Sañkarācārya.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sarasvatī -

a region abounding in pools and lakes;

N. of a river (celebrated in ṚV. and held to be a goddess whose identity is much disputed; most authorities hold that the name Sarasvatī is identical with the Avestan Haraquaiti river in Afghanistan, but that it usually means the Indus in the ṚV., and only occasionally the small sacred rivers in Madhya-deśa ...; the river-goddess has seven sisters and is herself sevenfold, she is called the mother of streams, the best of mothers, of rivers, and of goddesses; the Rishis always recognize the connection of the goddess with the river, and invoke her to descend from the sky, to bestow vitality, renown, and riches; elsewhere she is described as moving along a golden path and as destroying Vṛitra &c.; as a goddess she is often connected with other deities e.g. with Pūshan, Indra, the Maruts and the Azvins ...; in the Aprī hymns she forms a triad with the sacrificial goddesses Iḍā and Bhāratī; accord. to a myth told in the VS. xix, 12, Sarasvatī through speech [vācā] communicated vigour to Indra; in the Brāhmaṇas she is identified with vāc, ‘ Speech ’, and in later times becomes goddess of eloquence see below) ṚV. &c.;

N. of a well-known small river (held very sacred by the Hindūs; identified with the modern Sursooty, and formerly marking with the Dṛishadvatī one of the boundaries of the region Arya-deśa and of the sacred district called Brahmāvarta ..., this river is represented as flowing into the sea, although later legends make it disappear underground and join the Ganges and Jumnā at Allahābād;

N. of various rivers (esp. of rivers which in sacredness are equal to Sarasvatī and which are three accord. to AV. vi, 101, and seven accord. to MBh.);

N. of the goddess of eloquence and learning (cf. above; she is opposed to Śrī or Lakshmī [cf. Vikr. v, 24], and sometimes considered as the daughter and also wife of Brahmā, the proper wife of that god being rather Sāvītri or Gāyatrī; she is also identified with Durgā, or even with the wife of Viṣṇu and of Manu, and held to be the daughter of Daksha);

speech or the power of speech, eloquence, learning wisdom;

a celestial or oracular voice;

a cow;

an excellent woman;

N. of various plants (Cardiospermum Halicacabum, Egle Marmelos, Ruta Graveolens &c.);

N. of a two-year-old girl representing Durgā at her festival;

of a poetess;

of various other women;

of one of the ten mendicant orders traced back to Śaṅkarācārya (whose members add the word sarasvatī to their names).

Wikipedia

In Hinduism Saraswati ... is the goddess of knowledge, music and the arts. She is the consort of Brahma. Saraswati is considered to be the “mother of the Vedas”...

Saraswati is known as a guardian deity in Buddhism who upholds the teachings of Gautama Buddha by offering protection and assistance to practitioners.

Mythology

In the Rigveda, Saraswati is a river as well as its personification as a goddess. In the post-Vedic age, she began to lose her status as a river goddess and became increasingly associated with literature, arts, music, etc. In Hinduism, Saraswati represents intelligence, consciousness, cosmic knowledge, creativity, education, enlightenment, music, the arts, and power. Hindus worship her not only for “secular knowledge”, but for “divine knowledge” essential to achieve moksha.

In some Puranas (like Skanda Purana) she is sister of Shiva (Shivaanujaa) and in some Tantras with Ganesha...

According to Vedanta she is considered to be the feminine energy and knowledge aspect (Shakti) of Brahman, as one of many aspects of Adi Shakti.

Iconography

The goddess Saraswati is often depicted as a beautiful, light-skinned woman dressed in pure white often seated on a white Nelumbo nucifera, which symbolizes that she is founded in the experience of the Absolute Truth. Thus, she not only has the knowledge but also the experience of the Highest Reality. She is mainly associated with the color white, which signifies the purity of true knowledge. Occasionally, however, she is also associated with the colour yellow, the colour of the flowers of the mustard plant that bloom at the time of her festival in the spring. She is not adorned heavily with jewels and gold, unlike the goddess Lakshmi, but is dressed modestly — representing her preference of knowledge over worldly material things.

She is generally shown to have four arms, which represent the four aspects of human personality in learning: mind, intellect, alertness, and ego. Alternatively, these four arms also represent the 4 Vedas, the primary sacred books for Hindus. The Vedas, in turn, represent the 3 forms of literature:

Poetry — the Rigveda contains hymns, representing poetry

Prose — Yajurveda contains prose

Music — Samaveda represents music.

The four hands also depict this thus — prose is represented by the book in one hand, poetry by the garland of crystal, music by the veena. The pot of sacred water represents purity in all of these three, or their power to purify human thought.

She is shown to hold the following in her hands:

A book, which is the sacred Vedas, representing the universal, divine, eternal, and true knowledge as well as her perfection of the sciences and the scriptures.

A mālā (rosary) of crystals, representing the power of meditation and spirituality.

A pot of sacred water, representing creative and purification powers.

The vina, a musical instrument that represents her perfection of all arts and sciences. Saraswati is also associated with anurāga, the love for and rhythm of music which represents all emotions and feelings expressed in speech or music. It is believed that children born with that name will prove to be very lucky in their studies.

A hamsa [swan] is often located next to her feet. The sacred bird, if offered a mixture of milk and water, is said to be able to drink the milk alone. It thus symbolizes discrimination between the good and the bad or the eternal and the evanescent. Due to her association with the bird, Saraswati is also referred to as Hamsavahini, which means “she who has a hamsa as her vehicle”. She is usually depicted near a flowing river, which may be related to her early history as a river goddess. Sometimes a peacock is shown beside the goddess. The peacock represents arrogance and pride over its beauty, and by having a peacock as her mount, the Goddess teaches not to be concerned with external appearance and to be wise regarding the eternal truth.

Worship

In Hindu beliefs, great significance is attached to offering honey to this goddess, as honey is representative of perfect knowledge. hymns dedicated to her include Saraswati Vandana Mantra.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Saraswati. Goddess associated with art, aesthetics, learning, sacred speech, and wisdom. Saraswati is the patron deity of culture in all its manifestations. The spoken word is considered very powerful in Hindu culture and Saraswati can either promote or frustrate one’s efforts by conferring or withdrawing the ability to speak clearly. Her association with sacred speech goes back to the time of the sacrificial manuals known as the Brahmanas, in which the cult of sacrifice was based on the precise performance of sacred speech and ritual. Her iconography emphasizes her connection with the life of the mind: She holds a book, a crystal (symbolic of a purified mind), a vina (musical instrument), and a rosary (associated with religious rites, and particularly with the repetition of the sacred sounds known as mantras). Her animal vehicle is the swan, whose white color is a symbol of purity and whose high flight is a symbol of transcendence. Through Saraswati’s blessings (ashirvad) human beings can transcend their biological condition to create works of art and culture.

Saraswati is usually believed to be married, although different mythic sources give her different husbands. In some cases she is described as the wife of the god Brahma, the creator; here their joint activity encompasses the formation of the material world and its transformation through human cultural activity. In other stories she is described as the wife of the god Vishnu, and thus a co-wife of Lakshmi. Here the realms of Lakshmi and Saraswati can be seen as giving differing messages about the “good things” in life— while Lakshmi grants wealth and material prosperity, Saraswati brings wisdom and culture. A popular Indian saying reports that Saraswati’s devotee (bhakta) will never make money, while a follower of Lakshmi (whose vehicle is the owl) will be “blind” to spiritual wisdom.

Macdonell. Vedic mythology

Though there is nothing to show distinctly... that Saraswati is ever anything more, in the RV [Rig Veda] than a river goddess, we find her identified in the Brahmanas ..., with Vac, Speech, and in post-Vedic mythology she has become goddess of eloquence and wisdom, invoked as a muse and regarded as the wife of Brahma.

Saraswati River

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Saraswati River. One of the seven sacred rivers of India, along with the Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Indus, and Cauvery. The Saraswati is particularly interesting because no one is sure exactly where this river is located. A river by this name is mentioned in the hymns of the Vedas, the earliest and most authoritative Hindu religious texts, and thus the Saraswati River would seem to have been in the northeastern part of India, in which these hymns are set. In modern times a Saraswati River flows through the northern Indian state of Haryana and dries up in the desert of the state of Rajasthan. Archaeologists have found extensive settlements from the Indus Valley civilization on its banks, indicating that in earlier times the river was an active tributary of the Indus. Popular belief holds that the Saraswati continues to flow underground, and joins the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers at their confluence in Allahabad. This reputed confluence of three sacred rivers is the source for one of the site's names, Triveni ("triple stream").

See also:

Vak

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sarasvatī — from saras = "flowing" and vati = "having".

Wikipedia

The name Saraswati came from "saras" (meaning "flow") and "wati" (meaning "a woman"). So, Saraswati is symbol of knowledge; its flow (or growth) is like a river and knowledge is supremely alluring, like a beautiful woman.

Related words

Sarada

Vac

Veda

Vidya

Sarira

Variant spellings

sarira

sharira

śarīra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śarīra — ... body; “that which perishes”; sheath

1. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, the body is that which is supported by the self, controlled by the self, and exists for the sake of the self. It has eight constituents: the five elements (mahābhūta), primordial Nature (prakṛti), egoism (ahañkāra), and the Great (mahat).
2. It is divided into the gross body (sthūla-śarīra), the subtle body (liṅga or sūkṣma-śarīra), and the causal body (kāraṇa-śarīra).
3. Advaita Vedānta calls the causal body the sheath of bliss. The subtle body is composed of the mental sheath, the sheath of the intellect, and the sheath of breath. The gross body is composed of the food sheath.
4. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the body is made up of earth, water, fire, and air and is not constituted of the five elements as postulated by Sāṅkhya and Advaita Vedānta.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śarīra -

the body, bodily frame, solid parts of the body (pl. the bones);
any solid body (opp. to udaka &c.);
one's body i.e. one's own person;
bodily strength;
a dead body

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Sarira (etymology doubtful), the body, (in Nyāya) an object of Right Knowledge (Prameya) and defined as the site of motion (ceṣṭā), of the senses (indriyas), and of the objects (arthas) of pleasure and pain.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Three Acharyas and Narayana Guru tradition

Sarira. Body; “that which perishes.” According to the Upanisadic wisdom and the teachings of Narayana Guru, the numerous perishable forms assumed by the one imperishable Reality or Brahman, just as one imperishable gold substance assumes various ornament forms.

According to the Gīta, this sarira is inclusive of what we call the animating principle (cetana) in beings.

All the acaryas admit the classification of sarira into gross body (sthūla-sarira), subtle body (sūkṣma-sarira), and causal body (kāraṇa-sarira).

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

THE BODY (śarīra) is said to be the site of motion (ceṣṭā), of the senses (indriyas) and of the objects (arthas) of pleasure and pain, As such, the body is the field of the souls experiences as it strives to reach what is desirable and avoid what is undesirable, all of which are made known through the senses, the instruments through which the soul comes in contact with the outer world.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

Śarīra is to be taken in its literal sense as that which disintegrates. In the womb of the mother the process of body-building and faculty gathering takes place. When all the faculties are properly structured and coordinated to function, the child comes out of the womb. At the time of procreation, there is a great gathering of the essences of the father and mother in the selection of chromosomes. A very crucial bond is made between the monitoring elements in tire helix. All these are scattered at the time of death. Not only does the personality disintegrate but also the elements that make up the body: its concreteness, viscosity, gaseousness, thermal factor and electrical function. They are all diffused. Death nullifies all the provisions given to the individuated person... The Sanskrit term for body, śarīra, means “having the quality of disintegration or breaking up.” The śarīra is the material basis in which the vital principles are held.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The physical body (sarira) is made up of the elements: earth, air, fire, water and ether; it is insentient. The Self is pure and self-luminous and thus self-evident. The relation between the two is sought to be established by positing a subtle body, composed of the subtle aspects of the five elements on the one hand, and the reflected light of the Self on the other. In this way the subtle body which is synonymous with the mind, is both sentient and insentient, i.e., abhasa. Again, by the play of the pure quality (satva guna) on the elements, their brightness (satva aspect) manifests as the mind (manas), and the senses (jnanendriyas); by the play of rajas (active quality), the raja (active) aspect manifests as life (prana) and limbs (karmendriyas); by the play of dullness (tamas) the tama (dark) aspect manifests as the gross phenomena of the body, etc.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

śarīra — from the verb root śrī = “to waste away”.

Related words

Deha
Kosha

Linga sarira

Sanskrit

Śarīra — शरीर

śarīra - शरीर

The three bodies

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

Later [after the doctrine of the five sheaths/koshas] Vedānta also developed a doctrine of the three bodies that comprise a human being, which ostensibly seems to possess only one body. These are the sthula-sarira (or gross body) which corresponds to the annamaya kosa; the sukma-sarira (or subtle body), which corresponds to the pranamaya —the manomaya —and the vijñānamaya kosa and the karana-sarira (or casual body), which corresponds to the anandamaya kosa. The true self—the atman —lies beyond all the five sheaths and the three bodies or may be said to constitute their nucleus depending on how one chooses to describe it

Sat

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sat — ... existence; reality; being.

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, the Absolute is pure Being.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sat -

being, existing, occurring, happening, being present;

abiding in;

belonging to (gen.);

living;

lasting, enduring;

real, actual, as any one or anything ought to be, true, good, right (tan na sat, 'that is not right'), beautiful, wise, venerable, honest;

a being, (pl.) beings, creatures;

a good or wise man, a sage;

good or honest or wise or respectable people;

that which really is, entity or existence, essence, the true being or really existent (in the Vedānta, 'the self-existent or Universal Spirit, Brahma') RV. &c. &c.;

that which is good or real or true, good, advantage, reality, truth;

water;
(in gram.) the terminations of the present participle;
well, right, fitly

Dictionary - Runes

Sat: (Skr.) Being, a metaphysical concept akin to Eleatic thinking, which a school of thinkers regards as fundamental, as in Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.1: "In the beginning . . . this world was just being, one only, without a second." It refutes the theory of non-being. K.F.L.

Wikipedia

Sat is a Sanskrit adjective meaning "the ideal; pure and true essence (nature)" of an entity or existence in the Vedanta. It can thus be concluded as "the self- existent or Universal Spirit, Brahman".

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sat. In Indian philosophical thought, the most basic denotation for "that which (really and truly) exists." The term is a present participle of the verb "to be," so a fairly common translation is "Being," but the word also carries connotations relating to the idea of Truth—that things that exist are both "real" and "true." Sat is the first of the three attributes traditionally ascribed to the unqualified, ultimate Brahman as sacchidananda, along with consciousness (chit) and bliss (ananda).

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

It is said in the Yogic tradition that in the Sahasrara, the Lotus over the head of the perfected Yogi, the Goddess Kundalini and her Lord, Siva, are united. She is called Chit, Consciousness, and He is called Sat, Reality. They unite in a place within the Sahasrara called the Chandra-loka or "Moon-World". It is the abode of Paramananda, "Supreme Bliss".

Muller. The Upanishads, Part 1

... the Sat, ... , that which is, or Satya, the true, the real. It alone exists in the beginning and for ever; it has no second. Whatever else is said to exist, derives its real being from the Sat. How the one Sat became many, how what we call the creation, what they call emanation (πρόοδος), constantly proceeds and returns to it, has been explained in various more or less fanciful ways by ancient prophets and poets. But what they all agree in is this, that the whole creation, the visible and invisible world, all plants, all animals, all men are due to the one Sat, are upheld by it, and will return to it.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... sat, existence. I exist, you exist, this couch exists, the house exists, the sky exists, the world exists. All these can be brought under one common heading of existence. All that exists is a genuine existence which implies the existence of all. It's called sat.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Sat Being, called the adhara = the substratum...

Maya cannot obscure Sat, but it does obscure Chit and Ananda, making them appear as particulars.

...

(2) This (sat) Being is similar in all, as honey gathered from different flowers.

(3) There is no difference in the sat of individuals as illustrated by the state of deep sleep. The question arises - if so, why does not each know it in sleep?

(4) Because the individuality is lost. There is only sat left. Illustration: rivers lost in the ocean.

...

Talk 283.

D.: How can one become jitasangadoshah (free from the stain of association)?

M.: By satsanga (association with the wise). "Satsangatve nissangatvam, nissangatve nirmohatvam, nirmohatve nischalatatvam, nischalatatve jivanmuktih." Satsanga means sanga (association) with sat. Sat is only the Self. Since the Self is not now understood to be Sat, the company of the sage who has thus understood it is sought. That is Sat-sanga. Introversion results. Then Sat is revealed.

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Sat - participle of the root as, to be.

Related words

Ananda

Asat

Cit

Saccidananda

Satya

Sanskrit

Sat — सत्

sat - सत्

Muller. *The Upanishads, Part 1*: I have thought it best therefore to keep as close as possible to the Sanskrit original, and where I could not find an adequate term in English, I have often retained the Sanskrit word rather than use a misleading substitute in English. It is impossible, for instance, to find an English equivalent for so simple a word as Sat, τὸ ὄν. We cannot render the Greek τὸ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ὄν by Being or Not-being, for both are abstract nouns; nor by 'the Being,' for this would almost always convey a

wrong impression. In German it is easy to distinguish between das Sein, i.e. being, in the abstract, and das Seiende, tò öv. In the same way the Sanskrit sat can easily be rendered in Greek by tò öv, in German by das Seiende, but in English, unless we say 'that which is,' we are driven to retain the original Sat.

Sat chit ananda

See: Saccidananda

Satsampatti

Variant spellings

satsampatti
shatsampatti
satsampat

Definitions

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Satsampat ... right conduct, which consists of the six acquirements, viz. (1) tranquillity (sama), (2) self-restraint (dama), (3) tolerance, (uparati), (4) endurance (titiksha), (5) faith (sraddha), and (6) mental equipoise (samadhana); (in Vedanta) one of the four qualifications listed by Samkara for a student of philosophy, viz. (1) right discrimination (viveka) (2) right dispassion and indifference (vayragya), (3) right conduct (satsampat), and (4) right desire (mumuksutva).

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

The Six Virtues (Shatsampatti) : Dama = external control, control of conduct; Uparati = tolerance, nonassociation with impurity; Sama — control of thought, subjugation of the senses, peace; Titiksha = endurance, indifference to the pairs of opposites; Srad-dha = faith; Samadhana = constant spiritual Realization.

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Satsampatti, or the six treasures: These form the ethical foundation of spiritual life. Their practice prepares the inner faculties for the cultivation of higher knowledge.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Karapatra. Advaita Bodha Deepika

... Next must be effaced the latencies connected with the objects of the senses (vishayavasana) such as sound etc. These latencies are the running of the senses such as hearing etc., after their objects.

D.: How can these latencies be effaced?

M.: By a practice of the six-fold discipline consisting of sama, dama, uparati, titiksha, samadhana and sraddha, withdrawing the mind from going outwards, controlling the senses, not thinking of the objects of the senses, forbearance, fixing the mind on the Reality and faith.

Sankara tradition

Vedantaparibhasa. Dharmaraja

40. Control of the internal sense is śama; restraint of the external senses is dama; non-existence of distraction is uparati; endurance of pairs [of opposites] like heat and cold is titikṣā; concentration of mind is samādhāna; faith in the words of the preceptor and of the Vedānta is śraddhā.

83. The Bhāmati gives a slightly different account of śama, etc. Śama is subjugation of the internal sense; the capacity of the mind so subjugated for the investigation of truth is dama; the desire to abandon objects is titikṣā; turning away from objects is uparati; and śraddhā is faith in the truth.

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Satsampat from sat used in composition for sas, six + sampat.

Related words

Dama

Sadhanacatustaya

Sama

Samadhana

Sraddha

Titiksa

Sattva

Variant spellings

sattva
sattwa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sattva — ... pure; steady; goodness; illuminating; buoyant; joy; pleasure.

1. One of the three qualities (guṇa). Its nature is of pleasure and it serves to illumine. (See guṇa.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sattva -

being, existence, entity, reality (Īśvara-sattva, 'the existence of a Supreme Being');

true essence, nature, disposition of mind, character;

spiritual essence, spirit, mind;

vital breath, life, consciousness, strength of character, strength, firmness, energy, resolution, courage, self-command, good sense, wisdom, magnanimity;

the quality of purity or goodness (regarded in the Sāṃkhya phil. as the highest of the three Guṇas or constituents of Prakṛiti because it renders a person true, honest, wise &c., and a thing pure, clean &c.);

material or elementary substance, entity, matter, a thing;

a substantive, noun;

a living or sentient being, creature, animal;

embryo, fetus, rudiment of life;

a ghost, demon, goblin, monster;

N. of a son of Dhṛitarāshṭra

Wikipedia

In Hindu philosophy, sattva is the most rarefied of the three gunas in Samkhya, sāttvika "pure", rājasika "dim", and tāmasika "dark". Importantly, no value judgement is entailed as all gunas are indivisible and mutually qualifying.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In many scriptures it is written that at the beginning of the Treta Yuga, the second Age, the division of mankind into Four Varnas or “Colours” took place. These “colours”, which have been associated with and worked out in various race-theories in India, were originally symbolical in meaning. The highest Varna, that of the Brahmanas or “knowers of Truth”, was white. It is the “colour” of light, of the Sattva Guna or “quality of purity and harmony”. In the Golden Age there were “only Brahmanas”.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sattva (“goodness”). One of the three fundamental qualities (gunas) believed to be present in all things. The other two gunas are rajas (“passion”) and tamas (“darkness”). According to this model, the differing proportions of these qualities account for the differences between the properties of concrete things, and in individual human capacities and tendencies. Of the three, sattva is invariably positive and carries associations with goodness, truth, wholesomeness, health, cognitive thought, and deep-rooted religious life. The notion of these three gunas originated in the metaphysics of the Samkhya school, one of the six schools of traditional Hindu philosophy. Although much of Samkhya metaphysics connected with the gunas have been long discredited, the idea of the gunas and their qualities has become a pervasive assumption in Indian culture.

Wikipedia

Sattvic objects

For an object or food to be sāttvika, it must be uncontaminated and should not spread evil or disease in the world. On the contrary its presence must purify the surroundings. Thus when an individual consumes such a food, he must feel that he is eating pure food. The food should be healthy, nutritious and clean. It should also not weaken the power or equilibrium of mind. This idea disallows aphrodisiac or other drugs and intoxicants that can affect the mind in such a way. It also disallows food or objects obtained after killing or causing pain to a creature. This is because the object would then have source in an evil act. It also excludes stale and pungent- smelling food.

Some objects that are considered sāttvika are:

Flowers, fruits, and food that are allowed as offerings to God

Neem tree

The milk of a cow which has grown in good surroundings, is healthy and has been obtained after the calf of the cow has been fed well. In cases when the cow has been ill treated, it becomes sinful or evil to drink such milk. It must be remembered that the cow is sacred for the Hindus.

Sattva is a state of mind in which the mind is steady, calm and peaceful. A sattvika man or woman works with no attachment to the result.

Sattvic creatures

A person or creature can be called sāttvika if the creature has predominantly sāttvika tendencies.

A sāttvika individual always works for the welfare of the world. He is always hardworking, alert and lives life moderately. He leads a chaste life. He eats moderately. He speaks the truth and is bold. He never uses vulgar or insulting language. He does not feel jealous nor is he affected by greed and selfishness. He does not cheat or mislead anyone. He does not even allow any evil ten-

dencies to enter his mind. He has good memory and concentration. He also has keen interest in improving his spiritual knowledge, and spends time worshiping god or meditating. In the extreme state he may even perform penance or uninterrupted meditation. A satvic individual can be recognized if his mind, speech and actions synchronize. Manasa, vacha, karmana are the three Sanskrit words used to describe such a state.

Some of the people considered by Hindus to be sãttvika are:

Holy men and bhaktas like Tulsidas, Tyagaraja, Tukaram

Ancient rishis like Vashishta, Kashyapa

Modern day sages like Ramana Maharshi, Aurobindo, Vivekananda

Divine beings in heavens

Some flora and fauna like lotus (symbolizes purity), cow (symbolizes the earth mother).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Even in the confused and vague comprehension where tamas dominates, there will necessarily be a certain amount of sattva to aid cognition because cognition never occurs without sattva providing the ground.

...

Only when the purity of sattva in its manifestation as citta is maintained can the yogi successfully carry out practices (sadhanas).

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

"Do you know what a worldly person endowed with sattva is like? Perhaps his house is in a dilapidated condition here and there. He doesn't care to repair it. The worship hall may be strewn with pigeon droppings and the courtyard covered with moss, but he pays no attention to these things. The furniture of the house may be old; he doesn't think of polishing it and making it look neat. He doesn't care for dress at all; anything is good enough for him. But the man himself is very gentle, quiet, kind, and humble; he doesn't injure anyone."

...

"This world itself is the forest. The three robbers prowling here are sattva, rajas, and tamas. It is they that rob a man of the Knowledge of Truth. Tamas wants to destroy him. Rajas binds him to the world. But sattva rescues him from the clutches of rajas and tamas. Under the protection of sattva, man is rescued from anger, passion, and the other evil effects of tamas. Further, sattva loosens the bonds of the world. But sattva also is a robber. It cannot give him the ultimate Knowledge of Truth, though it shows him the road leading to the Supreme Abode of God. Setting him on the path, sattva tells him: 'Look yonder. There is your home.' Even sattva is far away from the Knowledge of Brahman.

Vivekananda. Raja Yoga

when the waves cease, and the water of the lake becomes clear, there is the state called Saliva, serenity, calmness. It is not inactive, but rather intensely active. It is the greatest manifestation of power to be calm. It is easy to be active. Let the reins go, and the horses will drag you down. Any one can do that, but he who can stop the) plunging horses is the strong man. Which requires the greater strength, letting go, or restraining? The calm man is not the man who is dull. You must not mistake Sattva for dulness, or

laziness. The calm man is the one who has restraint of these waves. Activity is the manifestation of the lower strength, calmness of the superior strength.

...

By this practice [purification of the Sattva by Yoga] the Sattva material will prevail, and the mind will become concentrated and cheerful. The first sign that you are becoming religious is that you are becoming cheerful. When a man is gloomy that may be dyspepsia, but it is not religion. A pleasurable feeling is the nature of the Sattva. Everything is pleasurable to the Sāttvika man, and when this comes, know that you are progressing in Yoga.

Sankara tradition

[Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda](#)

117. Pure Sattva is (clear) like water, yet in conjunction with Rajas and Tamas it makes for transmigration. The reality of the Atman becomes reflected in Sattva and like the sun reveals the entire world of matter.

118. The traits of mixed Sattva are an utter absence of pride etc., and Niyama, Yama, etc., as well as faith, devotion, yearning for Liberation, the divine tendencies and turning away from the unreal.

119. The traits of pure Sattva are cheerfulness, the realisation of one's own Self, supreme peace, contentment, bliss, and steady devotion to the Atman, by which the aspirant enjoys bliss everlasting.

...

278. Tamas is destroyed by both Sattva and Rajas, Rajas by Sattva, and Sattva dies when purified. Therefore do way with thy superimposition through the help of Sattva.

See also:

in Ishvara: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Etymology

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Sanskrit sattva “purity”, literally “existence, reality”; adjectival sāttvika “pure”, anglicised sattvic.

Related words

Broader term: Guna

Rajas

Tamas

Sanskrit

Sattva — सत्त्व

sattva - सत्त्व

Satya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Satya — ... truth.

1. The world of the highest truth or being. (See loka.)
2. The Golden Age. An age of truth, innocence, and purity. The path to liberation in this age is meditation. (See yuga.)
3. One of the abstentions of the rāja-yogadiscipline. It is absolute truthfulness and abstaining from uttering any falsehood. (See yama.)
4. One of the five ethical principles of Jainism.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

satya -

true, real, actual, genuine, sincere, honest, truthful, faithful, pure, virtuous, good. successful, effectual, valid;

the uppermost of the seven Lokas or worlds (the abode of Brahmā and heaven of truth; see loka);

N. of the ninth Kalpa;

the Aśvattha tree;

N. of Viṣṇu;

of Rāma-candra;

of a supernatural being;

of a deity presiding over the Nāndī-mukha Śrāddha;

of one of the Viśve Devāḥ;

of a Vyāsa;

of one of the 7 Rishis in various Manvantaras

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Satya (abstract noun fr. sat), 'truth/ the first of the four ages (yugas), 'the golden age', also called the Krita Yuga; its duration is said to be 1,728,000 years.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

Commentary by Nitya:

It is said here that the term satya has three factors in it: sa, that which is presented; ya, that which is mysteriously formulated within our heart which gives us a compulsion to accept it as a truth corresponding to what is being experienced; and in between, stands ta, this meager little creature of a person, which is none other than a perishable body with its anatomy and morphology and

various kinds of bio-chemical metabolisms packed with filth, which is ever tending to decay and ultimately will be lost. That is why in the Upanisad it is said sa is truth, ya is truth, but ta is a dark spot (tamas). There is a lurking darkness, an island of ignorance, in the very heart of truth. This is not to be known merely intellectually, but through contemplation.

Three factors are to be recognized to contemplate on sa. First, sa refers to the totality while the individual is looking at it from a fragmentary point of view. We insert ourselves into the total by our own conceptual ability which is rather meager. Only the divine or shining principle in us, that is, the numinosity of the Self, is capable of meditating on the Self. That is the only channel by which the individual gets even a meager idea of truth. Secondly, the Absolute (brahman) is a tremendous mystery, mahadyaksa. What is so magnificent or tremendous is like the gold coin that can never be fully paid with our copper change. We should know this limitation to begin with. Thirdly, as there is a shadow cast by the light of the Supreme, truth is again and again interfered with by untruth. But one who knows the whole, including the limiting adjuncts, will be able to transcend that which seems to blindfold the individual seeker from time to time. It is not through sensuous perception or mentation the seer becomes a seer of truth, but only by exercising a contemplative transcendence.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 33.

A visitor: "The Supreme Spirit (Brahman) is Real. The world (jagat) is illusion," is the stock phrase of Sri Sankaracharya. Yet others say, "The world is reality". Which is true?

M.: Both statements are true. They refer to different stages of development and are spoken from different points of view. The aspirant (abhyasi) starts with the definition, that which is real exists always; then he eliminates the world as unreal because it is changing. It cannot be real; 'not this, not this!' The seeker ultimately reaches the Self and there finds unity as the prevailing note. Then, that which was originally rejected as being unreal is found to be a part of the unity. Being absorbed in the Reality, the world also is Real. There is only being in Self-Realisation, and nothing but being. Again Reality is used in a different sense and is applied loosely by some thinkers to objects. They say that the reflected (adhyasika) Reality admits of degrees which are named:

(1) Vyavaharika satya (everyday life) - this chair is seen by me and is real.

(2) Pratibhasika satya (illusory) - Illusion of a serpent in a coiled rope. The appearance is real to the man who thinks so. This phenomenon appears at a point of time and under certain circumstances.

(3) Paramartika satya (ultimate) - Reality is that which remains the same always and without change.

If Reality be used in the wider sense the world may be said to have the everyday life and illusory degrees (vyavaharika and pratibhasika satya). Some, however, deny even the reality of practical life - vyavaharika satya and consider it to be only projection of the mind. According to them it is only pratibhasika satya, i.e., an illusion.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

The word 'satyam' is a commonly used word and means that which exists and is real. When you say, 'puspam satyam', then it means 'flower is real'. That which is false, asatya also 'is'. So we know satya and asatya, 'this is true', 'this is not true'. We understand dream as asatya, the waking as satya. The sense that we give [here] to the word 'satyam' is a time-bound existence.

See: Mithya and satyam

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

satya - from the verb root as = "to be".

Related words

Mithya

Rita

Sat

Sanskrit

Satya — सत्य

satya - सत्य

Shakti

Variant spellings

sakti

shakti

śakti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śakti — ... power; capacity; energy; potency; Citi; Kundalini, force; the divine cosmic energy which projects, maintains, and dissolves the universe; the spouse of Śiva.

1. According to Dvaita Vedānta, it is one of the ten categories. ... It is of four kinds: mysterious power (acintya), causal or natural (kāraṇa or sahaja), occasioned (ādheya), and word (pada).
2. According to Vīra Saivism, it is of six forms: cit-śakti, parā-śakti, Mi-śakti, icchā-śakti, jñāna-śakti, and kriyā-śakti.
3. According to Śākta philosophy, it is consciousness as dynamic. Śakti is one with Śiva, being the dynamic aspect of his feminine part.
4. It is the Divine Mother, the latent power of Śiva.
5. The potential power latent in human beings is called Kuṇḍalini-śakti.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śakti -

power, ability, strength, might, effort, energy, capability;

effectiveness or efficacy (of a remedy);

regal power (consisting of three parts, prabhutva, personal pre-eminence; mantra, good counsel, and utsāha, energy);

the energy or active power of a deity personified as his wife and worshipped by the Śākta sect of Hindūs under various names (sometimes only three, sometimes eight Śakti goddesses are enumerated, as follow, Indrāṇī, Vaishṇavī, Śāntā, Brahmāṇī, Kaumārī, Nārasimhī, Vārāhī, and Māhezvarī, but some substitute Cāmuṇḍā and Caṇḍikā for the third and sixth of these: according to another reckoning there are nine, viz. Vaishṇavī, Brahmāṇī, Raudrī, Māhezvarī, Nārasimhī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Kārttikī, and Pradhānā: others reckon fifty different forms of the Śakti of Vishṇu besides Lakshmī, some of these are Kīrtti, Kānti, Tusṭi, Pusṭā, Dhṛiti, Śānti, Kriyā, Dayā, Medhā &c.; and fifty forms of the Śakti of Śiva or Rudra besides Durgā or Gaurī, some of whom are Guṇodarī, Virajā, Śālmālī, Lolakshī, Vartulakshī, Dīrgha-ghoṇā, Sudīrgha-mukhī, Go-mukhī, Dīrgha-jihvā, Kuṇḍodarī, ārdha-keśī, Vikṛita-mukhī, Jvālā-mukhī, Ulkā-mukhī &c.; Sarasvatī is also named as a Śakti, both of Vishṇu and Rudra: according to the Vāyu-Purāṇa the female nature of Rudra became twofold, one half asita or white, and the other sita or black, each of these again becoming manifold, those of the white or mild nature included Lakshmī, Sarasvatī, Gaurī, Umā &c.; those of the dark and fierce nature, Durgā, Kālī &c.);

the female organ (as worshipped by the Śākta sect either actually or symbolically);

the power or signification of a word (defined in the Nyāya as padasya padārthe sambandhaḥ i.e. 'the relation of a word to the thing designated');

(in Gram.) case-power, the idea conveyed by a case;

the power or force or most effective word of a sacred text or magic formula;

the creative power or imagination (of a poet);

help, aid, assistance, gift, bestowal;

a spear, lance, pike, dart ṚV. &c.;

a sword;

(prob.) a flag-staff;

a partic. configuration of stars and planets (when the latter are situated in the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th astrological house);

N. of a Muni or sage (the eldest of Vasishṭha's hundred sons; accord. to VP. he was father of Parāśara, and was devoured by king Kalmāsha-pāda, when changed to a man-eating Rākshasa, in consequence of a curse pronounced upon him by the sage; he is represented as having overcome Viśvāmitra at the sacrifice of king Saudāsa; he is regarded as the author of ṚV. ...; Śakti is also identified with one of the Vyāsas, and with Avalokiteśvara, and has elsewhere the patr. Jātūkarṇa and Sāmkṛiti)

Wikipedia

Shakti is the primordial cosmic energy and represents the dynamic forces that move through the entire universe. Shakti is the concept, or personification, of divine feminine creative power, sometimes referred to as 'The Great Divine Mother' in Hinduism. On the earthly plane, Shakti most actively manifests through female embodiment and fertility - while also existing in males, in its potential, unmanifest form.

Not only is the Shakti responsible for creation, it is also the agent of all change. Shakti is cosmic existence as well as liberation, its most significant form being the Kundalini Shakti, a mysterious psychospiritual force. Shakti exists in a state of svātantrya, dependence on no-one, being interdependent with the entire universe.

In Shaktism, Shakti is worshiped as the Supreme Being. However, in other Hindu traditions of Shaivism and Vaishnavism, Shakti embodies the active feminine energy Prakriti of Purusha, who is Vishnu in Vaishnavism or Shiva in Shaivism. Vishnu's female counterpart is called Lakshmi, with Parvati being the female half of Shiva.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shakti is the primordial creative, sustaining and destructive power of all existence. Although conceived as female in nature, Shakti is not an individual goddess, but rather a dynamic quality that all goddesses (and even all women, at least within the SHAKTA TANTRIC tradition) are said to possess. Unbridled, uncontrollable, spontaneous, ecstatic, blissful, and fierce, Shakti flows from manifestation to dissolution. She is the power to give forth and to withdraw.

The concept of Shakti is an ancient one and has pre-VEDIC, prepatriarchal origins. She is often traced to archaeological discoveries from the INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (3500–1700 B.C.E.) and to other prehistoric cultures throughout western and central Asia. In India the belief and worship of her all-pervading nature were pushed underground during the Vedic period. Shakti regains importance in classical and medieval Hinduism, in which in many cases this primordial power is personified as Devi, the GODDESS, and held in even higher regard than the male deities. Epic texts such as the Devi Bhagavata, Devi Purana, Kalika Purana, Markandeya Purana, and Mahabharata Purana accept and worship Shakti as the supreme nature of reality.

From earliest times the concept of Shakti appears in discussions of fertility as well as in reverence of the divine as mother of nature and cosmos. In the RIG VEDA the term Shakti is not mentioned; however, various goddess manifestations (Ratri, USHAS, ADITI, PRITHIVI, Vac-Sarasvati, goddesses) indicate the presence and influence that would later develop into the central figures of the Shakti cult (KALI, DURGA, Ambika, Uma) that are worshipped today.

The later Shakta Upanishads and tantras (see TANTRISM) contain philosophical references to Shakti that equate her with BRAHMAN. In these texts the dynamic, all-pervading nature of brahman and Shakti as the fabric underlying all existence cannot be separated into two. In the Shakta UPANISHADS as well as in the later Shakta tantras we find references to Shakti's independent omnipotent nature where the complementary receptive qualities of the masculine force as Shiva are "but a corpse" without her activating power.

In the epic RAMAYANA, Shakti does not have the independent cult status that we find in the later epics; however, she is held in high regard. In the MAHABHARATA, Shakti once again regains the agency and importance that are evident in the prepatriarchal traditions. Here we learn of her invincible power as Durga and the Matrikas. She is also referred to as Kalika, Ambika, Bhadrakali, Parvati, Mahadevi, and by other names.

Shakti continues to gain importance in the puranic texts, the earliest of which, the Markandeya Purana, with its 13 chapters called the Durga Saptasai and Devi Mahatmya, elaborate the primordial all-pervading power of Devi. Here she is philosophically conceived as pure consciousness; the creator, preserver, and destroyer; the one and the many manifestations of supreme divinity. Shakti is both immanent and transcendent, illusive and manifest, moving and unmoving. She is knowledge, will, and action behind

all existence. Here we find Goddess as the absolute reality, and yet she incarnates from time to time to help the gods to carry out her divine work. She also appears to help her devotees conquer the bonds of human suffering and the limitations of the physical realm in order to achieve liberation.

In the Markandeya Purana, the goddess is identified with PRAKRITI, the natural sustaining power of existence. She takes on various roles as mother, nurturer, warrior, lover to experience the LILA (play) of her divine consciousness. In the Devi Bhagavata Purana, Shakti is divided into three forms or qualities of existence: sattva (purity), rajas (passion), tamas (inertia).

As Mahasarasvati, Mahalakshmi, Mahakali, the Goddess takes the universe from creation to destruction and back to creation again. The Goddess's distinct iconographic forms are expressions of her multiple nature. She has both benevolent and pacific as well as wrathful and terrifying qualities. Her benevolent manifestations include Uma, Gauri, Parvati, Lakshmi, Sarasvati; her terrifying ones include Chamunda, Kali, Durga, the Mahavidyas, the Yoginis, and Matrikas.

In the Shakta tantras Shakti becomes Parashakti, the supreme reality who before manifesting through the physical world remains in a state of unmanifest repose. In this respect she is ineffable and indescribable. She is worshipped as Mahamaya or Mahadevi in addition to the numerous epithets that emphasize the myriad facets of her all-pervading nature.

The acknowledgment and worship of the nature of reality as female, as the mobilizing energizing primordial force called Shakti, speaks strongly to the inherently autonomous nature of women. This concept of divinity as female ultimately lies in the biological reality of the female body, in particular the power of the womb. Today statues, YANTRAS, and other iconic objects of Shakti worship are not mere representations of Goddess and her ultimate power, but rather embodiments of her Shakti.

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

The Moon is the mirror that reflects the light of the Sun. In the highest connection the Sun symbolizes Being and Reality and God, and the Moon Consciousness and its creative power.

...

The Sakti or "Power" of a God represents the God in his beings, creative aspect, and is generally conceived mythologically as the God's Consort. In some cases the Animal of a God is partially identified with his Sakti.

[Wikipedia](#)

Evolution

According to the Vedic seers, or rishis, a woman's femininity cannot exist apart from her Shakti, and Shakti is a metaphor for womanhood.

...

The Shakti goddess is also known as Amma (meaning 'mother') in south India, especially in the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. There are many temples devoted to various incarnations of the Shakti goddess in most of the villages in South India. The rural people believe that Shakti is the protector of the village, the punisher of evil people, the curer of diseases, and the one who gives welfare to the village. They celebrate Shakti Jataras with a lot of hue and great interest once a year. Some examples of incarnations are Gangamma, Aarti, Kamakshamma, Kanakadurga, Mahalakshamma, Meeenakshamma, Poleramma and Perantamma.

Shakti temples

There are 51 important centres of Shakti worship located in the Indian sub-continent, which are located in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Tibet and Pakistan. These are called Shakti Peethas. Most Shakti peethas have since developed into famous temple

complexes, including: Amarnatha (Jammu and Kashmir), Jwalaji (Himachal), "Tara Tarini" (Berhampur, Orissa), Katyayani (Chattarpur, Delhi), Kamakhya (Assam), Naina Devi (Himachal), Manasa devi (Chandigarh).

Main pithas in are Tuljapur (Jagdamba), Kolhapur (Mahalaxmi), Vani-Nashik (Sptashrunji), Mahurgad (Renukamata).

...

Adi-Shakti or Adi Shakti is a Hindu concept of the ultimate Shakti, the ultimate feminine power inherent in all Creation. This is especially prevalent in the Shakta denomination within Hinduism, which worships the Goddess Devi in all Her manifestations.

...

Bhajans and Mantras

There are many ancient Shakti devotional songs and vibrational chants in the Hindu and Sikh traditions. The recitation of the Sanskrit bij mantra MA is commonly used to call upon the Divine Mother, the Shakti, as well as the Moon.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

Brahman and Sakti are identical, like fire and its power to burn. When we talk of fire we automatically mean also its power to burn. Again, the fire's power to burn implies the fire itself. If you accept the one you must accept the other.

...

Women are, all of them, the veritable images of Sakti. In northwest India the bride holds a knife in her hand at the time of marriage; in Bengal, a nut-cutter. The meaning is that the bridegroom, with the help of the bride, who is the embodiment of the Divine Power, will sever the bondage of illusion. This is the 'heroic' attitude. I never worshipped the Divine Mother that way. My attitude toward Her is that of a child toward its mother.

"The bride is the very embodiment of Sakti. Haven't you noticed, at the marriage ceremony, how the groom sits behind like an idiot? But the bride – she is so bold!"

...

That which is Brahman is verily Sakti. I address That, again, as the Mother. I call It Brahman when It is inactive, and Sakti when It creates, preserves, and destroys. It is like water, sometimes still and sometimes covered with waves. The Incarnation of God is a part of the lila of Sakti.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

In the earlier stages the mind reverts to the search at long intervals; with continued practice it reverts at shorter intervals until finally it does not wander at all. It is then that the dormant sakti manifests. The satvic mind is free from thoughts whereas the rajasic mind is full of them. The sattvic mind resolves itself into the Life-current.

...

The Heart is the Self. It is not within or without. The mind is Its sakti. After the emergence of the mind, the universe appears and the body is seen to be contained in it. Whereas all these are contained in the Self and they cannot exist apart from the Self.

See: Siva and shakti

See also:

Avarana and vikshepa

Jnana and yoga

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

śakti - from śak - “to be able”.

[Wikipedia](#)

Shakti from Sanskrit shak - “to be able,” meaning sacred force or empowerment.

Related words

Maya

Siva

Sanskrit

Śakti — शक्ति

śakti - शक्ति

Shastra

Variant spellings

sastra

shastra

śāstra

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Śāstra — ... scripture; teaching; doctrine; treatise.

1. The sacred books of Indian thought are divided into four categories: primary scripture (Śruti—“that which is heard”), secondary scripture (Smṛti—“that which is remembered”), historical and mythological (Purāṇa), epics (Itihāsa), and Tantra.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

śāstra -

an order, command, precept, rule;
teaching, instruction, direction, advice, good counsel;
any instrument of teaching, any manual or compendium of rules, any book or treatise, (esp.) any religious or scientific treatise, any sacred book or composition of divine authority (applicable even to the Veda, and said to be of fourteen or even eighteen kinds [see under vidyā]; the word śāstra is often found after the word denoting the subject of the book, or is applied collectively to whole departments of knowledge e.g. vedānta-śāstra, a work on the Vedānta philosophy or the whole body of teaching on that subject; dharma-ś..., a law-book or whole body of written laws; kāvya-ś..., a poetical work or poetry in general; śilpi-ś..., works on the mechanical arts; kāma-ś..., erotic compositions; alaṅkāra ś..., rhetoric, &c.);
a body of teaching (in general), scripture, science

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shastra ... is a term for any authoritative scripture in the Brahminical or Hindu tradition. For example, the ARTHASHASTRA is an authoritative scripture on artha (worldly action) as it relates to a king. The DHARMASHASTRA is authoritative scripture concerning DHARMA (right conduct).

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The Hindu Śāstras (scriptures) are classified into Śruti, Smṛti, Purāna, and Tantra; the last three assume the first as their base, in fact, they are merely special presentments of it for the respective ages: Sruti for the Satya Yuga; Smṛti for the Tretā Yuga; Purāna for the Dvāpara Yuga; and Tantra for the Kali Yuga. The orthodox view is that the means used during the Satya Yuga became void of power; therefore, a new interpretation had to be given for each age in order to meet the needs of environment and the temperament and capacity of men living in each age. Śruti is that knowledge which is seen by the ṛṣis (sages), therefore without authorship; Smṛti is that knowledge which has been remembered by the ṛṣis (sages); the Purāṇas preserved the teachings and doctrines of the Veda for the declining intelligence and spirituality of men by means of mythology and stories; the Tantra is the universal scripture (śāstra) for this age and is therefore considered as a Yuga Śāstra. It is only a reinterpretation of the Veda for modern man and therefore is frequently called the Fifth Veda (the Mahābhārata is also frequently called by this name).

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shastra ("order"). A shastra is the name given to a technical treatise explaining the standards of a particular cultural or artistic discipline in Hinduism, as in Bharata's Natyashastra, a technical manual that discusses dance and the theater. When it is placed at the end of a compound (as in "Shilpa Shastra"), the word shastra can also serve to denote the whole body of teaching on that particular subject. All of the classical arts were placed under well-defined canons, each with its own specific rules and standards to guide artists: Sculpture and architecture were under Shilpa Shastra, music under Sangita shastra, and dance and theater under Natya shastra. Given the prevailing emphasis on upholding such strict rules, artistic genius meant doing something unusual within the larger confines of the tradition rather than creating something entirely new or original.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

śastra - from the verb root śās = 'to rule, teach'.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

shastra from shas, to order or enjoin.

Related words

Puranas

Smriti

Śruti

Sanskrit

Śāstra — शास्त्र

śāstra - शास्त्र

Shreyas

Variant spellings

sreyas

shreyas

śreyas

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śreyas— ... good; beneficial.

1. In the Upaniṣads there is a distinction made between preyas, what is pleasing or pleasurable, and śreyas, what is good or truly beneficial. One is warned never to be lured away by the merely pleasing, for there is no end to the pursuit of pleasure.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śreyas -

more splendid or beautiful, more excellent or distinguished, superior, preferable, better, better than;

most excellent, best;

propitious, well disposed to (gen.);

auspicious, fortunate, conducive to welfare or prosperity;

(in astron.) N. of the second Muhūrta;
of the third month;
(with Jainas) N. of the 11th Arhat of the present Avasarpinī;
N. of a deity of the Bodhi tree;
the better state, the better fortune or condition (sometimes used when the subject of a sentence would seem to require the masc. form);
good (as opp. to `evil `), welfare, bliss, fortune, happiness;
the bliss of final emancipation, felicity;
better, rather, rather than;
N. of a Sāman

Descriptions

Shreyas and preyas

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

What are sreyas and preyas?

Perennial values belonging to humanity as a whole are called sreyas. Preyas is that which belongs to our here and now achievements of an earthly nature. Arjuna was looked upon by all as a great hero of matchless chivalry. If he now leaves the battlefield he will be looked upon as a coward. He will not gain any merit, nor achieve the goal of averting bloodshed and death among his relatives. Preyas for him is gaining victory, the kingdom, riches, fame, and the like. If he runs away, he will lose all these. Sreyas for him is wisdom, or higher knowledge that leads to realization. If he does not attend to the necessary requirements to actualize his immediate goals and natural obligations, he will also lose track of his higher wisdom, by which alone he can see all as his Self, and that he is all as the one Self without a second.

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

There are three grades of values: the first belongs to the mundane world, the second to the hypostatic world of imagination, and the third transcends the first and second worlds of values and remains identified with the eternal Self. Mundane values are called preyas. They are perishable. Hypostatic imaginative values are called śreyas. They are also perishable. The supreme kind of imperishable value is nīśreyas. The mark of nīśreyas is total freedom from all bondage, physical or mental.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

Shreyas and preyas are the two things which man has to make a choice between. In the Kathopanishad it is said:

“Those who are endowed with wisdom prefer shreyas to preyas, for shreyas takes us to spiritual enlightenment while preyas brings in material (worldly) prosperity. How rightly is now Arjuna coming round when he prayed to the Lord that he should be instructed to attain shreyas (and not preyas).”

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Katha Upanishad

Yama: One is good, while another is pleasant. These two having different objects chain a man. Blessed is he who, between them chooses the good alone, but he who chooses what is pleasant, loses the true end.

Yama: The good and the pleasant take hold of man; the wise man examines and distinguishes them. The wise man prefers the good (Sreya) to the pleasant, but the ignorant man chooses the pleasant (Preya) for the sake of the body.

...

Yama: The ignorant, who live in the midst of darkness but fancy themselves as wise and learned, go round and round deluded in many crooked ways, as blind people led by the blind.

...

Yama: He (the Self) of whom many are not even able to hear, whom many, even when they hear of him, do not comprehend; wonderful is a man, when found, who is able to teach the Self; wonderful is he who comprehends the Self, when taught by an able teacher.

...

Yama: This knowledge is not to be obtained by argument, but it is easy to understand it, O dearest, when taught by a teacher who beholds no difference; thou hast obtained it now; thou art fixed in truth. May we have, O Nachiketas, an enquirer like thee!

Related words

Preyas

Sanskrit

Śreyas — श्रेयस्

śreyas - श्रेयस्

Siddhi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Siddhi — ... powers; modes of success; attainment; supernatural powers attained through mantra repetition, meditation, and other yogic practices.

1. There are eight traditional powers: aṇimā, laghimā, garimā, mahimā, prāptiḥ, prākāmyam, vaśitvam, andyatrakāmāvasāyitvam. These are the capacity to grow small and penetrate all things; lightness or the ability to rise up; extreme heaviness; extensive magnitude; extreme reach; obtaining all the objects of one's desire; infallibility of purpose.
2. Other powers include the ability to fly (dardura); the conquest of death (mr̥tyuñjaya); the ability to acquire hidden treasure (pātāla-siddhi); the ability to fly over the earth (bhūcari); the ability to enter into another's body (kāya-siddhi); the ability to fly in the sky

(khecari); knowledge of the past, present, and future (trikāla-jñāna); the power to die at will (icchā-mṛtyu), the power to be free from hunger, thirst, sorrows, infatuation, infirmity, old age, and death {anurmima-tvam), the ability to hear even at long distances (dūraśravaṇā), the ability to see even at long distances (dūrdarśana), the ability to move the body as quickly as the mind (mano-jaṅgama), the ability to take any form one wishes (kāmarūpa), the ability to enter into another person's body (parakāya-praveśa), the ability to die when one wishes (svacchañdamṛtyu), the ability to see the sportive activities of the gods (deva-kṛdādarśana), the ability to attain things of one's predetermination (sañkalpa-padārtha-prāpti), the ability to command anyone to do anything (apratihata-ādeśa).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

siddhi -

accomplishment, performance, fulfilment, complete attainment (of any object), success;

the hitting of a mark;

healing (of a disease), cure by;

coming into force, validity;

settlement, payment, liquidation (of a debt);

establishment, substantiation, settlement, demonstration, proof. indisputable conclusion, result, issue;

decision, adjudication, determination (of a lawsuit);

solution of a problem;

preparation, cooking, maturing, maturity;

readiness;

prosperity, personal success, fortune, good luck, advantage;

supreme felicity, bliss, beatitude, complete sanctification (by penance &c.), final emancipation, perfection;

vanishing, making one's self invisible;

a magical shoe (supposed to convey the wearer wherever he likes);

the acquisition of supernatural powers by magical means or the supposed faculty so acquired (the eight usually enumerated are given in the following śloka, aṇimā laghimā prāptiḥ prākāmyam mahimā tathā īśitvaṃ ca vaśitvaṃ ca tathā kāmāvasāyitā

Page1216,3; sometimes 26 are added e.g. dūra-śravaṇa, sarvajña-tva, agni-stambha &c.);

any unusual skill or faculty or capability;

skill in general, dexterity, art;

efficacy, efficiency;

understanding, intellect;

becoming clear or intelligible (as sounds or words);

(in rhet.) the pointing out in the same person of various good qualities (not usually united);

(prob.) a work of art;

a kind of medicinal root;

(in music) a partic. Śruti;

a partic. Yoga (either the 16th or 19th);

Success or Perfection personified;

N. of Durgā;

of a daughter of Daksha and wife of Dharma;
of the wife of Bhaga and mother of Mahiman;
of a friend of Danu;
of one of the wives of Gaṇeśa;
N. of Śiva

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Few aspects of Hindu tradition have caused more mystification, either innocent or intentional, than the teachings regarding the Ashtasiddhi or “eight achievements” of Yoga, and few teachings have caused so much misunderstanding, often with serious consequences, as these. The Siddhis, that is, literally, “achievements, perfections, satisfactions”, are often called “the abnormal” Yogic Powers”. Actually, of course, there is nothing “abnormal” in them. Like everything else, these “powers” become abnormal only by misunderstanding and misuse. ... The Siddhis indicate Mastery over the Seven Spheres, from the Earth to the Sun-Sphere. It is the task of the spiritual aspirant on the Path of Return to God-Reality to acquire the Siddhis; he should strive to be initiated into them.

The Eight Siddhis or Achievements of Yoga are the following. After each Sanskrit name the current, often most contradictory, renderings or interpretations are given between inverted commas. From these traditional fragments the truth shines forth. The Siddhis are:

1. Animā: “the power to identify oneself with the smallest atom”, “the power to project oneself into the smallest atom”. It is the mastery over the Element Earth. In it the Creative Power is projected and broken up to the utmost. It is the power of analysis, which has special application in material science. Ani is the point of a needle, Anu means atomic, and is also a name of Śiva, in his aspect of God of the Earth.
2. Prākāmya: “the capacity to derive enjoyment from everything heard or seen”, “the power to exercise an irresistible will upon the minds of others”, “the power to obtain more than one expects”, “the property to enter into the body of another”, “the power to maintain a youthful appearance for an unusual length of time”. It is the mastery over the Element Water, the emotional or astral plane. Kāma is Eros. The traditional renderings all refer to different aspects of the Element Water, which is also the plane of the emotional aspect of sex. Will or desire in various forms, youth, enjoyment, are characteristics of this plane. “The property to enter into the body of another” is not in the least a miraculous power. Great love and full sympathy with a person imply that power, which, for once, may even be taken almost literally. Physical birth is determined on the emotional or astral plane in two different ways.
3. Mahimā: “the power to expand one’s consciousness to the largest atom or form”, “power, might, glory”. It is the power of “greatness”, referring to the Element Fire, the mental plane. It is the mastery over thought, over the lower mind, over the creative urges of that mind. The attainment of this mastery truly implies “greatness”. It has been seen before, how height is the dimension which symbolizes this plane. It also requires greatness to overcome the adversaries on this plane, which in myths and fairy-tales take the form of giants, and which are known to modern psychology as forms of inflation.
4. Laghimā: “the power of levitation”, “the power to render the body light at will”. This achievement is the mastery over the Element Air, the plane of Buddhi or spiritual discrimination. The soul, by rising up into the Air, obtains a “bird’s-eye view” of the lower

planes. The mastery over Air may also take another form. Tradition gives alternatively another Siddhi, called Garimā. The Yoga-Vāsishṭa (Via; 81; 45) describes it as follows: “If by the practice of Pūraka (filling up with air, that is to say, inbreathing) one can succeed in filling up the Kundalini-nadi with Prana, and letting it remain there without any outflow, one’s body will become as heavy as a mountain, in addition to becoming vast”. ... It refers to the fact that the true greatness of the mind, bringing expansion of personality and influence, is due to the Spirit. Garimā further means “dignity, venerableness”.

5. Prāpti: “the power to give indefinite extension to the subtle body or its members”, “the power to obtain any desired objective anywhere”, “the connection of a being with his organs as their presiding deity, known as attainment”, “success in obtaining all desired objects and powers”, “arrival at the goal, deliverance, discovery, good fortune, joyful attaining”. In all these various traditional interpretations a fragment of the meaning has been preserved for this as well as for the other Siddhis. This particular achievement refers to Mastery, or rulership of the Ether-Sphere. The presiding deity is Indra or Jupiter, the Lord of the indriyas or organs. A person’s essential nature in the Ether Sphere should rule his functions on the lower planes. This power of Mastery implies the discovery of Heaven, the attainment of joy and deliverance.

6. Ísatva or Ísitā: “rulership”, “the power to control and create”. It is the power of and over Maya, granted by the Goddess of Maya. It is a power either for creation, multiplication, manifestation, or for simplification and dissolution by purification and unveiling of Consciousness. The word means “God-hood”. It refers to Śakti, Creative Power, the Great Goddess, the Moon-Sphere.

7. Vaśitva or Vaśitā: “the power of command and control, resulting from non-attachment to objects”, “self-control”, “self-restraint and power over the elements”. Indeed, it is the Power which controls Maya, and the Achievement of that Power. It controls and restrains the All contained in the self, and the self contained in the All. It refers to Śiva, the Lord of Maya, the Sun.

8. Kāmāvasāyitā: “consummation of any and every desire”, “the power of suppressing desire”. It is the Achievement of the fulfillment of the Heart’s supreme desire, which is the liberation from bondage and the salvation from suffering by the annihilation of all desire. It is God-Realization. It is the Power which subdues the Primordial Kāma or Desire, the Primal cause of Existence, and the Achievement of the Return unto GOD, Parabrahman, the Beyond, about Which or Whom man can only stammer “neti, neti”, that is “not this, not this”. It is Nirvana.

It is obvious that these Achievements or Powers, except the highest, can be misused. In fact, they are being gravely misused all the time, in as far as they are not yet truly achievements or perfections. In other words, their partial acquirement constitutes misuse, for perfection rules out the possibility of misuse. Yet, from another point of view, every one of these achievements is capable of being misused, as long as the next higher achievement has not yet been attained. The fact is, of course, that there cannot really be seven or eight, or even two or three perfections. There can be only Perfection, the perfection of a truly harmonized and aligned state of being which is symbolized as Sonship. Every one of the seven or eight Achievements by itself is only a partial achievement, from the point of view of the ideal to be attained. Hence the scriptures stress that the Goal is Siddhi, in the singular.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali’s Yoga

When a desire comes to our minds, it is immediately followed by a question: “Is it possible to fulfill that desire?” If it is possible, we get the answer, “It is attainable.” Attainment in Sanskrit is siddhi. The attainability of what is desired resides in its means. The means for attainment is called sadhanam. The person who endeavors to exploit the means of attainment is a sadhaka. The action or discipline that is implemented to actualize the attainment is sadhana. Thus, the possibility, means to be exploited, the aspirant who acts, the discipline or procedure of action, and attainment are five interrelated factors.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

Occult powers

(To the devotees) “By ‘siddhi’ I mean the attainment of the spiritual goal and not one of the eight occult powers. About the occult powers, Sri Krishna said to Arjuna, ‘Friend, if you find anyone who has acquired even one of the beget pride, and God cannot be realized if there is the slightest trace of pride.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

There was a talk in Bhagavan’s presence today about siddhas. Some people said, amongst other things, that someone had tried to attain siddhi and had succeeded. After hearing them all patiently for a long time, Bhagavan said in a tone of annoyance, “You talk of siddhas. You say they attain something from somewhere. For that purpose they do sadhana and tapas. Is it not really a siddhi or attainment for us who are really formless to have got a body with eyes, legs, hands, nose, ears, mouth and to be doing something or other with that body? We are siddhas. We get food, if we want food; water, if we want water; milk, if we want milk. Are not all these siddhis? While we experience ever so many siddhis at all times, why do you clamour for more siddhis? What else is required?”

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

siddhi - from the verb root sidh = “to attain”.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

siddhi - present part. of the root sidh, to be accomplished, succeed.

Related words

Sadhana

Yoga

Sanskrit

Siddhi — सिद्धि

siddhi - सिद्धि

Sishya

Variant spellings

sishya

shishya
śiṣya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śiṣya— ... disciple; student.

1. One who is taught by the teacher (śikṣyata iti śiṣyah).
2. One who has become improved/introverted as a result of study of the scriptures (athavā siṣyāte viśiṣyate śāstrādi parijñanena bahirmukhāpekṣayā iti śiṣ).
3. One who controls and curbs the activities of one's own sense organs (indriyādi pravṛtim śikṣyati iti śiṣyah).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śiṣya -

to be taught;

to be instructed;

a pupil, scholar, disciple;

passion, anger;

violence

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

The bipolar Guru-Sishya relationship requires not only a genuine Brahman-knowing Guru, but also an enthusiastic or earnest disciple. Only then can the Word of the Guru be elaborated. And in conforming to this genuine relationship, the Sishya on his part has to fulfil certain preliminary requirements.

These, in the Vedanta context are often referred to as the six graces or treasures (sat-sampatti). He must first of all be prepared to listen and not be in a hurry to teach himself. He has thus to submit himself to a self-imposed period of preliminary silence, similar to that imposed in the Pythagorean communities at Crotona (the 'Mystiké Sioté'). This patient waiting must be of a positive, alert and actively waking kind, and not just a sloppy succumbing into the torpor of laziness. The ego has to be held back or encouraged, as required, stage by stage, to positive inner adjustment. Besides the truthfulness, purity and love of wisdom for its own sake which constitutes the pedestal or base upon which the statue of the seeker, the Brahmacharin or Sishya is to be erected, there is also implied in these six qualities a certain rigorous immunity to hardships, an adaptability, and a stamina that is uncomplaining and capable of smiling under duress. ... The typical Sishya of the Upanishads is often an interesting study himself. He is a Devadatta (God-given) or a Satyakama (passionate lover of truth), and usually of tender years.

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Sishya - A disciple, specifically a seeker of wisdom who is willing to be disciplined by a Guru.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. The word of the Guru

... the Sishya ... has to fulfil certain preliminary requirements.

These, in the Vedanta context are often referred to as the six graces or treasures (sat-sampatti). He must first of all be prepared to listen and not be in a hurry to teach himself. He has thus to submit himself to a self-imposed period of preliminary silence, similar to that imposed in the Pythagorean communities at Crotona (the 'Mystiké Sioté'). This patient waiting must be of a positive, alert and actively waking kind, and not just a sloppy succumbing into the torpor of laziness. The ego has to be held back or encouraged, as required, stage by stage, to positive inner adjustment. Besides the truthfulness, purity and love of wisdom for its own sake which constitutes the pedestal or base upon which the statue of the seeker, the Brahmacharin or Sishya is to be erected, there is also implied in these six qualities a certain rigorous immunity to hardships, an adaptability, and a stamina that is uncomplaining and capable of smiling under duress. ... The typical Sishya of the Upanishads is often an interesting study himself. He is a Devadatta (God-given) or a Satyakama (passionate lover of truth), and usually of tender years.

Traditionally, the aspiring youth arrives at the abode of the Guru who generally lives away from society in a forest hermitage. The future Sishya is expected to bring a token bundle of firewood as a sign of his willingness to submit to the household discipline required of him when he enters the Gurukula (the family of the Guru) 16, He proves in this way that he is one who has sacrificed all for the wisdom that he prizes more than family and friends...

So, like a stray animal pleading for adoption, he appears of his own accord at the Guru's threshold. He is docile, of good manners and of pleasant mien. He is earnest enough and zealous to pay the utmost price for the wisdom he seeks; willing, if need be, to give the loyalty of a lifetime. He does not know wisdom in its completion, but he is aware that there is wisdom. He has, as it were, a foretaste of its value, known in a vague way, and this inkling gives him the impetus, enabling him to take the ultimate step to discover it with whole-hearted aim, come what may. All this is understood and symbolically implied when he knocks at the Guru's door. Thus he is deeply sensitive, but neither timid nor hesitant.

The Brahmacharin of tradition rises before the sun and usually has his morning dip in the nearest river or lake. There is nothing severe about this in a tropical climate. At early dawn he is ready for service at the Guru's bedside. Various kinds of service are exacted from him in keeping with his character as a student. Begging is not taboo provided it is just as much as is needed for elementary bodily needs.

Competition with others in this connection is forbidden, as may be seen from the story of Aruni who was reprimanded by the Guru, as mentioned in the Mahabharata. Extreme tests are sometimes applied 18 until the mutual adoption between the Sishya and the Guru becomes firmly established. It is an educative process, a drawing out, and, without the essential bi-polar adoption recognized on both sides, it must fail....

The testing period over, and adoption complete, proved by service to the Guru or by other methods, all is ready for the instruction, which generally takes but a little time to give. The mantra (sacred syllable or word) is given to the disciple, the Maha-vakyas (Grand Aphorisms) are bestowed, and the climax of the relationship is reached.

There is glory in being a Guru, but by its own terms there is greater glory in being a Sishya. The willingness, submission, discipline and extra good breeding implied in the tender strength of the personality of the Brahmacharin is no less a marvel than that of Guruhood.

See: **Guru-sishya relationship**

Etymology

General

[Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Shishya (“to be taught”). A word that in its literal meaning can refer to any student but in its most common sense refers to the disciple of a religious instructor (guru).

Related words

Brahmacarin
Guru
Gurukula

Sanskrit

Śiṣya — शिष्य

śiṣya - शिष्य

Siva

Name

Siva
Shiva
Śiva - शिवि
Śiva — शिव

General

[Wikipedia](#)

The Sanskrit word Shiva (Devanagari: शिवि, śiva) is an adjective meaning “pure”. As a proper name it means “The Auspicious One”, used as a name for Rudra. In simple English transliteration it is written either as Shiva or Siva. The adjective śiva, meaning “auspicious”, is used as an attributive epithet not particularly of Rudra, but of several other Vedic deities.

The Sanskrit word śaiva means “relating to the god Shiva”, and this term is the Sanskrit name both for one of the principal sects of Hinduism and for a member of that sect. It is used as an adjective to characterize certain beliefs and practices, such as Shaivism. Adi Sankara, in his interpretation of the name Shiva, the 27th and 600th name of Vishnu sahasranama, the thousand names of Vishnu interprets Shiva to have multiple meanings: “The Pure One”, or “the One who is not affected by three Gunas of Prakṛti (Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas)” or “the One who purifies everyone by the very utterance of His name.” Swami Chinmayananda, in his translation of Vishnu sahasranama, further elaborates on that verse: Shiva means “the One who is eternally pure” or “the One who

can never have any contamination of the imperfection of Rajas and Tamas”. Shiva is considered as the Hindu God who has no Aadi or Anta i.e. no birth/death.

Shiva’s role as the primary deity of Shaivism is reflected in his epithets Mahādeva (“Great God”; mahā = Great + deva = God), Maheśvara (“Great Lord”; mahā = Great + īśvara = Lord), and Parameśvara (“Supreme Lord”).

There are at least eight different versions of the Shiva Sahasranama, devotional hymns (stotras) listing many names of Shiva. The version appearing in Book 13 (Anuśāsanaparvan) of the Mahabharata is considered the kernel of this tradition. Shiva also has Dasha-Sahasranamas (10,000 names) that are found in the Mahanyasa. The Shri Rudram Chamakam, also known as the Śata-rudriya, is a devotional hymn to Shiva hailing him by many names.

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Siva — ... auspicious; the Ultimate Reality; Lord.

1. According to the Śaiva schools, Śiva is the supreme Godhead. The concept is traced to the Ṛg Veda and He is the same as Rudra.
2. Literally śiva means “good or auspicious.”
3. Lord Śiva exercises five functions: creation (sṛṣṭi), maintenance (sthiti), dissolution (samhāra), obscuration (tirodhāna), and grace (anugraha).
4. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, Śiva has eight qualities: independence, purity, self-knowledge, omniscience, freedom from mala, boundless benevolence, omnipotence, and bliss.
5. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, Śiva appears in eight forms: earth, water, air, fire, sky, the sun and the moon, and in human beings. See the benedictory (nāndī) verse of the Abhijñāna-śakuntala of Kālidāsa.
6. According to Vīra Śaivism, Śiva manifests in six forms...
7. A name for the all-pervasive supreme Reality. As one member of the Hindu trinity, He represents God as the destroyer. He is the personal God of the Śaivites. In His personal form, He is portrayed as a yogi wearing a tiger skin and holding a trident, with snakes coiled around His neck and arms.
8. According to Kashmir Śaivism, Śiva has five principles: Vidyā, Īśvara, Sadaśiva, Śakti, and Śiva. He also has five faces: Sadyo-jāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, and Īśana.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śiva -

(‘in whom all things lie’; perhaps connected with root śvi ...) auspicious, propitious, gracious, favourable, benign, kind, benevolent, friendly, dear;

happy, fortunate;

happiness, welfare;

liberation, final emancipation;

The Auspicious one’, N. of the disintegrating or destroying and reproducing deity (who constitutes the third god of the Hindū Trimūrti or Triad, the other two being Brahmā ‘the creator’ and Viṣṇu ‘the preserver’; in the Veda the only N. of the destroying de-

ity was Rudra 'the terrible god', but in later times it became usual to give that god the euphemistic N. Śiva <the auspicious> [just as the Furies were called <the gracious ones>], and to assign him the office of creation and reproduction as well as dissolution; in fact the preferential worship of Śiva as developed in the Purāṇas and Epic poems led to his being identified with the Supreme Being by his exclusive worshippers [called Śaivas]; in his character of destroyer he is sometimes called Kāla <black>, and is then also identified with <Time>, although his active destroying function is then oftener assigned to his wife under her name Kālī, whose formidable character makes her a general object of propitiation by sacrifices; as presiding over reproduction consequent on destruction Śiva's symbol is the Liṅga or Phallus, under which form he is worshipped all over India at the present day; again one of his representations is as Ardha-nārī, <half-female>, the other half being male to symbolize the unity of the generative principle ...; he has three eyes, one of which is in his forehead, and which are thought to denote his view of the three divisions of time, past, present, and future, while a moon's crescent, above the central eye, marks the measure of time by months, a serpent round his neck the measure by years, and a second necklace of skulls with other serpents about his person, the perpetual revolution of ages, and the successive extinction and generation of the races of mankind: his hair is thickly matted together, and gathered above his forehead into a coil; on the top of it he bears the Ganges, the rush of which in its descent from heaven he intercepted by his head that the earth might not be crushed by the weight of the falling stream; his throat is dark-blue from the stain of the deadly poison which would have destroyed the world had it not been swallowed by him on its production at the churning of the ocean by the gods for the nectar of immortality; he holds a tri-śūla, or three-pronged trident [also called Pināka] in his hand to denote, as some think, his combination of the three attributes of Creator, Destroyer, and Regenerator; he also carries a kind of drum, shaped like an hour-glass, called Damaru: his attendants or servants are called Pramatha; they are regarded as demons or supernatural beings of different kinds, and form various hosts or troops called Gaṇas; his wife Durgā [otherwise called Kālī, Pārvaṭī, Umā, Gaurl, Bhavānī &c.] is the chief object of worship with the Śāktas and Tāntrikas, and in this connection he is fond of dancing [see tāṇḍava] and wine-drinking; he is also worshipped as a great ascetic and is said to have scorched the god of love (Kāma-deva) to ashes by a glance from his central eye, that deity having attempted to inflame him with passion for Pārvaṭī whilst he was engaged in severe penance; in the exercise of his function of Universal Destroyer he is fabled to have burnt up the Universe and all the gods, including Brahmā and Viṣṇu, by a similar scorching glance, and to have rubbed the resulting ashes upon his body, whence the use of ashes in his worship, while the use of the Rudraksha berries originated, it is said, from the legend that Śiva, on his way to destroy the three cities, called Tri-pura, let fall some tears of rage which became converted into these beads: his residence or heaven is Kailāsa, one of the loftiest northern peaks of the Himalaya; he has strictly no incarnations like those of Viṣṇu, though Vīra-bhadra and the eight Bhairavas and Khaṇḍo-bā &c. are sometimes regarded as forms of him; he is especially worshipped at Benares and has even more names than Viṣṇu, one thousand and eight being specified in the 69th chapter of the Śiva-Purāṇa and in the 17th chapter of the Anuzāsana-parvan of the Mahā-bhārata, some of the most common being Mahā-deva, Śambhu, Śaṃkara, Íśa, Íśvara, Maheśvara, Hara; his sons are Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya);

a kind of second Śiva (with Śaivas), a person who has attained a partic. stage of perfection or emancipation;

any god;

a euphemistic N. of a jackal;

sacred writings;

(in astron.) N. of the sixth month;

a post for cows (to which they are tied or for them to rub against);

the fragrant bark of *Feronia Elephantum* L;

a kind of thorn-apple;
quicksilver;
a partic. auspicious constellation;
demon who inflicts diseases;
the swift antelope;
rum, spirit distilled from molasses;
buttermilk;
a ruby;
a peg;
time;
N. of a son of Medhatithi;
of a prince and various authors;
of a fraudulent person;
the god Śiva and his wife;
pl. N. of a class of gods in the third Manvantara;
of a class of Brāhmans who have attained a partic. degree of perfection like that of Śiva
welfare, prosperity, bliss;
final emancipation;
water;
rock-salt;
sea-salt;
a kind of borax;
iron;
sandal;
N. of a Purāṇa;
of the house in which the Pāṇḍavas were to be burnt

[Wikipedia](#)

Shiva (/ˈʃɪvə/; Sanskrit: शिवि Śiva, meaning “auspicious one”) is a major Hindu deity, and is the Destroyer or Transformer among the Trimurti, the Hindu Trinity of the primary aspects of the divine.

Shiva is one in whom the Universe ‘sleeps’ in a boundless void after destruction, before re-birth and during its existence. Shiva is therefore “eternal and purest”. Thus Shiva is The Reality. Shiva is therefore also The Consciousness (frees from the bonds of mortal desires); Shiva is The Bliss (roots out sin and fear); Shiva is Auspicious (makes the earth religious and an abode of safety and peace).

Shiva is a yogi who has notice of everything that happens in the world and is the main aspect of life. Yet one with great power, he lives a life of a sage at Mount Kailash. In the Shaiva tradition of Hinduism, Shiva is the Supreme God and has five important works: creator, preserver, destroyer, concealer, and revealer (to bless). In the Smarta tradition, he is regarded as one of the five primary forms of God. Followers of Hinduism who focus their worship upon Shiva are called Shaivites or Shaivas (Sanskrit Śaiva).

Shaivism, along with Vaiṣṇava traditions that focus on Vishnu and Śākta traditions that focus on the goddess Shakti, is one of the most influential denominations in Hinduism.

Shiva is usually worshipped in the abstract form of Shiva linga. In images, he is represented as immersed in deep meditation or dancing the Tandava dance upon Apasmara, the demon of ignorance in his manifestation of Nataraja, the Lord of the dance. He is also the father of the deities Ganesha, Murugan (Kartikeya), and Ayyappan (Dharma Sastha).

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shiva, “the beneficent one,” is the divinity at the center of the largest Hindu religious sect. The tradition identifies Shiva with the Vedic god RUDRA, a fierce divinity who caused diseases of cattle and men and was propitiated out of fear. Rudra was known by the epithet shiva (as he was known to relent).

Shiva as a separate divinity first appears in the RAMAYANA (c. 600–300 B.C.E.) and MAHABHARATA (c. 700 B.C.E.–100 C.E.) epics; he is cited in the SHVETASHVATARA UPANISHAD (c. 300 B.C.E.) as the highest divinity. Clearly Shiva has ancient roots in North India. Some see his form in a seal from the INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (c. 2600 B.C.E.) showing a seated figure with a buffalo-horned headdress and an erect penis.

It is clear that the worship of Shiva is quite ancient, many centuries more ancient than the first extant SHIVA LINGAM, which dates to the first century C.E. The LINGAM is an erect penis; it is the aniconic form that represents Shiva in the inner sanctum of virtually all temples dedicated to him. The lingam is nearly always shown surrounded by a circular stone rim that represents the YONI, or sexual organ, of the goddess, indicating his association with the divine feminine from a very early time.

In the stories of Shiva he is found first with his wife, SATI, who tragically dies, and then with Sati’s reincarnated form PARVATI. His divine family includes the amusing elephant-headed god GANESHA, Shiva and Parvati’s elder son, and KARTTIKEYA, the eternal youth with his peacock vehicle.

The basic Shiva myth depicts him in his youth as a fierce, ascetic naked wanderer with matted locks and smeared with ashes from human cremation grounds. He gads about willfully, not observing any social convention.

This all changes after the gods learn that only a son of Shiva can defeat the demon that is trying to usurp their power. They send Parvati to seduce him and then send the god of love to induce him to succumb. The uncooperative Shiva simply burns the god of love to ashes.

Eventually, however, Shiva does take to Parvati, and their lovemaking is famous in the literature. As they make love in a beautiful pleasure grove, his passion is so strong that everything in the grove becomes female—including an unfortunate king who happens into the grove. Shiva’s son was actually born by accident when he spilled his semen into fire. The fire could not contain the energy and so gave the seed to the GANGES. She, with all her coolness, could not contain it either, so she abandoned it in a bank of reeds. There Karttikeya was born, so named because he was weaned and raised as a child by a group of female stars called the Krittikas. The demon was eventually defeated.

Shiva is famed as Lord of the Dance; as such his NATARAJA form is known to all India and found in grand representation in many temples. He is also the Lord of chaos, who destroys all the universe with his final dance. But of course he may dance that same universe into existence again, if he so chooses.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shiva (auspicious). Along with the god Vishnu and the Goddess, one of the three most important deities in the Hindu pantheon. All three are notable for being virtually absent from the Vedas, and their collective rise to dominance (and the gradual eclipse of the original Vedic gods) points clearly to a definitive change in the Hindu tradition. Of the three, Shiva is not mentioned at all in the Veda. He is identified with the god Rudra, who first appears in a few of the late Vedic hymns and who is later identified in the Shvetashvatara Upanishad as the single supreme deity behind all things. The word Shiva (“auspicious”) first appears in this upanishad, but as an adjective modifying the feminine noun body.

Despite Rudra/Shiva’s appearance in the upanishad as a supreme divinity, his position is not clear-cut. He is described as a master of archery who dwells in the mountains (and thus away from human beings) and is implored not to use his arrows to harm either man or beast. It is certain that Rudra/Shiva is not a Vedic deity, and some have claimed that his roots lie in the ancient urban-cultural center known as the Indus Valley civilization, citing as evidence one of the seals found in Harappa, an ancient city of Pakistan, which shows a horned figure sitting cross-legged as if in meditation. This identification is possible but hardly compelling. A more likely possibility is that he entered the pantheon as a god worshiped by ascetics, who have always been associated with mountain dwellings. His connection with ascetics is reinforced by several ascetic characteristics attributed to Shiva, such as the matted locks and ash-smeared body. Ascetic origins would also account for his marginal status among the gods, since this would have rendered him an “outsider” to Vedic sacrificial cult, which was the “established” religion of the time. Shiva’s dramatic entry into the pantheon comes in the story of the death of his wife Sati. In this story, his father-in-law Daksha’s insulting remarks—that Shiva was an ascetic with no money, job, or family, and was unfit to join respectable society—finally resulted in the destruction of Daksha’s sacrifice as a sign of Shiva’s supremacy.

Shiva has retained this ambivalent, sometimes marginal quality in his iconography, his mythology, and his character. Perhaps his most basic and important characteristic is that he is a divinity whose nature allows him to move beyond the opposing forces (or dualities) within himself and the world by being at all times the possibility of both forces at once. Shiva can represent both the wild and dangerous side of life and the respectable and refined side. On the one hand, he is the typical ascetic, with matted hair, ash-smeared body, and a home on Mount Kailas in the remote Himalayas. On the other hand, he is Hindu society’s ideal for the good husband, who dotes upon his wife Parvati. His body is adorned with snakes and clothed with a bloody elephant skin, but he also wears the Ganges River and the crescent moon, which are associated with beauty, purity, and auspiciousness. His mythic deeds stress his overwhelming power, against which no enemy can stand, and his sudden and sometimes impetuous temper, seen best in the destruction of Kama, the god of love; yet this sudden violence contrasts with his grace and favor toward his devotees (bhakta), by whom he is given the name “quickly satisfied” (Ashutosh) and to whom he will give almost everything. Although he is portrayed as simple and without deceit (as Bholanath, the “simple lord”), he is also traditionally described as the expositor of the tantras, the most secret and hidden religious practice of all. This transcendence of all opposites can be seen in the images that commonly represent him: in his form as Nataraja, in which many of these contrary attributes are shown, or as Ardhanarishvara, in which the image is half male and half female. This transcendence of duality is also visible in the linga, the pillar-shaped object that is his symbolic form, whose base and shaft are interpreted as symbolizing male and female reproductive organs. Finally, one can see this transcendence in the tantric conception of the subtle body (the system of psychic centers, or chakras, that run throughout the human body), in which religious practice aims for the union of Shiva and Shakti. As Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty points out, through his actions Shiva embodies all the contradictory possibilities for human experience, and in mythic form provides a resolution that one ordinary human life can never provide.

In medieval times Shiva's devotees developed a doctrine of avatars (incarnations of Shiva who take the form of a variety of saints, sages, and minor deities who appear on earth to restore balance and perform other necessary acts), probably in response to the older and better developed notion of avatars of Vishnu. Unlike Vishnu's avatars, Shiva's do not seem to have been a way to create a place for smaller existing deities in the larger pantheon. Of Shiva's twenty-one avatars, the most important one is Hanuman, who is the only one with a well-established independent cult. The others were sages (such as Durvasas) and important beings, but the worship of Shiva's avatars has never upstaged the worship of Shiva himself, as has often happened with Vishnu.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Sexual symbolism exists widely in the ancient traditions. We read in Genesis, the basic tradition of the Bible (2; 24): "A man. . . shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." It has been shown in "Evolution, Paradise and the Fall", that this symbolizes "the mystic marriage".

The Linga of Siva, standing in the Ark of Sakti, representing the Yoni, symbolizes the Beginning and the End of spirituality or life, the state of Rest or Peace. In that state Static and Dynamic Godhead — Father and Mother — are One, and the soul is completely merged in God-Reality. The symbolism of the Linga, fixed immovably in the Receptacle, also implies that — in spite of the show of the apparent universe — God is perpetually in contact and at One with his Power, the World of Creation. The word "Linga" means etheric or subtle. The Linga is also the Axis of the Universe of the soul, its base represents the Earth and its head, Heaven. The Siva-linga is worshipped by communities and people of high spiritual integrity. These have been occasionally accused of "sex-worship" by ignorant or mentally impure adherents of other religions, who have happened to come across some semi-pornographic work about "sex-worship through the ages" (no particular book is meant), or "enlightening" statements of adherents of some modern school of psychology. Actually the Linga represents primarily the Spiritual Axis of the World of the soul. Its higher end symbolizes the Spiritual Pole, and its lower end the Pole of Manifestation.

Therefore the lower end symbolizes among other things the power of sex.

The Linga-symbol, which has survived to the present day practically only in the form of the Siva-linga of Hinduism, was known and revered almost universally in the ancient world. When Jacob poured oil over the stone on which his head had rested during his sleep experiences, after putting it up right as a pillar (Genesis 28; 18), he performed the same rite which is done in Saiva temples to-day. The rite does not imply "sex-worship", but, as will be shown later, its opposite, namely, transmutation of sex...

It has survived in a number of forms; the one best known to the West is the May-pole. The steeples of churches, minarets have, like the towers of temples, the same symbolism.

...

Siva and Daksha

For a long time already have students of Hindu mythology recognised in the quarrel between Siva and Daksha a similarity with the encounter between Cain and Abel. Both myths apply to the first stage of the Fall.

We have so far known Siva as the Destroyer of Maya and Desire and the Enlightener. ... But why was he the Destroyer of Maya and Desire? He came to this exalted function because he was first the Destroyer of Harmony and Light. Every great quality arises from the lack of that quality or the opposite quality. ... In some traditions, as of the Egyptian Set, the Son of Light becomes a Son of Darkness. In others, as of Siva, the Son of Darkness becomes the Lord of Enlightenment. The Vedic name of Siva, Rudra, means "the Howler, the Roarer, the Terrible". He inspires fear and is the father of the warlike Maruts. In later tradition Siva is the blissful Lord of Yogis...

The myth tells us that Siva attempted to kill his brother Brahma, who, being immortal, was only maimed, but Siva finding him afterwards in a mortal shape in the character of Daksha, killed him when he was performing a sacrifice. ... The purpose of this myth as well as of the story of Cain and Abel is primarily to show the process of the Fall which takes place within the soul. Both brothers form aspects of the soul of one man. The Fall is a kind of spiritual suicide. Cain killed Abel also when he was performing a sacrifice.

There had subsisted for a time some animosity between Brahma and Siva in their mortal shapes, and the latter on account of his bad conduct had given much uneasiness to Svayambhuva and Satarupa, for he was libidinous, going about with a large club in his hand. Siva was the eldest son and indignant at seeing his claim as such disregarded in favour of Brahma. The latter supported it by such statements which so provoked Siva that Siva in his divine form cut off one of his heads. By the etymology of their names Svayambhuva and Satarupa may be compared with the Primal Parents Adam and Eve. In Siva's behaviour we recognize the primal sins of "covetousness" and "jealousy"...

In his human shape (sprung from the right thumb of Brahma) we find Daksha boasting that he ruled over mankind. One day in the assemblage of the Gods, Daksha coming in, they all respectfully arose except Siva, who kept his seat with a dark look. Daksha resented it and cursed Siva in his human shape, wishing that he might ever remain a vagabond on the face of the earth and ordaining that he should be avoided and deprived of his share of the sacrifices and offerings. Siva in his turn cursed Daksha and a dreadful contest took place, in which the Worlds trembled and the Gods became much alarmed...

Brahma (in his divine shape), Vishnu and all other Gods interfered and separated the two brothers, effecting their reconciliation. Daksha then gave one of his daughters, Sati, in marriage to Siva. This daughter was an Incarnation of Devi, the Goddess, for Sridevi, the wife of Daksha, had entreated the Goddess to give her one daughter exactly like herself, and her prayer had been granted.

Daksha and Sridevi had, according to various statements, a hundred, fifty or sixty daughters... But they had no son, a fact which they both lamented deeply. In order to obtain one they agreed to hold a solemn sacrifice. The daughters symbolize aspects of Sakti or the Dynamism of Tradition, the wanted son symbolizes the embodied product of the Tradition.

Daksha convened Gods and men for the sacrifice, omitting, however, to invite Siva. Siva took little notice of the slight, but Sati insisted on going and could not be dissuaded. She was treated so contemptuously by her father Daksha, that she flung herself into the sacrificial fire, thereby spoiling the rites. Siva on hearing this, blamed her for her rash conduct, impairing a sacrifice, and cursed her with the necessity to live for a thousand years in an inferior embodiment. We see that at this stage of the myth jealousy and covetousness have detached themselves from Siva — who is later known for his indifference and detachment — and use as their dynamic embodiment Sati, the Sakti of Siva. More prominent, however, than covetousness for a share of the sacrifices, and jealousy at the privileges of the other Gods and men, is the slighted vanity of Sati...

Siva went to Daksha, the embodiment of Brahma, and a struggle ensued in which all the Gods took the side of Daksha. Siva won the Battle with the help of an army of Demons which he called to his assistance. Daksha "lost his head" and the Sun and the Moon and other Gods were wounded. In a fit of divine madness resulting from the sorrow experienced at the death of Sati, Siva took her body, put it on his head and danced frantically seven times round the World, threatening all things with destruction. The plastic, choreographic and other arts of India of all periods have amply represented Siva's Tandava or Dance of Destruction. At the request of the Devas, Vishnu cut Sati's body with his Chakra into fifty pieces, which Siva in his dancing scattered in different parts of the World. The Gods at last succeeded in pacifying and appeasing Siva, who restored Daksha to life at their request, on the con-

dition that he would henceforth worship the symbols of Siva and Sakti. Each place where a part of Sati had fallen, became a place for the worship of Siva and Sakti.

The myth symbolizes the first spiritual struggle and compromise of the Fall. The Power of Destruction and its Demons win the day, but are appeased after Karma has worked itself out. The story illustrates the dilaceration of the soul and the fall and scattering of its fragments. By worshipping the Goddess in her Resurrected Form, as the Consort of Siva, the God of Enlightenment and Peace, and by worshipping on a round of pilgrimage at shrine after shrine sacred to Siva and Sakti, the Hindu worshipper collects the fragments of his soul on his Path to Enlightenment. The Spiritual Path consists of a retracing of the stages of the Path of the Fall. For the Fallen Man Siva is the Terrible, dancing his Dance of Destruction on Cemeteries and Battlefields, for the Sage Siva is very Light and Peace and God-Reality, sitting in meditation on his Mountaintop, destroying the Desire which is the cause of Ahan-karic World-involvement.

Wikipedia

Historical development

The worship of Shiva is a pan-Hindu tradition, practiced widely across all of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Some historians believe that the figure of Shiva as we know him today was built up over time, with the ideas of many regional sects being amalgamated into a single figure. ... in Shiva we find the unity of pre-Aryan, Aryan and post-Aryan religious development and an evolution of synthesis...

Shiva as we know him today shares many features with the Vedic god Rudra,[36] and both Shiva and Rudra are viewed as the same personality in a number of Hindu traditions. Rudra, the god of the roaring storm, is usually portrayed in accordance with the element he represents as a fierce, destructive deity...

Shiva's rise to a major position in the pantheon was facilitated by his identification with a host of Vedic deities, including Agni, Indra, Prajāpati, Vāyu, and others.

...

In the Yajurveda, two contrary sets of attributes for both malignant or terrific (Sanskrit: rudra) and benign or auspicious (Sanskrit: śiva) forms can be found, leading Chakravarti to conclude that "all the basic elements which created the complex Rudra-Śiva sect of later ages are to be found here". In the Mahabharata, Shiva is depicted as "the standard of invincibility, might, and terror", as well as a figure of honor, delight, and brilliance.

...

He is depicted as both an ascetic yogi and as a householder, roles which have been traditionally mutually exclusive in Hindu society. When depicted as a yogi, he may be shown sitting and meditating. His epithet Mahāyogi ("the great Yogi: Mahā = "great", Yogi = "one who practices Yoga") refers to his association with yoga. While Vedic religion was conceived mainly in terms of sacrifice, it was during the Epic period that the concepts of tapas, yoga, and asceticism became more important, and the depiction of Shiva as an ascetic sitting in philosophical isolation reflects these later concepts.

As a family man and householder, he has a wife, Parvati, and two sons, Ganesha and Kartikey. His epithet Umāpati ("The husband of Umā") refers to this idea...

The five mantras

Five is a sacred number for Shiva. One of his most important mantras has five syllables (namaḥ śivāya).

Shiva's body is said to consist of five mantras, called the pañcabrahmans. As forms of God, each of these have their own names and distinct iconography:

Sadyojāta
Vāmadeva
Aghora
Tatpuruṣha
Īsāna

These are represented as the five faces of Shiva and are associated in various texts with the five elements, the five senses, the five organs of perception, and the five organs of action.

Attributes of Siva

Attributes

Shiva's form: Shiva has a Trident in the right lower arm, with a crescent moon on his head. He is said to be fair like camphor or like an ice clad mountain. He has fire and Damaru and Mala or a kind of weapon. He wears five serpents as ornaments. He wears a garland of skulls. He is pressing with his feet the demon Muyalaka, a dwarf holding a cobra. He faces south. Panchakshara itself is his body.

Third eye: (Trilochana) Shiva is often depicted with a third eye, with which he burned Desire (Kāma) to ashes, called "Tryambakam" (Sanskrit: त्र्यम्बकम्), which occurs in many scriptural sources. In classical Sanskrit, the word ambaka denotes "an eye", and in the Mahabharata, Shiva is depicted as three-eyed, so this name is sometimes translated as "having three eyes". However, in Vedic Sanskrit, the word ambā or ambikā means "mother", and this early meaning of the word is the basis for the translation "three mothers". These three mother-goddesses who are collectively called the Ambikās. Other related translations have been based on the idea that the name actually refers to the oblations given to Rudra, which according to some traditions were shared with the goddess Ambikā.

Crescent moon: (The epithets "Chandrasekhara/Chandramouli")- Shiva bears on his head the crescent moon. The epithet Chandrasekhara (Sanskrit: चन्द्रशेखर "Having the moon as his crest" - chandra = "moon"; śekhara = "crest, crown") refers to this feature. The placement of the moon on his head as a standard iconographic feature dates to the period when Rudra rose to prominence and became the major deity Rudra-Shiva. The origin of this linkage may be due to the identification of the moon with Soma, and there is a hymn in the Rig Veda where Soma and Rudra are jointly implored, and in later literature, Soma and Rudra came to be identified with one another, as were Soma and the moon. The crescent moon is shown on the side of the Lord's head as an ornament. The waxing and waning phenomenon of the moon symbolizes the time cycle through which creation evolves from the beginning to the end. Since the Lord is the Eternal Reality, He is beyond time. Thus, the crescent moon is only one of His ornaments. The wearing of the crescent moon in his head indicates that He has controlled the mind perfectly.

Ashes: (The epithet "Bhasmaanga Raaga") - Shiva smears his body with ashes (bhasma). Some forms of Shiva, such as Bhairava, are associated with a very old Indian tradition of cremation-ground asceticism that was practiced by some groups who were outside the fold of brahmanic orthodoxy. These practices associated with cremation grounds are also mentioned in the Pali canon of Theravada Buddhism. One epithet for Shiva is "inhabitant of the cremation ground" (Sanskrit: śmaśānavāsin, also spelled Shmashanavasin), referring to this connection.

Matted hair: (The epithet "Jataajoota Dhari/Kapardin") - Shiva's distinctive hair style is noted in the epithets Jaṭin, "the one with matted hair", and Kapardin, "endowed with matted hair" or "wearing his hair wound in a braid in a shell-like (kaparda) fashion". A kaparda is a cowrie shell, or a braid of hair in the form of a shell, or, more generally, hair that is shaggy or curly. His hair is said to be like molten gold in color or being yellowish-white.

Blue throat: The epithet Nīlakaṇṭha (Sanskrit नीलकण्ठ; nīla = “blue”, kaṇṭha = “throat”) since Shiva drank the Halahala poison churned up from the Samudra Manthan to eliminate its destructive capacity. Shocked by his act, Goddess Parvathi strangled his neck and hence managed to stop it in his neck itself and prevent it from spreading all over the universe supposed to be in Shiva’s stomach. However the poison was so potent that it changed the color of his neck to blue.

Sacred Ganges: (The epithet “Gangadhara”) Bearer of Ganga. Ganges river flows from the matted hair of Shiva. The Gaṅgā (Ganges), one of the major rivers of the country, is said to have made her abode in Shiva’s hair. The flow of the Ganges also represents the nectar of immortality.

Tiger skin: (The epithet “Krittivasan”). He is often shown seated upon a tiger skin, an honour reserved for the most accomplished of Hindu ascetics, the Brahmarishis. Tiger represents lust. His sitting on the tiger’s skin indicates that He has conquered lust.

Serpents: (The epithet “Nagendra Haara”). Shiva is often shown garlanded with a snake. His wearing of serpents on the neck denotes wisdom and eternity.

Deer: His holding deer on one hand indicates that He has removed the Chanchalata of the mind (i.e., attained maturity and firmness in thought process). Deer jumps from one place to another swiftly, similar to the mind moving from one thought to another.

Trident: (Sanskrit: Trishula): Shiva’s particular weapon is the trident. His Trisul that is held in His right hand represents the three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. That is the emblem of sovereignty. He rules the world through these three Gunas. The Damaru in His left hand represents the Sabda Brahman. It represents OM from which all languages are formed. It is He who formed the Sanskrit language out of the Damaru sound.

Drum: A small drum shaped like an hourglass is known as a damaru (Sanskrit: ḍamaru). This is one of the attributes of Shiva in his famous dancing representation known as Nataraja. A specific hand gesture (mudra) called ḍamaru-hasta (Sanskrit for “ḍamaru-hand”) is used to hold the drum. This drum is particularly used as an emblem by members of the Kāpālika sect.

Nandī: (The epithet “Nandi Vaahana”). Nandī, also known as Nandin, is the name of the bull that serves as Shiva’s mount (Sanskrit: vāhana). Shiva’s association with cattle is reflected in his name Paśupati, or Pashupati (Sanskrit: पशुपति), translated by Sharma as “lord of cattle” and by Kramrisch as “lord of animals”, who notes that it is particularly used as an epithet of Rudra. Rishabha or the bull represents Dharma Devata. Lord Siva rides on the bull. Bull is his vehicle. This denotes that Lord Siva is the protector of Dharma, is an embodiment of Dharma or righteousness.

Gaṇa: The Gaṇas (Devanagari: गण) are attendants of Shiva and live in Kailash. They are often referred to as the bhutaganas, or ghostly hosts, on account of their nature. Generally benign, except when their lord is transgressed against, they are often invoked to intercede with the lord on behalf of the devotee. Ganesha was chosen as their leader by Shiva, hence Ganesha’s title gaṇa-īśa or gaṇa-pati, “lord of the gaṇas”.

Mount Kailāsa: Mount Kailash in the Himalayas is his traditional abode. In Hindu mythology, Mount Kailāsa is conceived as resembling a Linga, representing the center of the universe.

Varanasi: Varanasi (Benares) is considered as the city specially loved by Shiva, and is one of the holiest places of pilgrimage in India. It is referred to, in religious contexts, as Kashi.

Forms and depictions

Nataraja

The depiction of Shiva as Nataraja (... Sanskrit: naṭarāja, “Lord of Dance”) is popular. The names Nartaka (“dancer”) and Nityanarta (“eternal dancer”) appear in the Shiva Sahasranama. His association with dance and also with music is prominent in the Puranic period. In addition to the specific iconographic form known as Nataraja, various other types of dancing forms (Sanskrit:

nṛtyamūrti) are found in all parts of India, with many well-defined varieties in Tamil Nadu in particular. The two most common forms of the dance are the Tandava, which later came to denote the powerful and masculine dance as Kala-Mahakala associated with the destruction of the world. When it requires the world or universe to be destroyed, Lord Śiva does it by the tāṇḍavanṛtya. and Lasya, which is graceful and delicate and expresses emotions on a gentle level and is considered the feminine dance attributed to the goddess Parvati. Lasya is regarded as the female counterpart of Tandava. The Tandava-Lasya dances are associated with the destruction-creation of the world.

Dakshinamurthy

Dakshinamurthy, or Dakṣiṇāmūrti (... Sanskrit: दक्षिणामूर्ति), literally describes a form (mūrti) of Shiva facing south (dakṣiṇa). This form represents Shiva in his aspect as a teacher of yoga, music, and wisdom and giving exposition on the shastras. This iconographic form for depicting Shiva in Indian art is mostly from Tamil Nadu. Elements of this motif can include Shiva seated upon a deer-throne and surrounded by sages who are receiving his instruction.

Ardhanarishvara

The five-headed Tripurantaka is seen pointing an arrow towards the Tripura (rightmost top corner) with the bow made of mount Meru, the serpent Vasuki is seen as its string.

An iconographic representation of Shiva called (Ardhanārīśvara) shows him with one half of the body as male and the other half as female. According to Ellen Goldberg, the traditional Sanskrit name for this form (Ardhanārīśvara) is best translated as “the lord who is half woman”, not as “half-man, half-woman”. Some legends suggest, this is used to visualize the belief that the lord had sacrificed half of his body to his Shakti, goddess Parvati, the sagun swaroop of Goddess Adi parashakti, as a sign of this love for her.

Tripurantaka

Shiva is often depicted as an archer in the act of destroying the triple fortresses, Tripura, of the Asuras. Shiva’s name Tripurantaka (Sanskrit: त्रिपुरान्तक, Tripurāntaka), “ender of Tripura”, refers to this important story. In this aspect, Shiva is depicted with four arms wielding a bow and arrow, but different from the Pinakapani murti. He holds an axe and a deer on the upper pair of his arms. In the lower pair of the arms, he holds a bow and an arrow respectively. After destroying Tripura, Tripurantaka Shiva smeared his forehead with three strokes of Ashes. This has become a prominent symbol of Shiva and is practiced even today by Shaivites.

Lingam

Apart from anthropomorphic images of Shiva, the worship of Shiva in the form of a lingam, or linga, is also important. These are depicted in various forms. One common form is the shape of a vertical rounded column. Shiva means auspiciousness, and linga means a sign or a symbol. Hence, the Shivalinga is regarded as a “symbol of the great God of the universe who is all-auspiciousness”. Shiva also means “one in whom the whole creation sleeps after dissolution”. Linga also means the same thing—a place where created objects get dissolved during the disintegration of the created universe. Since, according to Hinduism, it is the same god that creates, sustains and withdraws the universe, the Shivalinga represents symbolically God Himself. Some scholars, such as Monier-Williams and Wendy Doniger, also view linga as a phallic symbol, although this interpretation is disputed by others, including Christopher Isherwood, Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda, and S.N. Balagangadhara. The worship of the Shiva-Linga originated from the famous hymn in the Atharva-Veda Samhitā sung in praise of the Yupa-Stambha, the sacrificial post. In that hymn, a description is found of the beginningless and endless Stambha or Skambha, and it is shown that the said Skambha is put in place of the eternal Brahman. Just as the Yajna (sacrificial) fire, its smoke, ashes, and flames, the Soma plant, and the ox that used to carry on its back the wood for the Vedic sacrifice gave place to the conceptions of the brightness of Shiva’s body, his taw-

ny matted hair, his blue throat, and the riding on the bull of the Shiva, the Yupa-Skambha gave place in time to the Shiva-Linga. In the text Linga Purana, the same hymn is expanded in the shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great Stambha and the superiority of Shiva as Mahadeva.

Avatars

Shiva, like some other Hindu deities, is said to have several incarnations, known as Avatars. Although Puranic scriptures contain occasional references to avatars of Shiva, the idea is not universally accepted in Saivism.

Virabhadra who was born when Shiva grabbed a lock of his matted hair and dashed it to the ground. Virabhadra then destroyed Daksha's yajna (fire sacrifice) and severed his head as per Shiva's instructions.

Bhairava, Bhairava (Sanskrit: भैरव, "Terrible" or "Frightful",[1]), sometimes known as Bhairo or Bhairon or Bhairadya or Bheruji (In Rajasthan), is the fierce manifestation of Shiva associated with annihilation.[2] He is one of the most important deities of Rajasthan and Nepal, sacred to Hindus and Buddhists alike. When depicted as Kala Bhairava, Bhairava is shown carrying the decapitated head of Brahma.

Nataraja or Nataraj (Hindustani: [nət̪ə'ra:dʒ]), The Lord (or King) of Dance in Barathanatyam; is a depiction of god Shiva as the cosmic dancer Koothan who performs his divine dance to destroy a weary universe and make preparations for god Brahma to start the process of creation. A Tamil concept, Shiva was first depicted as Nataraja in the famous Chola bronzes and sculptures of Chidambaram. The dance of Shiva in Tillai, the traditional name for Chidambaram, forms the motif for all the depictions of Shiva as Nataraja. He is also known as "Sabesan" which splits as "Sabayil aadum eesan" in Tamil which means "The Lord who dances on the dais". The form is present in most Shiva temples in South India, and is the main deity in the famous temple at Chidambaram.

Durvasa (दुर्वास in Devanagari or durvāsa in IAST, pronounced [d̪urʋɑːsɐ] in classical Sanskrit), or Durvasas, was an ancient sage, the son of Atri and Anasuya. He is supposed to be an incarnation of Shiva. He is known for his short temper. Hence, wherever he went, he was received with great reverence from humans and Devas alike.

Khandoba, a form of Shiva, mainly in the Deccan plateau of India, especially in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. He is the most popular family deity in Maharashtra.

Sharabha, Shaiva scriptures narrate that god Shiva assumed the Avatar (incarnation) of Sharabha to tame Narasimha - the fierce man-lion avatar of Vishnu worshipped by Vaishnava sect - into a normal pleasant form representing harmony. This form is popularly known as Sarabeshwara ("Lord Sarabha") or Sharabeshwaramurti. In Buddhism, Sharabha appears in Jataka Tales as a previous birth of the Buddha.

Adi Shankara, the 8th-century philosopher of non-dualist Vedanta "Advaita Vedanta", was named "Shankara" after Lord Shiva and is considered by some to have been an incarnation of Shiva.

In the Hanuman Chalisa, Hanuman is identified as the eleventh avatar of Shiva, but this belief is not universal.

It is believed that the Sai Baba of Shirdi, Maharashtra and Satya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh are the modern avatars of Lord Shiva.

Temples

There are many Shiva temples in the Indian subcontinent, the Jyotirlinga temples being the most prominent.

The holiest Shiva temples are the 12 Jyotirlinga temples.

Somnath - Prabhas Patan, near Veraval, Gujarat

Mahakaleshwar - Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

Omkareshwar - near Indore, Madhya Pradesh
 Kedarnath - Kedarnath, Uttarakhand
 Bhimashankar - Disputed:
 Bhimashankar Temple, near Pune, Maharashtra (pictured)
 Bheem Shankar (Moteswar Mahadev), Kashipur, Uttarakhand
 Bhimshankar temple near Guwahati, Assam
 Bhimasankar temple near Gunupur, Orissa
 Kashi Vishwanath - Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
 Trimbakeshwar - Trimbak, near Nasik, Maharashtra
 Ramanathaswamy - Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu
 Grishneshwar - near Ellora, Maharashtra
 Vaidyanath - Disputed:
 Vaidyanath temple, Deoghar, Jharkhand (pictured)
 Vajjnath temple, Parli, Maharashtra
 Baijnath temple, Baijnath, Himachal Pradesh
 Nageshwar - Disputed:
 Jageshwar temple near Almora, Uttarakhand (pictured)
 Nageshwar Temple, Dwarka, Dwarka, Gujarat
 Aundha Nagnath, Maharashtra
 Mallikarjuna Swamy - Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh
 Manifestations

In South India, five temples of Shiva are held to be particularly important, as being manifestations of him in the five elemental substances:

Deity	Manifestation	Temple	Location	State
Jambhukeswar	Water	Jambukeswarar Temple, Thiruvanaikaval	Trichy	Tamil Nadu
Arunachaleswar	Fire	Annamalaiyar Temple	Thiruvannamalai	Tamil Nadu
Kalahastheeswara	Air	Srikalahasti temple	Srikalahasti	Andhra Pradesh
Vanmikanathar	Earth	Thyagaraja Temple	Thiruvarur	Tamil Nadu
Ekambareswar	Earth	Ekambareswarar Temple	Kanchipuram	Tamil Nadu
Nataraja	Sky	Natarajar Temple	Chidambaram	Tamil Nadu

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

The Indian religions can be classified as five-fold: the Śaiva, the Jain, Vaiṣṇava, Vedic and Śāktya. A lofty sense of peace, (śānti) and a universal sense of uniting all in the embrace of love is expressed in the contemplative serenity of the original votaries of Indian religions. In the history of India's Śiva religion, the first evidence came from the excavations of Mohanjadaro and Harappa which have given us the seals of Paśupati Śiva whose image was embossed in bricks which are as ancient as 7000 years before Christ. Paśupati is shown as a yogi seated in a lotus posture. Śiva was called paśupati, the Lord of beings. The later Vedic term prajāpati was a close imitation of the term paśupati. There are also references in the Agamas to Śiva as prajāpati.

In the seal of Paśupati Śiva ... are the various figures shown around the main figure, such as the birds of the sky, fish on either side, forest animals like leopard or tiger, closely guarding him, and domestic animals lying at his feet. All beings were originally called paśu. Thus the first contemplative picture of Śiva was a symbol of uniting the animal world through his peaceful and loving relationship with all. Much later, in Sankara's time, this great contemplative guru is described as dakṣinamūrti, making the wisdom gesture with his right hand. Thus the first emblem of the primary exemplar of yoga spells peace to the world. The term śiva itself means peace.

Siva and shakti

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The creative power of Consciousness is called in Hindu tradition Sakti or "Power", conceived in some contexts as a Goddess. In the Kamakalavilasa Tantra (V;4) Sakti is described as "the Pure Mirror in which Siva reflects Himself". Siva here represents Reality and Being, the static aspect of God, and corresponds to "the Father" of Christian tradition. Sakti, his Consort, represents the dynamic aspect of God in the Manifested Universe (of which the material universe is only the condition of the greatest density). She is the Great Mother, the Creatrix.

...

The folding of the hands symbolizes the union of the Primal Duality, Siva and Sakti, Father and Mother, Divinity and World. It further symbolizes the harmonious interrelationship of the Five Organs of Perception and the Five Organs of Action.

...

The Dhyana Bindu Upanishad refers to the Hamsa Mantra, sometimes called Ajapa Gayatri, and says that every soul utters this Mantra during night and day both 21.600 times with its 21.600 breathings. What is the meaning of this? The Hamsa is the Swan or "Goose", the Bird of the Holy Spirit. Its syllable Ha represents Siva and its syllable Sa, Sakti. The two syllables symbolize the in and out-going Breath. The expression "Ajapa Gayatri" (or non-japa Gayatri) conveys that it is the most important Mantra of Manifestation which is uttered unconsciously by every living soul.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

Just as the Indian people envisioned the role of mother as Śakti to counterbalance Śiva, modern science conceived matter and energy. A little confusion comes from saying that matter and energy are like Śiva and Śakti, because, to the Indian people, Śakti is

energy and the source of energy is in Śiva. In the Western world, matter became equivalent to mother (mater is the Latin term for mother).

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

GOVINDA: "What is the meaning of 'yogamaya'?"

MASTER: "It signifies the yoga, or union, of Purusha and Prakriti. Whatever you perceive in the universe is the outcome of this union. Take the image of Siva and Kali. Kali stands on the bosom of Siva; Siva lies under Her feet like a corpse; Kali looks at Siva. All this denotes the union of Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is inactive; therefore Siva lies on the ground like a corpse. Prakriti performs all Her activities in conjunction with Purusha. Thus She creates, preserves, and destroys.

Siva and Vishnu

General

Wikipedia

During the Vedic period, both Vishnu and Shiva (as identified with Rudra) played relatively minor roles, but by the time of the Brahmanas (c. 1000-700 BC), both were gaining ascendance. By the Puranic period, both deities had major sects that competed with one another for devotees. Many stories developed showing different types of relationships between these two important deities. Sectarian groups each presented their own preferred deity as supreme. Vishnu in his myths "becomes" Shiva. The Vishnu Purana (4th c. AD) shows Vishnu awakening and becoming both Brahmā to create the world and Shiva to destroy it. Shiva also is viewed as a manifestation of Vishnu in the Bhagavata Purana. In Shaivite myths, on the other hand, Shiva comes to the fore and acts independently and alone to create, preserve, destroy, hide, and to bless (five works). In one Shaivite myth of the origin of the lingam, both Vishnu and Brahmā are revealed as emanations from Shiva's manifestation as a towering pillar of flame. The Śatarudrīya, a Shaivite hymn, says that Shiva is "of the form of Vishnu". Differences in viewpoints between the two sects are apparent in the story of Śarabha (also spelled "Sharabha"), the name of Shiva's incarnation in the composite form of man, bird, and beast. Shiva assumed that unusual form of Sarabheshwara to chastise Vishnu, who in his hybrid form as Narasimha, the man-lion, killed Hiranyakashipu. However, Vaishnava followers including Dvaita scholars, such as Vijayindra Tirtha (1539–95) dispute this view of Narasimha based on their reading of Sattvika Puranas and Śruti texts.

Syncretic forces produced stories in which the two deities were shown in cooperative relationships and combined forms. Harihara is the name of a combined deity form of both Vishnu (Hari) and Shiva (Hara). This dual form, which is also called Harirudra, is mentioned in the Mahabharata. An example of a collaboration story is one given to explain Shiva's epithet Mahābaleśvara, "lord of great strength" (Maha = "great", Bala = "strength", Īśvara = "lord"). This name refers to a story in which Rāvaṇa was given a linga as a boon by Shiva on the condition that he carry it always. During his travels, he stopped near the present Deoghar in Jharkhand to purify himself and asked Narada, a devotee of Vishnu in the guise of a Brahmin, to hold the linga for him, but after some time, Narada put it down on the ground and vanished. When Ravana returned, he could not move the linga, and it is said to remain there ever since.

As one story goes, Shiva is enticed by the beauty and charm of Mohini, Vishnu's female avatar, and procreates with her. As a result of this union, Shasta - identified with regional deities Ayyappa and Ayyanar - is born.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

In the world of symbolism. Viṣṇu and Śiva are like two contrasting counterparts in Indian mythology. Viṣṇu sustains everything and Śiva dissolves everything. In Indian mythology Śiva is seated in a yogic posture at the summit of mount Kailāsa, completely drawn inward. Jungle snakes fondly crawl all over him; his vehicle is considered to be a mountain bull. He holds a trident symbolizing the triple aspects of Śaivism: paśu, pati and pāsam. He is always established in an all-knowing transcendence which is not deep sleep, not the dream sleep and which is not the waking state.

Viṣṇu is shown as lying in a state of dream; the phenomenal universe is considered to be the dream of Viṣṇu. His bed is the great snake Vāsuki and he is placed in the milk ocean. Thus everything pleasing, amorous, and belonging to the world of memory is associated with Viṣṇu. His vehicle is Garuḍa, the sea bird. The Vaisnavite people call him samasta kaiyāna guṇi adorned with attributes, whereas Śiva is guṇātita. one who transcends all attributes. From the navel of Viṣṇu comes the creator, Brahma, who became identified as prajāpati Thus it became common to accept Brahma, the creator, Viṣṇu, the sustainer, and Śiva, the annihilator, as the three male concepts of God. Each of the three has a female counterpart: Śakti for Śiva, Laksmi for Viṣṇu and Sarasvatī for Brahma.

See also:

Jnana and yoga

Related words

Brahma
Shakti
Trimurti
Vishnu

Sivananda

Name

Swami Sivananda Saraswati
Swami Shivananda Saraswati
Sivananda was born Kuppuswami Iyer

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Swami Shivananda Saraswati was an Indian saint, YOGA teacher, and author of more than 200 books on spirituality. Through his disciples, he played a major role in spreading Hinduism and YOGA throughout the world.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shivananda, Swami (1887–1963) Hindu ascetic, teacher, and founder of the Divine Life Society. Shivananda's first calling was to be a doctor; after getting his degree, he spent some time practicing medicine in Malaysia, spurred by a passion to serve others. Later in life he felt the call of renunciation and, in 1924, settled in Rishikesh, where he was based for the rest of his life. Shivananda's message stressed the teachings of the Advaita Vedanta school, which is devoted to a belief in monism (the belief in a single Ultimate Reality where all things are united), and the practice of yoga for a disciplined life. He saw his own mission as teaching others, a mission fostered by the Divine Life Society's publications, which continue to be important today. Shivananda's learning and religious charisma made him greatly respected, and in keeping with his original vocation, one of the charitable works sponsored by the Divine Life Society is a free medical clinic...

Swami Shivananda was a Dashanami Sanyasi (ascetic) in the Saraswati division, which is one of the divisions that admits only brahmins (priests).

Wikipedia

Biography

Dates

September 8, 1887 – July 14, 1963

Place of birth

Pattamadai, in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, India

Life

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Kuppuswami Iyer was born on September 8, 1887. His father was a pious Hindu government official who sent him to college and to medical school. His father died before he finished medical training and Kuppuswami was forced to leave school. Nevertheless, he maintained his interest in medicine and began a medical journal that specialized in preventive medicine and the Indian AYURVEDIC system of health. He administered a hospital in Malaya, where his meeting with a wandering holy man inspired his own spiritual search.

Returning to India he began a pilgrimage around the country. He settled in the holy city of RISHIKESH, where he was initiated into SANNYAS (renunciation) by Swami Viswananda Saraswati and given the name Swami Shivananda Saraswati. Living at Swargashram on the GANGES River, he devoted himself to MEDITATION, study, and giving of spiritual guidance to a growing group of disciples. He emphasized BHAKTI YOGA and KARMA YOGA .

Wikipedia

Swami Sivananda Saraswati ... was a Hindu spiritual teacher and a proponent of Yoga and Vedanta. ... He studied medicine and served in Malaya as a physician for several years before taking up monasticism. He lived most part of his life near Muni Ki Reti, Rishikesh.

Early life

Sivananda was born Kuppuswamy in Pattamadai near Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu, India, as the third son to his parents on 8 September 1887. As a child he was very active and promising in academics and gymnastics. He attended medical school in Tanjore, where he excelled. He ran a medical journal called Ambrosia during this period. Upon graduation he practiced medicine and worked as a doctor in Malaya for ten years, with a reputation for providing free treatment to poor patients. Over time, a sense that medicine was healing on a superficial level grew in him, urging him to look elsewhere to fill the void, and in 1923 he left Malaya and returned to India to pursue a spiritual quest.

Initiation

After a few years, Sivananda went on an extensive pilgrimage and traveled the length and breadth of India to meditate at holy shrines and came in contact with spiritual teachers throughout India. During this Parivrajaka (wandering monk) life, Sivananda visited important places of pilgrimage in the south, including Rameshvaram. He conducted Sankirtan and delivered lectures during his travels. He visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and met Maharishi Suddhananda Bharati. At the Ramana Ashram, he had the darshan of Ramana Maharshi on Maharshi's birthday. He sang bhajans and danced in ecstasy with Maharshi's bhaktas. He also went on pilgrimages to various places in northern India including Kedarnath and Badrinath. He visited Kailash-Manasarovar in 1931.

Travels

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Death

General

Wikipedia

Swami Sivananda died on 14 July 1963 in his Kutir on the bank of the Ganges, in Shivanandanagar [in Rishikesh, India].

Works

Disciples

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

His student Swami Shivananda RADHA (Sylvia Hillman) founded the YASODHARA ASHRAM SOCIETY in Vancouver. Another student, Swami Vishnudevananda, founded a chain of SHIVANANDA YOGA VEDANTA CENTERS in the United States and Canada. In 1959, Swami Chidananda, Shivananda's successor as head of the Divine Life Society, organized the society in the United States. Another student, Swami JYOTIRMAYANANDA, founded the Yoga Research Society in 1962, and SWAMI SATCHI-

DANANDA created the Integral Yoga Institute in 1966. His disciple and secretary of the Divine Life Society, Swami KRISHNANANDA, although he did not travel to the West, wrote extensively and welcomed seekers from the West to the ashram in Rishikesh.

Wikipedia

Swami Sivananda's two chief acting organizational disciples were Swami Chidananda and Swami Krishnananda. Swami Chidananda was appointed President of the Divine Life Society by Swami Sivananda in 1963 and served in this capacity until his death in 2008. Swami Krishnananda was appointed **General** Secretary of the Divine Life Society by Swami Sivananda in 1958 and served in this capacity until his death in 2001. Swami Krishnananda is widely regarded as one of the most important theologians and philosophers of the 20th century.

Other prominent disciples were Swami Venkatesananda Saraswati (South Africa, Mauritius, Madagascar, Australia), Swami Pranavananda Saraswati (Malaysia) and Swami Sivananda Radha (Canada). Another prominent disciple was Swami Sahajananda Saraswati (South Africa), who was directed by Swami Sivananda to establish the Divine Life Society of South Africa.

Disciples who went on to grow new organisations:

Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati, founder of the Chinmaya Mission

Swami Jyotirmayananda Saraswati, President of the Yoga Research Foundation, Miami, USA

Swami Lalitananda Saraswati, Vice President of the Yoga Research Foundation

Swami Omkarananda Saraswati, founder of Omkarananda Ashram, Himalayas

Swami Satchidananda Saraswati, founder of the Integral Yoga Institutes, USA

Swami Satyananda Saraswati, founder of Bihar School of Yoga

Swami Shantananda Saraswati, founder of Temple of Fine Arts (Malaysia & Singapore)

Swami Sivananda Radha, founder of Yasodhara Ashram, British Columbia, Canada

Swami Vishnudevananda Saraswati, founder of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres, HQ Canada

Swami_Venkatesananda, inspirer of Ananda Kutir Ashrama in South Africa

Organisations

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

In 1934 Swami Shivananda established his own ashram, Ananda Kutir (Abode of Bliss), across the river in Rishikesh. It had a dispensary and meditation rooms for silent retreats. In 1936 he founded the Divine Life Trust with the goal of spiritualizing all of India. The Divine Life Society was begun as an auxiliary to the trust, and a monthly periodical was begun. Swami Shivananda also began the Forest Academy to train students in his teaching. ... Although Swami Shivananda's health prevented him from visiting the West, he became one of the most influential forces in the dissemination of Hinduism and yoga throughout the world through his students and disciples.

Wikipedia

Sivananda is the founder of The Divine Life Society (1936), Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy (1948) and author of over 200 books on yoga, vedanta and a variety of subjects. He established Sivananda Ashram, the headquarters of The Divine Life Society (DLS), on the bank of the Ganges at Shivanandanagar, at a distance of 3 kilometres from Rishikesh.

Sivananda Yoga, the yoga form propagated by him, are now spread in many parts of the world through Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres, but these centres are not affiliated to Swami Sivananda's ashrams which are run by the Divine Life Society...

Sivananda founded the Divine Life Society in 1936 on the banks of the Ganges River. The free distribution of spiritual literature drew a steady flow of disciples to the Swami...

In 1945, Swami Sivananda created the Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmacy, and organized the All-world Religions Federation. He established the All-world Sadhus Federation in 1947 and Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy in 1948. He called his yoga the Yoga of Synthesis.

Publications

General

Wikipedia

A prolific author, Swami Sivananda wrote 296 books on a variety of subjects: metaphysics, yoga, religion, western philosophy, psychology, eschatology, fine arts, ethics, education, health, sayings, poems, epistles, autobiography, biography, stories, dramas, messages, lectures, dialogues, essays and anthology. His books emphasized the practical application of Yoga philosophy over mere theoretical knowledge. He was known to have said, An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. Practice Yoga, Religion and Philosophy in daily life, and attain Self-realization.[]

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Related words

Vedanta
Yoga

Smṛiti

Variant spellings

smṛti
smṛiti
smṛti
smṛti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Smṛti — ... memory; recollection; “that which is remembered”.

1. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, it is included in perception as a valid means of knowledge. It is caused by similarity (śadrśya), unseen effect (adr̥ṣṭa), deep thinking (cintā), or association (sāhacarya).
2. According to Nyāya, it is nonpresentative knowledge which may be either true (yathārtha) or false (ayathārtha) but not valid (pramā).
3. According to the Jainas and the Vaiśeṣikas, it is valid mediate knowledge.
4. According to Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, it is invalid knowledge (though their reasons for its invalidity differ).
5. According to Advaita Vedānta, it is either valid or invalid as the case may be.
6. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, recollection is a cognition caused solely by impressions. Advaita and Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsā explain it as a cognitive complex consisting of two parts: perceptual experience and recollection. Nyāya calls it perceptual experience of a special type.

7. Smṛti also refers to traditional scriptures, which include the limbs of the Veda (Vedāṅgas), the Law Books (Dharmaśāstras), the Epics (Itihāsas), and the Purāṇas.

8. The principle Law Books are the Manusmṛti, Parāśarasmṛti, and Vaśiṣṭhasmṛti. Other smṛtis are of Śaṅkha, Likhita, Atri, Viṣṇu, Hārīta, Yama, Aṅgīrasa, Uśanas, Samvarta, Bṛhaspati, Kātyāyana, Dakṣa, Vyāsa, Yājñavalkya, and Śātātapa.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

smṛti -

remembrance, reminiscence, thinking of or upon (loc. or comp.), calling to mind;

memory as one of the Vyabhicāri-bhāvas;

Memory (personified either as the daughter of Daksha and wife of Aṅgīras or as the daughter of Dharma and Medhā);

the whole body of sacred tradition or what is remembered by human teachers (in contradistinction to śruti or what is directly heard or revealed to the Rishis; in its widest acceptation this use of the term Smṛiti includes the 6 Vedāṅgas, the Sūtras both śrauta and gṛhya, the law-books of Manu &c. ...; the Itihāsas [e.g. the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa], the Purāṇas and the Nitiśāstras;

the whole body of codes of law as handed down memoriter or by tradition (esp. the codes of Manu Yājñavalkya and the 16 succeeding inspired lawgivers, viz. Atri, Viṣṇu, Hārīta, Uśanas or Śukra, Aṅgīras, Yama, Apastamba, Samvarta, Kātyāyana, Bṛhaspati, Parāśara, Vyāsa, Śaṅkha, Likhita, Daksha and Gautama; all these lawgivers being held to be inspired and to have based their precepts on the Veda;

symbolical N. for the number 18 (fr. the 18 lawgivers above);

a kind of metre;

N. of the letter g;

desire, wish

Wikipedia

Smṛti, literally “that which is remembered,” refers to a specific body of Hindu religious scripture. Smṛti also denotes non-Shruti texts and is generally seen as secondary in authority to Shruti. The literature which comprises the Smṛiti was composed after the Vedas around 500 BCE. Smṛiti also denotes tradition in the sense that it portrays the traditions of the rules on dharma, especially those of lawful virtuous persons. This is understood by looking at traditional texts, such as the Ramayana, in which the traditions of the main characters portray a strict adherence to or observance of dharma.

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Smṛti (“[that which is] remembered”). An important class of Hindu religious literature that, despite its sacrality, is deemed less authoritative than the other major category, śruti. According to tradition, the śruti (“heard”) texts were not composed by human beings but are based in the primordial vibrations of the cosmos itself. The ancient sages, whose faculties of perception had been sharpened through rigorous religious practice, were able to “hear” and understand these vibrations, and transmitted them to others in a lineage of learning. The smṛti texts, in contrast, are attributed to human authors, who are putting forth matters that are “remembered” and thus carry with them the possibility of error. The smṛti literature is wider and much more varied than the śruti, which is restricted to the texts in the Vedas; smṛti literature includes the dharma literature, the sectarian compilations known as

puranas, the two great epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana), the Bhagavad Gita, and the tantras, which are manuals detailing the secret, ritually based religious practice of tantra followers. Although theoretically the smrtis have less religious authority than the shrutis, in practical terms they are often far more important, in part because their contents are much better known. This is particularly true for sectarian Hinduism, in which a group's sectarian literature will often be given the highest religious authority.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Divine Body, the True State, including the Tradition, in the form of Dionusos, Osiris, the Cosmic Man of the Gnostics, was dismembered by the Titans. It is the task of the spiritual aspirant to re-member it. This re-membering is indeed the re-uniting of the members of fragments of his being into the Divine Whole. But it is also remembering in the current sense of the word, the remembering of the True State, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Satya-loka, the Paradise within the Heart-Self, the Source and Origin of all life. The two kinds of "remembering" form the two sides of one coin. In fact, the one cannot be there without the other. Instead of "re-member" one may also say "re-collect". The two meanings of remember are not related etymologically. The word "member" comes from the Latin "membrum" which is related to the Sanskrit "mamsa", "flesh". It means also "apartment". "Remembering" comes from the Latin "memor", meaning "mindful, remembering", from a root "mer" which is related to the Sanskrit root "smr". From this root are derived "smarati", "he remembers", and "smriti", "memory". Smriti is also used for one of the four classes of Hindu scriptures. Scriptures are forms of and aids in remembering the Divine Life. The language of everyday life contains very valuable fragments. But people have ears and do not hear.

Wikipedia

Smriti is the second source of authority for dharma. The first source of dharma is Sruti: the Vedas or Revelation. With regards to Hindu law, scholars have commonly translated Smriti as "tradition". Although Smriti is also considered a written source; it differs from Sruti in that Smriti does not have divine origins. Smriti's literal translation, "to remember" explains this. In a sense, Smriti consists of the memories of wisdom that sages have passed on to their disciples. These memories consist of traditions. It is these memories that make up the second source of dharma and consequently have been recorded to become a written source; commentaries such as Laws of Manu, for example. The Smrti texts have become a binding of "sacred literature" which includes the six Vedangas, the epics: the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, as well as, the Puranas It is within all of these works that the rules of dharma remain and are passed down. However, Smriti is still only considered a second authority after Sruti and becomes relevant only when Sruti provides no answer.

There are two important sides of Smriti: Smriti as Tradition and Smriti as Texts. Smriti as Tradition consists of Smriti as memories. It is from these memories that the rules of dharma are preserved and passed down. Conversely, Smriti as Texts refers to the notion of Traditional Texts. These consists of mostly the dharmasastras and are described as literature which has been "inspired by the smrti".

Prodigious energy was expended by ancient Indian culture in ensuring that these texts were transmitted from generation to generation with inordinate fidelity. For example, memorization of the sacred Vedas included up to eleven forms of recitation of the same text. The texts were subsequently "proof-read" by comparing the different recited versions.

See: Sruti and smriti

See also:

in Soma: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

in Shastra: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

smṛti - from the verb root smṛ - “to remember”.

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

smṛti from the root smar, to remember.

Related words

Dharma Sastra

Puranas

Shastra

Soma

Sruti

Sanskrit

Smṛti — स्मृति

smṛti - स्मृति

Soma

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Soma — ... intoxicating drink used in Vedic sacrifices; nectar of immortality.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

soma -

juice, extract, (esp.) the juice of the Soma plant, (also) the Soma plant itself (said to be the climbing plant *Sarcostema Viminalis* or *Asclepias Acida*, the stalks [aṅśu] of which were pressed between stones [adri] by the priests, then sprinkled with water, and purified in a strainer [pavitra]; whence the acid juice trickled into jars [kalaśa] or larger vessels [droṇa]; after which it was mixed with clarified butter, flour &c., made to ferment, and then offered in libations to the gods [in this respect corresponding with the ritual of the Iranian Avesta] or was drunk by the Brāhmans, by both of whom its exhilarating effect was supposed to be prized; it

was collected by moonlight on certain mountains [in ṚV. x, 34, 1, the mountain Mūja-vat is mentioned]; it is sometimes described as having been brought from the sky by a falcon [śyena] and guarded by the Gandharvas; it is personified as one of the most important of Vedic gods, to whose praise all the 114 hymns of the 9th book of the ṚV. besides 6 in other books and the whole SV. are dedicated; in post-Vedic mythology and even in a few of the latest hymns of the ṚV. [although not in the whole of the 9th book] as well as sometimes in the AV. and in the Br., Soma is identified with the moon [as the receptacle of the other beverage of the gods called Amṛita, or as the lord of plants ...] and with the god of the moon, as well as with Viṣṇu, Śiva, Yama, and Kubera; he is called rājan, and appears among the 8 Vasus and the 8 Loka-pālas [Mn. v, 96], and is the reputed author of ṚV.;
the moon or moon-god (see above);
a Soma sacrifice;
a day destined for extracting the Soma-juice;
Monday;
nectar;
camphor;
air, wind;
water;
a drug of supposed magical properties;
a partic. mountain or mountainous range (accord. to some the mountains of the moon);
a partic. class of Pitṛis;
N. of various authors (also with paṇḍita, bhaṭṭa, śarman &c.; cf. above);
N. of a monkey-chief
rice-water, rice-gruel;
heaven, sky, ether;
relating to Soma

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Soma was a divine, intoxicating drink favored by INDRA, king of the gods, according to the Vedas. It was made from a celestial plant taken to Earth by an eagle and was said to confer immortality on gods and humans. BRAHMIN priests in Vedic times oversaw its preparation, offered it to the gods, and drank it themselves at their rituals. The drink was used in such quantities that the YAJUR VEDA includes a chant to alleviate the effects of excessive Soma drinking.

Soma was most used by the priests of the SAMA VEDA. A majority of hymns in the Sama Veda itself praise the Soma, personified as a god. In fact, Soma is said to have inspired the composition of Vedic hymns. The drink is said to be sweet and milky. Various attempts have been made to identify the Soma plant. Today it is the name of a vine that does not appear to have intoxicating properties.

The Vedic god Soma acts as the husband of the dawns, supports the Earth and sky, and makes the Sun light up. In late Vedic times Soma was connected to the Moon. In modern Hindu mythology Soma is the Moon god and the lord of all plants. Scholars

identify the beverage Soma with the Haoma, which was also offered to the gods in the Avesta, the scripture of the ancient Persians.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Soma is one of the most enigmatic deities in the Hindu tradition. The 120 hymns to soma in the Rg Veda, the oldest Hindu sacred text, variously describe soma as a plant, as the juice pressed from that plant, and as the deified form of both juice and plant. The Vedic hymns give detailed descriptions of how the sacrificial priests pressed it, strained and filtered it, and finally consumed it, which then brought visions upon them. These hymns portray soma as some sort of mind-altering substance, although there is no general agreement on what the soma plant might be. Its identity has been lost since late Vedic times, and since then various substitutes have been used in rituals.

Although the hymns describe soma as hallucinogenic, one need not take this literally. One can explain such visions in purely psychological terms, as induced or fostered by the priests' heightened expectations in the sacrificial arena. If one assumes that soma was actually mind-altering, it could not have been an alcoholic beverage—since it was prepared and consumed on the same day, this would have given no time for fermentation. One theory is that soma was hashish (charas), which is still consumed in certain ritual contexts.

Macdonell. Vedic mythology

soma the intoxicating juice of the Soma plant ... offered as the main libation, pressed, purified by a sieve, mixed with milk, and described as the lord of plants, as growing on the mountains, and as brought down by an eagle or eagles.

...

The beverage of the gods is soma. What they eat is the favourite food of men and is of course represented by what is offered to them at the sacrifice. It consists of milk in its various forms, butter, barley, and (though perhaps not in the oldest Vedic period) rice; cattle, goats, and sheep, with a preference for the animal which in some way is most closely connected with a deity's peculiar qualities. Thus the bull or the buffalo, to which Indra is so often compared, is offered to him and eaten by him, sometimes in extraordinary numbers... The abode of the gods is variously described as heaven, the third heaven, or the highest step of Visnu, where they live a joyous life exhilarated by Soma. The gods on the whole are conceived as dwelling together in harmony and friendship.

...

Next to Indra and Varuna come the two great ritual deities Agni and Soma. These two along with Indra are, judged by the frequency of the hymns addressed to them, the three most popular deities of the RV. For, roughly speaking, three-fifths of its hymns are dedicated to their praise. The fact that the hymns to Agni and Indra always come first in the family books, while the great majority of the hymns to Soma have a whole book, the ninth, to themselves, confirms this conclusion.

...

Though the gods in general are fond of Soma, Indra is preeminently addicted to it. He even stole it in order to drink it. He is the one Soma-drinker among gods and men, only Vayu, his companion, coming near him in this respect. It is his favourite nutriment. The frequent epithet 'Soma-drinker' is characteristic of him, being otherwise only applied a few times to Agni and Brhaspati when associated with Indra, and once besides to Vayu alone. Soma is sometimes said to stimulate Indra to perform great cosmic actions such as supporting earth and sky or spreading out the earth. But it characteristically exhilarates him to carry out his warlike deeds, the slaughter of the dragon or Vrtra or the conquest of foes. So essential is Soma to Indra that his mother gave it to him or he drank it on the very day of his birth. For the slaughter of Vrtra he drank three lakes of Soma, and he is even said to have drunk

at a single draught thirty lakes of the beverage. One entire hymn consists of a monologue in which Indra describes his sensations after a draught of Soma. But just as too much Soma is said to produce disease in men, so Indra himself is described as suffering from excessive indulgence in it and having to be cured by the gods with the Sautramani ceremony.

...

His love of Soma is even represented as having driven him to patricide. In judging morally of Indra's immoderate indulgence in Soma, it must be borne in mind that the exhilaration of Soma partook of a religious character in the eyes of the Vedic poets and that the intoxicating influence of Soma itself led to its being regarded as the drink of immortality. It is probably from the latter point of view that Indra is conceived as having performed his grandest cosmical feats, such as fixing heaven and earth, under the influence of Soma.

...

§37. Soma. - Since the Soma sacrifice forms the main feature of the ritual of the RV, the god Soma is naturally one of the most important deities of that Veda. All the 114 hymns of the ninth besides 6 in other books, are dedicated to his praise. He is also celebrated in portions of four or five other hymns, and as a dual divinity with Indra, Agni, Pushan, or Rudra, in about six more. The name of Soma, in its simple form and in compounds, occurs hundreds of times in the RV. Judged by the standard of frequency, Soma therefore comes third in order of importance among the Vedic gods. Soma is much less anthropomorphic than Indra or Varuna, the constant presence of the plant and its juice setting limits to the imagination of the poets who describe its personification. Consequently little is said of his human form or action. The marvellous and heroic deeds attributed to him are either colourless, because common to almost all the greater gods, or else only secondarily belong to him. Like other gods, he is, under the name of Indu as well as Soma, invoked to come to the sacrifice and receive the offerings on the strewn grass. The ninth book mainly consists of incantations sung over the tangible Soma while it is pressed by the stones, flows through the woolen strainer into the wooden vats, in which it is finally offered on a litter of grass to the gods as a beverage, sometimes in fire or drunk by the priests. The processes to which it is subjected are overlaid with the most varied and chaotic imagery and with mystical fancies often incapable of certain interpretation.

...

Its mysteriously exhilarating and invigorating action, surpassing that of ordinary food or drink and prompting to deeds beyond the natural powers, led to Soma being regarded as a divine drink which bestows immortal life. Hence it is mythologically called amṛta, the draught of immortality...

Soma naturally has medicinal power also. It is medicine for a sick man. Hence the god Soma heals whatever is sick, making the blind to see and the lame to walk ... The Soma draught is even said to dispel sin from the heart, to destroy falsehood and to promote truth.

...

Though Soma is a terrestrial plant, it is also celestial; in fact its true origin and abode are regarded as in heaven.

...

In the post-Vedic literature Soma is a regular name of the moon, which is regarded as being drunk up by the gods and so waning, till it is filled up again by the sun: In the Chandogya Upanishad the statement is found that the moon is king Soma, the food of the gods, and is drunk up by them.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Soma was said to be born “between the two sacred stones that were used to press it out”, symbolism referring to the union of Father and Mother, or God and his Creative Power, resulting in Enlightenment, and reflected in the preparation of the unfermented wine that was used in rituals. It is the Jnanavari, “the Water of Gnosis” of the Hindu tradition dealing with Knowledge. It is the Elixir of Life, the production of which was the aim and end of the Great Work of the Alchemist. It is further the Rasa of the Hindu tradition dealing with Bliss. In the Rig-veda (IX; 63; 13; 65; 15) the Rasa is the juice of the Soma-plant. The Rasa is the blissful essence of life. In the Taittiriya Upanishad (11; 7; 1) and the Maitri Upanishad (V; 2) it is selfluminous consciousness, ecstasy, and the perfect taste or realization of life.

According to tradition it is obtained by “smriti”, meaning memory recollection, and the scriptures that aid in the process of remembering and recollecting.

See: Amrta and Soma

Etymology

General

Macdonell. Vedic mythology

Etymologically Soma ... means ‘pressed juice’, being derived from the root su ‘to press’.

Related words

Amrta
Indra
Smriti

Sanskrit

Soma — सोम
soma - सोम

Sparsa

Variant spellings

sparsa
sparsha
sparśa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sparśa — ... touch; sense contact.

1. One of the five subtle essences of the elements. (See tanmatra.)
2. One of the twelve links in the causal chain of existence.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sparśa -

touching;

touch, sense of touch ..., contact;

(in gram.) collective N. of the twenty-five consonants constituting the five classes from k to m (so-called because formed by complete contact of the organs of utterance;

(in phil.) the quality of tangibility (which constitutes the skin's;

any quality which is perceptible by touching any object (e.g. heat, cold, smoothness, softness &c.);

feeling, sensation (e.g. siraḥ-śūla-sp..., 'sensation of headache');

pleasant feeling;

unpleasant or morbid sensation, illness;

air, wind;

(accord. to some) temperature;

a kind of sexual union;

a gift, offering;

a spy

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Sparśa ... the subtle element (tanmatra) of touch; this is a technical term generally translated as Touch and used to mean the sense of feeling as the impression left on the consciousness rather than its tactual meaning; as for example, one is touched by an act of kindness.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

2.I salute this Yoga known as the Asparsa (i.e., free from all touch which implies duality), taught through the scripture— the Yoga which promotes the happiness of all beings and concedes to the well-being of all and which is free from strife and contradictions. Sankara's commentary: Now salutation is made to the Yoga taught by the Advaita Philosophy, in order to extol it. The word Asparsayoga in the text means the Yoga which is always and in all respects free from sparsa or relationship with anything and which is of the same nature as Brahman. This Yoga is well known as the Asparsayoga to all knowers of Brahman.

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Asparsayoga—As a matter of fact there is a contradiction involved in this word. For, the word ‘Asparsa’, meaning freedom from relation, indicates only non-duality which by its very nature has no contact with any other thing, as such a thing is ever non-existent. The word Yoga, ‘meaning contact’ implies more than one. Gaudapada names the path of knowledge as Asparsayoga, as the word Yoga was used in his time also to denote the method for realising the Ultimate Truth.

...

39. This Yoga, which is not in touch with anything, is hard to be attained by all Yogis (in general). The Yogis are afraid of it, for they see fear in it where there is really fearlessness.

Shankara’s commentary: Though such is the nature of the knowledge of the Supreme Reality, yet it is described in the Upanisads as Yoga not in touch with anything; for, it is free from all touch implying relations (with objects)...

Commentary by Nikhilananda: The word ‘Yoga’ signifying union, generally means contact between two. But derivatively Jnana-yoga is not in touch with any idea or object, as there exists nothing else but the non-dual Brahman. Therefore it is called the Asparsa-yoga, i.e., a spiritual discipline which does not admit of relation or touch with anything else. ... The Upanisad says that the knowledge of Atman is ever uncontaminated by any touch of action sinful or virtuous.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Mandukya Upanishad

(39) This Yoga, called the Touch-of-the-untouch, is hard to be attained by all seekers. Yogins are afraid of this Path, for they feel frightened in That—where alone one can experience the true state of fearlessness!

Commentary by Chinmayananda: Here Gaudapada has again dipped his brush in the gilt of his own genius to paint so vividly the idea of the Vedantic Sadhana in one incomparable expression, the “Asparsa Yoga”. There are critics who complain that this is a phrase borrowed from the Buddhistic literature and that there is no equivalent to it in the scriptural texts. They go to the extent of citing quotations to prove that Gaudapada is here copying the Buddhistic works.

Students of Vedanta who sincerely try to follow the text-book need not necessarily accept this criticism. There is direct evidence in the Gita (V. 21, 22 and 27) wherein the Lord has used the word ‘Sparsa’ meaning ‘mind’s contact with the external objects though the sense-organs’. Gaudapada must have coined this expression from his knowledge of the Gita.

In the Gita ‘Sparsa’ has been used as the mental contact which an ordinary deluded one makes with the external world of objects and thereby earns for himself either joy or happiness in life. The objects of the outer world in themselves have no capacity at all to bring about any definite experience in the individual. The perceiving ego in us wandering out into the travails of the sense-objects, through the indriyas, comes in contact with the external world, and we ourselves project upon them our own false notions and values, and thereby we give the strength for the sense-objects to hoodwink and tyrannise over us ultimately. This idea is splendidly brought out in Chapter V of the Gita. The same term is employed here by Gaudapada to make this novel term, Asparsa Yoga, to impress upon us the Vedantic process of Self-realization...

The term “Asparsa Yoga” indicates both the aspects of spiritual practice—the negative and the positive. ‘Asparas’ indicates the process of renouncing from ourselves our false values for and deluded attachments with the unreal, while Yoga indicates the attempt of the purified ego in the seeker to discover and re-establish its identity with the Real and the Permanent.

See: Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

See also:

in Vayu: [Dayananda. Taittiriya Upanishad](#)

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Sparśa from the root spars, to touch, feel.

Related words

Vayu

Tanmatra

Sanskrit

Sparśa — स्पर्श

sparśa - स्पर्श

Sphota

Variant spellings

sphota

sphoṭa

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Sphoṭa— ... to burst; manifest; boil; idea; connection between letter and meaning

1. The hidden or underlying power behind individual letters of a word which present the meaning of the word to the reader or hearer. It is the eternal essence of a word, according to the Grammarians. It is manifested by letters and itself manifests the meaning of a word. It is the single meaningful symbol. The articulated sounds used in linguistic discourse are merely the means by which the symbol is revealed, according to the Grammarians who propounded the theory.

2. It is the eternal essence of words, both because it is manifested by the letters and because it manifests the meaning. The concept arose due to the need to explain how individual letters form a meaningful word.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

sphoṭa -

bursting, opening, expansion, disclosure;
extension;

a swelling, boil, tumour;
a little bit or fragment, chip;
crackling, crash, roar;

(in phil.) sound (conceived as eternal, indivisible, and creative);

the eternal and imperceptible element of sounds and words and the real vehicle of the idea which bursts or flashes on the mind when a sound is uttered

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sphota (“disclosure”). Crucial element in the theory of language propounded by Bhartrhari (7th c.). Bhartrhari was the founder of the Grammarians, a philosophical school that conceived of Brahman, the Supreme Reality, as being manifested in sound, particularly the sound of the spoken word. According to this theory, a verbal utterance had three elements: the sound or sounds produced by the speaker and heard by the listener; a phonological pattern, of which that utterance is an instance; and finally the sphota, which was expressed by the sounds and signified the object of that utterance. According to Bhartrhari, sphota had to be postulated to explain how words could carry meaning. They do so because they are connected to the sphota, which designated a particular object, and in producing the sounds the speaker expressed that sphota.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Bhartrhari (c. fourth or fifth century) grammarian and philosopher Bhartrhari was a philosopher of language whose work was seminal in the development of the Indian theories of language and of MANTRA. There are several extant accounts of his life, but none seem to have a historical basis. He was primarily known as a grammarian, but his works had great philosophical impact as well. Bhartrhari developed a philosophy that came to be known as “word ADVAITA,” or non-dualism, based on the notion that the word (shabda) is the transcendent reality. His idea of “Shabda BRAHMAN,” or Ultimate Reality, as the basis of all language, broke the barrier between grammar and philosophy. He is best known for his work Vakyapadiya (Treatise on words and sentences), which formulates the sphota theory of linguistic utterance, much debated in successive times. Bhartrhari maintained that the study of Sanskrit grammar alone could cause one to attain liberation from birth and rebirth.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

Hindu philosophers have actually elaborated an idea which does not exist in any other philosophy, that of Sphota. It is true that in Panini’s own Sûtras the word Sphota does not occur, but the name of a grammarian whom he quotes (VI, i, 123), Sphorâyana, shows that this peculiar word Sphofa must have existed before Panini’s time. Derived as it is from Sphut, Sphota must have meant originally what bursts forth. It has been translated by expression, notion, concept or idea, but none of these renderings can be considered as successful. It really means the sound of a word as a whole, and as conveying a meaning, apart from its component letters. The subject has been well treated by Mâdhava in his Sarva-darsana-samgraha. Here, when examining the Pânini Darsana, he shows first of all that the Sabda or word which Pânini professes to teach in his Sabdânusâsana, or grammar, is really the same as Brahman. ‘The eternal word’, he writes, ‘which is called Sphota, and is without parts, is the true cause of the world,’ is in

fact Brahman, and he adds thereupon some lines from Bhartrihari's Brahmakanda, where that grammarian (died 650 A.D.) says :—

'Brahman, without beginning or end, the indestructible essence of language,
Which developed in the form of things, and whence springs the creation of the world.'
What more could be said of the Neo-platonic Logos ?

Raja. Theories of Meaning

The term sphota is derived from the root sphut which means 'to burst' and it is defined in two ways. In its linguistic sense it is normally defined as 'that from which the meaning bursts forth, i.e. shines forth, in other words the word-as-expressing-a meaning (vācaka). ' The sphota is simply the linguistic sign in its aspect of meaning-bearer (Bedeutungstrager).' Secondly it is defined as an entity which is manifested by the letters.

This sphota theory was fully developed and systematized by the great grammarian-philosopher Bhartrhari in his Vākyapadīya; but some of the ideas underlying this theory can be found even in earlier grammatical and philosophical literature. There is no evidence, however, to show that Pānini knew anything similar to the sphota theory, in spite of the ... tradition ascribing this theory to sage Sphotāyana, mentioned as an authority by Pānini himself.

Srinivasa. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Bhartrihari, the famous writer of the 7th. century A. D., expounds the doctrine of the sphota in his Karika called Vakyapadiya. "Those that know sound know that there are two sounds in the words that we speak: one, the cause of sound; the other is used for indicating an object." (Vakyapadiya 1.44). The two sounds referred to are, first, what exists in the mind before the word is actually pronounced, and, second, the pronounced word. "Some of those that follow the ancient path say that these two are different in nature. Others say, we divide in two by our thought what is really one. Just as the light (potential) in the fire-stick (arani) is the cause of other lights being produced, so the sound (sphota) in the mind (buddhi) is the cause of the various sounds heard (nada). It is first thought out by the mind, then associated with some meaning and then is grasped (by the hearer) as sound. Nada is produced in succession (in time) ; but sphota is not before or after (i.e. produced in succession). What is not successively produced appears as if gradually made and thus appears divided. As a reflection seems to take on the motion of the water in which it is seen (lit. exists), being under the influence of the action of the water, that is the relation of sphota and nada." (Ib. i. 45-49). Sphota is, thus, the potential word which exists in the mind i.e. the mental antecedent that is revealed by the uttered word, as water reveals the moon reflected in it.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

A word is like a bomb. When I throw the grenade of a word to you it bursts into your mind, with the result that a meaning is evoked. In Sanskrit this bursting aspect of words is called sphotam.

Nitya. Psychodynamics of Pranava

Swami Prajnanananda, in his illustrious book, A Historical Study of Indian Music (Anandadhara Prakashan, 1965 p. 396 -400), gives a beautiful account of pranava in the context of music. Before that, he presents the word that blasts as sphota. The science of sphota is one of the earliest sciences of semantics developed in India. We give here a gist of what the Swami says: The word emanated from the eternal sound (sabda) or sphota. The casual sound of sphota has two aspects, dhvani (sound) and varnam

(alphabet character). When sounds are pure and simple and do not convey any definite meaning, they are known as dhvanyatma-ka sabda. When they are intelligible and capable of being expressed by letters, they are known as varnatmaka sabda. According to Upavarsa, varna alone is expressive of sabda. This view is endorsed by Sankara and Sabara Swamin. Patanjali also accepts this view in his Mahabhasya, that sounds are articulate (vyaktavak) when they are turned into letters. The audible or articulated sound is popularly known as vaikhari. The meaning of a word (conveyed by vaikhari) is ultimately expressed by sphota and not by sounds of momentary existence. The derivation of sphota is sphutatrartho'smaditisphotah. When a word or sentence is conceived as an indivisible unit, that is called sphota. Sphota is both the vibrating sound (dhvani) and the gestalt it presents (bhavartha rupa). According to the grammarians, sphota is the word essence (brahman). Nagesa, in his Laghumanjusa, insists that all words come from the cosmic sound sabda brahman. Swami Prajnanananda is of the view that sphota can be compared with the divine mystic word AUM or pranava from which all forms of speech (vak) are supposed to emanate. Patanjali also identifies sabdatattva with brahmatattva. In the Laghumanjusa, Nagesa identifies sphota with pranava. According to Nagesa, the nucleus of sphota is bindu which is composed of three subtle qualities. The bindu is an inexhaustible source of energy, saktitattva. The unconscious part of this energy is known as bija, while the combination of the conscious (cit) and unconscious (acit) parts is called nada. As the nuclear aspect of sphota, bindu, being the intelligent part of sphota, is said to be the ultimate source of all forms of speech (vak).

...

The mantra we articulate is vaikhari. If we take mantras like AUM, HRIM, SRIM, etc., we can see that they are structured with specific notes or sounds. Each mode of sound is a vibration. The vibration has a certain quality according to its amplitude, frequency and tenor. These are all measurable as aspects of physical vibration. A sound heard by the ear or articulated by the tongue, or a vague image seen by the eye, can burst into meaning in consciousness (sphota).

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Complete works

In the universe, Brahma or Hiranyagarbha or the cosmic Mahat first manifested himself as name, and then as form, i.e. as this universe. All this expressed sensible universe is the form, behind which stands the eternal inexpressible Sphota, the manifester as Logos or Word. This eternal Sphota, the essential eternal material of all ideas or names, is the power through which the Lord creates the universe; nay, the Lord first becomes conditioned as the Sphota, and then evolves Himself out as the yet more concrete sensible universe. This Sphota has one word as its only possible symbol, and this is the Om. And as by no possible means of analysis can we separate the word from the idea, this Om and the eternal Sphota are inseparable; and therefore, it is out of this holiest of all holy words, the mother of all names and forms, the eternal Om, that the whole universe may be supposed to have been created.

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

The word sphota is derived from sphut (which means to burst into clarity, as in the case of a diamond).

Related words

OM
Sabda

Sanskrit

Sphoṭa -- स्फोट

sphoṭa - स्फोट

Sraddha

Variant spellings

sraddha
shraddha
śraddhā

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Śraddhā — ... faith.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

sraddhā -

to have faith or faithfulness, have belief or confidence, believe, be true or trustful (with na, 'to disbelieve' &c.) ṚV. &c. &c.; to credit, think anything true (two acc.) MBh. Kāv. &c.; to believe or have faith in or be true to (with dat., and in later language with gen. of thing or person, or with loc. of thing) ṚV. &c. &c.; to expect anything (acc.) from (abl.) MBh.; to consent, assent to, approve, welcome (with acc.; with na, 'to disapprove') Kathās.; to be desirous of (acc.), wish to (inf.) ib. BhP. : Caus. -dhāpayati, to make faithful, render trustful, inspire confidence ṚV.;

faith, trust, confidence, trustfulness, faithfulness, belief in ..., trust, confidence, loyalty (Faith or Faithfulnesses is often personified and in ṚV. x, 151 invoked as a deity; in TBr. she is the daughter of Prajāpati, and in ŚBr. of the Sun; in MBh. she is the daughter of Dakṣa and wife of Dharma; in MārKP. she is the mother of Kāma, and in BhP. the daughter of Kardama and wife of Aṅgiras or Manu) ṚV. &c. &c.;

wish, desire (śraddhayā ind. 'willingly, gladly'), longing for;

desire of eating, appetite;

the longing of a pregnant woman;

curiosity;

purity;

respect, reverence;

calmness or composure of mind;
intimacy;
a term for the fem. nouns in ā;
N. of the authoress of ṚV. x, 151;
N. of two Sāmans

Narayana Guru tradition

[Nitya. Meditations on the self](#)

Śraddha - Absolute faith and one-pointed devotion.

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Śraddha: One of the prerequisites on the part of a seeker. Willingness to have full faith in the truthfulness of the word of the Guru and of the scriptures. A necessary stepping stone to manana.

Sankara tradition

[Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Śraddha is the faith in the truths of Vedanta as taught by the Guru.

Descriptions

General

[Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Śraddha (“faithful”). Ancestral memorial rite, performed either for one specific person (ekoddishṭa), or for a group in which the primary beneficiaries were one’s three paternal ancestors (parvana).

An ekoddishṭa śraddha is usually first performed on the eleventh day after a person’s death, although it may be repeated on the anniversary of the death. It is also usually performed every year during the Pitrpakṣa, a two-week period specifically devoted to such rites, on the lunar day during this period that corresponds to the lunar day of death.

A parvana śraddha can be performed on a number of different occasions, for a number of different reasons. In the dharma literature and its commentaries, śraddhas are classified as falling in all three categories of ritual action: nitya, naimittika, and kama. Certain śraddhas are obligatory (nitya) because they are prescribed for certain particular times, such as during the Pitrpakṣa. Other śraddhas are occasional (naimittika) because they are necessary only under certain conditions, such as the obligation to give a tirtha śraddha when one visits a pilgrimage place (tirtha). Finally, certain śraddhas are freely performed because of the desire (kama) for certain benefits from them—usually conceived as the well-being of one’s ancestors—and these are desiderative (kama) śraddhas.

Whatever the motive for giving the śraddha, the general procedure always has two particular features: symbolically feeding one’s ancestor(s) by offering balls of cooked grain (pindas), and feeding real food to a group of brahmins (the group with the highest social status in Hinduism) representing one’s ancestors. Each of these parts is given a great deal of ritual elaboration, and there is considerable disagreement about which should come first, but in modern times offering the pindas generally precedes the meal.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

śraddhā or faith: a function of the mind which enables the aspirant to accept as true the words of Vedānta as taught by a competent teacher. This is not a mechanical or unquestioning belief. It is rather an affirmative attitude of mind as opposed to the sceptical and negative. Endowed with this virtue the aspirant intuitively believes in the existence of Ultimate Reality and in the eternity of the Soul. Further, he knows that he is capable of making any sacrifice for the realization of Truth. It is said in the Kāṭha Upaniṣad that Naciketa, armed with śraddhā, went to the abode of the king of death to seek the knowledge of the hereafter. Without this affirmative attitude of the mind no success is possible in spiritual life.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. *Talks on Vivekachudamani*

26. That conviction that the śāstra and the words of the teacher are true is said to be śraddhā by the wise by which the truth is known.

Commentaries by Dayananda:

Śraddhā means faith or trust. These English words do not fully convey the meaning of śraddhā. Śraddhā is defined as 'śāstrasya guruvākyasya satyabuddhi-avadhāraṇa'. Avadhāraṇā means ascertainment, conviction or commitment. Satya-buddhi means a buddhi which sees 'this is true'. A 'this is true' attitude towards the words of the Veda-śāstra as well as of the teacher is called śraddhā.

...

It is nice to hear sometimes that, 'I am Brahman'. It is like someone telling you, "you are the king of the country". It is nice to hear that. But it is a false statement. And a false statement, however flattering, cannot be accepted by me. So I cannot accept the statement, 'I am Brahman'. I can go by what I know. And I know very well about my limitations. But in the vision of śāstra 'I am Īśvara', 'the seeker is the sought'. That vision I cannot accept. I thought perhaps I did not understand the śāstra properly; so I go to a guru who understands the śāstra and he confirms what the śāstra says. In this situation I need śraddhā to accept the vision of the śāstra about me. It is just the opposite of what I think I am. When it is just the opposite to what I think I am, then definitely I require not just ordinary faith; I make proper effort to see that the śāstras words are true, and not my opinions about myself. That is śraddhā.

...

Śraddhā alone is considered the most important thing in gaining this knowledge. If śraddhā is there everything else including mumuksutva can be accomplished. The śāstra says that the knower of Brahman gains the ultimate. This itself will create mumuksutva in you, if śraddhā is there. If śraddhā is not there, your approach to the śāstra will be academic. When you have śraddhā, even though you are made to study grammar, logic and so on, your pursuit is non-academic. Even if you study philosophy etc. in the university or anywhere, it is still non-academic when you have śraddhā. But without śraddhā even if you study Vedānta with a teacher it is only academic. Anyone who studies the śāstra with śraddhā is a mumuksu, no matter where he studies...

Before operating a means of knowledge you should have confidence and trust in it. Once knowledge is born, śraddhā is no more necessary, because the thing is known to you.

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

śraddhā — from the verb root dhā “to place” + śrad = “faith”.

Related words

Dama

Sama

Samadhana

Broader term: Satsampatti

Titiksa

Uparati

Sanskrit

Śraddhā — श्रद्धा

śraddhā - श्रद्धा

Sravaṇa

Variant spellings

sravana

shravana

śravaṇa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śravaṇa — ... hearing; study.

1. A proximate aid, according to Advaita, for liberation. An aspirant should hear the Upaniṣadic texts from a qualified teacher. This will remove any doubts one has as to the nature of the means of valid knowledge (pramāna) to know the Absolute (Brahman)—i.e., śruti. It is the stage of formal study.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śravaṇa -

the act of hearing (also 'that which is heard');

acquiring knowledge by hearing, learning, study;

fame, reputation;

wealth;

(rarely n.) the ear;

the hypotenuse of a triangle or the diagonal of a tetragon &c.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Śravaṇa. This is study and discussion of the Upaniṣads with the assistance of a guru that has realized the truth they teach. The implication of this requirement is two-fold: First, it signifies that the ultimate philosophic truth is to be learnt through a study of the revealed texts. Secondly, it emphasizes the need for personal intercourse with a competent teacher, if the study is to be fruitful and shows that mere book-learning is not of much avail.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The effects of sravana may be immediate and the disciple realises the truth all at once. This can happen only for the well-advanced disciple. Otherwise, the disciple feels that he is unable to realise the truth, even after repeatedly hearing it. What is it due to? Impurities in his mind: ignorance, doubt and wrong identity are the obstacles to be removed.

Sravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana

General

Dictionary - Grimes

2. According to Advaita Vedānta, the path of knowledge consists of three steps: study (śravaṇa), reflection (manana), and contemplation (nididhyāsana). Reflection is discovering how and why the teachings are true. The truth has been discovered by study, but now any doubts (asambhāvanā) are to be removed so that what has been received on trust can be made one's own. This reveals a unique feature of Advaita which posits and recognizes the value of analytical reflection.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Acquisition of knowledge (jnāna).—Evil being due to a misconception of the nature of Reality, its removal can be only through right knowledge; ... Detachment is a pre-condition of right knowledge. ... The training of this second stage [the first is vairagya] is three-

fold: śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana. The first stands for the study of the Upanisads under a proper guru... It defines the place of ... tradition in the training. ... Though necessary, śravaṇa is not enough; so it is supplemented by manana or continued reflection upon what has thus been learnt with a view to get an intellectual conviction regarding it. This training is to be further supplemented by nididhyāsana or meditation, which assists directly in the realization within oneself of the unity underlying the multiplicity of the universe. The necessity for this part of the training arises as follows: Our belief in the reality of diversity as such is the result of perception and is therefore immediate. So nothing but an equally immediate apprehension of unity can effectively remove it. If variety, in the reality of which we almost instinctively believe, is not to delude us, we must see the unity underlying it, not merely know it. Seeing is believing. That is why the Upanisads speak of darśana or 'spiritual perception' in respect of the ātman or Brahman. A mere reasoned conviction is not enough, though it is necessary to give us the mark, as it were, at which to shoot. A successful pursuit of this course of training will result in right knowledge, which ... will lead to moksa.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

That questioner said, "The ancients say that for a person who wants to know that real state sadhana, sravana, manana, and nididhyasana are absolutely necessary till the very end." Bhagavan replied, "They are necessary only to get rid of the various things that come from outside and that too for purposes of sadhana only, but not for realising the Self. One's own self is there at all times and in all places. Sravana, etc., are to be resorted to only to get rid of external influences, but if they are regarded as the most important things they will be the cause of the development of the feelings of ahankara, such as 'I am a pandit' (learned man), 'I am a great man' and the like. That is a big samsara (family). It is difficult to get rid of it later on. It is bigger than a wild elephant. It will not yield ordinarily.

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

By sravana, Knowledge dawns. That is the flame.

By manana, the Knowledge is not allowed to vanish. Just as the flame is protected by a wind-screen, so the other thoughts are not allowed to overwhelm the right knowledge.

By nididhyasana, the flame is kept up to burn bright by trimming the wick. Whenever other thoughts arise, the mind is turned inward to the light of true knowledge.

When this becomes natural, it is samadhi. The enquiry "Who am I?" is the sravana. The ascertainment of the true import of 'I' is the manana. The practical application on each occasion is nididhyasana. Being as 'I' is samadhi.

...

Sravana removes the illusion of the Self being one with the body, etc. Reflection makes it clear that Knowledge is Self. Onepoint- edness reveals the Self as being Infinite and Blissful.

...

Vaidharbha's question was: "In practice, the thoughts are found to manifest and subside alternately. Is this jnana?" Sri Bhagavan explained the doubt as follows:

Some people think that there are different stages in jnana. The Self is nitya aparoksha, i.e., ever-realised, knowingly or unknowingly. Sravana, they argue, should therefore be aparoksha jnana (directly experienced) and not paroksha jnana (indirect knowledge). But jnana should result in dukkha nivriti (loss of misery) whereas sravana alone does not bring it about. Therefore they say, though aparoksha, it is not unshaken; the rising of vasanas is the cause of its being weak (not unchanging); when the vasanas are removed, jnana becomes unshaken and bears fruit. Others say sravana is only paroksha jnana. By manana (reflection) it be-

comes aparoksha spasmodically. The obstruction to its continuity is the vasanas: they rise up with reinforced vigour after manana. They must be held in check. Such vigilance consists in remembering = “I am not the body” and adhering to the aparoksha anubhava (direct experience) which has been had in course of manana (reflection). Such practice is called nididhyasana and eradicates the vasanas. Then dawns the sahaja state. That is jnana, sure. The aparoksha in manana cannot effect dukha nivritti (loss of misery) and cannot amount to moksha, i.e., release from bondage because the vasanas periodically overpower the jnana. Hence it is adridha (weak) and becomes firm after the vasanas have been eradicated by nididhyasana (one-pointedness).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Psychology of Darsanamala

Yājñavalkya instructed his wife and disciple, Maitreyi, to listen, śravaṇa, ponder over, manana, and actualize the teaching, nididhyāsana, when he commenced his teaching of brahmavidya to her.

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

The Absolute is within the consciousness of man, and conversely man lives within the Consciousness of the Absolute. The third degree of contemplation in the series of sravana (hearing), manana (mental identification of what one has heard or knowing it by heart as schoolboys say) is nididhyasana (knowing the Absolute as if from inside it or as the Absolute within you).

See also:

in Moksha: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

śravaṇa- from the root śru, to hear.

Related words

Manana

Nididhyasana

Sanskrit

Śravaṇa — श्रवण

śravaṇa - श्रवण

Sruti

Variant spellings

sruti

shruti

shruthi
śruti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Śruti — ... what is heard; revealed scripture; direct assertion; Veda.

1. The Vedas are called the śruti. They are the Hindu revelatory scripture. The Divine Word (Veda) which is “heard” by the Seer (ṛṣi) constitutes the immemorial truth.
2. It is divided into bheda- and abheda-śruti.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

śruti -

hearing, listening;

the ear, organ or power of hearing;

the diagonal of a tetragon or hypotenuse of a triangle;

that which is heard or perceived with the ear, sound, noise &c.;

an aggregate of sounds (whether forming a word or any part of a word);

rumour, report, news, intelligence, hearsay (śrutau- root sthā, ‘to be known by hearsay’);

a saying, saw, word;

that which has been heard or communicated from the beginning, sacred knowledge orally transmitted by the Brāhmins from generation to generation, the Veda (i.e. sacred eternal sounds or words as eternally heard by certain holy sages called Rishis, and so differing from smṛti or what is only remembered and handed down in writing by human authors...; it is properly only applied to the Mantra and Brāhmaṇa portion of the Vedas, although afterwards extended to the Upanishads and other Vedic works including the Darśanas; iti śruteḥ, ‘because it is so taught in the Veda, according to a śruti or Vedic text’; pl. ‘sacred texts, the Vedas’, also ‘rites prescribed by the Vedas’);

(in music) a particular division of the octave, a quarter tone or interval (twenty-two of these are enumerated, four constituting a major tone, three a minor, and two a semitone; they are said to be personified as nymphs);

a name, title;

learning, scholarship;

buddhi;

N. of a daughter of Atri and wife of Kardama

Wikipedia

Śruti (Sanskrit: lit. “hearing, listening”), often spelled shruti or shruthi, is a term that describes the sacred texts comprising the central canon of Hinduism and is one of the three main sources of dharma and therefore is also influential within Hindu Law. These sacred works span the entire history of Hinduism, beginning with some of the earliest known Hindu texts and ending in the early modern period with the later Upanishads. Śruti is often cited as akin to the Vedas; however, it also contains various supplementary commentaries on them. This literature differs from other sources of Hindu Law, particularly smṛti or “remembered text”, because of

the purely divine origin of śruti. This belief of divinity is particularly prominent within the Mimamsa tradition. The initial literature is traditionally believed to be a direct revelation of the “cosmic sound of truth” heard by ancient Rishis who then translated what was heard into something understandable by humans.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Śruti (from shru, to hear) refers to sacred texts that are received through a kind of revelation, rather than written by humans. Śruti texts are the primary authority in Hinduism; they are complemented, but never superseded, by smṛiti, or human-made texts. Śruti texts are understood to be heard from a transcendent source. The VEDIC MANTRA texts and their adjuncts, the BRAHMANAS, which include in them the ARANYAKAS and UPANISHADS, are accepted by all as being śruti. These texts are considered to have been “heard” or “seen” by the Vedic RISHIS (seers). Other texts are sometimes given the status of śruti by certain groups or regional traditions, such as the BHAGAVAD GITA, the Tamil TEVARAM, or the TANTRIC AGAMAS.

Encyclopedia of religion

The Veda has been passed from generation to generation by oral transmission. This fact explains the name śruti (“what is heard”) by which the Veda is known. In order to preserve this extensive literature intact without the aid of writing, and to facilitate its precise memorizing, the Vedists devised various ways of reciting the Veda (pathas or vikṛtis) that involve permutations and combinations of the words in mantras (versus) and prose formulas. The emergence of various schools (śakhas) and subschools (cāranas) of Vedic study has also substantially helped the preservation of this large corpus of literature. At the same time, oral transmission may have resulted in the loss of a considerable portion of Vedic literature in the course of time.

...

These communities [the Indian branch of the Indo-Europeans who gradually entered the valley of the Indus River in successive waves in the second millennium BCE] regard as sacred and authoritative texts only those orally transmitted collections of poetic hymns (mantras), ritual instructions (Brahmanas), and some of the early philosophical speculations (Aranyakas and Upanisads) of the Vedic literary corpus. Together, these works are said to constitute sacred “knowledge” (veda) and are known as śruti, “revealed truth.”

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The origin of Upaniṣadic literature as it has been handed down to us is somewhat hard to trace. Hindu tradition places it on the same footing as the other species of Vedic literature—the Mantras and the Brahmanas—regarding them all alike as śruti or ‘revelation,’ i.e. as works not ascribable to human authors.

...

Human experience may be sufficient to understand nature; but nature, the [orthodox schools] contend, transcends itself and points to something beyond, and they postulate śruti or revelation as the sole means of acquiring what knowledge is possible of that transcendental sphere of being...

The acceptance of śruti as an authority in this sense ... has its danger; for it may lead to belief in anything under the plea that it has been revealed. The ancient Indian realized the danger and has hedged in his view of it by various conditions. They show what exactly revelation as conceived in orthodox circles is, and how it stands related to experience in general and to reason in particu-

lar: (i.) The first of these conditions is that the revealed truth should be new or extra-empirical (alaukika), i.e. otherwise unattained and unattainable. The authority of revelation for instance is not to be invoked to show that heat destroys cold, which is a matter of common experience. Now it is clear that revelation should speak to us in terms of our experience for otherwise it will be unintelligible and will therefore fail of its purpose. Even the scripture cannot teach the unknown through the unknown, so that the theme of revelation cannot be wholly out of relation to human experience. When we take the condition of novelty along with this fact that the terms in which transcendental truth is communicated must necessarily be known to us, we see that what is revealed, so far at least as philosophic truth is concerned, cannot be altogether new, but can only be a new way of construing our experience. (ii.) The next condition is that what is revealed should not be contradicted (abādhita) by any of the other pramāṇas. Nor should one part of it be in conflict with another. This means that the content of revelation must be internally coherent and that, though it may be above reason, it cannot be against it. The very fact that conditions are laid down for determining the validity of revelation makes it evident that it cannot be opposed to reason. (iii.) It is not only thus negatively that revelation is related to reason. The relation is also positive in that we find a third condition laid down, viz. that reason should foreshadow what revelation teaches. That is, revealed truth must appear probable. If this condition again is not to clash with the first one of novelty, we must take it as meaning only a rough forecast of the truth under consideration by means of analogies drawn from the empirical sphere. They are not proofs of revealed truth; yet they are not useless, since they serve to remove any 'antecedent improbability' that may be felt to exist about the truth in question. The appeal to reason which we come across often in the śruti—particularly in the Upaniṣads—is explained by the orthodox as really of this kind. In their view, reason by itself is incapable of discerning such truths. At best, it may lead to two or more conclusions equally plausible; and, without the aid of revelation, it is impossible to avoid scepticism. The survival of the self after death is a good instance of a truth taught in the Veda which satisfies these conditions. It is not accessible to reason, but at the same time there is nothing in it to contradict reason. Despite these careful reservations, it should be admitted, śruti so defined remains an external authority; and that is the view taken of it in the orthodox schools.

Wikipedia

Max Muller in an 1865 lecture stated

“In no country, I believe, has the theory of revelation been so minutely elaborated as in India. The name for revelation in Sanskrit is Sruti, which means hearing; and this title distinguished the Vedic hymns and, at a later time, the Brahmanas also, from all other works, which however sacred and authoritative to the Hindu mind, are admitted to have been composed by human authors. The Laws of Manu, for instance, are not revelation; they are not Sruti, but only Smriti, which means recollection of tradition. If these laws or any other work of authority can be proved on any point to be at variance with a single passage of the Veda, their authority is at once overruled. According to the orthodox views of Indian theologians, not a single line of the Veda was the work of human authors. The whole Veda is in some way or the other the work of the Deity; and even those who saw it were not supposed to be ordinary mortals, but beings raised above the level of common humanity, and less liable therefore to error in the reception of revealed truth. The views entertained by the orthodox theologians of India are far more minute and elaborate than those of the most extreme advocates of verbal inspiration in Europe. The human element, called paurusheyatva in Sanskrit, is driven out of every corner or hiding place, and as the Veda is held to have existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time...”

Role in Hindu Law

The idea of śruti established a set group of people who were granted access to the information contained in the Vedas. Because of its divine nature and methods of transmittance, śruti literature, Vedas, was reserved solely for the twice-born or upper three castes. This necessitated interpretations by those granted access in order to provide the proper teaching and practical rules for

those unable to approach the literature, including Sudra, women, and those outside of the caste system. As these interpretations began to be practiced as law, the concept of Acara, or regional customary laws developed by a person who reads and interprets the Vedas, began to be understood. This, in conjunction with Smṛti texts that provide further human interpretation of Śruti, developed the information hierarchy that Hindus looked toward to dictate the proper conduct of their lives.

The specific information regarding such proper conduct was not found directly in the Vedas because they do not contain explicit codes or rules that would be found in a legal system. However, because of the Vedas' divine and unadulterated form, a rule that claims connection to this literature is given more merit even if it does not cite a specific passage. In this sense, Śruti exists as a source for all Hindu Law without dictating any specifics.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

... an important point which should be borne in mind is that so long as the knowledge of Brahman is sought with the help of Sruti (Revelation) and Yoga, a Guru or an enlightened teacher is an indispensable necessity. For, in the absence of confirmation by a knower of the Truth, we can never know whether our interpretation of the words of Sruti is correct, or whether the experiences we gain by Yogic practices have led us aright to the final goal. Hence we find that all those who approach the study of Vedanta in the orthodox way invariably invoke the help and the blessings of the Guru.

Sruti and smṛti

General

Encyclopedia of religion

... the relationship between sruti (“hearing”), the transcendent “revelation” as against the worldly or human tradition, called smṛti (“remembrance”). The word sruti does not refer to the mode of receiving the revelations: The standard term is “seeing,” not “hearing.” Sruti thus refers to the transmission of the fixed and systematized texts. In this sense it is not essentially different from the smṛti, except for the unique care and efforts spent on its preservation and transmission. But the differentiation marked by the two terms is significant. Although the smṛti equally tends to give itself as revelation, namely by the godhead, the transcendent authority of the sruti does not derive from any godhead. It stands by itself without the intermediary of a divine agency. Its authority being ultimate, it can have no other, higher source. It therefore functions as the unassailable basis of the fluid and adaptive worldly smṛti. Another word for smṛti is dharma, universal law, which then is said to be derived from or to be already contained in the sruti. At any rate the dharma should not go counter to the sruti. In fact, however, the relationship is more complex and indeed problematic.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

The Hindus have divided the whole of their ancient literature into two parts, which really mean two periods, Srutam, what was heard, and was not the work of men or any personal being, human or divine, and Smṛitam, what was remembered, and has always been treated as the work of an individual, whether man or god. Srutam or Sruti came afterwards to mean what has been revealed, exactly as we understand that word, while Smṛitam or Smṛiti comprised all that was recognized as possessing human authority only, so that if there ever was a conflict between the two, Smṛiti or tradition might at once be overruled by what was called Sruti or revelation...

What we call philosophy in its systematic form, is, from an Indian point of view, not revealed, Srutam, but belongs to Smriti or tradition. We possess it in carefully composed and systematically elaborated manuals, in short aphorisms or Sûtras or in metrical Kârikâs, ascribed to authors of whom we hardly know anything, and followed by large commentaries or independent treatises which are supposed to contain the outcome of a continuous tradition going- back to very ancient times, to the Sutra, nay even to the Brâhmana period, though in their present form they are confessedly the work of medieval or modern writers.

...

Samkara, ... says: ' In matters to be known from Sruti mere reasoning is not to be relied on. As the thoughts of man are altogether unfettered, reasoning, which disregards the holy texts and rests on individual opinion only, has no proper foundation. One sees how arguments which some clever men had excogitated with great pains, are shown by people still more ingenious to be fallacious, and how the arguments of the latter are refuted in their turn by other men ; so that on account of the diversity of men's opinions, it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as having a sure foundation. Nor can we get over this difficulty by accepting as well founded the reasoning of some person of recognised eminence, whether Kapila or any one else, since we observe that even men of the most undoubted intellectual eminence, such as Kapila, Kanâda, and other founders of philosophical schools, have contradicted each other.'

This rejection of reason and reasoning, though not unfamiliar to ourselves, seems certainly strange in a philosopher ; and it is not unnatural that Samkara should have been taunted by his adversaries with using reason against reasoning. ' You cannot,' they say, ' maintain that no reasoning whatever is wellfounded, for you yourself can found your assertion that reasoning has no foundation, on reasoning only. Moreover, if all reasoning were unfounded, the whole course of practical human life would have to come to an end.' But even this does not frighten Samkara.

See also:

in Shastra: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

śruti - from the root śru, to hear + abstract formative -ti .

Related words

Brahmana
Shastra
Smriti
Upanishad
Veda

Sanskrit

Śruti — श्रुति

śruti - श्रुति

Sthula

Variant spellings

sthula

sthūla

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sthūla — ... gross material.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sthūla -

large, thick, stout, massive, bulky, big, huge;

gross, tangible, material (opp. to sūkṣma , 'subtle')

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

Sthūla - from the root sthū = sthā .

Whitney. Sanskrit roots

the root: sthā, 'stand' .

Sanskrit

Sthūla — स्थूल

sthūla - स्थूल

Sthula-sarira

Variant spellings

sthula sarira

sthula-sharira
sthūla-śārīra
sthūlaśārīra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sthūla śārīra — ... gross body; physical body.

1. According to Sāṅkhya, it is constituted of the twenty-five elemental principles: the five jñānendriyas (the organs of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell), the five karmendriyas (the organs of speech prehension, movement, excretion, and generation), the five tanmātras (the subtle essence of the elements of sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell), the five mahābhūtas (ether, air, fire, water, and earth), and the five vital airs (prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna, and vyāna).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sthūlaśārīra -

the gross or material and perishable body with which a soul clad in its subtle body is invested (opp. to sūkṣma- and liṅga-s...); large-bodied

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

The Sthūla-sarīra or coarse material body consists, according to some Sāṅkhya teachers, of the five or four coarse elements (Bhutas), according to others of the element of the earth only, and is made up of six coverings, hair, blood, flesh, sinews, bones and marrow.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Three Acharyas and Narayana Guru tradition

Sthula-sarira. Gross body; physical body. The body with which gross objects are enjoyed in the waking state.

Descriptions

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

The gross aspect [of man] is called the sthūla śārīra or “gross body,” that is, the material and perishable body. This perishable body is, of course, destroyed at death, and another is formed at birth. It consists of the five gross aspects of the five tanmatras, technically called bhutas or the five gross elements. All this is the sum and substance of man. All proceed from the Cosmic Substance (Prakṛti), and represent the true essence of each individual of the manifest world. The philosophy of the Yoga interprets these principles as they apply to the individual, and the art of the Yoga teaches one how to control these forces.

Diagram: Three bodies (sharira traya)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Sthūlaśarīra - compounded of sthūla + śarīra .

Related words

Annamaya kosha

Karana-sarira

Sarira

Suksma sarira

Sanskrit

Sthūla-sarīra — स्थूलशरीर

sthūlaśarīra - स्थूलशरीर

Sukha

Variant spellings

sukha

sukham

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sukha — pleasant; happy; agreeable.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sukha -

... running swiftly or easily (only applied to cars or chariots);

pleasant (rarely with this meaning in Veda), agreeable, gentle, mild;

comfortable, happy, prosperous;

virtuous, pious;

N. of a man;

a kind of military array;

of one of the 9 Śaktis of Śiva;

ease, easiness, comfort, prosperity, pleasure, happiness, joy, delight in;

water;
N. of the fourth astrol. house;
the drug or medicinal root called Vṛiddhi

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

Pleasure - sukham. Sukham is happiness and joy, also the state of being happy and joyful. It is the quality of being pleasant and agreeable, as also the mental condition of being pleasant or agreeable.

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

“And now hear from Me the threefold happiness [sukham] that one enjoys through practice, and in which one comes to the end of suffering.” (18:36)

Sattvic happiness

... “That which in the beginning is like poison but in the end like nectar; that happiness, born from the tranquillity of one’s own mind, is declared to be sattvic.” (18:37)

... an important principle is set forth in this verse. In the beginning it is normal for spiritual practice to be boring or even annoying and upsetting. But at the end it will be all sukha: happiness and ease. For it never really is poison, but only seems so to the distorted mind-mirror of those bound in ignorance.

...

Rajasic happiness

“That which in the beginning, through contact between the senses and their objects, is like nectar, and in the end like poison; that happiness is declared to be rajasic.” (18:38)

Here we have the opposite of the previous verse. Those things that to the ignorant seem like the nectar of immortality (“This is really living!” “This the way to live!” “I like it—give me more!”) will in time be seen as deadly poison, but it is often too late... The happiness of rajas is simply fool’s gold.

An interesting point: In this and the previous verse the word pariname is found. It means “when transformed,” the idea being that in time the two kinds of happiness transmute or ripen into either amrita or poison. Actually, they reveal their inner nature, they do not really change, but it seems so to the sadhaka.

...

Tamasic happiness

“That happiness which both in the beginning and afterwards deludes the self, arising from sleep, indolence, and negligence, is declared to be tamasic.” (18:39)

Krishna describes tamasic happiness as mohanam—deluding, addicting, and confusing—arising from spiritual “sleep” (nidra), idleness and outright spiritual laziness (alasya), and negligence and confusion (pramada). Notice that, unlike sattvic and rajasic hap-

piness, tamasic happiness does not transform into anything other than what it is at the beginning. It does not lead to anything, but remains utterly inert. Sattwic and rajasic happiness leads to conclusions about their merit or demerit. Tamasic happiness,

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

As you experience it [sukha], the object is exhausted, the sense organs are tired and the mood has changed. Sukha is possible only when all the three are in proper alignment. The object should be there in a desirable quality and quantity, the senses should be fit and the mood should be proper. It is not humanly possible to keep all these three in alignment for a good length of time. So happiness has a beginning and an end. There is no guarantee that, after all the efforts, there will be happiness.

... The sukha belongs to the ānandamaya.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sukha — from su = “good, fine” + kha = “state”.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sukha - said to be from ... su + ... kha, and to mean originally ‘having a good axle-hole’.

Related words

Anandamaya kosha

Opposite: Dukha

Sanskrit

Sukha — सुख

sukha - सुख

Suksma sarira

Variant spellings

sukshma-sarira

sukshma-sharira

sūkṣma-śarīra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sūkṣma-śarīra — ... subtle body.

1. The sheaths of vital airs (prāṇa), mind (manas), and knowledge (vijñāna) constitute the subtle body. They are called the prāṇa-mayakośa, manomaya-kośa, and vijñāna-maya-kośa.

2. The subtle body consists of the internal organs (buddhi, ahañkāra, and manas), the organs of knowledge (jñānendriya), the organs of action (karmendriya), and the five vital airs (prāṇa).

3. It is also called the liṅga-śarīra or the astral body.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sūkṣmaśarīra -

(in phil.) the subtle body (= lingaś..., opp. to sthūla-ś...);

pl. the six subtle principles from which the grosser elements are evolved (viz. Ahañ-kāra and the 5 Tan-mātras ... ; accord. to other systems 'the 17 subtle principles of the 5 organs of sense, 5 organs of action, 5 elements, Buddhi and Manas')

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Three Acharyas and Narayana Guru tradition

Suksma-sarira : Subtle body; also called linga sarira. The body with which one sees and enjoys dreams.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

... the sukshma sarira corresponds to the pure light which one experiences just after sleep and before the rise of the ego. It is Cosmic Consciousness.

...

There is the body which is insentient; there is the Self which is eternal and self-luminous; in between the two there has arisen a phenomenon, namely the ego, which goes under these different names, mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), memory (chitta), the ego (ahankara), power (sakti), life current (prana), etc. ... [These] are only ideas (kalpana) to explain the subtle body (sukshma sarira).

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

The five (faculties) beginning with speech, the five (organs) beginning with the ear, the five (vital airs) beginning with prāṇa, the five (elements) beginning with ākāśa, buddhi (intellect) and the rest, avidyā (ignorance) whence Kama (desire) and Karma (action) constitute a body called sūkṣma (subtle) body. 98

Listen! This body produced from five subde elements is called sūksma as also linga (characteristic) śarīra; it is the field of desires, it experiences the consequences of Karma (prior experience); it (with the kārana sarīra added) being ignorant, has no beginning, and is the upādhi (vehicle) of ātman. 99

The characteristic condition of this body is the dreamy state; this state is distinguished from the waking state by the peculiar manner in which its senses work; in the dreamy state mind itself revives the condition created by the desires of the waking state. 100

[Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

89. Among these sheaths, the intelligent sheath (Vijnanamayakosha) which is endowed with the power of knowledge is the agent; the mental sheath (Manomayakosha) which is endowed with will-power is the instrument; and the vital sheath (Pranamayakosha) which is endowed with activity is the product. This division has been made according to their respective functions. These three sheaths together constitute the subtle body.

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

[Power of knowledge—Vijnana or intelligence has this power on account of its proximity to the Atman.

Will-power—Will is a function of the mind.]

See also:

in Sarira: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Diagram: Three bodies (sarira traya)

Related words

Karana-sarira

Linga sarira

Manomaya kosha

Pranamaya-kosa

Sarira

Sthula-sarira

Vijnanamaya kosha

Sanskrit

Sūkṣma-śarīra — सूक्ष्मशरीर

sūkṣma-śarīra - सूक्ष्मशरीर

Sushupti

Variant spellings

sushupti

susupti

suṣupti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Suṣupti — ... deep sleep; sleep without dream.

I. The state of deep-sleep consciousness. There are no objects present—neither of external things of the world nor of internal ideas; thus, there is no apprehension of duality, though ignorance (avidyā) still persists in a latent state.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

suṣupti -

deep sleep (in phil. 'complete unconsciousness') Vedāntas

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Sushupti: dreamless sleep

... The sushupti is the state of deep sleep in which the jiva in the Prajna aspect and the Lord in the Isvara aspect, abiding together in the stamen of the Heart-Lotus, experience the bliss of the Supreme by means of the subtle avidya (nescience). Just as a hen after roaming about in the day calls the chicks to her, enfolds them under her wings and goes to rest for the night, so also the subtle individual being, after finishing the experiences of the jagrat and swapna for the time being, enters with the impressions gathered during those states into the causal body which is made up of nescience, characterised by tamo guna, denoted by the letter M and presided over by the deity Rudra.

Deep sleep is nothing but the experience of pure being.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The third foot of the Ātman the third phase of its analysis, is deep sleep, where all perceptions and cognitions converge into a single mode of the mind, - ekībhūtah. It becomes a mass of consciousness, which is not projected outside; - prājñana-ghanah. There is no modification of the mind, and so there is no external consciousness. We are not aware of the world outside in the state of sleep because of the absence of vṛittis, or psychoses, of the mind. Only when the mind becomes extrovert can it have consciousness of the outer world, whether in dream or in waking. But, there is no agitation of the mind, of that nature, in sleep. It is as if there is a homogeneous mass of all perceptions, where all the saṃskāras, vāsanās, commingle into a single mode, or condition, instead of there being many cognitive psychoses. ... It is all bliss. The happiness of deep sleep is greater than all other forms of happiness or pleasure born of sense-contact. It is filled with ānanda, bliss, delight, satisfaction.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Dreamless sleep.—In this state, described as *susupti*, the *manas* as well as the senses is quiescent and there is consequently a cessation of normal or empirical consciousness. There is no longer any contrasting of one object with another or even of the subject with the object, and the embodied self is then said to attain a temporary union with the Absolute. As however *susupti* is not identified with the state of release, this statement has to be understood negatively—as only signifying that the consciousness of individuality is absent at the time though the individual himself continues to be, as shown by the sense of personal identity connecting the states before and after sleep. It is not a state of consciousness in the ordinary sense; but it is not a state of blank or absolute unconsciousness either, for some sort of awareness is associated with it. ... This state is above all desire and is therefore described as one of unalloyed bliss. ... The perfect peace or happiness of sleep we even recollect after waking, for then our feeling is not merely that we have slept but that we have slept soundly.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The third state of consciousness is *Sushupti* or “the state of deep sleep”. The words *sushupti* and sleep are also etymologically related. It is the state of *Parasabda* or “Supernal Sound”. It has been noted before that the Element Air is the Element of Sound. The hierarchy of Voice — Word — Sound has thus been retraced from external physical manifestation to inward spiritual principle. ... The symbolic nature of the “sleep” of the *Sushupti* state appears in statements like that made by the Rishi *Vasishta* (in the *Mumukshu-Prakarana* of *Yoga-Vasishta*): “I shall ever be in the *Sushupti* state, and thus be able to overstep the limits of the painful mind, though engaged in the daily actions of the world.” The *Yoga-Vasishta* also mentions that it is the highest of the *Ajnana* states or “states of non-realization” (of Reality).

Narayana Guru tradition

Isa Upanishad. Nitya

... unconscious, which is more correctly termed in Indian psychology as *susupti* or *karana caitanya* (causal consciousness).

Nitya. Pranayama

From the moment of the fertilization of an ovum to the hour of the birth of the child, the fetus is in deep sleep. In that state it has no desires and it does not see any dream. This long period of the unconscious state of the growing fetus can be called *susupti*. In spite of having no conscious desire or semi-conscious dream, the growing fetus is active. This is one of the greatest miracles of this world.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

Our wakeful experience cannot make any sense if the external items are not meaningfully related to an inner consideration of their worth or value. A glorious sunrise comes. You turn to it and say “how wonderful!” Outside is the sun, inside is the wonder. The love for the beautiful is embedded in us. Even when no beautiful thing is being presented, the capacity to appreciate beauty is still within us. Everything which happens in wakeful life has a corresponding urge, interest or value vision lying buried in the deep unconscious. This is the causal factor which produces the effect of what is experienced, called *susupti*, or *suptam*.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: What does sushupti look like?

M.: In a cloudy dark night no individual identification of objects is possible and there is only dense darkness, although the seer has his eyes wide open; similarly in sushupti the seer is aware of simple nescience.

Sankara tradition

Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad

... the knowers of Brahman do not admit attainment of its own nature by the individual soul, in any state other than deep-sleep.

See: Sakshin and sushupti

Sushupt and Buddhi

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The State of Deep Sleep is called “the state in which there is neither the subjective nor the objective”. It is the state in which Buddhi, the intuitive, discriminative spiritual faculty functions. “Sleep” is symbolical, though the literal is not excluded. The function of Buddhi is like sleep to the rational mind which inevitably falls short of its superior realm. ... Sleep is moreover an appropriate term, for while the rational faculty can be followed in its activities, the faculty of Buddhi works in flashes of its own nature, without allowing itself to be watched at work. It is, indeed, “neither subjective, nor objective”.

Sushupti and Jagrat

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Interesting is another sentence in Yoga-Vasishta (Utpatti Prakarana, the Story of Akasaja): Those who are liberated in life are in “that “ undisturbed state of mental equilibrium when they enjoy the Jagrata (Waking) state in Sushupti (Sleep) or the Sushupti in Jagrata, devoid of all desire-tendencies (Vasanas)”.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Cohen. Guru Ramana

Mr. C. Sushupti is often characterised as the state of ignorance.

Bh. No, it is the pure State. There is full awareness in it and total ignorance in the waking state. It is said to be ajnana (ignorance) only in relation to the false jnana (knowledge) prevalent in jagrat. Really speaking jagrat is ajnana and sushupti prajnana (wisdom). If sushupti is not the real state where does the intense peace come from to the sleeper? It is everybody’s experience that nothing in jagrat can compare with the bliss and well-being derived from deep sleep, when the mind and the senses are absent. What does it all mean? It means that bliss comes only from inside ourselves and that it is most intense when we are free from thoughts and perceptions, which create the world and the body, that is, when we are in our pure Be-ing, which is Brahman, the

Self. In other words, the Be-ing alone is bliss and the mental superimpositions are ignorance and, therefore, the cause of misery. That is why samadhi is also described as sushupti in jagrat, the blissful pure being which prevails in deep sleep is experienced in jagrat, when the mind and the senses are fully alert but inactive.

Ramana. Maharshi's Gospel

D: Can I not remain in sushupti as long as I like and also be in it at will, just as I am in the waking state? What is the jnani's experience of these three states?

M: Sushupti does exist in your waking state also. You are in sushupti even now. That should be consciously entered into and reached in this very waking state. There is no real going in and coming out of it. To be aware of sushupti in the jagrat state is jagrat-sushupti and that is samadhi.

The ajnani cannot remain long in sushupti, because he is forced by his nature to emerge from it. His ego is not dead and it will rise again and again. But the jnani crushes the ego at its source. It may seem to emerge at times... That is, in the case of the jnani also, for all outward purposes prarabdha would seem to sustain or keep up the ego, as in the case of the ajnani; but there is this fundamental difference, that the ajnani's ego when it rises up (really it has subsided except in deep sleep) is quite ignorant of its source; in other words, the ajnani is not aware of his sushupti in his dream and waking states; in the case of the jnani, on the contrary, the rise or existence of the ego is only apparent, and he enjoys his unbroken, transcendental experience in spite of such apparent rise or existence of the ego, keeping his attention (lakshya) always on the Source. This ego is harmless; it is merely like the skeleton of a burnt rope — though with a form, it is useless to tie up anything. By constantly keeping one's attention on the Source, the ego is dissolved in that Source like a salt-doll in the sea.

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

... the sleep state is free from thoughts and their impression to the individual. It cannot be altered by one's will because effort is impossible in that condition. Although nearer to Pure Consciousness, it is not fit for efforts to realise the Self.

The incentive to realise can arise only in the waking state and efforts can also be made only when one is awake. We learn that the thoughts in the waking state form the obstacle to gaining the stillness of sleep. "Be still and know that I AM God". So stillness is the aim of the seeker. Even a single effort to still at least a single thought even for a trice goes a long way to reach the state of quiescence. Effort is required and it is possible in the waking state only. There is the effort here: there is awareness also; the thoughts are stilled; so there is the peace of sleep gained. That is the state of the Jnani. It is neither sleep nor waking but intermediate between the two. There is the awareness of the waking state and the stillness of sleep. It is called jagrat-sushupti. Call it wakeful sleep or sleeping wakefulness or sleepless waking or wakeless sleep. It is not the same as sleep or waking separately. It is ati-jagrat (beyond wakefulness) or atisushupti (beyond sleep). It is the state of perfect awareness and of perfect stillness combined. It lies between sleep and waking; it is also the interval between two successive thoughts. It is the source from which thoughts spring; we see that when we wake up from sleep. In other words thoughts have their origin in the stillness of sleep. The thoughts make all the difference between the stillness of sleep and the turmoil of waking. Go to the root of the thoughts and you reach the stillness of sleep. But you reach it in the full vigour of search, that is, with perfect awareness.

That is again jagrat-sushupti spoken of before. It is not dullness; but it is Bliss. It is not transitory but it is eternal. From that the thoughts proceed. What are all our experiences but thoughts? Pleasure and pain are mere thoughts. They are within ourselves. If you are free from thoughts and yet aware, you are That Perfect Being.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

[the initial state of our becoming aware of ourselves immediately after we wake up from deep sleep] Generally, we do not think of this condition when we get up from sleep. We remain in a state of half-consciousness, and we plunge into our usual activities afterwards; so that we do not meditate upon this intervening period between deep sleep and waking consciousness in terms of the outer world. We have a subtle feeling of our 'being', before we become aware of the world outside. We are not asleep; we have woken up; and yet we are not fully aware of the samsāra that is outside us. This state of consciousness where it is aware that it is, and yet not aware that other things are, is the state of I-am-ness, asmitva, aham-asmi, that can be a feeble apology for Reality. A perpetual establishment of oneself in this consciousness would land us in the experience of the Cosmic.

See also:

in Catuspada: [Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy](#)

in Manas: [Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani](#)

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Related words

Broader term: Catuspada

Jagrat

Laya

Prajna

Svapna

Turiya

Sanskrit

Suṣupti — सुषुप्ति

suṣupti - सुषुप्ति

Sutra

Variant spellings

sutra

sūtra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Sūtra — ... aphorism; “thread”.

1. An extremely condensed and cryptic statement requiring a commentary or explanation (bhāṣya) to make it intelligible.
2. The sacred thread worn by the members of the three higher castes.
3. The basic text for a philosophical system. It consists of a set of aphorisms setting forth, in an ordered manner, the leading concepts and doctrines of the system concerned. These aphorisms are cryptic and are not expository statements but aids to memory. Since they are brief, they lend themselves to divergent interpretations.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

sūtra -

a thread, yarn, string, line, cord, wire;

a measuring line;

the sacred thread or cord worn by the first three classes;

a girdle;

a fibre;

a line, stroke;

a sketch, plan;

that which like a thread runs through or holds together everything, rule, direction;

a short sentence or aphoristic rule, and any work or manual consisting of strings of such rules hanging together like threads (these Sūtra works form manuals of teaching in ritual, philosophy, grammar &c.: e.g. in ritual there are first the Śrauta-sūtras, and among them the Kalpa-sūtras, founded directly on Śruti ; they form a kind of rubric to Vedic ceremonial, giving concise rules for the performance of every kind of sacrifice ...; other kinds of Śruti works are the Gṛihya-sūtras and Sāmāyācārika or Dharma-sūtras i.e.

‘rules for domestic ceremonies and conventional customs’, sometimes called collectively Smārta-sūtras [as founded on smṛti or ‘tradition’ see smārta]; these led to the later Dharmaśāstras or ‘law-books’ ...; in philosophy each system has its regular text-book of aphorisms written in Sūtras by its supposed founder ...; in Vyākaraṇa or grammar there are the celebrated Sūtras of Pāṇini in eight books, which are the groundwork of a vast grammatical literature; with Buddhists, Pāśupatas &c. the term Sūtra is applied to original text books as opp. to explanatory works; with Jains they form part of the Dṛiṣṭivāda);

a kind of tree Divyāv

Wikipedia

Sūtra, literally means a thread or line that holds things together, and more metaphorically refers to an aphorism (or line, rule, formula), or a collection of such aphorisms in the form of a manual.

In Hinduism the ‘sutra’ is a distinct type of literary composition, based on short aphoristic statements, generally using various technical terms. The literary form of the sutra was designed for concision, as the texts were intended to be memorized by students in some of the formal methods of scriptural and scientific study (Sanskrit: svādhyāya). Since each line is highly condensed, another literary form arose in which commentaries (Sanskrit: bhāṣya) on the sutras were added, to clarify and explain them.

One of the most famous definitions of a sutra in Indian literature is itself a sutra and comes from the Vayu Purana:
“Of minimal syllabary, unambiguous, pithy, comprehensive, / non- redundant, and without flaw: who knows the sūtra knows it to be thus.”

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

A sutra (line, thread, or string) is a text (on any subject) composed of short, aphoristic verses, usually only of a few words. Most often the sutra form was used to facilitate easy memorization, as knowledge in India was most frequently communicated from memory. Because of the extreme conciseness of the lines of text, most verses are not comprehensible without reference to some sort of commentary. Buddhist and Jain traditions also frequently used this method in their texts (e.g., Acharanga Sutra of the Jains). Among the many such texts are the Dharma Sutra, YOGA SUTRA, and Vedanta Sutra.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Sutra (“thread”). In a metaphorical sense, a sutra is a short phrase or aphorism that can easily be committed to memory. Many early philosophical and grammatical texts were collections of such sutras, which are so brief that they virtually presuppose a commentary to explain their meaning. In many cases the commentary would have been an oral exchange between teacher and student, thus effecting the living transmission that is still the norm in tantra, a secret, ritually based religious practice. Memorizing such sutras was a way to gain mastery over an entire text, and the sutras could also serve as an aid to memory for the commentary, thus enabling a person to preserve the “thread” of the argument. In a more literal sense, the word sutra can also refer to the cord or cords strung through the centers of palm leaf manuscripts, which kept the pages of the text in their proper order.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

We possess it [philosophy in its systematic form] in carefully composed and systematically elaborated manuals, in short aphorisms or Sūtras or in metrical Kārikās. ... In the Sūtras each system of philosophy is complete, and elaborated in its minutest details. There is no topic within the sphere of philosophy which does not find a clear or straightforward treatment in these short Sutras. The Sūtra style, imperfect as it is from a literary point of view, would be invaluable to us in other systems of philosophy, such as Hegel’s or Plato’s. We should always know where we are, and we should never hear of a philosopher who declared on his death-bed that no one had understood him, nor of antagonistic schools, diverging from and appealing to the same teacher. One thing must be quite clear to every attentive reader of these Sūtras, namely, that they represent the last result of a long continued study of philosophy, carried on for centuries in the forests and hermitages of India. The ideas which are shared by all the systems of Indian philosophy, the large number of technical terms possessed by them in common or peculiar to each system, can leave no doubt on this subject. Nor can we doubt that for a long time the philosophical thoughts of India were embodied in what I call a Mnemonic Literature.

...

The Sūtra-period, reaching down as far as Asoka’s reign in the third century, and his Council in 242 B.C., claims not only the famous Sutras of Panini, but has also been fixed upon as the period of the greatest philosophical activity in India, an activity called forth, it would seem, by the strong commotion roused by the rise of the Buddhist school of philosophy, and afterwards of religion.

...

Sûtra-style

... the structure of the Sûtras. In order to discuss a subject fully, and to arrive in the end at a definite opinion, the authors of the Sûtras are encouraged to begin with stating first every possible objection that can reasonably be urged against what is their own opinion. As long as the objections are not perfectly absurd, they have a right to be stated, and this is called the Purvapaksha, the first part. Then follow answers to all these objections, and this is called the Uttarakpaksha, the latter part ; and then only are we led on to the final conclusion, the Siddhânta. This system is exhaustive and has many advantages, but it has also the disadvantage, as far as the reader is concerned, that, without a commentary, he often feels doubtful where the cons end and the pros begin. The commentators themselves differ sometimes on that point. Sometimes again, instead of three, a case or Adhikarana is stated in five members, namely :—

1. The subject to be explained (Vishaya).
2. The doubt (Samsaya).
3. The first side or prima facie view (Purvapaksha).
4. The demonstrated conclusion (Siddhânta); and
5. The connection (Samgati).

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

... the Sûtra period ... extended from 600—200 B.C. The word sūtra, thread, is derived from the root siv, "to sew." Here the term is used to mean that which like a thread runs through and holds everything together. A sutra is a short, pithy, mnemonic sentence used to facilitate learning. It is the style used for all philosophical literature.

Main sutras

General

Wikipedia

Vedanga

Shiksha (phonetics)

Chandas (metrics)

Vyakarana (grammar)

Ashtadhyayi (Panini), discussing grammar

Nirukta (etymology)

Jyotisha (astrology)

Kalpa (ritual)

Srauta Sutras, performance of sacrifices

Smarta Sutras

Grhya Sutras, covering domestic life

Samayacarika or Dharma Sutras

Sulba Sutras, architecture of sacrificial area

Hindu philosophy

Yoga Sutras

Nyaya Sutras

Vaisheshika Sutra
Purva Mimamsa Sutras
Brahma Sutras (or Vedanta Sutra) (Badarayana)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

sūtra - from the root siv 'to sew', and connected with sūci and sūnā.

[Wikipedia](#)

It is derived from the verbal root siv-, meaning to sew (these words, including Latin suere and English to sew, all ultimately deriving from PIE *siH-/syuH- 'to sew').

Related words

Brahma-sutra
Darshana

Sanskrit

Sūtra — सूत्र

sūtra - सूत्र

Svapna

Variant spellings

svapna
swapna

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Svapna —... dream; the dream state.

1. It is to be immersed in one's own self. The state of consciousness called dream is also known as prajñā.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

svapna -
sleep, sleeping;
sleepiness, drowsiness;

sleeping too much, sloth, indolence;
dreaming, a dream (acc. with root drś, 'to see a vision, dream')

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

The swapna is the dream state in which the jiva in the Tajasa aspect and the Lord in the Hiranyagarbha aspect, abiding together in the corolla of the Heart-Lotus, function in the neck and experience through the mind the results of the impressions collected in the waking state. All the principles, the five gross elements, the will and the intellect, seventeen in all, together form the subtle body of the dream which is characterised by the rajo guna denoted by the letter U and presided over by the deity Brahma, so say the wise.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The second state of consciousness is Svapna or "the dreaming state". It is also known as "the subjective state" because denoting the state of experience of "subtle objects". This is the consciousness of the emotional and mental planes together. It is the state of Madhyama Sabda, the "middle or intermediate Sound". The word "Svapna" is related to the Latin "sopor", sleep, and the Anglo-Saxon "swefen", a dream.

See also:

See: Ajnana, avarana, vikshepa

See also:

in Catuspada: Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

in Manas: Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Etymology

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

When a person is in the condition of sleep, in Sanskrit we say, svapiti, "He sleeps". Here is a linguistic interpretation of the word svapna, describing what sleep actually means. The etymological meaning of the term svapiti,—'one sleeps', is that 'one goes', or 'reaches' sva, i.e., the self. One word sva connotes one's own being or essential nature. What is made out, thus, is that one gets absorbed into oneself in sleep. You become yourself in sleep; that is why there is no consciousness of anything external, then.

Sata saumya tada sampanno bhavati: One gets absorbed into the true being that one is. But, in other conditions, i.e., waking, etc., one gets drawn out of the true being that one is, into its other aspects which are external, such as physical being. In sleep, you get into yourself, you enter yourself, you become yourself, and know nothing but yourself. This is sleep...
You go to the being that you are, instead of searching for support in the non-being that is 'the outside'. Pranabandhanam hi, saumya, mana iti: The mind is rooted in true being which is your essential nature, which you enter in sleep. That is sleep,—that is your basic substance.

Related words

Broader term: Catuspada

Jagrat

Sushupti

Tajjasa

Turiya

Sanskrit

Svapna — स्वप्न

svapna - स्वप्त्

Svarupa

Variant spellings

svarupa

svarūpa

swarupa

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Svarūpa — ... natural form; actual or essential nature; essence.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

svarūpa -

one's own form or shape, the form or shape of;

own condition, peculiarity, character, nature;

peculiar aim;

kind, sort;

a partic. relation;

occurrence, event;
having one's own peculiar form or character;
having a like nature or character, similar, like;
pleasing, handsome;
wise, learned;
N. of a Daitya;
of a son of Su-nandā;
of a pupil of Caitanya

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

“Are you always the same?” The answer is, “No.” If we continue and ask, ‘What is always the same in you?’ the answer is. “My intrinsic form (svarupa).” And if we ask, ‘What is changing in you?’ the answer is, “My attitude or nature (svabhāva) and my innate potential (svadharma).”

“How do you explain your svarūpa?” The answer is rather complicated. “In certain respects I resemble my father or some person in the family tree of my father from whom the gene which decides my morphology has come. I also resemble my mother or somebody in the family of my mother from whom I have genetically inherited certain other of my morphological specialties. It is only natural that when two metals are made into an alloy they make a third metal which is not like either of them. It is much more complex than this in living beings. Before entering into this body, I came from another father and mother and their family tree, and before that my genetic inheritance came from the common seed of two other family trees. Thus it goes back ad infinitum.

So there is a third factor in me which belongs neither to my paternal seed nor to my maternal egg. It comes from my true being. This is the manusyā in me. Thus I am the product of an alchemy of my paternal and maternal genes plus a continuing purusa in me.”

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 561.

D.: What is svarupa (form) and arupa (formless) of the mind?

M.: When you wake up from sleep a light appears, that is the light of the Self passing through Mahat tattva. It is called cosmic consciousness. That is arupa. The light falls on the ego and is reflected therefrom. Then the body and the world are seen. This mind is svarupa. The objects appear in the light of this reflected consciousness. This light is called jyoti.

See also:

in Nididhyasana: [Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

svarūpa - from sva = “own, self + rūpa = “form, shape, figure”.

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Svarupa (compounded of sva, one’s own + rūpa), one’s own form, nature, character.

Related words

Nididhyasana

Broader term: Rupa

Sanskrit

Svarūpa -- स्वरूप

svarūpa - स्वरूप

Svetasvatara Upanishad

Title

Svetasvatara upanishad

Shvetashvatara upanishad

श्वेताश्वतर उपनिषद्

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

Author(s)

The sage Svetāśvatara.

Descriptions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad — ... the Upaniṣad of the sage Svetāśvatara.

1. It belongs to the Taittiriya or Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda. It contains a strong theistic vein and mentions names like Hara, Rudra, Siva, and Bhagavān. Devotion is mentioned as a means of realizing the Supreme.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Shvetashvatara Upanishad is generally dated around the third century B.C.E., making it one of the later UPANISHADS. It is the only orthodox Upanishad that refers to a sectarian divinity, in this case RUDRA-SHIVA. It understands Shiva to be the same as the BRAHMAN, the ultimate reality, who had not previously been characterized in purely theistic terms. The text equates the terms PURUSHA, which is the person from whom the world evolved in the Vedas, ATMAN (soul or self), BRAHMAN, and God, so as to make clear the identity of all designations for the highest. The theistic quality of this text is developed in later Hindu theism and in theistic or God-oriented VEDANTA.

Hume. The thirteen Upanishads

In the Svetâśvatara the Sâmkhya is mentioned by name in the last chapter, and the statement is made that it reasons in search of the same object as is there being expounded. The references in this Upanishad to the Sâmkhya are unmistakable.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Shvetashvatara Upanishad. A text generally regarded as one of the latest upanishads, the speculative religious texts that themselves form the most recent stratum of the Vedas. This judgment is based on both the Shvetashvatara Upanishad's form and on its content. Stylistically, the earliest upanishads tend to be written in prose, or prose mixed with verse, whereas the later upanishads, including the Shvetashvatara, are completely in verse. In terms of content, the earlier upanishads tend to be long and rambling, whereas in the later ones the ideas are far more concise and clearly developed. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad's most original idea is its description of the Supreme Being in completely theistic terms, in contrast to the abstract, impersonal representations in the earlier upanishads. It identifies Ultimate Reality as the god Rudra, who was later identified with the god Shiva, one of the most important modern Hindu deities. The text is also notable for an explicit description of the process and results of yoga, which is the first known written explanation of this tradition.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

This theory of the three Gunas, however, is altogether absent from the original Vedânta ; at least, it is not to be met with in the purely Yedantic Upanishads, occurring for the first time in the Svetâśvatara Upanishad.

...

A ... mixture of philosophical terms meets us in the Svetâśvatara Upanishad. In verse I, 10, for instance, we have Pradhâna, which is Sâmkhya, and Mâyâ, which is Vedânta, at least the later Vedânta, while in IV, 10 Mâyâ is directly identified with Prakriti. Purusha occurs in III, 12, where it evidently stands for Brahman, IV, 1. But though in this Upanishad Sâmkhya ideas would seem to prevail, Vedânta ideas are not excluded. The very name of Sâmkhya¹ and Yoga occurs (VI, 13), but the name of Vedânta also is not absent, VI, 22. In all this we may possibly get a glimpse of a state of Indian philosophy which was, as yet, neither pure Sâmkhya nor pure Vedânta, unless we look on these Upanishads as of a far more modern date, and on their philosophy as the result of a later syncretism.

Wikipedia

The Shvetashvatara Upanishad (400 - 200 BCE) is one of the older, "primary" Upanishads. It is associated with the Black Yajurveda. It figures as number 14 in the Muktika canon of 108 Upanishads. Adi Shankara has called it the "Mantra Upanishad" of the Vedic Shvetashvatara school in his commentary on Brahma sutras.

This Upanishad contains 113 mantras or verses in six chapters. In the last chapter we find the following verse.

“The Sage Shvetashvatara got this knowledge of Brahman, which is very sacred and revered by many great sages, through his penance and through God’s grace, and he taught it very well to his disciples.”

By this verse we learn that this Upanishad was attributed to a sage called “Shvetashvatara” or to his line of ancient spiritual teachers. The name “Shvetashvatara” is not uncommon in vedic literature. It means “White Mule”. The Mule was a prized animal in ancient vedic India. A person who owns a white horse is called “Shvetashva” and one who owns a white mule can be called “Shvetashvatara”. One of Arjuna’s names in the epic Mahabharata is “Shvetashva.” In the Rigveda, too, we find a sage’s name as “Shyavashva,” meaning “One who owns a black horse.”

The Shvetashvatara Upanishad is the earliest textual exposition of a systematic philosophy of Shaivism.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Commentaries

General

Wikipedia

There is one commentary available on this Upanishad that is attributed to Adi Shankara, but on comparison with his other commentaries, there is some doubt that is indeed composed by him. There are three other commentators, namely Vijnanatma, Shankarananda and Narayana Tirtha.

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Related words

Upanishads

Yajur Veda

T

Taijasa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Taijasa — ... the dream self; the vital self; the fiery

1. It is the self having a conceit in an individual subtle body in dream experience. It is so called because it is of the nature of light and, thus, can function in the absence of external objects. It knows subtle internal objects and enjoys them through the mind.

2. See *viśva* and *prajñā*.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

taijasa -

originating from or consisting of light (*te'jas*), bright, brilliant;

consisting of any shining substance (as metal), metallic;

said of the gastric juice as coloured by digested food;

passionate;

metal;

vigour;

long pepper

Ramakrishna tradition

Sarvananda. Mandukya Upanishad

10. Taijasa, who has the dream state for his field, is the letter 'U', the second part of Om, because they are both superior¹ and in between². One who knows this, becomes great in knowledge and the equal of all. No one ignorant of Brahman is born in his family.

[NOTES—1. Superior—The superiority of Taijasa identified with the dream state, consists perhaps in the subtleness of dream, which helps one realize the world to be made only of ideas. U is said to be superior only apparently, because it comes after A.

2. In between — In the syllable Om, U is in between A and M. So also dream is in between waking and sleep, and Taijasa, identified with dream, in between Vaisvanara and Prajna.]

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

93. Consciousness associated with each individual subtle body is known as Taijasa (full of light) on account of its being associated with the effulgent inner organ (*Antahkarana*).

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

Taijasa ... is the “middle state” of consciousness, “whose region is dream” as the Mandukya-Upanishad says. It concerns the Elements Water and Fire.

Sankara tradition

Karapatra. *Advaita Bodha Deepika*

D.: What is dream?

M.: After the senses are withdrawn from external activities the impressions formed by the mental modes of the waking state reproduce themselves as visions in dreams. The experienter of this subtle state is known as the taijasa.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. *Mandukya Upanishad*

Internal to the waking consciousness, and pervading the waking consciousness, there is a subtler function of this very same consciousness, which is subjectively known as the dream-consciousness, or taijasa, and universally known as hiraṇyagarba, or the Cosmic Subtle Consciousness.

Chinmayananda. *Sankara. Vivekachudamani*

The Supreme Consciousness functioning through the individual subtle body is known as Taijasa. It expresses itself in the dream condition and so is called the “dreamer”.

Taijasa and hiraṇyagarba

Taijasa individually and hiraṇyagarba cosmically are antahprājña, internally conscious because of their objects being not physical but subtle, constituted of tanmātrās: śabda, śparśa, rūpa, rasa and gandha.

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. *Mandukya Upanishad*

Taijasa is identical with Hiraṇyagarbha on account of its existence being realised in mind. Mind is the characteristic indication (of both). This is supported by such scriptural passages as, ‘This Purusa (Hiraṇyagarbha) is all mind’ etc.

Hiraṇyagarbha and Taijasa are only what are termed as the cosmic mind and the individual mind respectively. Really speaking, macrocosm and microcosm, both being mere forms of thought, are identical. Therefore the perceivers, Hiraṇyagarbha and Taijasa, are identical because they are also forms of thought. Their different appellations are due to their identification with different Upadhis (adjuncts) namely, the thoughts of macrocosm and microcosm.

See: Visva, Taijasa, Prajna

See also:

in Jiva: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Related words

Hiranyagarbha

Prajna

Svapna

Tejas

Visva

Sanskrit

Taijasa — तैजस

taijasa - तैजस

Taittiriya Upanishad

Title

Taittirīya Upaniṣad — तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद्

Taittiriya Upanishad

तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद्

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Taittirīya Upaniṣad — ... “partridge”; an Upaniṣad belonging to the Kṛṣṇa or Black Yajur Veda named after the sage Tittiri
1. Though relatively short, it is regarded as a source book of Vedānta philosophy. It is divided into three sections (vallī). The first section deals with pronunciation and prayers addressed to deities for the removing of obstacles to spiritual wisdom. The second part discusses knowledge of the Absolute (Brahman) through an analysis of the five sheaths (kośa). The third part deals with a dialogue between Varuṇa and his son, Bhṛgu, which puts forth Brahman as the cause of the creation, continuance, and dissolution of the universe.

Wikipedia

The Taittiriya Upanishad is one of the older, “primary” Upanishads commented upon by Shankara. It is associated with the Taittiriya school of the Yajurveda. It figures as number 7 in the Mukṭika canon of 108 Upanishads. It belongs to the Taittiriya recension

of the Yajurveda and is constituted by the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of Taittiriya Aranyaka. The tenth chapter of the same Aranyaka is the Mahanarayana Upanishad.

The Taittiriya Upanishad describes the various degrees of happiness enjoyed by the different beings in creation.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Taittiriya Upanishad is an UPANISHAD of the Black YAJUR VEDA. It is considered one of the oldest Upanishads. It consists of three sections.

The first section is devoted to teaching; it outlines elements of the sacred study of the VEDAS. The second section is named for its description of the ANANDA (infinite bliss) of the BRAHMAN (ultimate reality). While in passing, defining the terms self and ultimate reality, it introduces the five SHEATHS that make up a human being. These are the sheath of food, the sheath of breath, the sheath of mind, the sheath of understanding, and the sheath of bliss.

In the final section, named after the teacher Bhrigu, these five levels of being are fully described: the sheath of food describes the external body and the sheath of bliss lies in the core of the heart, as the ultimate Self or brahman. The Upanishad concludes with a memorable chant, the vision of the sage who realizes brahman: "I am food; I am food; I am food. I am the food-eater; I am the food-eater; I am the food-eater. . . . Earlier than the gods; at the navel of immortality . . . [I see] the golden light!" The food is the manifest universe. The food-eater is the transcendent reality. The sage understands that in SELF-REALIZATION he encompasses all the manifest and unmanifest world.

Wikipedia

The Taittiriya Upanishad is divided into three sections or vallis, the Siksha Valli, the Brahmananda Valli and the Bhrigu Valli. Each Valli further subdivided into anuvakas or verses.

1st Section: Shiksha Valli

The Siksha Valli deals with the discipline of Shiksha (which is the first of the six Vedangas or "limbs" or auxiliaries of the Vedas), that is, the study of phonetics and pronunciation.

First Anuvaka of this Valli starts with Shanti Mantra "OM Sham no Mitra ..".

Second Anuvaka lists the contents of Shiksha discipline.

Third Anuvaka tells about the intimate connection between the syllables using five examples and implicitly tells that one should meditate on those examples to realise connections told in them. Each of these examples are called a Maha Samhita. Each Syllable is called a Samhita. There is also a method of reciting Vedic Mantras where each syllable of mantra is recited separately of preceding and next syllables known as "Samhita Patha". This anuvak also declares that one who realises connection between syllables, will get good fruits including heaven. One of the example used under the heading of Self or Adhyaatmaa tries to make point that the connection between syllables is as intimate and innate as speech and elements producing it. "Lower jaw is former form (or first syllable), upper jaw is next form (next syllable), speech is union or connection, tongue is connector"

Fourth Anuvaka consists of Mantras and rituals to be done by those who aspire for Divine Knowledge (Medha Kama) and Wealth (Shree Kama). In this anuvak teacher prays that “As water flows from high land to low land, as months join to become year, let good disciples come to me from everywhere”

Fifth and Sixth Anuvakas try to describe Brahman in the form of Vyahrutis. The words “Bhooh” , “Bhuvah”, “Suvah”, “Mahah”, “Janah”, “Tapah” and “Satyam” are called seven Vyahrutis or Sapta Vyahrutis. These denote different worlds in Puranas. The term “Vyahuti” means pronunciation, since these above mentioned words are pronounced in Vedic rituals like Agnihotra, these are called Vyahuti’s. Fifth Anuvaka states that the fourth Vyahuti “Mahah” was discovered by a Rishi called “Mahachamasya” and “Mahah” is Brahman all other Vyahrutis are its organs. This Anuvak says that “Bhooh” denotes earth, fire, Richa’s and Prana. “Bhuvah” denotes space, air, Sama’s and Apana. “Suvah” denotes heaven, sun, Yajus and Vyana. “Mahah” denotes sun, moon, Holy Syllable OM and food. This way, each of first four Vyahrutis become four each and in total they are 16. So all these four Vyahrutis should be meditated as all of their sixteen manifestations, this is known as famous vedic term Shodasha Kala Purusha in vedic literature. Finally this anuvak says that one who knows all sixteen manifestations of Vyahrutis knows Brahman and all gods bring gifts to him.

Sixth Anuvaka tells that in the space inside the heart there exists an immortal golden being (Hiranmaya Purusha) and states that there is a subtle route through the middle of the head through which a self realized Yogi travels when he/she leaves the body and joins the all pervading Brahman.

The Seventh Anuvaka describes a meditation called Paanktha Upasana, where Brahman is meditated upon as a Set Of Five called Paanktha. There is also a vedic meter of five lines called Paanktha. Outer world seen is classified into 3 set of five things called “AdiBootha” and also inner body world into 3 sets of five things called “Adhyaathma”. This inner-outer grouping is then meditated upon and meditator realizes both inner and outer paankta are one and the same Brahman and every thing is Paanktha. This Anuvak states that Earth (Prithvi), Space (Antariksha), Heaven (Devloka), Directions (North, South etc), Subdirections (South- East, North- West etc..) (Worldly set of Five or Loka- Paankta) and Fire (Agni), Air(Vayu), Sun(Aditya), Moon(Chandra), Stars(Nakshatra) (Divine- Five or Deva- Paanktha) and Water, Herbs(Oshadhi), Trees, Sky(Akasha), Body of meditator (Elemental Five or Dhaatu- Paanktha) are called Adibhuta or Outer Elements. further it states that Prana, Vyana, Apana, Udana, Samana (all these are Five inner pranas of the body) and Eye, Ear, Mind, Speech(Vaak), Outer- Skin(Tvak)(Sensory- Five or Indriya-Paanktha) and Inner- Skin (Charma), Flesh, tendon- Ligaments, bones, Fat or Bone-Marrow (Elemental Five or Dhaatu Paanktha) are called Adhyaatma or Inner Elements. The Rishi who realized oneness among these says “Thus everything is Paankta”. It further says that one who realized everything as Paanktha, completes Paanktha with Paanktha itself.

Eighth Anuvaka states the greatness of Holy Syllable OM. It says that OM is Brahman and everything.

Ninth Anuvaka explains a pious way of life to be lead by persons aspiring realization of Brahman. see a prescription for an ideal life

Tenth Anuvaka is a Mantra for self practice (Swadhyaya) or meditation. It is stated by a Rishi called Trishanku as an exclamation of awe after he realized that he is one with Brahman. It is also called Mantramnaya of Trishanku.

Eleventh Anuvaka is a set of instructions that teacher(Acharya) gives to his disciple after completion of vedic education. The ninth and eleventh Anuvaks collectively define a prescription for an ideal life.

Twelfth Anuvaka concludes the Shikshavalli with Shanti Mantra “OM Sham no mitra..” expressing gratitude toward gods who removed obstacles for study of Upanishad as prayed for in first anuvak of this Valli.

Prescriptions

The ninth and eleventh anuvakas of Shiksha Valli prescribe a moral or religious way of life which a person aspiring for self realization or divine knowledge follow. Ninth Anuvak emphasises heavily on learning, studying and teaching (Swadhyaya and Pravachana) and ordains that this should be done althrough the life of an individual. Accoding to this anuvaka, the following are the duties to be performed.

Observing truth always, observing perseverance, controlling indulgence in sensory organs or sensory pleasures(Shama), controlling external flow of mind (Dama), performing mandated vedic rituals like Agnihotra etc, hospitality to guests, facing worldly odds and pleasures with even mind, procreation and begetting children and grand children (family life emphasised). Further this verse says, According to truthful Raathithara, he says, truth must be observed as priority. According to great penance performer Paurushishti, perseverance/penance (Tapas) should be observed. According to Naka the son of Mudgala, studying/learning-teaching of Vedas (Swadhyaya and Pravachana)should be observed.

So there seems to be three teachers emphasizing on one of the aspects of ideals of pious life. This part of the verse lead some scholars think that there was a difference of opinions on way of life leading to divine knowledge/realization at time of composition of this Upanishad.

All through this anuvak, emphasis is laid on continuous study, learning and teaching of Vedas to students. This is termed as Swadhyaya and Pravachana.

Eleventh Anuvak is a set of instructions that teacher(Acharya) gives to his disciple after the completion of vedic education and the disciple is about to start a household life. In this anuvak we find famous saying “Matrdevo bhava” which emphasizes on reverence to ones mother, father, teacher and guests. Here teacher ordains disciple as follows.

Tell truth always, observe Dharma or (eternal divine laws), continue progeny, never leave truth, never leave Dharma, never abandon care of your health, never abstain from good rituals ordained in scriptures, never leave study/learning and teaching, never abandon worshipping gods (Deva’s) and revering ancestors (Pitru’s). Treat mother as a God. Treat father as a God. Treat your teacher as a God. Treat guests as Gods. Those deeds, rituals that are good and lauded by people should be done. have reverence for great men, sages and wise ones.

Engage in charity work with diligence, donate according to your wealth, donate with faith, donate with humility. Donate with friendliness (not belittling the receiver) in case of any doubts about performing these duties follow as do the selfless, kindhearted sages do. Finally to emphasize that these duties to be performed with greater importance and due care, this verse says that, This is divine ordain and divine commandment. Form the gist of these two Anuvaks, one can guess what kind of life a house holder, aspiring divine knowledge tried to lead at the time of this Upanishad.

2nd Section: Brahmananda Valli

The statement “Brahmavida Apnoti Param” which means “The one who knows Brahman attains supreme state” is the formula (Sutra- Vaakya) to get the high level gist of this Valli. First Anuvak starts with Shanti Mantra “OM sham no mitra” and “Sahana vavatu” pleasing gods and removing obstacles for study of Upanishad being the objective of these Mantras. Second Anuvak starts with formula sentence “Brahmavida Apnoti Param” as stated above and also tries to define Brahman succinctly as “Truth, Omniscient, and Infinite” (Satyam Jnyanam Anantam Brahma).

Anuvaks Second to Fifth describe that Five sheaths subtle bodies or (Five Atmans) reside in one another in human body. Starting with grosser, tangible human body called “Annamaya” or “Formed out of Food” to “Pranamaya” or “formed out of Vital life force” to “Manomaya” or “Formed out of Mind” to “Vijnyanamaya” or “One who is of Knowledge” to Final and subtle most being “Anandamaya” or one who is full of Joy.

In Sixth and Seventh Anuvaks, some of the questions asked by a disciple are answered. such as “Brahman being equal to both knower and ignorant, who gets the Brahman after death, knower or ignorant and why?” Eighth Anuvak, compares happiness of various evolved beings starting from Man to that of next higher level till Happiness of Brahman itself.

Ninth Anuvak describes that knower of Brahman doesn't repent for not having done any good because for him/her, the terms good and bad loses their meaning and he/she has equalled them with Brahman since it is the only one which is really existing.

3rd Section: Bhr.gu Valli

This Valli describes how son of Varuna(The Water God) Bhr.gu obtained realization of Brahman through repeated Tapas under his fathers guidance.

Rest of the part of Valli describes greatness of donating food, that is feeding the hungry. It also emphasises on greatness of Food. It says that since food is support of all life, food should not be insulted, food should not be declined.

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Related words

Upanishads

Yajur Veda

Tamas

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Tamas — ... darkness; inertia; dullness; sluggish; state of rest; that which resists activity

1. One of the three qualities (guna). It is of the nature of indifference and serves to restrain. It is heavy and enveloping. (See guna.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

tamas -

darkness, gloom (also pl.);

the darkness of hell, hell or a particular division of hell;

the obscuration of the sun or moon in eclipses, attributed to Rāhu;

mental darkness, ignorance, illusion, error (in Sāṃkhya phil. one of the 5 forms of a-vidyā ...; one of the 3 qualities or constituents of everything in creation [the cause of heaviness, ignorance, illusion, lust, anger, pride, sorrow, dullness, and stolidity; sin ...; sorrow ...; see guṇa

Wikipedia

Tamas (Sanskrit *tamas* “darkness”) is one of the three *gunas* (qualities), the other two being *rajas*, “passion, activity” and *sattva*, “purity”. Tamas is the template of inertia or resistance to action. It has also been translated from Sanskrit as “indifference”.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The root “tem”, inclining towards “ten”, is interesting. A number of words are derived from it, all connected with the fall from light into darkness, from peace to disturbance, from being to having, from freedom to bondage. “Tem” implies several, distinct, ideas, which are traditionally related in their implications. It means dark, cut off, separate. The Latin “temere” meant in the dark, later it got the sense of rashly, from which the English “temerity” was derived. It also assumed the sense of thoughtlessly, indiscreetly. Related to it is the Latin “tenebrae”, darkness, and the Sanskrit “tamas”, meaning darkness, ignorance of truth, gloom, materiality. The function of Tamas is traditionally said to be “the veiling of consciousness”.

Wikipedia

The classification between *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* is seen in various facets (including dietary habits) of Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism, where *tamas* is the lowest of the three. Tamas is a force which promotes darkness, death, destruction, ignorance, sloth, and resistance. The result of a *tamas*- dominated life is demerit by karma: demotion to a lower life-form. A *tamasic* life would be marked by laziness, irresponsibility, cheating, maliciousness, insensitivity, criticizing and finding fault, frustration, aimless living, no logical thinking or planning, and making excuses. *Tamasic* activities include overeating, oversleeping, and consuming drugs and alcohol.

This is the most negative *guna* because of its rejection of Karmic Law and the central principle of dharmic religions; that one’s Karma must be worked out and not ignored.

The *gunas* (*tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*) are defined and detailed in Samkhya, one of the six schools of classical Indian philosophy. Each of the three *gunas* has its own distinctive characteristics and it is believed that everything is made up of these three. Tamas is lowest, heaviest, slowest, and most dull (for example, a stone or a lump of earth). It is devoid of the energy of the *rajas* and the brightness of *sattva*.

Tamas cannot be counteracted by *tamas*. It might be easier to counteract it by means of *rajas* (action), and it might be more difficult to jump directly from *tamas* to *sattva*.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

Characteristics of tamas

(To the doctor) “There are a few men who cannot attain knowledge of God: men proud of their scholarship, proud of their education, or proud of their wealth. If you speak to such people about a holy man and ask them to visit him, they make all kinds of excuses and will not go. But in their heart of hearts they think: ‘Why, we are big people ourselves. Must we go and visit someone else?’

“A characteristic of tamas is pride. Pride and delusion come from tamas.

“It is said in the Purana that Ravana had an excess of rajas, Kumbhakarna of tamas, and Bibhishana of sattva. That is why Bibhishana was able to receive the grace of Rama. Another characteristic of tamas is anger. Through anger one loses one’s wits and cannot distinguish between right and wrong. In a fit of anger Hanuman set fire to Lanka, without thinking for a moment that the fire might also burn down the hut where Sita lived.

“Still another feature of tamas is lust.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

113. The veiling power (Avriti), is the power of Tamas, which makes things appear to be other than what they actually are. It causes man’s repeated transmigration and initiates the action of the projecting power (Vikshepa).

...

114. Even the wise and the learned, and those who are proficient in the vision of the supremely subtle meaning of the scriptures, are overpowered by Tamas and cannot comprehend Truth, even though It is clearly explained in various ways. They consider as real what is simply superimposed by delusion and attach themselves to its effects. Alas! How powerful is the veiling power of dire Tamas!

...

115. Absence of correct judgement, or contrary judgement, lack of definite belief, and doubt—certainly these never leave one who has any connection with this veiling power; also, the projecting power gives endless trouble.

...

116. Ignorance, laziness, dullness, sleep, inadvertance, stupidity etc., are the attributes of Tamas. One tied up with these cannot comprehend anything, but remains like one asleep, or like a stump of wood or a block of stone.

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

What is tamas? Tamas tv ajnana-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinam (14.8): Tamas is total ignorance, idiocy, lethargy, fatigue, and a desire to not do anything. It deludes the intellect so that we always confuse one thing with another thing. “Oh! I forgot it. Oh! I did not know it!” is the kind of attitude we develop. An illusion is spread before the mind by tamoguna, and it is deluding in its character as far as the individual is concerned. It causes us to blunder and make mistakes. We make mistakes everywhere, and we cannot even speak a good sentence; everywhere there is some confusion. Also, we are fatigued immediately – alasya nidra pramada. These are some of the results that follow from the preponderance of tamas.

...

When tamas is predominating, we have no idea as to what to do and what not to do. There is confusion about the pros and cons of things. There is no proper judgment as to the way any step has to be taken in a given direction; and even if some step is taken, it will be a wrong step and it will end in some fumbling and catastrophic conclusion. This is what tamas does.

...

When tamas predominates, what happens? There is no light in front of oneself. There is no radiance or hope on the horizon at all and, therefore, there is no inclination to do anything. There is an inactive tendency in the person. As mentioned already, there is always the committing of mistakes whenever any kind of initiative is taken. There is delusion at the back of all these things. That is the essential nature of tamoguna.

See also:

in Avarana: [Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda](#)

in Ishvara: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Etymology

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Related words

Avarana

Bhutadi

Broader term: Guna

Moha

Rajas

Sattva

Sanskrit

Tamas — तमसु

tamas - तमस्

Tanmatras

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Tanmātra — ... the subtle essence of the five elements; the pure elements; elemental essence

1. They are sound (śabda), touch (sparśa), sight (rūpa), taste (rasa), and smell (gandha). The five elements (mahābhūta) are derived from the tanmātras: from sound comes ether; from touch comes air; from sight comes fire; from taste comes water; and from smell comes earth. The tanmātras are said to evolve from the tāmasa aspect of egoity according to Sāṅkhya.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

tanmātra -

merely that, only a trifle;

a rudimentary or subtle element (5 in number, viz. śabda-, sparśa-, rūpa-, rasa-, gandha-, from which the 5 Mahā-bhūtas or grosser elements are produced

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The tanmatras are the subtle elements, the subtle forms of the five gross elements (earth, air, fire, water, and akasha) from which the gross elements are derived. The senses corresponding to the subtle elements are gandha (smell) for earth, sparsha (touch) for air, rupa (shape) for fire, rasa (taste) for water, and shabda (sound) for akasha. The tanmatras first appeared in the account of the evolution of the universe propounded by the Samkhya school, one of the six schools of traditional Hindu philosophy. In the Samkhya account, the subtle elements are the stage of evolution preceding the evolution of the gross elements. The Samkhya school espoused an atheistic dualism in which the two fundamental principles were purusha (spirit) and prakrti (matter); all of this evolution was associated with prakrti because, according to the Samkhyas, the purusha never changed. The Samkhya account of evolution was appropriated by other groups—although these groups often adapted it to reflect theistic assumptions in which the world came from God—and thus the notion of the subtle elements became an accepted philosophical convention.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

... the scheme of Tamasic Ahankara may be here mentioned. At a first glance it reveals its Material nature. It belongs to the Sankhya School (and is found, for instance, in the Mahabharata II; 233; 4—7, Manu I; 75—78, and the Bhagavata Purana Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Uddhava).

According to it the Tanmatra or “cause, subtle quality, characteristic” of the Element Earth is “odour”; that of the Element Water is “taste”; that of the Element Tejo, “Fire, Light” is Rupa, “form and colour”; that of the Element Air is “space, sensitiveness, touch”; and that of the Element Ether is “sound”, namely the A of the Om (AUM). The dissolution of the Material Universe is taught by Krishna to Uddhava to take place in the following order: Earth — Odour — Water — Essence — Fire — Form and Colour — Air — Touch — Ether — Sound — Tamasa Ahankara.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

4-8. If it is asked, What are the five Tanmātras (substances) ? he answers, The five substances or essences as emanating from Ahankāra, the essence of sound, contact colour, savour, and odour.

The essences of sound are perceived in sounds only. Differences of sound, such as acute, grave, circumflexed, and the notes of the gamut, such as Shadya, C, Rishabha, 1), Gāndhāra, E, Madhyama, K, Pankama, G, Dhaivata, A, Nishada, B, are perceived ; but there is no difference in the essence of sound.

The essences of touch are perceived in touch only. Differences of touch, such as soft, hard, rough, slippery, cold, and hot, are perceived, but there is no difference in the essence of touch.

The essences of colour are perceived in colour only. Differences of colour, such as white, red, black, green, yellow, purple, are perceived, but there is no difference in the essence of colour.

The essences of savour are perceived in savour only. Differences of savour, such as pungent, bitter, astringent, corrosive, sweet, acid, salt, are perceived, but there is no difference in the essence of savour.

The essences of odour are perceived in odour only. Differences of odour, such as sweet and offensive, are perceived, but there is no difference in the essence of odour.

Thus have the essences been indicated; and their synonyms, though sometimes very inaccurate ones, are said to be : Avishsha, not differentiated, and therefore not perceptible, Mahâbhûtas (?), the great elements ; Prakritis, natures, Abhogya, not to be experienced, Anu, atomic, Asânta, not-pleasurable, Aghora, not-terrible, Amûdha, not-stupid ; the last three being negations of the qualities of the Mahâbhûtas, according to the three Gunas preponderating in each. And if it is asked why these eight Prakritis only, from Avyakta to the Tanmâtras, are called Prakritis, the answer is because they alone Prakurvanti, they alone bring forth, or evolve.

...

... the question arises, how this process of perception could take place, how perception is possible subjectively, how it is possible objectively. If we begin with the objective side, the answer of Kapila is that there must be Tanmâtras (This-only), potential perceptibilia, which are not the potentialities of everything in general, but of this and this only (Tan-mâtra). These five potentialities are Sound, Touch, Odour, Light, and Taste. They are not yet what is actually heard, seen, &c, nor what actually hears and sees, but they contain the possibilities of both. As there is no hearing without sound, the Sâmkhyas seem to have argued, neither is there any sound without hearing. But there is in the Tanmâtras the potentiality of both. Hence, according to the division produced by Ahamkâra into subject and object, the five Taninâtras are realised as the five subjective powers of perception, the powers of hearing, touching, smelling, seeing, and tasting, and corresponding to them as the five objects of sense, the objects of sound, touch, odour, sight, and taste. In their final form the five potential Tanmâtras stand before us in their material shape, subjectively as ear, skin, nose, eyes, and tongue, objectively as ether, air, light, water, and earth (the five Mahâbhûtas). These five supply all possible and real forms under which perception can and does take place.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

I smell a flower; in doing so, something must have come in contact with my nose. The flower is there. I do not see it move towards me; but without something coming in contact with my nose how can I have the smell? That which from the flower come into contact with my nose are the tanmatras, fine molecules of that flower, so fine that no diminution will be perceived in the flower, even if we all smell it the whole day. So with heat, light, sight, and everything. These tanmatras can again be subdivided into atoms. Different philosophers have different theories about, the dimensions of atoms but we know these are only theories, so we leave them out of discussion. Sufficient for us that everything gross is composed of things that are very minute. We first get the gross elements, which we feel externally, and composing them are the fine elements, which our organs touch, which come in contact with the nerves of the nose, eyes and ears. The ethereal wave which touches my eyes, I cannot see, yet I know it must come in contact with my optic nerve before I can see the light. So with hearing, we can never see the particles that come in contact with

our ears, but we know that they must be there. What is the cause of these tanmatras? A very startling and curious answer is given by our [old] psychologists— self-consciousness. That is the cause of these fine materials, and the cause of the organs [indriyas].

Vivekananda. Raja Yoga

,,, Tanmâtras, which cannot be sensed by ordinary men. If you practice Yoga, however, says Patanjali, after a while your perceptions will become so fine that you will actually see the Tanmâtras. For instance, you have heard how every man has a certain light about him; every living being is emanating a certain light, and this, he says, can be seen by the Yogi. We do not all see it, but we are all throwing out these Tanmâtras, just as a flower is continuously emanating these Tanmâtras, which enable us to smell it. Every day of our lives we are throwing out a mass of good or evil, and everywhere we go the atmosphere is full of these materials, and that is how there came to the human mind, even unconsciously, the idea of building temples and churches. Why should man build churches in which to worship God? Why not worship Him anywhere? Even if he did not know the reason, man found that that place where people worshipped God became full of good Tanmâtras. Every day people go there, and the more they go the holier they get, and the holier that place becomes. If any man who has not much Sattva in him goes there the place will influence him, and arouse his Sattva quality. Here, therefore, is the significance of all temples and holy places, but you must remember that their holiness depends on holy people congregating there. The difficulty with mankind is that they forget the original meaning, and put the cart before the horse. It was men who made these places holy, and then the effect became the cause and made men holy. If the wicked only were to go there it would become as bad as any other place. It is not the building, but the people, that make a church, and that is what we always forget.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

In reply to a question if tanmatras are the operating factors in dreams, Sri Bhagavan said: No. Tanmatras are sukshma - subtler than that. Although the dream-creations are subtle as compared with the gross world of the wakeful state, yet the dream-creations are gross compared to tanmatras. Tanmatras after panchikarana give rise to the form of the antahkaranas (inner organ, mind). There too, by the different sets of operating causes. Influenced by satva the predominance of ether (akasa) it gives rise to jnana (knowledge) whose seat is the brain.

vayu (air) gives rise to manas (mind)

tejas (light) gives rise to buddhi (intellect)

jala (water) gives rise to chitta (memory etc.)

prthvi (earth) gives rise to ahankara (ego).

They are samashti (collective) for the reason that they can operate collectively or individually with any or all of the senses or organs. By rajoguna they are changed to jnanendriyas in the vyashti (individual); by tamoguna to karmendriyas in the vyashti (the individual). The relation between the external world and the individual now becomes easy because the tanmatras are common to them.

The tanmatras proceed from Prakriti. The statements on creation differ considerably. There is mentioned yugapatsrshti (simultaneous creation) and kramasrshti (gradual creation). The significance is not emphasis on creation but on the original source.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Katha Upanishad

The tanmatras are the deeper essence behind objects—including our body, which is also an object. They are not electric energy, but finer than the molecules, protons and electrons of the scientists. While electric energy is wholly inert, without intelligence to direct itself, the tanmatras are midway between the cosmic prana and the world, being the vital forces regulating the physical objects and thus superior to and higher than these and the senses. There are three gunas of prakriti; and the sattvic element of these constitutes the tanmatras, the rajasic element constitutes the prana, and the tamasic one the physical world. Hence, beyond the physical world, there are the tanmatras; and beyond them, there is the mind constituted of their subtle, sattvic principles like: sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa and gandha.

See: Bhutas and tanmatras

Evolution of tanmatras

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

... tanmātra represents subtle matter, vibratory, impinging, radiant, instinct with potential energy. These “potentials” arise from the unequal aggregation of the original mass-units in different proportions and collocations with an unequal distribution of the original energy (rajas). The tanmātras possess something more than quantum of mass and energy [unlike the bhūtādi from which they are generated]; they possess physical characters, some of them penetrability, others powers of impact or pressure, others radiant heat, others again capability of viscous and cohesive attraction. In intimate relation with those physical characters they also possess the potentials of the energies represented by sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell; but, being subtle matter, they are devoid of the peculiar forms which these “potentials” assume in particles of gross matter like the atoms and their aggregates. In other words, the potentials lodged in subtle matter must undergo peculiar transformations by new groupings or collocations before they can act as sensory stimuli as gross matter, though in the minutest particles thereof the sensory stimuli may be infra-sensible (atindriya but not anudbhūta).

Of the tanmatras the shabda or ākāsha tanmātra (the sound-potential) is first generated directly from the bhūtādi. Next comes the sparsha or the vāyu tanmātra (touch-potential) which is generated by the union of a unit of tamas from bhūtādi with the ākāsha tanmātra. The rūpa tanmātra (colour-potential) is generated similarly by the accretion of a unit of tamas from bhūtādi; the rasa tanmātra (taste-potential) or the ap tanmātra is also similarly formed. This ap tanmātra again by its union with a unit of tamas from bhūtādi produces the gāndha tanmātra (smell-potential) or the ksiti tanmātra. The difference of tanmātras or infra-atomic units and atoms (paramānu) is this, that the tanmātras have only the potential power of affecting our senses, which must be grouped and regrouped in a particular form to constitute a new existence as atoms before they can have the power of affecting our senses. It is important in this connection to point out that the classification of all gross objects as ksiti, ap, tejas, marut and vyoman is not based upon a chemical analysis, but from the points of view of the five senses through which knowledge of them could be brought home to us. Each of our senses can only apprehend a particular quality and thus five different ultimate substances are said to exist corresponding to the five qualities which may be grasped by the five senses. In accordance with the existence of these five elements, the existence of the five potential states or tanmātras was also conceived to exist as the ground of the five gross forms.

See: Pancikarana and tanmatras

See: Tanmatras and mahabhutas

See also:

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

in Bhuta: Muller. [The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy](#)

in Mahabhutas: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

This term is composed of the pronoun tad, “that,” and the root ma, “to measure,” used here in the word mātra, meaning “an element or elementary matter.” Here it is translated as “merely that” or “thatness.”

Related words

Bhuta

Bhutadi

Indriyas

Mahabhuta

Pancikarana

Sanskrit

Tanmātra — तन्मात्र

tanmātra - तन्मात्र

Tapas

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Tapas — ... austerity; concentrated discipline; penance; heat; energy; “to heat up” (from the verb root tap = “to burn”)

1. A burning enquiry and aspiration. It is a spiritual force of concentrated energy generated by a spiritual aspirant.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

tapas -

warmth, heat (pañca tapāmsi, the 5 fires to which a devotee exposes himself in the hot season, viz. 4 fires lighted in the four quarters and the sun burning from above);

pain, suffering;

religious austerity, bodily mortification, penance, severe meditation, special observance (e.g. 'sacred learning' with Brāhmans, 'protection of subjects' with Kshatriyas, 'giving alms to BrAhmans' with Vaizyas, 'service' with śūdras, and 'feeding upon herbs and roots' with Rishis);

'father of Manyu';

N. of a month intervening between winter and spring;

the hot season;

N. of a Kalpa period

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Tapas (heat) or tapasya is a concept of great importance in Hindu practices of austerity. The word refers to the sacred heat that is generated by bodily mortifications and ascetic denial. Tapas confers wondrous powers and abilities upon the YOGI and makes it easier for the adept to break the bonds of attachment to worldly life.

In a very literal example of tapas, ancient orthodox yogis used to sit surrounded by five fires under the noonday Sun in order to absorb the heat and gain spiritual power. Other ascetics doing tapasya would endure lengthy fasts or extreme bodily mortifications. There is some indication that the notion of tapasya developed within the Brahminical tradition as a result of association with the fires of the Vedic sacrifice.

Wikipedia

Tapasya (tāpasya) in Sanskrit means "heat". In Vedic religion and Hinduism, it is used figuratively, denoting spiritual suffering, mortification or austerity, and also the spiritual ecstasy of a yogin or tāpasá (a Vriddhi derivative meaning "a practitioner of austerities, an ascetic"). In the Rigveda, the word is connected with the Soma cult. The adjective tapasvín means "wretched, poor, miserable", but also "an ascetic, someone practicing austerities".

In the yogic tradition, tapasya may be translated as "essential energy", referring to a focused effort leading towards bodily purification and spiritual enlightenment. It is one of the Niyamas (observances of self-control) described in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Tapasya implies a self-discipline or austerity willingly expended both in restraining physical urges and in actively pursuing a higher purpose in life. Through tapas, a yogi or spiritual seeker can "burn off" or prevent accumulation of negative energies, clearing a path toward spiritual evolution.

Personified, Tapasya appears as the father of Manyu in the Rigveda. The tapo-raja ("king over austerities") is a name of the Moon.

Sanskrit tapasya (neuter gender), literally "heat", refers to a personal endeavor of discipline, undertaken to achieve a goal, accompanying suffering and pain. Earliest reference of this word is to be found in the Rgveda- 8.82.7, where its is used in the sense 'pain, suffering' (Monier-Williams). It is usually applied in religious and spiritual terms, but can be applied to any field or context. One who undertakes tapas is a Tapasvin. From tapas the more widespread word tapasyā was derived, which is used in all three genders and was mentioned in Katyayana-Shrauta- Sutra, Baudhayana's Dharma- shashtra, Panini- 4.4.128, etc. Rigveda has

dozens of references to words derived from 'tapas' which indicate that "suffering, austerity" was its meaning from the Rigvedic times.

Monks and gurus in Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism practice tapasya as a means to purify and strengthen their devotion to God, practice a religious lifestyle and obtain moksha, or spiritual liberation.

Tapas may be the striving for nirvana, or moksha. It may also be striving for perfection in a particular sport, field of knowledge or work. Tapasya may also be undertaken as penance, to liberate oneself from the consequences of a sin or sinful activities, or karma.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Tapas: (from root, tap to burn) Intense self-discipline in a secluded place or forest, aimed at spiritual illumination. It involves effort in Self-realization in which all instinctive impurities are burnt up.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The unsuccessful marriage of Fire and Water, resulting in the spilling or losing of Blood or "fiery water", must be successfully consummated. In the terms of the tradition of Alchemy this is expressed by: "Boil the Water over the Fire." This is an important part of the Great Work of the Philosophers. When water boils the resultant is steam, which, in its perfect state, is invisible. It is Air. The perfect coordination and harmony of Water and Fire, of emotions and lower mind, prepare the ground for the revelation of Spirit. Herein lies also the clue to the meaning of the Hindu practice of Tapas. This word has been variously rendered and interpreted as "spiritual practice", "heating-up process", "burning", "asceticism, with all that implies", "spiritual striving". It means all these things and much more. The word "tepid", derived from the Latin tepidus, warm, is related to tapas. The purpose of Tapasya, the life of tapas, is the coordination of the three lower planes of existence: Earth, Water and Fire, under the presidency of the Fire. Tapas has been traditionally defined as being triple: 1. Sariraka, that is, bodily; 2. Vachika, that is, voiced; and 3. Manasa, that is, mental. "Voiced" implies the emotional benefits of reciting scriptures and chanting hymns. Tapasya is the coordination and purification of thought, word and deed.

Tapasya also implies something deeper. The Fire of Mars should be transmuted into the Solar Fire. The Sariraka, or bodily aspect of it, then refers to the three Sariras of bodies, consisting of the five kosas or "sheaths" which relate to the five Elements. The Vachika then refers to Vach, "the Voice", and the Manasa to the Mahat, "the Great One". In this sense Tapas includes the entire spiritual Path till the final "Enlightenment". Ultimately the Blood of Suffering changes into the Wine of Rapture. The fiery experiences of highly spiritual people, especially in the chest and in the head, have often been noted. The inner experiences often impress themselves on the matter of the physical body.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Tapas ("heat") Term denoting any physical asceticism, or what in earlier times was referred to as mortification of the flesh. The term tapas encompasses rites of denial, such as fasting (upavasa) or celibacy, as well as rites of enduring physical pain, such as the "five fires" (panchagni) rite. In this rite a person sits during the hot season surrounded by four fires, with the fifth fire being the

sun overhead. Other rites include enduring cold from bathing (snana) in snow-fed rivers, and enduring any other sort of physical discomfort. The word tapas can also describe bizarre and even masochistic behaviors, such as remaining standing for years on end; keeping an arm upraised until the muscles atrophy, and it cannot be lowered; lying on beds of thorns and nails, and so forth. The governing assumption behind all of these practices is that they generate spiritual power (seen figuratively as “heat”) and that a person who generates and amasses enough of this power will gain supernormal powers or the ability to demand boons from the gods themselves. Even though many contemporary Hindus are skeptical of the more extreme practices and may dismiss them, there is still great cultural respect for ascetic self-control, and combined with the right personality, such practices can still confer considerable religious authority.

In Hindu mythology Indra, king of the gods, pays close attention to those amassing such powers to protect himself from being replaced by someone more powerful. When an ascetic starts to amass enough power to displace him, Indra’s heavenly throne becomes hot through the “heat” generated by the tapas. Indra must search for the aspirant and defuse this power in one of two ways—either by giving the aspirant a boon, which in many cases is the reason for performing the tapas in the first place, or by sending a celestial nymph (apsara) to seduce the ascetic, whose power will be discharged along with his semen. This mythology reflects the basic Hindu belief that the starting point for ascetic power is celibacy, which conserves a man’s vital energies by conserving his semen.

Wikipedia

Tapasya is closely associated with meditation, fasting and the practice of yoga. Meditative tapas involves focusing entirely upon God, the Supreme Brahman and ignoring all environmental, artificial and other provocations or distractions. In the purest state of meditation, no thought save that of God must occupy the processes of the mind.

A tapasvin also practices brahmacharya, endeavoring to control all his or her biological instincts, functions and senses. Tapasvins reduce consumption of food and drink steadily, using their mental, intuitive force to reduce their biological needs. Ahimsa and vegetarianism, pure non-violence towards all living beings is practiced to eliminate anger, destructive impulses and avoid the foolishness of hurting others.

Fasting is accompanied by avoiding all cooked foods, especially spices and meats. Only fruits and roots are considered acceptable, and one may strive to reduce the quantity one has to consume.

Yoga is closely linked with tapas. The disciplined and concentrated practice of yogic arts and exercises may be considered tapas by itself.

A vow to observe brahmacharya, silence or fast is the commitment an individual offers to complete the objectives of tapas.

In the ancient scriptures, mythology and folklore of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, holy men, women and heroes undertake tapas to obtain a spiritual goal of realization, or salvation. Many of the times tapas is undertaken to win a boon by pleasing a God, and many other times it is undertaken to increase one’s pious characteristics.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali’s Yoga

The word tapas means “warming up” or “bringing to a white heat.” Metals like gold are purified by being melted. If an alloy such as bronze is to be made, copper and tin are to be melted and blended. If rice is to be made edible, it is to be cooked in boiling water. Thus we are familiar with the application of heat for various constructive purposes. In the present case, warming or heating up is to be taken both physically and metaphorically.

Heat has two powers. One is of fission, which separates two entities that otherwise seem to be inseparable. The other is fusion, the blending of two entities into one. In Yoga, we want to apply the principles of both fission and fusion. As we are psycho-physical organisms with the inner organs, sensory and motor systems, and a physical body in which all these faculties inhere, systematic heat is to be applied to all parts of the body/mind complex.

... The first austerity recommended is that of using words of an inspiring nature with the right intonation at the appropriate time. Part of that tapas is holding your tongue and keeping golden silence when your vocal expression is not going to help another.

... Using words to teach, direct, conduct, inspire, console, and encourage another is a positive value of the tapas of speech. Even when a person is far away you can stretch your spirit to that person by writing appropriate words. All expressions of love that are physically possible can be given to another with words in a very intimate and intense way. That is also tapas of the word.

The world comes to us in the form of heat and cold. ... So we have to acclimatize and be somewhat indifferent to heat and cold. A yogi is therefore expected to show sameness to heat and cold, of course, only to the extent that it is not detrimental to the body.

...

Just as we restrain our sense organs to make our lives wholesome, we can also keep our organs of action engaged only in pursuits that are beneficial to the world. Then we can say we are doing proper tapas. Thus tapas is a very important discipline.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Ramana Smrti

SRI Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni (1878-1936), who was unique in being at once a scholar, poet, patriot, political thinker and tapasvi, was one of the most esteemed figures of his times.

... In 1903 he came to Arunachala to perform tapas. He visited Sri Ramana Maharshi, who was then known as Brahmana Swami on the hill twice before he accepted a teacher's job at Vellore in 1904... [Later he] resigned his job at Vellore and returned to Arunachala in 1907.

... An intellectual and spiritual giant who had high achievements to his credit and a host of followers as well, Kavyakantha still felt that his life's purpose was not fulfilled. He remembered Brahmana Swami whom he had met before and went to him again. This was to give him the inward peace that he still seemed to lack. The meeting was of profound significance not only for Kavyakantha but for the world at large which could learn from such a high authority about the real stature of the swami. Kavyakantha approached the Virupaksha cave where Brahmana Swami was staying, and prostrating himself before him, said in a trembling voice, "All that has to be read I have read. Even Vedanta Sastra I have fully understood. I have performed japa to my heart's content. Yet I have not up to this time understood what tapas is. Hence have I sought refuge at thy feet. Pray, enlighten me about the nature of tapas". For fifteen minutes Sri Ramana silently gazed at Kavyakantha.

He then spoke:

If one watches whence this notion of 'I' springs, the mind will be absorbed into that. That is tapas. If a mantra is repeated and attention is directed to the source whence the mantra sound is produced, the mind will be absorbed in that. That is tapas.

The scholar was filled with joy and announced that the upadesa was original, and that Brahmana Swami was a Maharshi and should be so called thereafter. He gave the full name of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to Brahmana Swami, whose original name had been Venkataraman (named after the Lord of Tirupati). Kavyakantha was now the foremost disciple of Sri Ramana. His disciples also came to the Maharshi.

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Talk 401.

Mr. Krishnamurti, an Andhra gentleman, asked as follows:- When we make tapas, on what object must we fix our sight? Our mind is fixed on what we utter.

M.: What is tapas for?

D.: For Self-Realisation.

M.: Quite so. Tapas depends on the competency of the person. One requires a form to contemplate. But it is not enough. For can anyone keep looking at an image always? So the image must be implemented by japa. Japa helps fixing the mind on the image, in addition to the eyesight. The result of these efforts is concentration of mind, which ends in the goal. He becomes what he thinks. Some are satisfied with the name of the image. Every form must have a name. That name denotes all the qualities of God. Constant japa puts off all other thoughts and fixes the mind. That is tapas. One-pointedness is the tapas wanted. The question what tapas is was asked in order to know what purpose to serve. It will take the form required for the purpose.

D.: Are not physical austerities also tapas?

M.: May be one form of it.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

Commentary by Panoli: The absorption of the mind in that one and only aim (with intense desire to realise the Self) is samadhana. This actually is samadhi. Sri Sancaracharya is of opinion that this verily is tapas (austerities) as could be seen from his Bhashya on Taittiriya Aranyaka”, wherein occurs the following:—

“To the novice (Brahmachari) the study of the Vedas is tapas.

To the one belonging to the third institution i.e. Vanaprastha, tapas consists in the control of eating.

To the Yati (Sannyasi) the concentration of the mind and senses is the foremost tapas.”

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

tapas — from the verb root tap= “to burn”.

Related words

Japa

Yoga

Sanskrit

Tapas — तपस

tapas - तपसे

Tal-tvam-asi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Tal-tvam-asi — ... “That thou art”

1. A Great Saying (mahāvākya) which occurs in the Chāndogya Upanisad of the Sāma Veda. According to Advaita Vedānta, it implies that you, the individual, are not different from the Absolute (That). According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, it implies that you, the individual, are a part of God (That).

Wikipedia

Tat Tvam Asi, a Sanskrit sentence, translating variously to “Thou art that,” “That thou art,” “You are that,” or “That you are,” is one of the Mahāvākyas (Grand Pronouncements) in Vedantic Sanatana Dharma. It originally occurs in the Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7, in the dialogue between Uddalaka and his son Śvetaketu; it appears at the end of a section, and is repeated at the end of the subsequent sections as a refrain. The meaning of this saying is that the Self - in its original, pure, primordial state - is wholly or partially identifiable or identical with the Ultimate Reality that is the ground and origin of all phenomena. The knowledge that this is so characterises the experience of liberation or salvation that accompanies the Unio Mystica.

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In connection with That which is beyond Duality or Trinity — the Supernal, Parabrahman, Paramasiva, God-Reality —it should be stressed that it is taught that there is no Fall from It, nor any Return to It. For It IS. It can be “expressed” only by Silence.

Wikipedia

Major Vedantic schools offer different interpretations of the phrase:

Advaita - absolute equality of ‘tat’, the Ultimate Reality, Brahman, and ‘tvam’, the individual self, jiva.

Shuddhadvaita - oneness in “essence” between ‘tat’ and individual self; but ‘tat’ is the whole and self is a part.

Vishishtadvaita - identity of individual self as a part of the whole which is ‘tat’, Brahman.

Dvaitadvaita - equal non-difference and difference between the individual self as a part of the whole which is ‘tat’.

Dvaita - “Sa atmaa-tat tvam asi” in Sanskrit is actually “Sa atma-atat tvam asi” or “Atman, thou art not that”.

... The Advaita school of Shankara assigns a fundamental importance to this Mahāvākya and three others of the same kind from three other Upanishads.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

The last word of Advaita is ‘Tat-tvam-asi’—‘That thou art.’

Sankara tradition

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

The realization of the precise meaning of “That thou art” is a transcendental experience felt only on the spiritual plane. The meaning is lost if the aspirant has the slightest attachment to such material things as body, senses, mind, or ego, or to the pleasure associated with them. The Freedom, Peace, Blessedness, Knowledge, and Immortality which result from the transcendental experience are totally different from their counterparts on the physical plane of time, space, and causality. Through the realization of the ultimate identity of thou and That one knows the true meaning of religion, which is the realization of the eternal oneness of the eternal God and the eternal Soul. Religion, in its ultimate sense, has nothing to do with devising means to enhance man’s material happiness in this transitory world.

Vedantic teachers explain to their pupils the real nature of the Self through the “method of the tenth” (daśamanyāya). The following story is told in Vedantic books: Once ten men forded a swift-flowing river. None of them could swim. Reaching the other side, they wanted to know if they had all safely arrived; so one of them counted the number of men and found only nine—because he had omitted himself. He was sure that one man was drowned. The others did the same thing and came to the same conclusion, because each of them counted all except himself. So they began to bewail the loss of one of their comrades. Another man, passing by, inquired about the cause of their weeping. He was told that while the ten friends were crossing the river, one had been drowned. Of course it took no time for the stranger to detect their mistake. So he asked one of them to count again. The man counted nine and said. “You see, we have lost our tenth friend”. Immediately the stranger touched him on the chest and said. “Thou art the tenth”. In order to reassure all, he repeated the same thing with each of them; and thus each found out that he was the tenth. So their anguish disappeared and their happiness was restored. Likewise, the disciple comes to the teacher and tells him that he has searched, for Truth everywhere—in books, in temples, in images, in heaven—and has not found it. Of course, he has not sought the Truth in the right place, that is to say, in his own self. So the teacher touches him and says, emphatically, “That thou art”

See: Mahavakyas as used for instruction

Related words

Chandogya Upanishad
Broader term: Mahavakya
Sama Veda

Tattva

Sanskrit

Tat-tvam-asi — तत्त्वमसि
तत् त्वम् असि or तत्त्वमसि
Tattva

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Tattva — ... category; truth; the essence of things; reality; principle; “thatness”

1. It is the essence of anything. It is a thing’s essential being, its “thatness.”

2. Each school in Indian philosophy names a certain number of elements (tattva) as fundamentals in its system of thought. Advaita Vedānta lists two (from the empirical, relative point of view): tat and tvam. Sāṅkhya lists twenty-five tanmātras, the five mahābhūtas, the five karmendriyas, the five jñānendriyas, manas, and puruṣa. Kashmir Śaivism lists thirty-six: Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva (sādākhya), īśvara, Śuddha-vidyā, māyā, kāla, niyati, rāga, vidyā, kalā, puruṣa, prakṛti, buddhi, ahaṅkāra, manas, five karmendriyas, five jñānendriyas, five tanmātras, and five mahābhūtas. (The first five constitute the pure creation and the latter thirty-one form the impure creation). All the other schools accept a similar number of categories—about seven to twenty-six.

3. That which is the essence of each stage of manifestation. The process of creation, according to Kashmir Śaivism, contains thirty-six tattvas: Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, īśvara, śuddhāvidyā, māyā tattva, the five cloaks (pañca kañcukas), puruṣa (individual soul), prakṛti (primordial nature, the basic stuff of the material universe), buddhi (intellect), ahaṅkāra (ego), manas (mind), the five powers of sense perception, the five powers of action, the five tanmātras or rudimentary elements, and the five gross elements. These comprise creation from Śiva to the earth.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

tattva -

true or real state, truth, reality;

(in phil.) a true principle (in Sāṅkhya phil. 25 in number, viz. a-vyakta, buddhi, ahaṅkāra, the 5 Tan-mātras, the 5 Mahā-bhūtas, the 11 organs including manas, and, lastly, puruṣa) MBh. xii, 11840; xiv, 984 R. iii, 53, 42 Tattvas.; 24 in number MBh. xii, 11242 Hariv. 14840 (m.); 23 in number BhP;

... in Vedānta phil. tattva is regarded as made up of tad and tvam, ‘that [art] thou’, and called mahā-vākya, the great word by which the identity of the whole world with the one eternal Brahma [tad] is expressed);

the, number 25;

the number 24;

an element or elementary property;

the essence or substance of anything;

N. of a musical instrument

Wikipedia

Tattva is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘thatness’, ‘principle’, ‘reality’ or ‘truth’. According to various Indian schools of philosophy, a tattva is an element or aspect of reality conceived as an aspect of deity. Although the number of tattvas varies depending on the philosophical school, together they are thought to form the basis of all our experience. The Sāṅkhya philosophy uses a system of 25 tattvas, while Śaivism recognises 36 tattvas.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Tattva ... thatness, essence, truth, reality, principle, category, in Samkhya twenty five are enumerated, in Kāśmīr Śaivism thirty-six are given.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Bhagavad Gita

Tattva: The state of “ that” being “that” pure and simple; basic principle; basic Reality.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Tattva in Jainism

Jain philosophy can be described in various ways, but the most acceptable tradition is to describe it in terms of the Tattvas or fundamentals [3]. Without knowing them one cannot progress towards liberation. They are:

Jiva - Souls and living things

Ajiva - Non-living things

Punya - Results of Good Deeds (Good Karma)

Pap - Results of Bad Deeds (Bad Karma)

Asrava - Influx of karma

Bandha - The bondage of karma

Samvara - The stoppage of influx of karma

Nirjara - Shedding of karma

Moksha - Liberation or Salvation

Each one of these fundamental principles are discussed and explained by Jain Scholars in depth[4]. There are two examples that can be used to explain the above principle intuitively.

(1) A man rides a wooden boat to reach the other side of the river. Now the man is Jiva, the boat is ajiva. Now the boat has a leak and water flows in. That incoming of water is Asrava and accumulating there is Bandh, Now the man tries to save the boat by blocking the hole. That blockage is Samvara and throwing the water outside is Nirjara. Now the man crosses the river and reaches his destination, Moksha.

(2) Consider a family living in a house. One day, they were enjoying a fresh cool breeze coming through their open doors and windows of the house. However, the weather suddenly changed to a terrible dust storm. The family, realizing the storm, closed the doors and windows. But, by the time they could close all the doors and windows some of the dust had been blown into the house. After closing the doors and the windows, they started clearing the dust that had come in to make the house clean again.

This simple scenario can be interpreted as follows:

- 1) Jivas are represented by the living people.
- 2) Ajiva is represented by the house.
- 3) Punya is represented by enjoyment resulting from the nice cool breeze.

- 4) Pap is represented by discomfort resulting from the storm.
- 5) Asrava is represented by the influx of dust.
- 6) Bandh is represented by the accumulation of dust in the house.
- 7) Samvar is represented by the closing of the doors and windows to stop the accumulation of dust.
- 8) Nirjara is represented by the cleaning up of already collected dust from the house.
- 9) Moksha is represented by the cleaned house, which is similar to the shedding off all karmic particles from the soul.

Tattvas in Samkhya

The Samkhya philosophy regards the Universe as consisting of two eternal realities: Purusha and Prakrti. It is therefore a strongly dualist philosophy. The Purusha is the centre of consciousness, whereas the Prakriti is the source of all material existence. The twenty-five tattva system of Samkhya concerns itself only with the tangible aspect of creation, theorizing that Prakriti is the source of the world of becoming. It is the first tattva and is seen as pure potentiality that evolves itself successively into twenty-four additional tattvas or principles.

Tattvas in Shaivism

In Shaivite philosophy, the tattvas are inclusive of consciousness as well as material existence. The 36 tattvas of Shaivism are divided into three groups:

Shuddha tattvas

The first five tattvas are known as the shuddha or 'pure' tattvas. They are also known as the tattvas of universal experience.

Shuddha-ashuddha tattvas

The next seven tattvas (6–12) are known as the shuddha- ashuddha or 'pure- impure' tattvas. They are the tattvas of limited individual experience.

Ashuddha tattvas

The last twenty-four tattvas (13–36) are known as the ashuddha or 'impure' tattvas. The first of these is prakriti and they include the tattvas of mental operation, sensible experience, and materiality.

Tattvas in Vaishnavism

Within Puranic literatures and general Vaishnava philosophy tattva is often used to denote certain categories or types of being or energies such as :

Krishna-tattva

The Supreme personality of Godhead. The causative factor of everything including other Tattva(s).

Vishnu-tattva

Any incarnation or expansion of Krishna.

Sakti-Tattva

The multifarious energies of the Lord Krishna. It includes his internal potency Yoga Maya and material prakrti

Jiva-tattva

The living souls (jivas).

Siva-tattva

Lord Siva (excluding the Rudra(s)) is not considered to be a jiva.

Mahat-tattva

The total material energy (prakrti).

In Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy that there are a total of five primary tattvas described in terms of living beings, which are collectively known as the Pancha Tattva and described as follows:

“Spiritually there are no differences between these five tattvas, for on the transcendental platform everything is absolute. Yet there are also varieties in the spiritual world, and in order to taste these spiritual varieties one should distinguish between them”.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

[Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

D.: What is my tattva (truth)?

M.: You are yourself the tattva. Is there a different one to know the tattva of another? How can you exist apart from the tattva? The very fact of your existence makes you ask this question. Your very existence is the tattva. Give up the habiliments of the tattva and remain in your essential nature. All the Scriptures tell you only not to waste your efforts in non-truth - non-tattva. Give up the non-tattva. Then tattva remains always shining pure and single.

D.: I want to know my tattva and my duties.

M.: Know your tattva first and then you may ask what your duties are. You must exist in order to know and do your duty. Realise your existence and then enquire of your duties.

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli](#)

Commentary by Sankara: The word Tat is a sarvanama. Brahman is what is connoted by the word sarva. Therefore, Tat is an epithet of Brahman. Tattva, therefore is Tatbhava. In other words, Tattva is the exact nature of Brahman. Those who have the inclination to perceive it are Tattva Darshis (seers of the subtle truth).

See also:

in Antahkarana: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Tattva — from tat = “that” + the nominizing suffix tvam = “ness”

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Tattva from pronoun tad, that + abstract suffix -tva

Related words

Tal-tvam-asi

Tejas

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Tejas — ... fire; splendor; light; heat; brilliance

1. It is one of the five elements. (See mahābhūta.)

2. It is of four kinds: terrestrial (bhauma), celestial (divya), of the stomach (audarya), and mineral (ākaraja).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

tejas -

(often pl.) the sharp edge (of a knife &c.), point or top of a flame or ray, glow, glare, splendour, brilliance, light, fire; clearness of the eyes;

the bright appearance of the human body (in health), beauty;

the heating and strengthening faculty of the human frame seated in the bile;

the bile;

fiery energy, ardour, vital power, spirit, efficacy, essence;

semen virile;

marrow;

the brain;

gold;

(opposed to kṣamā) impatience, fierceness, energetic opposition;

(in Sāṃkhya phil.) = rajas (passion);

spiritual or moral or magical power or influence, majesty, dignity, glory, authority;

a venerable or dignified person, person of consequence;

fresh butter;

a mystical N. of the letter \$

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Tejas ... Fire as an element, (in Vaiśeṣika) the third Eternal Reality (Dravya); (in Samkhya) the third Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta), the principle of luminosity, its function is expansion, its Special Property (Viśeṣa) is Form (Rūpa), its General Qualities (Sāmānya Guṇas) are Touch (Sparśa), and Sound (Śabda).

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Bhagavad Gita

Brightness or mental alertness is ... a spiritual quality, to be likened to a perfectly-tuned musical instrument, or to a sportsman in good form. There are popular notions of tejas (brightness) referred to as brahma-tejas (brightness of the Brahmin) and kshattra-tejas (brightness of a warrior) which are mostly based on prejudices in the name of closed loyalties, determined largely by patterns of behaviour or dress.

...

Tejas which primarily means brilliance, implies an intellectual or spiritual alertness, a constant readiness or preparedness to respond to any contingency, however hazardous it might be. One hears the expressions brahma-tejas and kshattra-tejas: the former suggesting intellectual enthusiasm for truth; and the latter a moral enthusiasm to see the truth prevail.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

Tejas is radiance and brilliance of mind and spirit.

See also:

in Antahkarana: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

in Mahabhutas: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

in Evolution of prakriti: [Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion](#)

Diagram: Mahabhutas

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Tejas (Fire), derived from the root tij, "to be sharp."

Related words

Agni

Mahabhutas

Rupa

Taijasa

Titiksa

Variant spellings

titiksa

titiksha

titikṣā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Titikṣā — ... endurance of opposites; forbearance; tolerance

1. The ability to withstand opposites like pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc., with equal fortitude. The bearing of all afflictions without caring to change them and without anxiety or lament.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

titikṣā -

endurance, forbearance, patience;

Patience (daughter of Daksha; wife of Dharma; mother of Kshema)

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Titikṣā - endurance, bearing heat and cold and other pairs of opposites; (in Vedānta) one of the six acquirements (ṣaṣṣamṛat).

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Titiksa: Endurance of troubles incidental in life, without petulance or self-pity. One of the prerequisite qualities of a seeker.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Titiksha is the endurance of heat and cold and other pairs of opposites. [Endurance etc.—Being unruffled by pleasure and pain, arising from heat and cold which are the inevitable associates of the body, by meditating on the Pure Self, which is always free from the dual throng. Other pairs—They include respect and contumely gain and loss, weal and woe, etc.]

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Titikṣā or forbearance: the endurance of all afflictions arising from the contact of the senses with their objects. A man practising his discipline does not care to relieve his physical suffering nor does he show any anxiety or grief on its score. By means of this discipline the aspirant remains unagitated by heat and cold, pleasure and pain, love and hate, and the other pairs of opposites.

Sivananda tradition

[Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani](#)

24. Titikṣa is the capacity to endure all sorrows and sufferings without struggling for redress or for revenge, being always free from anxiety or lament over them.

Commentary by Chinmayananda: Describing the fourth psychological qualification in a man of true spiritual stamina, Sankara gives a full and scientific definition of the quality of silent endurance which is glorified in all the religions of the world. Meek surrender and silent suffering are the watchwords in all religious disciplines...

It is a great pity that many people indulge in acts of perversion in the name of titikṣa. I have met a number of unintelligent people who, in the name of spiritual seeking, persecute themselves physically and mentally, and as a result of their self-persecution, all they gain at the end of years of suffering is a crooked, ugly, deformed mind! They do not ever achieve the least amount of inward beauty or perfection.

Discarding clothes or starving oneself to a skinny existence, denying the body its bare necessities or giving unnecessary pain to the mind, running away from life or preserving oneself on inhuman diets in solitary caves, living an animal's life open to a brutal climate or breaking the body in an effort to make it endure more discomforts—none of these is true titikṣa. And yet, how many a blind seeker has foundered on this rock of ignorance!

Titikṣa (forbearance), is that faculty of the mind which it maintains when intellectually it is governed by a tempo and a conviction which is complete and self-ordained, divine and noble. When the intellect is fully convinced of its accepted values of life, of the sacredness of its Goal, thereafter in trying to gain it, the mind smilingly faces all difficulties and obstacles. This capacity of the mind to accommodate cheerfully all its vicissitudes and patiently ignore any obstacles that might come its way is titikṣa.

[Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani](#)

(24 & 25) ... Objectivity to all pains without any anxiety, complaint or any attempt of revenge is said to be titikṣā.

Commentary by Dayananda: Titikṣā is sahanam surva-duḥkhānām, being objective towards situations that cause pain. Duhkha is physical or emotional pain which may be caused by certain external situations. Titikṣā does not mean allowing the duhkha to happen and then putting up with it. Once you have allowed the duhkha to set in, you have got to put up with it; you have no choice. But sahana means being objective to the situations which generally cause you pain and which you are unable to change now. Wherever you can change the situation to make it comfortable, change it; that is what action is for. Suppose in winter your window is open at night and it is cold, then you have to get up and shut the window. If you think, 'let me put up with the cold', then this is not sahana, it is foolishness. You get up and close the window, that is what is to be done. In spite of closing the window, if the room is still cold and you cannot do anything about it for the time being, then put up with it. That is sahana.

Further, this sahana is the capacity to put up with the unpleasant and inevitable situations without cintā and vilāpa. Cintā is concern, anxiety. Once you start saying 'it is cold, it is very cold', the mind will continue, "Yes, it is very cold. In this cold who can stay? It is difficult to stay" etc. This is cintā. Titiksā is cintā-rāhitya, absence of this build-up. Vilāpā is talking about the difficult situation, complaining about it all the time. Titiksā is the capacity to put up with difficult situations without complaining. Titiksā is not an advice like, "do not talk to anybody about your difficulties". That is not the point here. If you have to talk and if it is going to help you without complicating the issue, it is better you talk. That is okay. That is processing your problem. But vilāpa is different; it is complaining about one thing or the other all the time. This complaining tendency is something that one has to deal with. There is no advice involved here. Titiksā is describing what kind of mind is necessary for understanding the ātmā. If you analyse all these qualifications properly, you will find, each one of them has got a definite place in describing the qualified mind.

See also:

"Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda" on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Titikṣā - from desiderative form of the root tij, to become sharp.

Related words

Dama

Sama

Samadhana

Broader term: Satsampatti

Sraddha

Uparati

Sanskrit

Titikṣā — तितिक्षा

titikṣā - तितिक्षा

Trimurti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Trimūrti — ... the three forms—i.e., Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Siva; the Hindu trinity.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

trimūrti -

having 3 forms or shapes (as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva);

Gaṅge;

in compound Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva;

the sun;

a Buddha;

one of the 8 Vidyeśvaras

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Trimurti ... is a common term in Hindu texts, referring to the triad of divinities BRAHMA, VISHNU, and SHIVA. Brahma is the creator god, Vishnu is seen as the sustainer of the world, and Shiva is seen as its destroyer. In theistic Hinduism these three are often seen as aspects of one divinity, either Shiva or Vishnu. Shiva and Vishnu are the two divinities around which the two great Hindu sects, SHIVISM and VAISHNAVISM, constellate. Brahma is not a sectarian divinity, and there are only two temples dedicated solely to Brahma in all of India. Though it resembles the trinitarian conceptions of Christianity, the trimurti is a much looser concept and was not emphasized theologically or theorized upon in any way as the Trinity was in Christianity.

Lurker. Dictionary of Gods

Trimurti ('having three forms'; trinity) The Indian trinity consisting of the world creator →Brahma, the sustainer →VisNu, and the destroyer →Siva. According to the Samkhya school, the three are manifestations of one essential unity. In popular belief they are often regarded as manifestations of the supreme god → Isvara.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of religion

TRIMURTI. In Hindu mythology and popular theology many gods appeared, though Visnu and Siva (Rudra) became dominant. Early in the common era a trimurti ("having three forms") was proposed that created a triad of these two and a creator, Brahma. These three were regarded as forms of the neuter absolute brahman, or corresponding to the three gunas of the Absolute. The epic Mahabharata tells of these gods separately and not as a unity, and when the Trimurti concept appeared its exposition varied according to the preferences of the writers for one or another deity.

A story in the Bhagavata Purana says that there was once a dispute among the gods as to which member of the triad was greatest. The sage Bhrgu went to each of them in turn to decide the matter by tests. First he saw Brahma. but omitted to bow to him, whereupon the god blazed out in anger. Next he visited Siva and did not return the god's salutation, so that Siva raised his trident (trisula) to destroy him; the sage was spared only by the intercession of Siva's wife. Lastly Bhrgu called on Visnu, found him asleep, and woke him with a kick on the chest. Instead of becoming angry, Visnu begged the sage's pardon for not having greeted him and said that he was highly honored by the kick, which had left an indelible mark on his breast, and that he hoped the sage's foot had not been hurt. Bhrgu decided that Visnu was the mightiest god because he overcame his enemies with weapons of gentleness and generosity. This Vaisnava story indicates the diversity and rivalry of different sects and the problems of a triad. It was debated whether the three gods were equal or had interchangeable functions. Each in turn might be the Supreme Lord, Paramesvara, and take the place of the others.

... in popular religion in most of India today Brahma has virtually disappeared, while Visnu and Siva have vast followings. (The two groups are considered almost as distinct religions.) The third most popular cult today follows the great goddess Mahadevi, the all-pervading power sakti, known under many names and notably today as Kali.

Early students of Hinduism in the West often considered that parallels exist between the Trimurti and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and attempts were made to apportion common functions to the three persons in one God. There are still writers who call Brahma., Visnu, and Siva "the Trinity," but the parallel with Christianity is not close, and the Trimurti concept never became popular or embodied an orthodox and catholic creed. Hindu writers and artists tended to favor one god of the three, and Visnu and Siva came to dominate in their own schools.

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

A very exalted Hindu aspect of God, not much known in popular hinduism, but worshipped by contemplatives, is Dattatreya, an Incarnation of the Trimurti, the Triad Brahma-Vishnu- Siva. He is represented as naked.

[Radhakrishnan. Eastern Religions and Western Thought](#)

The oneness of the three gods Brahma, Visnu, and Siva is brought out by the mystic symbol Aum, where A represents Visnu, U Siva, and M Brahma.

Etymology

General

[Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Trimurti tri, three; murti, forms

Related words

Brahma

Siva

Vishnu

Tripoti

Variant spellings

tripuṭi

tripuṭī

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Tripuṭī — ... triple form

1. The process of knowing or knowledge implies the subject, who knows, and the object, which is known. Every act of cognition involves this triple form of the cognizer, the object cognized, and the means of cognition.
2. The knower, the known, the act of knowledge.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Tripoti: Having three bases. Technical term in Vedānta referring to three aspects of cognition, namely the subjective, the objective and the process itself. The knower of the pot and the object called the pot and the knowledge of the pot would illustrate the three ways by which the same cognition could be viewed. Absolute knowledge is without this triple-based difference.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: Is the seen (drisya) world real (satya)?

M.: It is true in the same degree as the seer (drashta), subject, object and perception form the triad (triputi). There is a reality beyond these three. These appear and disappear, whereas the truth is eternal.

D.: These triputi sambhava are only temporal.

M.: Yes, if one recognises the Self even in temporal matters these will be found to be non-existent, rather inseparable from the Self; and they will be going on at the same time.

See also:

in Jnana: [Cohen. Guru Ramana](#)

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Triputi: Literally, “the three-petalled.”

Related words

Darsana

Jnana

Sanskrit

Tripuṭī — त्रिपुटी

tripuṭī - त्रिपुटी

Turiya

Variant spellings

turiya

tuṛīya

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Tuṛīya — ... “the fourth”; the transcendental Self; the supreme Reality; the state of witness consciousness.

1. It is the fourth state of consciousness, according to Advaita Vedānta, which is beyond the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and which pervades and transcends all these states. However, it is not really a state but the underlying substratum of the other three states, the waking, dreaming and deep-sleep states.

2. It is the real Self which is beyond the changing modes of existence. It is indivisible, ungraspable, unthinkable, and unnameable. Each of the other three states have their own names (vaiśvānara, taijasa, and prajñā), but not the Absolute, which is merely referred to as the fourth. It is a-mātra or modeless.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

tuṛīya -

consisting of 4 parts;

the 4th state of spirit (pure impersonal Spirit or Brahma);

being in that state of soul;
a 4th, constituting the 4th part

Wikipedia

In Hindu philosophy, turiya (or chaturtha) is a state of pure consciousness. It is a fourth state of consciousness that underlies and transcends the three common states of consciousness: the state of waking consciousness (jagrata), the state of dreaming (svapna), and dreamless sleep (susupti).

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

Turiya state—This is a state which, as its improvised name suggests, is not within the experience of ordinary man. It may therefore be regarded as lying outside the strict limits of any empirical investigation. It is brought about voluntarily by the elimination of discursive thought, and resembles dreamless sleep in all respects but one. There is in it the same withdrawal of normal consciousness, the same absence of desires and the manifestation of almost the same bliss. But while the self fully reveals itself in the fourth state, the experience of dreamless sleep is extremely dim. The turiya is a mystic state to be testified to only by the person that is gifted with yogic power. But the truth he vouches for is not wholly beyond us. For we have on the one hand the negative evidence of susupti and on the other the positive one of the ānandamaya phase of experience, which together enable us to get a 'conjectural insight' into the nature of the knower's experience. The attainment of this state is regarded as the culmination of spiritual training.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The fourth state of consciousness is Turiya or "that beyond deep sleep". Yoga-Vasishta says that it is the state of those "liberated during life": Jivanmuktas or those "living freed". It is the state of Ether, of Heaven on Earth.

Wikipedia

Advaita concept

The first two states are not true experiences of reality and truth because of their dualistic natures of subject and object, self and not-self, ego and non-ego. In the third state, dreamless sleep, one is not conscious of external or internal objects; however, that does not mean consciousness is not present there. It is like saying 'I don't see anything in darkness'. The recognition that I don't see anything is what I 'see'. So also in dreamless sleep, one is not conscious of anything and the very fact that this statement is true proves the existence of consciousness during deep sleep.

In the waking consciousness there is a sense of 'I' (self identity) and awareness of thoughts. In the sleep/dream state there is no or little sense of 'I' but there are thoughts and awareness of thoughts. In the deep sleep state there is no awareness of thoughts or 'I'. In Turiya there is awareness of the 'I' but there are no thoughts. This is what makes it unique from the other 3 states.

The Mandukya Upanishad defines turiya as:

"The fourth state is not that which is conscious of the subjective, nor that which is conscious of the objective, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is all-sentient mass, nor that which is all darkness. It is unseen, transcendent, the sole essence of the consciousness of self, the completion of the world."

Shiva Sutras of Vasugupta concept

Turiya or Turya: The fourth state of consciousness beyond the states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep and stringing together all the states; the Metaphysical Consciousness distinct from the psychological or empirical self; the Saksi or witnessing consciousness; the transcendental Self.

“There is, however, a fourth state of consciousness, known as turiya. This is the consciousness of the central Self or Siva in each individual. This is a witnessing consciousness of which the individual is normally not aware. The turiya is pure cidananda- consciousness and bliss. The individual’s mind is conditioned by habit energy (Vasana) of previous lives. When by yogic practices, his mind becomes deconditioned, then he attains the turiya consciousness, and becomes a jivan-mukta i.e. liberated while still alive.”

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

In the Mandukya, Chandogya and Katha Upanishads it is said that all we experience in the present, the past and the future is only modifications of aum. What we experience as the gross in the wakeful, the subtle in the dream, and the causal in deep sleep are all variations of the one sound, aum. If the secret of aum is open to us, then the gross, the subtle and the causal all merge into the pure silence that follows it. This is called turiya, the fourth state. When everything existing merges into that fourth state there is no longer the knower, the known and knowledge. They have all been completed and merged into the sound of aum. That place shines by itself as a pure light.

This is an experience, or the experience, which is on a par with what we hear of the Buddha getting his enlightenment under the Bo tree, the angel calling to Mohammad in the cave, or the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus to confer on him the grace whereby he becomes the Son of God. It is equivalent to these--the highest possible experience one can have. The person becomes the all-embracing consciousness, which bursts out in a flame of such brilliance that it effaces everything. Thereafter, there is no sound. Or, the only sound is that which at one level is the wakeful world, at another level the dream world, and at still another level the deep sleep world. They are all now merged into the fourth state of pure transcendence. In that transcendence, nothing is left behind. It just shines by itself. This is the state to which a person comes at the height of his illumination.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Nagamma. Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

The devotee asked once again, “What about those who are in complete awareness (sahaja samadhi)?”

Bhagavan replied saying, “It is just because of such questions that Vasishtha narrated the story of the ‘Sage and the Hunter’ to Rama to illustrate the fourth or turiya state. In a forest, once a great Muni sat in the lotus posture (padmasana) with his eyes open, but in deep trance. A hunter hit a deer with an arrow, but the deer escaped and ran in front of the Muni into the bush nearby and hid itself. The hunter came in hot pursuit of the deer and not seeing it asked the Muni where it had gone. ‘I do not know, my friend,’ said the Muni. The hunter said, ‘Sir, it ran right in front of you and you had your eyes wide open. How could you have not seen it?’ Finding that he would not leave him in peace unless a proper reply was given, the Muni said, ‘My dear man, we are submerged in the Self; we are always in the Fourth State. We do not have the waking or dream or deep sleep states. Everything is alike to us. These three states are the signs of the ego and we have no ego. Egoism is itself the mind and it is that which is responsible for all the deeds done in this world. That ego (ahankara) left us long ago. Hence it does not matter whether we keep our eyes closed

or open; we are not conscious of what is happening around us. That being so, how can I tell you about your deer?" The hunter thought that it was all sheer nonsense and went his way.

"It may well be asked, 'If there is no 'I' (aham), how did he speak?' When properly understood, that which occurred as 'I' before, becomes our own Nature (swarupa) afterwards. That is called destruction of mind (mano nasa). That thoughtfree awareness or other signs of awareness are cases of merging (laya) and not of destruction (nasa). So long as there is merging and emerging, it is merely a state of spiritual practice (sadhana)," said Bhagavan.

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: What is turiya?

M.: There are three states only, the waking, dream and sleep. Turiya is not a fourth one; it is what underlies these three. But people do not readily understand it. Therefore it is said that this is the fourth state and the only Reality. In fact it is not apart from anything, for it forms the substratum of all happenings; it is the only Truth; it is your very Being. The three states appear as fleeting phenomena on it and then sink into it alone. Therefore they are unreal.

The pictures in a cinema show are only shadows passing over the screen. They make their appearance; move forward and backward; change from one to another; are therefore unreal whereas the screen all along remains unchanged. Similarly with paintings: the images are unreal and the canvas real. So also with us: the world-phenomena, within or without, are only passing phenomena not independent of our Self. Only the habit of looking on them as being real and located outside ourselves is responsible for hiding our true being and showing forth the others. The ever-present only Reality, the Self, being found, all other unreal things will disappear, leaving behind the knowledge that they are no other than the Self.

Turiya only another name for the Self. Aware of the waking, dream and sleep states, we remain unaware of our own Self. Nevertheless the Self is here and now, it is the only Reality. There is nothing else. So long as identification with the body lasts the world seems to lie outside us. Only realise the Self and they are not.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

The Māṇḍūkya Upanisad speaks of Turiya in the following manner:

"Turiya is not that which is conscious of the inner (subjective) world, nor that which is conscious of the outer (objective) world, nor that which is a mass of consciousness, nor that which is a simple consciousness, nor that which is unconsciousness. It is unperceived (by any sense-organ), incomprehensible (to the mind), unrelated (to any object), uninfcrable, unthinkable, and indescribable; It is essentially of the nature of Consciousness, constituting the Self alone, and is the negation of all phenomena. It is Peace, Bliss, and the One without a second. This is known as Turiya, the Fourth. This is Atman and It has to be realized."

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

SANKARA'S INTRODUCTION TO UPANISAD

The fourth quarter [Fourth quarter—The 'fourth' is not the fourth state or condition in which Atman is to be viewed. Turiya which is indicated here as the 'fourth' comes in only for consideration after the three states have been considered. Atman itself does not admit of any condition or state. Waking, d r e am and deep sleep are its three states or quarters and Turiya, as will be seen later on, is present in all these three. Turiya is designated here as thq fourth because in the preceding texts, three quarters of Atman have been explained. It has occupied the 'fourth* place in respect of explanations.] which now comes in order (for explanation) has to be described. This is done in the words of the text: 'Not conscious of the internal object'. It (Turiya) does not admit of de-

scription or indication by means of words, for all uses (affirmative or negative) of language fail to express it. Therefore Turiya is sought to be indicated by the negation of all attributes (characteristics).

(Objection)—Then it becomes mere void or Shunya.

(Reply)—No, because it is impossible for imagination to exist without a substratum. The illusion of silver, a snake, a man or mirage etc., cannot be conceived as existing without the (corresponding) substratum of the mother-of-pearl, rope, stump or desert, etc.

(Objection)—If that be the case, Turiya ought to be indicatable by words and not by the negation of all attributes. For, it is the substratum of all imaginations such as Prana etc., in the same way as jars etc., which being the substratum of water etc., are indicated as such by words.

(Reply)—The idea of Prana etc., (supposed to exist in Turiya) is unreal like the false idea of silver etc., in the mother-of-pearl etc. A relation between the real and the unreal cannot be expressed by words because such relation is, itself, non-existent. Turiya cannot be the object of any other instrument of knowledge (such as direct perception) like the cow etc., because of its unique nature, owing to the absence of Upadhis. Atman cannot have anything like a generic property, like the cow etc., because it is devoid of all Upadhis or attributes; it has neither generic nor specific characteristics because it is one, without a second. It cannot be known by any activity (proceeding from it) as in the case of a cook; because it is devoid of all actions. It cannot be described by attributes such as blue etc., because it is without any attribute. Therefore it follows that Turiya cannot be indicated by any name.

(Objection)—Then it (Turiya) would be like the 'horns of a hare' and hence one's pursuit of it must be futile.

(Reply)—No, the knowledge of Turiya as identical with Self (Atman) destroys the hankering after objects which are non-self just as the knowledge of mother-of-pearl (mistaken for silver) removes the desire for (illusory) silver. For, once the identity of Turiya and Self is realised there is no possibility of one's being deluded by ignorance, desire and the like misapprehensions (which are the effects of ignorance) and there is no reason for Turiya not being known as identical with the Self. For all the Upanisads point to this end only as is evident from the following: 'That thou art', 'This Atman is Brahman', 'That is real and that is Atman', 'The Brahman which is directly and immediately cognized', 'He is both without and within, as well as causeless', 'All this is verily Atman', etc. This very Atman has been described as constituting the Highest Reality and its opposite (the unreal) and as having four quarters. Its unreal (illusory) aspect has been described as due to ignorance, like the illusion of snake in the rope, having for its characteristics the three quarters and being of the same nature as the seed and the sprout. Now is described (in the following Sruti) Turiya which is not of the nature of cause but which is of the nature of the Highest Reality corresponding to the rope—by negating the three states, enumerated above, which correspond to the snake etc.

[Mandukya Upanishad, VII]:

Turiya is not that which is conscious of the internal (subjective) world, nor that which is conscious of the external (objective) world, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is a mass all sentiency, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is insentient. (It is) unseen (by any sense organ), not related to anything, incomprehensible (by the mind), uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, essentially of the nature of Consciousness constituting the Self alone, negation of all phenomena, the Peaceful, all Bliss and the Non-dual. This is what is known as the fourth {Turiya}. This is the Atman and it has to be realised.

('Consciousness' as the nearest English word is used).

See also:

in Prapancha: [Chinmayananda. Mandukya Upanishad](#)

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Related words

Broader term: Catuspada

Jagrat

Sushupti

Svapna

Meditation

[Narayana Guru tradition](#)

[Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru](#)

Narayana Guru defines it as, "to know that which is bottomless and topless, from top to bottom."

Sanskrit

Turīya — तुरीय

turīya - तुरीय

Tyaga

Variant spellings

tyaga

tyāga

Definitions

[General](#)

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Tyāga — ... abandonment; renunciation

1. The Bhagavad Gītā considers true renunciation to be the relinquishment of the fruits of one's actions.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

tyāga -

leaving, abandoning, forsaking;

quitting (a place);

discharging, secretion ... giving up, resigning, gift, donation, distribution;

sacrificing one's life;
liberality;
a sage

Descriptions

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

Tyaga literally means “abandonment,” the turning from all that hinders the realization of the Self. In the Gita, tyaga means renunciation in the sense of the relinquishment of the fruit of action. Sri Ramakrishna said “What is the message of the Gita? It is what happens when you repeat it ten times. If Gita is repeated ten times it comes to sound like tagi [tyagi—one who renounces]. This is the teaching of the Gita—‘Oh man, try to realize God by giving up everything.’ Be he a holy man [sadhu] or a worldly man, he has to give up all attachment from the mind.” Again we see that this is primarily psychological. One of the saddest sights in India are the many men who thought that they need only not have a job and wander around in gerua clothes to be sannyasis—tyagis. Now they have found it is not so, but are trapped, and go here and there intent on nothing but food and shelter, becoming daily more and more materialistically minded. What their next life will be, who can say? But it will not be a step up.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

When a child held something to be offered to Sri Bhagavan by the parents, they cajoled the child to offer it to Sri Bhagavan. The child did so gladly. Sri Bhagavan remarked: Look at this! When the child can give a thing away to Jeja it is tyaga. (Jeja-God). See what influence Jeja has on children also! Every gift implies unselfishness. That is the whole content of nishkama Karma (unselfish action). It means true renunciation. If the giving nature is developed it becomes tyaga. If anything is willingly given away it is a delight to the giver and to the receiver. If the same is stolen it is misery to both. Dana, dharma, nishkama Karma are all tyaga only. When ‘mine’ is given up it is chitta suddhi (purified mind). When ‘I’ is given up it is jnana. When the nature to give away is developed it results in jnana.

Again a little later, a young boy came all alone, unescorted by his parents. He had come from Chengam in a bus. Sri Bhagavan remarked, “The boy has left his parents to come here. This is also an instance of tyaga.”

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

Tyaga is living a simple, frugal life; as it is generally said, simple living and high thinking. That may be said to be tyaga. We don't accumulate property, treasure, wealth etc., more than what is essential for our minimal comfortable existence, and we renounce all other things.

...

The whole of the Gita seems to be somehow or other centred around the principle of renunciation – abandonment of the fruit of action – for the purpose of attaining perfection. The terms sannyasa and tyaga, meaning thereby abandonment or relinquishing, are used frequently in the Gita. Tyaga is abandoning; sannyasa is relinquishing.

... “O Lord! I want to know the real meaning of sannyasa, and I also want to know the real meaning of tyaga. Clearly explain to me what is sannyasa, what is tyaga.”

... Abandoning actions which are filled with desire is sannyasa. Abandoning the fruit of any action is tyaga.

... tamasic relinquishment is mentioned as that form of abandonment of action which is tantamount to abandonment of duty itself; that is called tamasic relinquishment. There is another relinquishment, called rajasic tyaga: “Because it is difficult – it is very painful, it involves a lot of hardship, I have to work day and night – therefore, I will not do that work.” This argument for not doing a work is not actually feasible, and it is not tenable. The reason for not doing a work should not be merely the fact that it is a strain upon oneself to do hard work. We have to sweat, and “I do not want to sweat; therefore, I will not do this work. Physically it is painful, torturous and, therefore, I am afraid of doing this kind of work or undertaking this project.” When a person abandons doing a work because it is painful and requires hard labour on their part, that kind of abandonment of work due to fear of hard work or labour is called rajasika tyaga. It is not sattvic.

... Sattvic renunciation does not mean renunciation of action. Then, what does it mean? It is the doing of one’s work because it is something that must be done under the circumstances in which one is placed. ... “Definitely it has to be done, because it is binding upon me. Yet, I shall do that work but be free from attachment to the work.” It does not mean that we should be attached to duty. The performance of duty is an impersonal involvement of ourselves in a call that is super-individual, and it does not call for attachment. Attachment is an emotional clinging to a particular form or event or anything whatsoever; and duty, being a superior call from a law that is above human nature, cannot be an object of attachment. Therefore, when a person performs a work as a duty incumbent upon that person and yet never feels that it is ‘my’ work; and knows that it is not anyone’s work but it is a work done for the work’s sake; and does not expect any recompense or fruit thereof – such an impersonal work with no tag attached to it in the form of emotional clinging or fruit accruing therefrom, such an impersonally construed unselfish action done for the sake of work alone can be regarded as sattvic action. All other kinds of work are rajasic or tamasic.

Sannyasa and tyaga

Related words

Sannyasa

Sanskrit

Tyāga — त्याग

tyāga - त्याग

Upadana-Karana

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Upādāna-kāraṇa — ... material cause

1. For example, thread is the material cause of cloth.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

upādānakāraṇa -

a proximate cause

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Upadana. In Indian philosophy, the word upadana denotes the “material cause” for something, that is, the stuff from which it is formed. Although this notion seems obvious to modern materialist ears, it carries several important assumptions that not all Indian philosophical schools were willing to concede—namely, that there were real objects in the world, that they were made from other things, and that these things underwent real transformations. The notion of a material cause was held by the “realist” schools, most notably the Sankhya, Nyaya-Vaisheshika, and Vishishthadvaita Vedanta. It was opposed by the Buddhist schools, whose assumption that reality was constantly changing made the notion of real things problematic. It was also opposed by the Advaita Vedanta school, whose starting assumption was that ultimately there was only one “real” thing—the formless Brahman (Supreme Reality)—and thus that the notion of anything becoming anything else was in error.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of philosophy

Both Sankara and the Sankhyans adopt a view of causation whereby the effect preexists in the material cause (upadana karana)—called satkaryavada. They differ, however, in the detail. For the Sankhyans the evolution of prakrati is a real process of natural unfolding out of the potentialities of the gunas—a position known as parinamavada. Sankara, however, finds difficulties with the notion of potentiality and argues instead for the more extreme position of the identity of the effect with the cause—there is only a merely apparent transformation from cause to effect. Applying this claim—known as vivartavada—to the case of the emergence of the experienced world out of the one real thing, Brahman, which is undifferentiated consciousness, the implication is that the experienced world is but an illusory appearance of Brahman. The route to moksa is the realisation of this difficult truth.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Psychology of Darsanamala

... in Vedānta the material cause is not the equivalent of that of Western logic. It is called upādāna. The concept of upādāna contains within itself not only the material, but also the inherent possibilities of everything that might be fashioned from it. A pot would be seen as only one of those things.

Clay, as a material from which a pot may be formed, has an existential status. However, the possibility of a pot being produced is only a phenomenological intention in the mind of the potter. The absence of a pot in the clay does not rule out the possibility of a pot being made from it. This possibility of a pot — the prior nonexistence of it — implies the promise of a future pot. Although it may seem strange that the factor of nonexistence can change into an existential factor, this is exactly what happens in all creative processes.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Taittiriya Upanishad

The spider ... is nimittakāraṇam as well as upādānakāraṇam for the web. This leggy jīva, an intelligent being in a physical body, who wants to catch prey, who plans and executes, is called a spider because of upādhi. Svapradhānatayū it is nimitta and upādāna for the web. Out of himself alone, from the standpoint of upādhi alone, the spider is upādānakāraṇam for the web.

...
Vivarta upādānam is that which, without undergoing change, is the material cause everything. It gives the substance for everything. Parināmi upādānam is the material cause which undergoes a change. Brahman is the vivarta upādānam; māyā is the parināmī upādānam. This is to be understood from the drsti of the jagat alone, not from the standpoint of brahmaitanyam. All that there is, is the one caityanyam. But in accord with the different orders of reality, you can talk about brahman in terms of the jagat.

...
The upaniṣat says brahman is the upādānakāraṇam.

... Devadatta, having built a house, entered that house. In that case, the house is separate from Devadatta. That is not the kind of situation that śruti has set up with regard to brahman and the jagat. Having created the jagat, brahman, īśvara, entered that jagat. Since Devadatta did not make a house out of himself, he can enter it. If brahman is upādānakāraṇam, there is no way for brahman to enter the jagat. The creation itself is in the form of brahman. How can he enter that? There is a problem here.

... Having created everything, it as though entered; it is available in the antahkarana.

Related words

Karana

Sanskrit

Upādāna-kāraṇa — उपादानकारण

upādāna-kāraṇa - उपादानकारण

Upadhi

Variant spellings

upadhi
upādhi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Upādhi — ... adventitious condition; association; vehicle; attribute; support; limiting adjunct; attribute; title; deceit.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

upādhi -

that which is put in the place of another thing, a substitute, substitution;

anything which may be taken for or has the mere name or appearance of another thing, appearance, phantom, disguise (said to be applied to certain forms or properties considered as disguises of the spirit);

anything defining more closely, a peculiarity;

an attribute;

title, discriminative appellation, nickname;

limitation, qualification (e.g. an-upādhi-rāmaṇya, beautiful without limitation i.e. altogether beautiful);

a qualifying term added to a too general middle term to prevent ativyāpti;

that which is placed under, supposition, condition, postulate;

deception, deceit;

species

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Upadhi (“obstruction”). In Indian logic, a counterexample that renders an inference (anumana) invalid by showing that the reason (hetu) given as evidence for the initial assertion (sadhya) is not invariably true. For example, the inference that “there is smoke because there is fire” was judged invalid because of the counterexample of the red-hot iron ball, which was considered fiery but not smoky. Since the red-hot iron ball was a class of fiery things that did not smoke, it showed that the reason given for the inference did not account for every case of the thing to be proved (sadhya)—and thus raised the possibility that there were other such cases as well. This invalid inference fails the requirement known as pervasion (vyapti), in which the reason must account for every possible case; this is critical for validity in an inference. Needless to say, the search for such counterexamples was an essential part of Indian logic, since one such example could discredit an opponent’s argument.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Upadhi: Conditioning factors that make indistinct Reality appear in distinct forms.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Upadhi: limiting adjunct; all that is being superimposed on the formless and attributeless Brahman.

Descriptions

General

Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

... we read in the S'vet. Up[anisad]. IV, 10 : 'Know Prakriti (nature) as Mâyâ (magic), and the great Lord as the Mâyin (magician).' Though this is not pure Vedanta, it shows us, at all events, the way by which the ignorance of the individual became the cause of what we call objective reality, and led, at the same time, to the admission of an active and creative Lord, the personal Brahmâ or îsvara; how Avidyâ in fact became a Sakti or potentia, somehow or other related to Brahman itself.

But before there arises this Mâyâ of objective nature, belonging as it were to Brahman himself, there was the Mâyâ of the internal or subjective world. This was originally the only Mâyâ, and, deceived by that Mâyâ or Avidyâ, the Atman, or pure Self, was covered up (Upâhita) or blinded, or conditioned by the so-called Upâdhis, the conditions or impositions, if we may say so, in both senses. There is here again a certain ambiguity, the Upâdhis being caused by primeval Avidyâ, and, from another point of view, Avidyâ being caused in the individual soul (Jîvâtman) by the Upâdhis. These Upâdhis are:—

1. The Mukhyaprana, the vital spirit (unconscious);
2. the Manas, the central organ of perception, ready to receive what is conveyed to it by the separate senses, and to react on them by will, Manas being that which, as we say, perceives, feels, thinks and wills;
3. the Indriyas, the five senses, both afferent and efferent. The five afferent (Upalabdhi) senses are the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, scent. The five efferent or acting senses (Adhyavasâya) are the senses of speaking, grasping, going, evacuating and generating;
4. the material organic body.

...

All these, called the Upâdhis, conditions, are to be treated as Not-self; and if it be asked why they should ever have been treated as Self, the only possible answer is that it was through Nescience or Avidyâ, but through a Nescience that is not only casual or individual, but universal.

Wikipedia

Upadhi (Sanskrit: "imposition" or "limitation") is a term in Hindu philosophy. In Hindu logic, an upadhi is the condition which accompanies the major term and must be supplied to limit the too general middle term. For instance, "the mountain has smoke because it has fire" rests on the false premise that all fire is accompanied by smoke. To restrict the too general middle term here, 'wet fuel' should be added as the condition of fire.

It can also be viewed as a disguise or vehicle for true reality, both defining something and limiting it. For example, the body of a man or animal is the upadhi of its spirit. Upadhi is one of many conditions of body and mind obscuring the true state of man or his self which Indian philosophies seek to remove for the attainment of moksha. Extract from Helena Blavatsky's Theosophical Glossary:

“Basis; the vehicle, carrier or bearer of something less material than itself: as the human body is the upādhi of its spirit, ether the upādhi of light, etc., etc.; a mould; a defining or limiting substance.”

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

The favourite example in Indian philosophy is of a colourless, transparent crystal placed on red silk, or in contact with a ruby. The colourless apparently becomes coloured. The conditioning factor in this case is the silk or ruby. In Sanskrit this conditioning factor is called upadhi.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

The nature of the Jiva changes with the addition of each Upadhi. When a man dresses like a fop, wearing the fine black-bordered muslin, the love songs of Nidhu Babu spring to his lips. A pair of English boots inflates even a languid man with the delight of vanity; he begins to whistle immediately, and if he has to ascend a flight of stairs, he leaps up from one step to another like a Saheb. If a man holds a pen in his hand, he will go on scratching carelessly on any paper he happens to get.
... Money is an Upadhi (a deceptive influence) of a very strong nature. As soon as a man becomes rich, he is thoroughly changed.

See: Jiva and upadhi

See also:

in Ishvara: [Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Psychology of Darshanamala

The literal meaning of upādhi is ‘intelligence that has undergone conditioning’. Upā means ‘with’ or ‘together with’, and dhi means ‘intelligence’.

Sanskrit

***Upādhi* — उपाधि**

upādhi - उपाधि

Upanishad

Title variants

upanisad

upanishad
Upaniṣad
उपनिषद्

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Upaniṣad — ... “to sit close by devotedly”; the last portion of the Vedas ...

1. The teachings of the ancient sages which form the knowledge and/ or end portion of the Vedas. The central teaching of the Upaniṣads is that the Self of a human being is the same as Brahman, the Absolute. The goal of life, according to the Upaniṣads, is realization of Brahman.
2. They are treatises in poetry and prose; on spiritual and philosophical subjects.
3. There are ten principal Upaniṣads: Īśa, Kena, Katha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya, and Brhadāraṇyaka.
4. The concluding portion of the Vedas. They are also called Vedānta (which in turn bases its theories on the ideas of the Upaniṣads).
5. Some hold the view that upaniṣad literally means “secret teaching” (rahasya); and as the Upaniṣads are so varied, and difficult to decide as to what their import is, they account for the emergence in later times of the diverse schools of Vedānta.
6. See prasthāna-traya.

Encyclopedia of religion

The Upanishads are codified Sanskrit philosophical speculations of varying lengths in both prose and verse form, composed orally and set to memory mostly by anonymous South Asian sages, primarily in the classical and medieval periods. While the most important and influential Vedic Upanishads date from the eighth to the fourth centuries BCE, some lesser-known sectarian Upanishads appear as late as the sixteenth century CE. Individually and as a whole, the Upanishads present insights and doctrines that serve as the foundation for much of India’s philosophical thought.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

upaniṣad -

to sit down near to; to approach, set about;

(according to some) the sitting down at the feet of another to listen to his words (and hence, secret knowledge given in this manner; but according to native authorities upaniṣad means ‘setting at rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit’);

the mystery which underlies or rests underneath the external system of things;

esoteric doctrine, secret doctrine, mysterious or mystical meaning, words of mystery &c.;

a class of philosophical writings (more than a hundred in number, attached to the Brāhmaṇas [but see Īsopanishad]; their aim is the exposition of the secret meaning of the Veda, and they are regarded as the source of the Vedānta and Sāṃkhya philosophies

Wikipedia

The Upanishads are Hindu scriptures that constitute the core teachings of Vedanta. They do not belong to any particular period of Sanskrit literature: the oldest, such as the Brhadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads, date to the late Brahmana period (around the middle of the first millennium BCE), while the latest were composed in the medieval and early modern period. The Upanishads have exerted an important influence on the rest of Hindu philosophy and were collectively considered one of the 100 Most Influential Books Ever Written by the British poet Martin Seymour-Smith.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of religion

Traditional South Asian teachings based on the Upanishads have been called the Vedanta, the “end of the Veda,” for the Upanishads chronologically and formally set the closure of the Vedic canon. Perhaps more to the point, Upanishadic lessons are said to be the end of the Veda in that they purport to present the “hidden meaning” or the “real message” of religious practice and thought.

...

The central teaching presented by the Upanishads as a whole centers on the notion that behind all of the spatial swirl and temporal flux of the world as it is experienced by the senses is a subtle, pervasive, timeless, and unchanging reality that is identical to the undying essence of the human being as well. The early Vedic Upanishads call this unified and imperishable world soul brahman or atman, the former applying more typically to the godhead and the latter signifying the correlative divine “self” residing at the deepest level of one’s person. The theistic Upanishads teach that this brahman or atman is a single deity known generically as Íśv Íśa (Lord) living deep within one’s being and identified particularly as Siva, Vishnu, or the Goddess by particular sectarian communities.

... While they explicitly or implicitly admit the difficulties of comprehending a hidden reality that either transcends or simply cannot be known through the structures of time, space, and causation, the Upanishads hold that through disciplined practices of meditation and the cultivation of extraordinary knowledge, it can in fact be discerned.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

... the word [‘upaniṣad’] used in the Upanishads themselves, and there it generally appears as synonymous with rahasya or secret. That should accordingly have been its original meaning. Etymologically the word is equivalent to ‘sitting (sad) near by (upa) devotedly (ni),’ and in course of time it came to signify the secret instruction imparted at such private sittings. That the teaching of these works was regarded as a mystery and that much care and anxiety were bestowed upon keeping it from the unworthy lest it should be misunderstood or misapplied, come out clearly in several Upanishads. According to the Praśna Upaniṣad, for example, six pupils go to a great teacher seeking instruction of him in respect of the highest reality; but he asks them to live with him for a year before instructing them, obviously with the purpose of watching them and satisfying himself of their fitness to be taught by him. Again, when Naciketas, according to the Kaṭha Upaniṣad, desires to know whether or not the soul survives after death. Yama does not reply until he has tested the sincerity and strength of mind of the young inquirer. The reluctance to impart the highest truth to every one without discrimination, we may observe in passing, was not peculiar to India, but was common to all ancient peoples. Heraclitus in early Greece, for example, is reported to have stated, ‘If men care for gold, they must dig for it ; otherwise they must be content with straw.’

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Upanishad. The latest textual stratum in the Vedas, the oldest and most authoritative Hindu religious texts. The literal meaning of the word upanishad is “to sit near [a teacher],” but a better sense of its true meaning would be “secret teaching.” The Upanishads mark a clean break from the immediately preceding Vedic literature, the Brahmanas, in which the essential concern was to lay out the concrete procedures for performing highly complex sacrificial rites. In contrast, the Upanishads were concerned with more speculative and abstract questions: the essential nature of the cosmos, the essence of the human being, and the relationship between these two. The conclusion in the Upanishads is that the essence of the universe is an impersonal reality known as Brahman, and that the essence of the human being is called the “Self” (atman). The fundamental insight and essential teaching in the Upanishads is the identity of Brahman and atman, and thus of the macrocosm and the microcosm. This identity is one of the most fundamental Hindu religious ideas and underlies religious thought up to the present time.

The twelve or thirteen oldest upanishads are not a cohesive set but a series of independent documents, although the later ones were clearly influenced by the earlier ones. The two oldest are the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad and the Chandogya Upanishad. Each is much longer than all the others combined, they are written in prose as a series of dialogues between famous sages, the Sanskrit language in them is clearly more archaic, and their ideas are embryonic and undeveloped. Later upanishads— such as the Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, and Mandukya—are much shorter, are written in verse, and have well-developed ideas. Some of these introduce the notion of theism, but not until the Shvetashvatara Upanishad is the Supreme Being identified as a god, in this case Rudra. For much of their history, the Upanishads would have been transmitted orally from master to student; this makes it unlikely that these texts were widely known because they would have been secret and carefully guarded teachings.

The Upanishads are important because of the speculative questions they ask and because many of their teachings are fundamental assumptions in Hindu religious life, even today: the notion of an eternal Self that gives a being continuous identity; the idea of reincarnation (samsara) commensurate with one’s deeds; the concept that some single unifying power lies behind the world’s apparent diversity; and the conviction that this can be attained only through individual realization, usually described as a flash of mystic insight. As texts carrying the religious authority of the Vedas, the Upanishads were also extremely important in the development of Hindu philosophical schools, particularly Advaita Vedanta, which shares this overriding emphasis on inner realization.

Wikipedia

Commentaries

The philosopher and commentator Shankara is thought to have composed commentaries on eleven mukhya or principal Upanishads, those that are generally regarded as the oldest, spanning the late Vedic and Mauryan periods. The Muktika Upanishad (predates 1656) contains a list of 108 canonical Upanishads and lists itself as the final one. Although there are a wide variety of philosophical positions propounded in the Upanishads, commentators since Shankara have usually followed him in seeing idealist monism as the dominant one.

Philosophy

The Upanishads speak of a universal spirit (Brahman) and of an individual soul (Atman), and at times assert the identity of both. Brahman is the ultimate, both transcendent and immanent, the absolute infinite existence, the sum total of all that ever is, was, or shall be. The mystical nature and intense philosophical bent of the Upanishads has led to their explication in numerous manners, giving birth to three main schools of Vedanta. Shankara’s exegesis of the Upanishads does not describe Brahman as the God in a monotheistic sense. His philosophy is named advaita, “not two” as opposed to dvaita, founded by Madhvacharya, which holds that Brahman is ultimately a personal God, to be aligned with Vishnu, or Krishna (brahmano hi pratisthaham, I am the Foundation

of Brahman Bhagavad Gita 14.27). The third major school of Vedanta is Vishishtadvaita, founded by Ramanujacharya and it has some aspects in common with the other two.

The ninth chapter of the Taittiriya Upanishad says:

He who knows the Bliss of Brahman (divine consciousness)..does not distress himself with the thought “why did I not do what is good? why did I do what is evil?”. Whoever knows this (bliss) regards both of these as Atman (self, soul), indeed he cherishes both as Atman. Such, indeed, is the Upanishad, the secret knowledge of Brahman.

The key phrase of the Upanishads, to Advaita Vedanta, is तत् त्वं असि “Tat Tvam Asi” (That thou art). Vedantins believe that in the end, the ultimate, formless, inconceivable Brahman is the same as our soul, Atman. We only have to realize this through discrimination. (However, interpretations of this phrase differ.) Verses 6, 7 & 8 of Isha Upanishad:

Whoever sees all beings in the soul and the soul in all beings...

What delusion or sorrow is there for one who sees unity?

It has filled all. It is radiant, incorporeal, invulnerable...

Wise, intelligent, encompassing, self- existent, It organizes objects throughout eternity.

The Upanishads also contain the first and most definitive explications of the divine syllable Aum or OM, the cosmic vibration that underlies all existence. The mantra “Aum Shanti Shanti Shanti” (the soundless sound, peace, peace, peace) is often found in the Upanishads. ‘Devotion to God’ (Sanskrit: bhakti) is foreshadowed in Upanishadic literature, and was later realized by texts such as the Bhagavad Gita.

Global scholarship

In 1775, the French scholar Anquetil Duperron received a manuscript of part of the Upanishads from M. Gentil, who resided at the court of Shula ud daula. Duperron requested the remaining part and then collated the two, translating them into French and Latin.

The French version was never published but the Latin translation was published in 1801. The Latinized title was Oupnek’hat.

The German philosopher Schopenhauer read the Latin translation and extravagantly praised it in his main work, The World as Will and Representation, which was published in 1819, as well as in his Parerga and Paralipomena, (1851). He found that the Upanishads accorded with his own philosophy, which taught that the individual is a manifestation of the one basis of reality. For Schopenhauer, that fundamentally real underlying unity is what we know in ourselves as “will.”

German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling praised the mystical and spiritual aspects of the Upanishads. Schelling and other members of the German Idealist group were dissatisfied with Christianity (as propagated by churches) and became fascinated with the Vedas and the Upanishads. Similarly-minded English and European writers, such as Thomas Carlyle, Victor Cousin, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Mme. de Staël, claimed to find deep wisdom in these non-Western writings.

In the United States, the group known as the Transcendentalists were influenced by Schelling’s German Idealists. These Americans, such as Emerson and Thoreau, were not satisfied with traditional Christian mythology and therefore embraced Schelling’s interpretation of Kant’s Transcendental idealism, as well as his celebration of the romantic, exotic, mystical aspect of the Upanishads. As a result of the influence of these writers, the Upanishads gained renown in Western countries.

Erwin Schrödinger — the great quantum physicist said “The multiplicity is only apparent. This is the doctrine of the Upanishads. And not of the Upanishads only. The mystical experience of the union with God regularly leads to this view, unless strong prejudices stand in the West.”

Ekknath Easwaran in translating the Upanishads tells how they “form snapshots of towering peaks of consciousness taken at various times by different observers and dispatched with just the barest kind of explanation”.

See: Brahmana, Aranyaka, Upanishad

See: Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

upaniṣad — from the verb root sad = “to sit” + the prefixes upa = “near” and ni = “down”; thus, “to sit down near” (the spiritual teacher earnestly).

[Wikipedia](#)

The Sanskrit term upaniṣad derives from upa- (nearby), ni- (at the proper place, down) and sad, that is “sitting down near” a teacher in order to receive instruction... Monier- Williams adds that “according to native authorities upanishad means ‘setting to rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit’;...” A gloss of the term upaniṣad based on Shankara’s commentary on the Kaṭha and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishads equates it with Ātmavidyā, that is “knowledge of the Self”, or Brahavidyā “knowledge of Brahma”. Other dictionary meanings include “esoteric doctrine” and “secret doctrine”.

Texts

General

[Encyclopedia of religion](#)

Written texts

The Upanishads were first put into written form in 1656 CE, when Sultan Dara Shokh sponsored the translation of fifty Upanishads from Sanskrit into Persian. In 1801–1802, these Persian works were then translated into Latin by Antequil du Perron, becoming the first, although poor, European version. Since that time, all of the Upanishads have been rendered into various Indian scripts, and the more important or influential ones have been translated into virtually all of the world’s major languages. The Upanishads stand as works of monumental significance in the history of India and of the world.

Classification of the upanishads

It is somewhat problematic to arrive at a precise number of Upanishads, because if all Sanskrit works claiming to present secret teachings were to be classified as Upanishads the number would be indefinite.

Nearly 250 texts call themselves Upanishads—including the Allopanishad (“secret teachings about Allah,” composed at the time of Akbar) and the Christopanishad, dated well after the rise of Christian communities on the subcontinent—but it appears that most of these do so merely as a way to align themselves with a respected literary genre or religious tradition.

The Mukhtika Upanishad and other medieval South Indian works mention 108 separate Upanishads in an enumeration that has become somewhat of a stock list. Using the methods of historical, thematic, and textual criticism, twentieth-century scholars have

isolated 123 genuine Upanishads. These works may be classified into two general categories, the Vedic Upanishads and the later Upanishads.

Vedic Upanishads

Virtually all Vedic and most sectarian traditions recognize ten to eighteen Upanishads as revealed authoritative scripture (sruti). Furthermore, all of the more important traditional theologians and philosophers throughout classical and medieval India recognized the central importance of these ancient works, and have written extensive commentaries on them. For these reasons, the Vedic Upanishads have also been called the Major, or Principal, Upanishads. They may be divided into three historical and textual groups.

1. The earliest Upanishads (the Brhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, and Kausitaki Upanishads and the prose parts of the Kena Upanishad) predate the rise of Buddhism in the sixth century BCE, the Brhadaranyaka and the Chandogya being the earliest and the Kena being the latest. All are explicitly aligned with one or another of the various sakhas, or “schools” of Vedic interpretation, and are composed in a prose that closely resembles Vedic Sanskrit. These texts make frequent use of allegorical modes of interpretation and are often almost indistinguishable in style from the A ranyakas. In many ways these six works serve as the philosophical foundation for all of the later Upanishads.

2. A second group of Upanishads (the Kat:ha [or Kat:haka], Isa, Svetasvatara, Mundaka, and Mahanarayana Upanishads and the metrical parts of the Kena Upanishad) reflects a growing sectarian orientation and dates to the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. These works, which are composed primarily in verse, are only loosely attached to the Vedic sakhas, and make less use of metaphorical, allegorical, or other tropic means of expression.

3. The Upanishads of a third group (the Prasna, Maitri [or Maitrayaniya], Jabala, Paingala, and Mandukya Upanishads) return to prose form, but in a language that resembles classical Sanskrit much more than Vedic Sanskrit. They probably emerged in the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE although the dates for a few of them are uncertain.

Later Upanishads

To this list of principal Vedic Upanishads most authorities would add a large number of less known and, for the most part, medieval works that may be classified as the later Upanishads. These works are not universally accepted as sruti, and they have not received the extensive attention from traditional South Asian philosophical commentators as have the Vedic Upanishads. This does not mean that they are less important than others. Indeed, these texts may well be more influential in their respective communities than the principal Vedic Upanishads. Such works reflect the increasing influence of Samkhya philosophy, Yoga practice and ideology, and sectarian theistic traditions through the classical and medieval periods. While many align themselves with the Rgveda, Yajurveda, or Samaveda, most of these Upanishads are attached, at least nominally, to the Atharvaveda. Most are in prose form and are composed almost entirely in classical Sanskrit.

The number of the later Upanishads is too large to list all of them... Only the most important or representative ones will be mentioned.

1. Vedanta Upanishads. These works, which include the Muktika, Pinda, Garba, Atman, Pranagnihotra, Adhyatman, and Brahma as well as perhaps two dozen other Upanishads, fairly consistently maintain the general doctrines presented by the Vedic Upanishads, and show relatively little sectarian influence. They differ from the Vedic Upanishads only in that they are not cited in traditional commentaries.

2. Yoga Upanishads. These texts arose out of a more specifically ascetic context than did many of the Vedic and Vedanta Upanishads, and reflect the influence of Yoga ideologies and practices within Upanishadic circles. This group includes the Yogakun-

dali, Nadabindhu, Sandilya, Yogatattva, Tejobindhu, Hamsa, Amrtabindhu, Dhyanabindhu, and Varaha Upanishads. These works center on the direct experience of the eternal self (atman) through specific techniques of Yoga and through the meditation on the sacred syllable om.

3. Samnyasa Upanishads. These works tend to extol the life of the wandering ascetic's search for release from the cycle of rebirth (samsara) and teach ways in which such release may be obtained. They include the Naradaparivrajaka, Bhiksuka, Paramahansa, Asrama, and Samnyasa Upanishads.

4. Mantra Upanishads. These teachings center on esoteric interpretations of specific sounds and syllables and place those interpretations into Yogic as well as Saiva, Vaisnava, and Durga theistic contexts. Typical of such works would be the Tarasara, Kalisantarana, and Narayana Upanishads.

5. Saiva Upanishads. The earliest Saiva Upanishad might well be said to be the Vedic Svetasvatara Upanishad, which praised the role of Rudra (a Vedic precursor to the god Siva) in the religious quest. The more well-known of the medieval Saiva Upanishads would include the Nilarudra, Kalagnirudra, Kaivalya, and Atharvasiras Upanishads, all of which understand the person of Siva (also known as Mahesvara, Bhairava, Isana, and other names) to be an embodiment of the deepest self, atman.

6. Vaisnava Upanishads. These texts tend to interpret the various incarnations of the god Visnu as representative forms of the atman. Some Vaisnava traditions look to the Isa Upanishad as the Vedic antecedent to, or oldest sectarian representative of, this particular genre. Works associated with this group include the Nrsimha-purvatapaniya, Nrsimhottarata panīya, Maha, Ramapurvatapaniya, and Ramottarata panīya Upanishads.

Wikipedia

List of Upanishads

Canonical Upanishads

The Muktikā (“deliverance”, see mukti) Upanishad is the final Upanishad of the Hindu canon of 108 texts of the Advaita school, and it is itself the source of this canon. It predates 1656, when the canon was recorded by Dara Shikoh.

In this canon,

10 Upanishads are associated with the Rigveda and have the Shānti beginning vaṇme-manasi.

16 Upanishads are associated with the Samaveda and have the Shānti beginning āpyāyantu.

19 Upanishads are associated with the Shukla Yajurveda and have the Shānti beginning pūrṇamada.

32 Upanishads are associated with the Krishna Yajurveda and have the Shānti beginning sahanāvavatu.

31 Upanishads are associated with the Atharvaveda and have the Shānti beginning bhadram- karṇebhiḥ.

The first 10 are grouped as mukhya “principal”. 21 are grouped as Sāmānya Vedānta “common Vedānta”, 23 as Sannyāsa, 9 as Shākta, 14 as Vaishnava, 14 as Shaiva and 17 as Yoga Upanishads.

... The 108 canonical Upanishads are listed at 1:30-39 (without the associated Vedas)

“Principal” Upanishads

The following list includes the eleven “principal” (mukhya) Upanishads commented upon by Shankara, and accepted as shruti by most Hindus. Each is associated with one of the four Vedas (Rigveda (RV), Samaveda (SV), White Yajurveda (SYV), Black Yajurveda (KYV), Atharvaveda (AV)); Aitareya (RV)

Brhadāranyaka (ŚYV)
Taittirīya (KYV)
Chāndogya (SV)
Kena (SV)
Īsa (ŚYV)
Śvetāśvatara (KYV)
Katha (KYV)
Mundaka (AV)
Māndūkya (AV)
Prašna (AV)

The Kauśītāki and Maitrāyani Upanishads are sometimes added. All these date from before the Common Era. From linguistic evidence, the oldest among them are the Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya Upanishads. The Jaiminīya Upanisadbrāhmana, belonging to the late Vedic Sanskrit period, may also be included. Of nearly the same age are the Aitareya, Kausītaki and Taittirīya Upanishads, while the remnant date from the time of transition from Vedic to Classical Sanskrit.

The older Upanishads are associated with Vedic Charanas, Shakhas or schools; the Aitareya and Kauśītāki Upanishads with the Shakala shakha, the Chāndogya Upanishad with the Kauthuma shakha, the Kena Upanishad with the Jaiminiya shakha, the Katha Upanishad with the Caraka- Katha shakha, the Taittirīya and Śvetāśvatara Upanishads with the Taittiriya shakha, the Maitrāyani Upanishad with the Maitrayani shakha, the Brhadāranyaka and Īsa Upanishads with the Vajasaneyi Madhyandina shakha, and the Māndūkya and Mundaka Upanishads with the Shaunaka shakha.

In the Muktika Upanishad's list of 108 Upanishads the first 10 are grouped as mukhya "principal". 21 are grouped as Sāmānya Vedānta "common Vedanta", 23 as Sannyāsa, 9 as Shākta, 13 as Vaishnava, 14 as Shaiva and 17 as Yoga Upanishads.

Shakta Upanishads

Later Upanisads are often highly sectarian: this was "one of the strategies used by sectarian movements to legitimate their own texts through granting them the nominal status of Śruti." For the most part, the canonical Shakta Upanishads are sectarian tracts reflecting doctrinal and interpretative differences between the two principal sects of Srividya upasana (a major Tantric form of Shaktism). As a result, the many extant listings of "authentic" Shakta Upanisads vary in content, reflecting the sectarian bias of their compilers:

"Past efforts to construct lists of Shakta Upanisads have left us no closer to understanding either their 'location' in Tantric tradition or their place within the Vedic corpus. [...] At stake for the Tantric is not the authority of sruti per se, which remains largely undisputed, but rather its correct interpretation. For non- Tantrics, [it is a text's] Tantric contents that brings into question its identity as an Upanisad. At issue is the text's classification as sruti and thus its inherent authority as Veda."

Of the texts listed in the Muktika Upanishad nine are classified as Shakta Upanishads:

Sītā (AV)
Annapūrna (AV)
Devī (AV)
Tripurātapani (AV)
Tripura (RV)
Bhāvana (AV)

Saubhāgya (RV)
Sarasvatīrahasya (KYV)
Bahvrca (RV)

The list excludes several notable and widely used Shakta Upanisads, including the Kaula Upanisad, the Śrīvidyā Upanisad and the Śrichakra Upanisad.

Publications

History of translations

General

Encyclopedia of religion

The last hundred years have seen the publication of a large number of Upanishads in modern languages, many of which suffer from a lack of perspicuity due to the somewhat esoteric nature of the original works. The most objective English translation of most of the Vedic Upanishads remains Robert Ernest Hume's somewhat stilted *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, 2d rev. ed. (Oxford, 1949). A more fluid translation is Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's *The Principal Upanishads* (New York, 1953). Radhakrishnan's work is better than Hume's in that it includes the Sanskrit and it translates sixteen rather than thirteen works. Some students will find Radhakrishnan's commentaries on the works to be of some help, although many of them reflect his neo-Vedantic bias. Another good translation, and one that openly admits an Advaitic point of view, is Swami Nikhilananda's *The Upanishads*, 4 vols. (New York, 1949–1959). Readers interested in the later Upanishads would be advised to look to Paul Deussen's *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda* (Leipzig, 1897), to K. Narayanasvami Aiyar's *Thirty Minor Upanishads* (Madras, 1914), and to Jean Varenne's *Upanishads du yoga* (Paris, 1974). Readers seeking only selections from the Vedic Upanishads might turn to Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles Moore's edited volume, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J., 1957), pp. 37–96, or to Juan Mascaro's *The Upanishads* (Baltimore, 1965), although the latter is somewhat colored by a theistic understanding of the texts.

Wikipedia

The Upanishads have been translated in to various languages including Persian, Italian, Urdu, French, Latin, German, English, Dutch, Polish, Japanese and Russian. The Moghul Emperor Akbar's reign (1556–1586) saw the first translations of the Upanishads into Persian, and his great-grandson, Dara Shikoh, produced a collection called *Sirr-e-Akbar* (*The Greatest Mysteries*) in 1657, with the help of Sanskrit Pandits of Varansi. Its introduction stated that the Upanishads constitute the Qur'an's "Kitab al-maknun" or hidden book.[84][85] But Akbar's and Shikoh's translations remained unnoticed in the Western world until 1775. Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, a French Orientalist who had lived in India between 1755 and 1761, received a manuscript of the Upanishads in 1775 from M. Gentil, and translated it into French and Latin, publishing the Latin translation in two volumes in 1802–1804 as *Oupneck'hat*. The French translation was never published. The first German translation appeared in 1832 and Roer's English version appeared in 1853. However, Max Mueller's 1879 and 1884 editions were the first systematic English treatment to include the 12 Principal Upanishads. After this, the Upanishads were rapidly translated into Dutch, Polish, Japanese and Russian.

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See also: **Individual Upanishads for their translations**

Related words

Aitareya Upanishad

Aranyaka

Brahmana

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Chandogya Upanishad

Isha Upanishad

Jnana-kanda

Katha Upanishad

Kena Upanishad

Mandukya Upanishad

Mundaka Upanishad

Prashna Upanishad

Prasthanatraya

Sruti

Shvetashvatara Upanishad

Taittiriya Upanishad

Veda

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Uparati

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Uparati — ... (once the senses have been restricted) the power to ensure that the senses may not once again be tempted toward worldly objects

1. It is a limb of the virtues necessary for an aspirant to be spiritually qualified. (See sadhana-catustaya.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

uparati -

cessation, stopping;

death;

desisting from sensual enjoyment or any worldly action, quietism, (Vedāntas)

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Uparati - tolerance and renunciation of all sectarian religious observances, with the object of acquiring wisdom.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Uparati. or selfsettledness: a function of the mind which prevents the sense organs, restrained by Sama and Dama, from drifting back to their respective objects. This virtue, according to some Vedantists, means the relinquishment of worldly duties and the acceptance of sannyasa, or monastic life.

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Uparati is the cessation of these external organs so restrained, from the pursuit of objects other than that; or it may mean the abandonment of the prescribed works according to scriptural injunctions.

[Cessation etc.—Uparati is that function of the mind which keeps the restrained organs from drifting back to the objects of the senses.

That—Hearing of the scriptures, thinking of their meaning and meditating on it.

Or it may mean—As the word Uparati according to the first definition differs very little from Shama and Dama, the alternative definition is given to make the meaning precise.

Abandonment—According to this definition the word Uparati means Sannyasa or entering into the fourth order. Like the practice of Shama etc., the aspirant must accept the vow of monasticism as the essential Sadhana for the attainment of Knowledge. Cp. “By renunciation alone some attained immortality” (Mahanar. Up. 10. 5), “Purified through the practice of Sannyasa” (Mund. Up. 3. 2. 6). “He attains the supreme perfection by renunciation” (Gita 18. 49). So Srutis and Smritis support the view, and that reason supports it is quite obvious.

Prescribed works—Such obligatory works as Sandhya, Agnihotra sacrifice, etc.

According to etc.—This is to warn against the abandonment of the works through laziness or other tamasik propensities.]

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

If the spirit is not interested in the transactional world, it can refuse to illuminate the intellect. When such a negative withdrawal is made by the purusha from the instrumentality of the mind and senses, it is called pratyahara by yogis and uparati by Vedantins. For instance, a person may live quite close to a tavern or liquor shop without having the least awareness of what goes on there simply because he is not at all interested in what happens in such a place. Thus, every person, to some extent, unconsciously exercises withdrawals of the light of the spirit.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

23. ... The best uparati (self-withdrawal) is that condition of the thought-waves in which they are free from the influences of external objects.

...

When one has gained a degree of proficiency in sama and dama, uparati (self-withdrawal) automatically takes place, wherein the seeker's mental conditions is such that it no longer gets affected by any disturbances created by external objects.

When we think of these requirements, it is possible that we think of them as very delicate, difficult and distressing feats, but in fact, the more we practise them, the more easily will we understand that after all this is but a verbal explanation of the state of mind of anyone who is trying to achieve or execute any great work. Even on a material plane, we find these qualifications are essential for a person who wants unqualified success in his activities. In any successful business man too, we observe a certain amount of self-control within as well as without, and also uparati, at least while he is at his desk. Of course, the comparison of these qualities with the qualities exhibited by the materialist or the money-hunter is not fair, because a seeker needs a subtlety a million times more than the materialist. Yet, to a large extent, we can appreciate and understand these qualifications within ourselves when we watch for them and experience them as available in our work-a-day world.

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

Uparati is aham vṛtteḥ bāhya-viṣaya-anāmbanam - not leaning upon the external objects on the part of the ego. Āmbana is to lean upon, so analambana is not leaning upon. For the aham-vṛtti, ego, not leaning upon external objects is uparati. But uparati does not mean avoiding the world. When your sense organs are open you are going to have vṛttis, thought forms, with reference to your perception. When you open your eyes you are going to see mountains, rivers, people, situations. You are not going to avoid them. Even if you are in a cave, you will be seeing the cave, the bats etc., and when you come out of the cave, there will be the world waiting for you. Even if you shut your eyes and plug your ears, you are still not going to avoid the external world. Your memories will put up an external world inside for you. So nobody can avoid the external world. The world presents itself to you in the form of mental modifications either out of memory or out of perception. So the world is going to be in your mind. You can either go with these thoughts in your mind or you need not go. Not identifying with these thoughts is what we call uparati which is also considered as sannyaṣa.

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Related words

Dama

Sama

Samadhana

Broader term: Satsampatti

Sraddha

Titiksa

Sanskrit

Uparati — उपरति

uparati - उपरति

Upasana

Variant spellings

upasana

upāsana

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Upāsana — ... meditation; worship; adoration; sitting near; spiritual discipline; attending

1. It is of three kinds: angāvabodhopāsana, in which some person or thing is worshipped or meditated on as a limb of a rite (e.g., where a piece of grass is thought of as a deity); pratīkopāsana is where an idol or picture is worshipped as God; ahamgrahopāsana in which the worshipper equates him(her)self with a deity.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

upāsana -

the act of throwing off (arrows), exercise in archery;

the act of sitting or being near or at hand;

serving, waiting upon, service, attendance, respect;

homage, adoration, worship (with Rāmānujas, consisting of five parts, viz. Abhigamana or approach, Upādāna or preparation of offering, ĩjyā or oblation, Svādhyāya or recitation, and Yoga or devotion);
a seat;
the being intent on or engaged in MRicch. ;
domestic fire

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Upasana (“service”). **General** term denoting religious practice or spiritual discipline as a whole. Aside from the explicit notion of serving the deity (or guru), the word also connotes an intent focus on the part of the performer—not so much the particular things one is doing, but the overall attitude of care and attention with which one does them.

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

... the Upaniṣads prescribe several meditative exercises of a preliminary character. They are usually called upāsanas, and the prominence given to them in the Upaniṣads is comparable to that given to rites in the Brāhmaṇas. We need notice only one or two points about them. In upāsanas, the thought may be directed wholly outwards and two selected objects, both external, may be mentally identified as in the meditation of the universe as a ‘horse’ alluded to above; or only one external object may be chosen and it may be thought of as identical with the contemplative’s own self. There is an important difference between the two forms of meditation. While the former affords exercise only in concentration, the latter gives scope, in addition, to the cultivation of sympathetic imagination—the power to place oneself in the position of another. It accordingly serves as a more direct aid to Brahma-realization, wherein also what is contemplated, viz. Brahman, is to be identified with the contemplative’s self. Again the objects of contemplation may be real objects or only symbols. Among real objects which the disciple is asked to think of as one with Brahman, we often find conceptions which were once taken for ultimate reality itself, but which in course of time, as philosophic thought progressed, were superseded by higher conceptions. Such for instance is the case with Prāṇa which marked an actual stage in the evolution of the conception of the Absolute. Among the symbols used for Brahman may be mentioned the famous Om, the mystic syllable, which finds a very important place in the Upaniṣads. Whatever form these meditations may take, they prepare the disciple for the final mode of contemplation as Aham Brahma asmi. When a person that has morally purified himself and has after formal study and reflection convinced himself intellectually of the truth of unity, succeeds through nididhyāsana in transforming what was heretofore known only mediately into an immediate certainty, he attains the spiritual goal.

Wikipedia

‘Upasana’ in Sanskrit literally means “Sitting near” but normally the term is used in Hinduism to denote a prescribed method for approaching a Deity or God or getting close to a deity/deities. In the Vedas, some Upasanas are prescribed whereby one meditates on the all-pervading Brahman as some aspect of creation, such as fire, water, directions, food, mind, joy, etc. Thus, Upasana can be described as a systematic practice of a prescribed method of worship for pleasing and winning the attention of the deity or it can be a deity-less practice of austerities involving meditating upon some aspect of nature as told in specific Vedic Upasanas. Normally such prescriptions of worship or meditational methods are taken from various Hindu scriptures, mainly the Puranas and

Vedas. A devotee would consult the scriptures, or a person who knows them thoroughly, to get a prescribed form of worship (Upasana) for his/her deity of choice (Ishta Devata) and follow it faithfully to the best of his/her abilities.

Once the deity is pleased, She/He is said to grant the wishes of devotees either by directly appearing to the devotee and asking/granting what he or she wants, or reading the mind of the devotee and granting his or her wishes without making any appearance (unless one of the wishes is to see the deity personally.)

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: Is there any particular upasana which is more efficacious than others?

M.: All upasanas are equally efficacious. But each one takes easily to one kind of upasana which suits his previous vasanas.

...

D.: Saguna upasana (worship of the personal God) is said to be imperfect. It is also said that nirguna upasana (devotion to the impersonal) is hard and risky. I am fit for the former only. What is to be done?

M.: The Saguna merges into the nirguna in the long run. The saguna purifies the mind and takes one to the final goal.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

12. Mental activities(1) relating to the Saguna Brahman(2)—such as are described in the Shandilya Vidya(3) are Upasanas or devotions.

[1 Mental activities—As distinguished from real knowledge. The Upasana is distinct from Jnanam or Knowledge as in the latter case all differences between the meditator and the object of meditation are obliterated.

2 Saguna Brahman—Brahman with attributes such as power of creation etc. The word Saguna is used to make a distinction between mental activities and complete absorption in the Highest Self, in which case all ideas of the object are entirely effaced.

3 Shandilya Vidya—This is the famous chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad beginning with —"All this is verily Brahman etc." (3. 14. 1).]

Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad

The major portion of this Upanisad consists of upāsanās, the import of which is a little difficult to understand.

... Upāsanā, which is here roughly translated as Upaniṣadic meditation, aimed in part at engendering higher mental attitudes with regard to the daily avocations, social contacts, and religious preoccupations. This path of inner transformation, in the midst of outward conformity, was worked out in all its philosophical bearings and practical details by men of action among whom were some Upaniṣadic king-saints (rājārṣis), who were conscious of the efficacy of the path as well as of their monopoly of this. In the Bṛhadārṇyaka Upaniṣad (VI.2.8), King Pravāhana Jaivali says to the Brāhmaṇa Gautama, 'Before this, this knowledge did not reside in any Brāhmaṇa.' In the Chāndogya (V.3.7), too, the same king says to Gautama, 'Before you, this knowledge reached no Brāhmaṇa, and hence in all the worlds the Ksatriyas had their supremacy.'

Meditation in everyday life

To our forebears no philosophy had any claim to recognition unless it had some bearing on life. To illustrate the point, let us cite some concrete examples from the Upanisadic texts.

The chanting of the Vedas was the daily duty of the students of those days. But lest it should degenerate into a mechanical process, the students were encouraged to add a little reflection in the form of upāsana to this routine work. The Chāndogya (1.3.8-9) says, 'One should reflect on the sāma with which one would eulogize, on the Ṛk on which the soma rests, on the seer who saw the Ṛk verses, and one should reflect on the deity which one would eulogize.'

...

One of the grandest conceptions of life as a sacrifice is to be found in the Chāndogya (III. 16-17), which by the way, is the richest storehouse of Upaniṣadic meditation. This Upaniṣad says, 'Man himself is a sacrifice', and shows in detail how this can be so.

...

These meditations are often directed towards Reality or God. The Chāndogya gives a practical hint as to how one can be in the constant presence of Reality in the midst of daily duties: 'The Ātman is in the heart, ...he who meditates thus goes to heaven every day'.

Meaning of upasana

Literally, it ['upāsana'] means sitting near, mentally approaching an ideal. Upāsana is sometimes referred to by such words as 'upaniṣad', 'darśana', 'veda' etc. which terms lay emphasis on the several aspects of Upaniṣadic meditation. It is firstly a secret thing, to be diligently protected as one's own, and not to be merely talked or argued about or exposed to the derision of the common people. Besides, it is a mental attitude with regard to things which are not to be looked upon as detached entities, but are to be linked up with their higher aspects in a cosmic whole. And that attitude again has to change into an experience, the whole personality getting transformed and elevated thereby. It is both an objective outlook and a subjective realisation.

... Sankara ... defines upāsana thus in his commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka (1.3.9): "Upāsana is mentally approaching the form of the deity or the like, as it is presented by the eulogistic portions of the Vedas relating to the objects of meditation, and concentrating on it, excluding conventional notions, till one is completely identified with it, as with one's body, conventionally regarded as one's own self.'

So, according to Śaṅkara, the object of meditation may be any object or any deity or Brahman. Besides, it is essentially a mental process, and aims at a knowledge of the object through identification. But upasana itself is not knowledge. It may be helpful to realisation, through the purification of the mind, but by itself it falls far short of realisation. ... The Puhcadaśī (IX.74-82) brings out this distinction very aptly: "Knowledge is determined by the object, but upāsana is dependent on the subject." Besides, upāsana implies a meditator, an object of meditation, and an uninterrupted thought. Unless the meditator is aware of himself as distinct from the object of meditation upāsana is not possible. The Pañcadaśī also emphasises the element of faith in upāsana. One must have faith in the object and the process of meditation as taught by the scriptures and the teacher. Knowledge does not presuppose any such faith. Another point to note is that the objects of upāsana are not mere imaginary things or concepts, nor need they be real in the ordinary sense of the term; but they are presented by the scriptures. Again, upāsana is a process of building up from the bottom upward, expanding the ego at every step, whereas knowledge achieves its object rather in a negative way by removing ignorance. Thus knowledge and meditation are entirely different.

Classes of upasana

A brief survey of the different classes of upāsana will clarify our ideas about this word. We have already spoken of Brahma-upāsana and abrahma-upāsana [...in the Upaniṣads, we have not only Brahma-upāsana, but also abrahmaupāsana, i.e. it has as its object not only the qualified Brahman, but much more that is not Brahman]. Of Brahma-upāsana, however, there has been mention of only one aspect, viz meditation on Personal God, immanent or qualified Brahman. But there is a school of Vedantists

who think that it is possible to meditate on the transcendental or absolute Brahman as well. ... In the Praśna Upanisad it is stated, “. . . any one who meditates on the supreme Puruṣa with the help of this very syllable Om, as possessed of three letters ...” Here meditation is enjoined on the unqualified Brahman itself. In the sūtras, “Bliss and other characteristics of the principal entity (i.e. Brahman) are to be combined” (B.S. III.3.11), and, “All the (negative) conceptions of the Immutable are to be combined...” (B.S. III.3.33), Vedavyāsa, the author of the sūtras, has stated that the unqualified Brahman should be meditated on by concentrating on the aggregate of positive and negative qualifications, viz “It is Knowledge”, “It is Bliss”, etc. and “It is not gross, not minute”, etc. which are asserted about the subject of meditation. You cannot insist that where a combination of qualities such as Bliss etc. are mentioned, there the unqualified Brahman is not meant. For it is possible to perform (ahamgraha-) upāsanā by thinking, “I am verily the partless, homogeneous Brahman indicated by such qualifications as ‘It is Bliss’, etc. and ‘It is not gross’, etc.”, without thereby violating Its being without any qualities. By meditating thus, the unqualified Brahman is realised in course of time’ (Sid-dhānta-leśasahgraha, III.8).

Most Vedāntists would not agree with this, since the absolute Brahman cannot be the content of any thought or meditation. When properly analysed, it would seem that the controversy hinges on the meaning we give to the word nididhyāsana. If by this word we mean ordinary meditation, then surely there can be no upāsanā of the absolute Brahman; for, however we may try, we can have no image, or concept in our minds higher than that of the qualified Brahman. If, on the other hand, nididhyāsana means meditation of the higher order, as defined by Sureśvara, we may have meditation on the absolute Brahman. But for clarity of thought and expression, we shall be well advised not to call it upāsanā but nididhyāsana, not a form of mental activity, but a flow of conviction. This ‘higher meditation’ is essentially nothing more than an intensification of the vision of the Truth received initially from the scriptures and the teacher through śravaṇa (hearing). The first introduction to Truth and the last consummation do not differ in their contents, but only in their intensity of realisation.

From another standpoint the upāsanās may be placed under three heads: First, those which are connected with sacrifices etc. actually being performed, ahgāvabaddha, and are calculated to heighten the results of the sacrifices; for, according to the Vedic people, though the sacrifices are efficacious by themselves, when they are conjoined with meditation they lead to greater results. Secondly, there are those meditations which are neither connected with actual sacrifices nor with Brahman, but are calculated to lead to heaven or yield other cherished results. ...

This class of upāsanā is found in the Chāndogya, from the beginning of Chapter I to the end of the twenty second section of Chapter II. ... Thirdly, there are the Brahma-upāsanās which lead to Liberation through stages (krama-mukti).

From still another point of view, there are two kinds of upāsanās—Brahma-upāsanā (direct meditation on Brahman) and pratīka-upāsanā (indirect meditation based on symbols). Meditation on Brahman by attributing qualities like bliss, fearlessness, immortality, etc. to It is Brahma-upāsanā. But these qualities in no way point to the real nature of Brahman; they are mentioned by the scriptures only to facilitate upāsanā. When the mind, weighed down by past impressions of temporal objects and unable to free itself from them, fails to dwell solely on the idea of Brahman, but concentrates on any temporal emblem (pratīka) by imposing the idea of Brahman on it,—that is called pratīka-upāsanā. {Pratīkas are also used in the upāsanās of deities). A pratīka is a symbol such as a śālagrāma (the aniconic stone symbol of Viṣṇu), an image, a name etc. The ideas of the deities to be meditated on are fastened on these symbols.

,,, Upāsanā may be undertaken either with a desire to secure the various results described in the relevant sections of the Vedas, or without such a desire, but only to adore God, from which follows purification of the mind and subsequent realisation of the su-

preme Brahman. It is very clearly mentioned in the scriptures that the results of mere rites and duties, unassociated with upāsanā, are inferior to the results of upāsanā.

Upasana and devotion

There is no significant difference between the essential natures of Vedic upāsanā and bhakti as known today. In fact, one may state that bhakti is a form of upāsanā. An aspirant can perform upāsanā also of things other than Brahman and the deities. But bhakti is directed only towards God or deities. In this way, the scope of upāsanā is wider than that of bhakti. Sañkarācārya has taken upāsanā and bhakti to imply the same thing (vide commentary on Br. 1.4.10). Bhakti is usually a discipline of the Dualists. We have seen that though upāsanā is an aid to the Non-dualists, its practise involves a sense of dualism. Even where a votary thinks of himself as identical with his deity during worship, following the dictum 'One should worship the deity by deifying oneself, or in the Tāntric worship where an aspirant tries to imagine identity between his own body and that of the deity, through what is called nyāsa, we may reasonably draw their similarity with the Vedic ahamgraha-upāsanā. Certainly no non-dualistic knowledge is involved in these practises, though they may be aids to acquire that.

... upāsanā has in it many elements of devotion. It is not mere thought; there is scope for emotion and volition as well. Ideas are to be adhered to with determination, and will is to be sustained by faith. And the whole effort is to be sweetened by love—love for a personal God sometimes, but more often love for a higher ideal which is nothing but Saccidānanda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss).

Aims and methods

The results of upāsanā, like those of rites and duties, are also said to be of two kinds—the perceptible and the unseen. Certain upāsanās lead indirectly to Liberation by helping the meditator pass through the intermediate stages. The common result of all the upāsanās is concentration of the mind, which culminates in samādhi. Brahman is realised in the state of samādhi. Upāsanā takes hold of man as a whole. It deepens his emotion, strengthens his will, and expands his intellect. But the maximum that can be gained through such expanding upāsanā is identification with Hiranyagarbha or cosmic Intelligence-Will-Power thought of as a Person. Higher still is the state where all thoughts and words cease and only Existence- Knowledge-Bliss reigns in its solitary glory. The highest realisation comes as a sudden and spontaneous opening of insight. All that upāsanā can do is to free the mind from all impurities and worldly distractions, and concentrate it on Brahman, so that light may descend unimpeded.

...

The Upaniṣads were, however, careful not to carry all and sundry to the highest meditation, irrespective of their mental progress. Various upāsanās of different degrees and subtlety were prescribed for people in various stages of life. 'From the familiar to the unfamiliar' was their motto, as it was also 'from the concrete to the abstract'. It is a mistake to think that the sections of the Vedas dealing with upāsanās were meant for those who had retired from life, the vānaprasthas. The students (brahmacārins), too, had their upāsanās... The householders (gṛhasthas) had theirs, as for instance the Pañcāgni-vidyā. The sacrificer, the priests engaged by him in the sacrifice, the chanters of hymns, the pourers of oblation, and the singers of sāmas—all had their adequate upāsanās. And so also had those who led a retired life, or were otherwise debarred from undertaking the costly and prolonged ceremonies.

As a usual rule, they started from the most familiar things—the students from letters, the ordinary people from acts, the thinkers from concepts, and the meditators from lower meditations. The whole process aimed at a grand synthesis in which the gross and the subtle, and the microcosm and the macrocosm, lost their separate existence. Thus, at every turn, we are reminded of the identity of the adhibhūta, the adhidaiva, and the adhyātma—the natural, the supernatural, and the personal. In fact, the upāsanās aimed not only at intellectual grasp, but also at spiritual identification where all vestige of this lower existence ceased.

To reach this highest identity (speaking relatively), the aspirant has to pass through lesser identities. Reality in its immanent form is visualised in various ways on the personal, natural, and supernatural planes. On the personal or individual plane, the series runs thus: gross body, vital force, thought, intelligence, and bliss; on the material plane, the progress lies from the smaller to the larger and from the grosser to the subtler; and on the supernatural plane, the advance is from the individual presiding deities to their cosmic counterparts. On the cosmic plane, again, first comes the gross, Virāt; then the subtle, Hiranyagarbha; and lastly the causal, Ívara—the immanent Brahman (Saguṇa Brahman), beyond which the transcendental Reality (Nirguṇa Brahman). Upāsanā thus consists in ‘covering all this with God’, as Ísa Upanisad puts it, through progressive stages.

Meditation through self-identification

And this [progressive stages of upāsanā] brings us to a unique characteristic of the Upanisads. They not only searched for the Infinite, but found it to be identical with the Self in all. They first realised ‘Brahman is all this’, and then ‘I am Brahman’. And so the task before the Upanisads was how to prepare the aspirants for that realisation of unity. As a potent means of accomplishing this, they hit upon ahamgraha-upāsanā or meditation based on self-identification in which the individual thinks of himself as Brahman. Thus in one meditation, Virāt, (the gross cosmic Person) is thought of as food, which is raised by stages from the ordinary to the cosmic plane, where everything is seen to merge in its cause, which is considered to be the eater of food. This final eater again is no other than Virāt; and eating, too, is Virāt. When thus everything has been reduced to Virāt, and cause and effect have lost their duality, the meditator identifies himself with the non-dual Virāt. This, by the way, is what is known as the samvarga-vidyā or the meditation on the mergence of everything in the cosmic Person as identified with the Self. Similarly, also in other cases. The highest upāsanā is given in the Śūṇḍilya-vidyā, where Brahman is presented as identified with everything that is good, noble, and beautiful; and the meditator then thinks himself to be no other than Brahman thus qualified.

The Upaniṣadic seers did not rest satisfied with an objective direction of the mind, as is usual in the path of devotion and duty, or subjective withdrawal, as is done in yoga. They combined the two processes and reaped the highest benefit in the form of aparokṣānubhūti (immediate realisation) of the Self as Brahman, of the microcosm as the macrocosm. Their life’s goal lay not in the mere realisation of an isolated Self, but in realising their identity with God in all His fullness—in His transcendence and immanence.

It is this final objective that gave the direction to upāsanā, which was not allowed to be alienated from life, but through which life was to be progressively spiritualised. It is in this realistic attitude leading to the highest realisation that the present-day worth of Upaniṣadic upāsanā lies.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Taittirīya Upanishad

The first portion of Taittirīya Upaniṣad involves a number of upāsanā, contemplations or meditations. Modern Vedānta does not utilize these upāsanā in a way that allows them to be of comprehensive value, and there is no śāstra extant that talks about upāsanā definitively. Upāsanā appears to be a method of visualization. In modern psychology a therapist may use visualization techniques to help a client appreciate a more integrated sense of himself. The student will find upāsanā, values, and conducive attitudes presented in the first vallī. Vedānta itself begins in the second chapter.

...

Upāsanās are found in every Upaniṣad. Even in the concise Kenopaniṣad there is upāsanā. In Māṇḍūkya, the omkāra becomes a kind of upāsanā. They are everywhere, because upāsanā, upāsanakarma, is connected to vedāntaśāstra. Cittaśuddhi is taken

care of by karma, by religious karma or a religious life, dharmānusthānam, karmānusthānam. Cittanaiścalya, steadiness of the mind, is taken care of by upāsana. Cittanaiścalyāpeksā being antarañga, upāsana is found in the jñānakānda of the śāstra and not in the karmakānda. The upāsana are important and necessary sādhana for the adept.
... Each upāsana has its own phala [fruit].

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

Upasana of the Guru is not a mere servile attendance upon him in an attitude of growing disgust, or in a mood of melancholy dissatisfaction. The disciple, out of sheer love and reverence for the Master, forgets himself and serves him at all times and in all possible ways; thereby the student is made to remember, constantly, the glories and the noble qualities of the Master. This constant mental awareness of the Ideal through the person of the Guru slowly and steadily raises the moral tempo and ethical goodness in the neophyte who finds himself well-established in his inner purity which would otherwise have taken him painfully long years to develop.

See: Nididhyasana and upasana

Upasana and dhyana

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Bhagavad Gita

Could there be a worshipful meditation or a meditative worship?

Worship of a personal deity is called upasana in Sanskrit. The term describing meditation is dhyana. Though one is related to the other, these disciplines are treated as different. To understand upasana, let us take the example of a person who worships an image. An image is made of stone, wood, or metal. The devotee first localizes the Absolute in his own physical being. Then he transfers these points of consciousness, synergically located in the various centers of the body, to the image, thereby psychologically effecting a transference of the divine in him to the image. Thereafter the image, for him, is no longer a mere piece of metal or wood. To the devotee it is perhaps more real and alive than his own being, which articulates through an equally inertial body of bones, blood, flesh, and skin. It is as if the body and the image of the deity are two receptacles containing the same spirit. As a person gets a clear vision of their own face by looking in a mirror, the devotee now sees in the image the otherwise unimaginable Divine. He knows that the Divine is not in any way limited to the image, but it is nonetheless quite real. To this image he offers mentally and even proto-linguistically, with gestures of the hand, various offerings such as water, light, incense, consecrated food, flowers, and garlands. After receiving the presence of the Divine in a fitting manner, he sings the praises, repeats the divine Name, and views the Divine as master, lord, saviour, teacher, beloved, friend, father, and mother all in one. He delights himself in the company of the Divine. This act of worship is what is called upasana. For upasana the mind has to be kept entirely in tune with a subtle resonance coming from the mirror image of the deity, which, as we have said, has its counterpart in the devotee's own thoughts, feelings, and emotions. This inevitably removes all gross sense of duality. All that remains unresolved is the attitude of the lover to the beloved.

Let us take the example of one on the path of contemplation. The aid of an image or picture is not used. This person is likely to adopt either the method of acceptance (affirming everything as belonging to the Absolute), or of denial (denying the visible to be real). If the former is chosen, the contemplative reduces everything to its abstracted existence. Existence is further understood in

terms of one's knowledge of it, or of its subsistence. That knowledge is seen as the operation of a value within one's own self. The discursive and the individual reference to value is further referred back to the whole gamut of value systems belonging to the Absolute; thus, the entire existential universe is integrated into a total reality. Naturally in the process, individuality and the personal ego are lost.

If the negative way is chosen, the contemplative takes all pairs of opposites and cancels them out, such as existence and non-existence, cause and effect, being and becoming, attention and non-attention, good and bad, and pleasure and pain. First he negates everything, then he negates negation itself. This brings him to an overwhelming silence which fills him within and without with the being that is as good as non-being. We may say that this is an example of dhyana, meditation. Arjuna wants to know which of these two methods is superior. Both are included in the context of yoga, so it is only a matter of choosing between them, and that is what is undertaken here.

See also:

in Vidya: [Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani](#)

Etymology

Narayana Guru tradition

[Prasad. Bhagavad Gita](#)

Upasana: Worship, adoration; literally, "sitting closely and doing services."

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli](#)

Upa=Samipe (near) Asana=to sit or remain. Hence upasana means to dwell in the immediate presence of the object of worship.

Related words

Dhyana

Nididhyasana

Vidya

Sanskrit

Upāsana — उपासन

upāsana - उपासन

Upastha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Upastha — ... organ of generation

1. One of the five organs of action. (See karmendriya.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

upastha -

'the part which is under', lap, middle or inner part of anything, a well-surrounded or sheltered place, secure place;

the generative organs (esp. of a woman);

the haunch or hip;

the anus

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Upastha ... the power to procreate, one of the five abstract-working senses (karmendriyas)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Upastha from prep. wpa, towards, with, under, down + stha, standing (the root sthā, to stand).

Related words

Karmendriyas

Sanskrit

Upastha — उपस्थ

upastha - उपस्थ

Vac

Variant spellings

vāc
vac
vach

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vāc — ... word; Divine Word; logos; speech; Goddess

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vāc -

(from root 'vac') speech, voice, talk, language (also of animals), sound (also of inanimate objects as of the stones used for pressing, of a drum &c.);

a word, saying, phrase, sentence, statement, asseveration;

Speech personified (in various manners or forms e.g. as Vāc Ambhṛiṇī in RV. x, 125; as the voice of the middle sphere in Naigh. and Nir.; in the Veda she is also represented as created by Prajāpati and married to him; in other places she is called the mother of the Vedas and wife of Indra; in VP. she is the daughter of Daksha and wife of Kazyapa; but most frequently she is identified with Bhārati or Sarasvati, the goddess of speech

Lurker. Dictionary of Gods

Vac (Vak _ speech). In India, the deified personification of speech, which is believed to be invested with magical powers. In the Rigveda, Vac is the world principle which underlies all action by the gods. The goddess is regarded as the wife of → Prajapati. In Buddhism, Vak is a name of →Manjufri; he sits in the meditative posture, with his hands in his lap.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vach (Vak). Vach or Vak is Hindu goddess of speech, and the most prominent and important goddess in the VEDAS. In later times she becomes identified with SARASVATI, the goddess of learning, and loses her separate character, except in linguistic philosophy. In Vedic tradition the words of SANSKRIT have a divine character. Words are not arbitrary or mere names, but are the essential truth of the object they represent. The sounds of the word tree, for instance, form the essence of a tree. All of reality can be seen as mere congealed speech. Vedantic theory sees four levels of speech: (1) the transcendent level, where speech is the divine silence out of which emerges the manifest universe; (2) speech as it becomes incipient thought looking toward manifestation; (3) speech expressed as thought, but before external expression; and (4) speech as uttered words.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vāc ... a word, (in Nyāya) one of the three forms of equivocation (chala); (in Samkhya) the power to express, one or the five abstract working-senses (karmendriyas).

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of religion

Words express, reveal, and expose reality. They are equal to the essence of the universe itself. In other words they are equal to god. In Vedic tradition the word vac (word or speech) is said to be the origin and the essence of this universe. The ultimate word is brahman (the essence of the universe.) And in the New Testament, the same concept is propounded: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Words in themselves are thus divine and have power. Speech-acts such as blessings, curses, and vows are more intensified by psychological processes than normal significative ones. Since speech is powerful, blessing has the potential to be efficacious.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In most traditions the Voice of God is represented by a Goddess. The Word, however, is "male". The Voice speaks the Word, the Moon-Goddess, as Virgin Mother, gives birth to the Son of God.

In the Rig-veda the Voice appears in the form of the Goddess Vach. This word, meaning voice and eloquence, is etymologically related to the Latin "vox" and the English "voice". She is called "Queen of the Gods" and it is said that she "entered into the Rishis" and that she makes the man she loves great and intelligent, a priest and a Rishi. A Rishi is a Sage, a Son of God. It is evident that she represents the Intelligence of the Tradition. This is also clear from the reference in the Taittiriya Brahmana in which she is called "the Mother of the Vedas", for the Vedas embody the Tradition of the Vedic Indians.

She was "generated by the Gods" (Rig-veda). The Tradition belongs to the Spiritual Path.

The Rig-veda also describes her as "the melodious cow who milked forth sustenance and water", "who yields us nourishment and sustenance." There is a tradition, in which the Voice is parallel to the Water of Life, and the Word to the Bread of Life. Instances from several religions will be given later. The tradition is the Water of Life and produces the Bread of Life.

The Taittiriya Brahmana also says that Vach is "the wife of Indra, who contains within herself all worlds." We have seen that Indra is Jupiter, the Overlord of the Five Elements. In many traditions there is a marriage relationship between the Intelligences of the Moon-Sphere and the Ether-Sphere.

The Brahmanas mention that Vach is associated with Prajapati, "the Progenitor", in the work of creation. The Progenitor is the Intelligence of the Process of Genesis, that is, the genesis of true Manhood on the Spiritual Path. Prajapati is a form of Brahma, the Creator.

The Mahabharata also calls Vach "the Mother of the Vedas", and says, "A Voice derived from Brahma entered into the ears of them all; the celestial Sarasvati was then produced from the heavens". The sense of hearing is the sense symbolizing the spiritual function. Sarasvati, one with Vach, is now generally called Vagisvari, "the Voice-Goddess". She is the Consort of Brahma, and has a number of names — Savitri, Brahmani, Gayatri, and others, each representing a particular aspect of the Sakti of the Tradition.

The places of Brahma and Sarasvati are in Cancer and Leo, the Houses in which Voice and Word are at their mightiest. Cancer is ruled by the Moon and Leo by the Sun. Sun and Moon represent the Duality of the Moon-Sphere, as we shall see later. Sarasvati

is worshipped as the Goddess of Wisdom — the wisdom of the Tradition which is the great constructive factor in the genesis of Manhood on the Spiritual Path. The Goddess Vach is identified with the important Goddess Aditi, in the Rig-veda. “Aditi” signifies “the indivisible, the infinite, liberation”. She is described as follows in the Rig-veda: “Aditi is the Heaven, Aditi is the Antariksha (the inner region, the mid-region), Aditi is Mother, Father, Son; Aditi is the Visvadevas (All-Gods, Universe-Gods) and the Pancha-Jana (the Five Kins), Aditi is Generation and Birth.” This verse describes all the fields of influence of the Tradition, liberating men from bondage and moulding them into true Men. The Five Kins form, as we shall see later, the aspects of life in the Five Elements. In the Rig-veda Aditi is also called Deva-matri, “the Mother of the Gods”, and she is invoked for blessings, for protection, and for forgiveness. She was a Deity of the greatest importance. Terracotta images of her are among the most ancient images found in India. In her rested the power to redeem men from sin and suffering. Only the Intelligence of the Tradition, the Queen of Heaven, can do this.

Wikipedia

In the early Rigveda (books 2 to 7), vāc- refers to the voice, in particularly the voice of the priest raised in sacrifice. She is personified only RV 8 and RV 10, in RV 10.125.5 speaking in the first person (trans. Griffith),

“I, verily, myself announce and utter the word that Gods and men alike shall welcome.

I make the man I love exceeding mighty, make him a sage, a Rsi, and a Brahman.”

The intimate connection of speech, sacrifice and creation in (late) Rigvedic thought is expressed in RV 10.71.1-4:

“When men, Brhaspati!, giving names to objects, sent out Vak’s first and earliest utterances

All that was excellent and spotless, treasured within them, was disclosed through their affection.”

“Where, like men cleansing corn-flour in a cribble, the wise in spirit have created language,

Friends see and recognize the marks of friendship: their speech retains the blessed sign imprinted.”

“With sacrifice the trace of Vak they followed, and found her harbouring within the Rsis.

They brought her, dealt her forth in many places: seven singers make her tones resound in concert.”

“One man hath ne’er seen Vak, and yet he seeth: one man hath hearing but hath never heard her.

But to another hath she shown her beauty as a fond well-dressed woman to her husband.”

Vak also speaks, and is described as a goddess, in RV 8.100:

“When, uttering words which no one comprehended, Vak, Queen of Gods, the Gladdener, was seated,

The heaven’s four regions drew forth drink and vigour: now whither hath her noblest portion vanished?”

“The Deities generated Vak the Goddess, and animals of every figure speak her.

May she, the Gladdener, yielding food and vigour, the Milch-cow Vak, approach us meetly lauded.”

RV 1.164.45 has:

“Speech hath been measured out in four divisions, the Brahmans who have understanding know them.

Three kept in close concealment cause no motion; of speech, men speak only the fourth division.”

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

You have heard this great passage of the Bible: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Something like this is what the Upanishad tells us here. The Eternal Wisdom was manifest, with the eternal Word, and with this Word the whole cosmos was created. The Word which is with God, and which is God, is not merely a letter, or a sound that

we make through our lips. It is an energy; it is a force; it is a vibration, which materialises itself, concretises itself into object-forms. The Word is the Veda, or Eternal Wisdom which is with God, and it is inseparable from God, and so, it is God Himself. The Cosmic Mind projected itself in the form of this Eternal Word, and manifested this universe. In the Manusmriti, and such other ancient texts, we are also told in a symbolic manner that Prajāpati, the Creator, conceived the whole cosmos in the pattern of 'Om', or the Praṇava. The Praṇava, or Omkāra, is supposed to be the seed of the whole universe. That is the essence of the Word that is Divine. It is also the Veda contained in a seed form. The whole of the Veda is inside 'Om'. ... 'Om' is supposed to be a vibration, which is integral in its nature, and that is the Word spoken of. This Word which is Om, is the cause of the whole cosmos. The Mind of the Universe, the Cosmic Mind, Prajāpati, got united with this Word, which means to say, Consciousness vibrated through this Word for the purpose of the manifestation of the universe. And, in the Manusmriti, we are told that Praṇava splits itself into the Vyāhṛitis—Bhūh, Bhavah, Svah. These are mystical syllables which are supposed to contain the inner content of the Praṇava. And we are also further told that the three Vyahritis split themselves into the three Pādas, or the quarters of the Gāyatri Mantra which is supposed to be expounded in a greater detail in the three sections of the Puruṣha-Sūkta. These three parts of the Puruṣha-Sūkta become the three Vedas—Rik, Yajur and Sāman, and in all their multiplications. So, the origin of this creation is supposed to be a communion of the Cosmic Mind with Cosmic Vibration, which is referred to as the Word, the Veda-Vac, which means speech, the Original Word.

See: Name and word

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Vāc (from the root vac, to speak).

[Wikipedia](#)

Vāk or Vāc (stem vāc-, nominative vāk) is the Sanskrit word for “speech”, “voice”, “talk”, or “language”, from a verbal root vac- “speak, tell, utter”.

Related words

Karmendriya

Sabda

Saraswati

Vak

Sanskrit

Vāc — वाच्

vāc - वाच्

Vairagya

Variant spellings

vairagya
vairāgya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vairāgya — ... dispassion; detachment; renunciation; nonattachment

1. Renunciation is giving up all the pleasures of the eyes, ears, and the other senses, giving up all objects of transitory enjoyment, giving up the desire for a physical body as well as for the highest kind of spirit body of a god.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vairāgya -

change or loss of colour, growing pale;

disgust, aversion, distaste for or loathing of;

freedom from all worldly desires, indifference to worldly objects and to life, asceticism

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vairāgya - right dispassion and indifference to the unreal and transitory. This consists of renunciation of all desires to enjoy the fruit of action both here and hereafter.

Wikipedia

Vairāgya (... also spelt as Vairagya) is a Sanskrit term used in Hindu philosophy that roughly translates as dispassion, detachment, or renunciation, in particular renunciation from the pains and pleasures in the material world. The Hindu philosophers who advocated vairāgya told their followers that it is a means to achieve moksha.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Vairagya: Sense of detachment towards everything transient.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vairagya, freedom from any attachment, or renunciation, has been a central theme in Hinduism throughout the centuries. It was understood that attachment to worldly desires and ends can result only in continued rebirth, a continued circuit on the wheel of SAMSARA or worldly life.

The period from the eighth to the sixth centuries B.C.E., when JAINISM and Buddhism first emerged along with the UPANISHAD era within the VEDIC tradition, saw a great expansion in mendicancy and ascetic orders and a flowering of traditions of renunciation. The Vedas themselves, in their ancient MANTRA sections, upheld a very different, world-affirming point of view. Ever since in India, it has been those who left the ordinary world behind and abandoned worldly concerns who have been credited with the greatest spiritual accomplishments. Vairagya in one form can mean simple avoidance of worldly externals, but in its most difficult form it might mean bodily mortification. In either case it is a central feature of Hindu religious life.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The prime object of Upaniṣadic discipline is the removal of ahamkāra, which is the basis of all evil; and vairāgya is the name given to that attitude towards the world which results from the successful eradication of the narrow selfish impulses for which it stands. Its accomplishment necessarily presupposes a long course of training through the three āśramas or disciplinary stages—those of the religious student (brahmacarya), the householder (gārhasthya) and the anchorite (vānaprastha)—so far as they were understood at the time. As the very word āśrama ('toil') means, they are stages of strife when selfishness is slowly but steadily rooted out. ... This training leads to samnyāsa; but we should remember that the term does not yet bear in the Upanisads its present significance of a formal stage in the spiritual ascent of man. It there means only the transcending of the triple mode of āśrama life, and is regarded as a consequence of Brahma-knowledge rather than a means of attaining it. In the latter sense, samnyāsa appears comparatively late. The Upanisads, while fully recognizing the value of this preparatory training, do not ordinarily dwell at length upon it. They rather take it for granted and address themselves to such as have already successfully undergone that training and have acquired vairāgya.

Wikipedia

The concept of Vairāgya is found in Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras, where it along with practice (abhyāsa), is the key to restraint of the modifications of the mind (YS 1.12, "abhyāsa- vairāgyabhyāṁ tannirodhaḥ"). The term vairāgya appears three times in the Bhagavadgītā (6.35, 13.8, 18.52) where it is recommended as a key means for bringing control to the restless mind.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

556. It is useless to pore over the holy scriptures if one's mind is not endowed with Viveka and Vairagya. No spiritual progress can be made without these.

...

564. Vairagya is of many kinds. One kind of it springs from acute pain due to worldly misery. But the better kind arises from the consciousness that all worldly blessings, though within one's reach, are transitory and are not worth enjoying. Thus, having all, he has not anything.

565. How many kinds of Vairagya are there? Generally two: the intense and the moderate. Intense Vairagya is like digging a large tank in one night until it gets filled with water then and there. Moderate Vairagya is slow in its growth and procrastinating. There is no knowing when it will become complete.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

D.: How is restlessness removed from the mind?

M.: External contacts - contacts with objects other than itself - make the mind restless. Loss of interest in non-Self, (vairagya) is the first step. Then the habits of introspection and concentration follow. They are characterised by control of external senses, internal faculties, etc. (sama, dama, etc.) ending in samadhi (undistracted mind).

...

As the mind tends to go out turn it inwards then and there. It goes out owing to the habit of looking for happiness outside oneself; but the knowledge that the external objects are not the cause of happiness will keep it in check. This is vairagya or dispassion. Only after perfect vairagya the mind becomes steady.

...

Chudala illustrated Sikhidhvaja's error by this story. He had vairagya even while ruling his kingdom and could have realised the Self if only he had pushed his vairagya to the point of killing the ego. He did not do it, but came to the forest, had a timetable of tapas and yet did not improve even after 18 years of tapas. He had made himself a victim of his own creation. Chudala advised him to give up the ego and realise the Self which he did and was liberated.

It is clear from Chudala's story that vairagya accompanied by ego is of no value, whereas all possessions in the absence of ego do not matter.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Vairāgya or renunciation: This is the utter disregard of all pleasures, ranging from the enjoyment of the sensuous objects of this world to the experience of the happiness one expects in heaven after death. From the teachings of the scriptures and personal observation the intelligent aspirant realizes that no pleasure, whether here or hereafter, can have an infinite duration since all pleasures are the results of finite action. Even good actions, such as charity, study, or worship, are finite by nature. Their results, too, are finite. Self-Knowledge ... is not the direct result of any action. It always exists. The Vedantic discipline merely removes ignorance, the barrier to this Knowledge, and the glory of the Self shines forth.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

Vairagya is commonly translated as detachment. For many, it holds an uncanny fear, for it seems to point more to a condition of a living death than to a state of a better and fuller living. The vairagya of Vedanta is only a fulfilment of viveka. Having discriminated between the Real and the unreal, it should not at all be agonising to pluck ourselves away from the false.

When through discrimination, we are intellectually convinced of the fallacy of our way of thinking, detachment is the fructification of that discrimination. Accordingly it manifests to the degree to which we have been convinced by our discrimination. When I am convinced that my shadow is not really me, it does not take an iota of my energy to rid myself of the sorrows of my shadow. Even if ten thousand elephants pass over it I shall still smile and be happy for I know that no matter how much my shadow is trampled upon, it cannot bring me any pain.

...

A spirit of detachment and a craving for dispassion may be generated in us as a result of repeated tragedies. A tragic bereavement, a shocking disappointment, a painful failure, an agonising physical pain, all these have been found, either individually or collectively, capable of creating a temporary sense of vairagya, termed in Sanskrit as smasana vairagya,—an aversion to life and its finitude which is usually generated when one has occasion to visit a cremation ground. This passing phase and temporary mood is not a solid capital upon which a person can build his entire future in the spiritual world. No doubt, these temporary mental moods may be capitalised in training the mind and intellect to generate more and more sense of discrimination, which will ultimately increase the intensity of true vairagya.

True dispassion is a wise condition of the ego created from a deep intellectual conviction which, in its turn, has its roots in perfect discrimination. Only in the maturity of an individual's spiritual florescence, can one hope to gather the fruits of wisdom. False vairagya has ruined more men than even atheism has ever done...

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Etymology

General

[Wikipedia](#)

Vairāgya is a compound word joining vai meaning “to dry, be dried” + rāga meaning “color, passion, feeling, emotion, interest” (and a range of other usages). This sense of “drying up of the passions” gives vairāgya a general meaning of ascetic disinterest in things that would cause attachment in most people. It is a “dis-passionate” stance on life. An ascetic who has subdued all passions and desires is called a vairāgika.[1]

[1] Apte, A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary, p. 891.

Related words

Abhyasa
Sadhanacatustaya
Sama
Viveka

Sanskrit

Vairāgya — वैराग्य

vairāgya - वैराग्य

Vaishvanara

Variant spellings

Vaiśvānara
Vaishvanara
Vaiswanara

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vaiśvānara — ... universal being

1. The self of the waking state. It is the self that leads all creatures in diverse ways to the enjoyment of different objects.
2. The locus of meditation on Vaiśvānara is the right eye.
3. According to Advaita Vedānta, it stands for the cosmic self in waking, while viśva stands for the waking individual self.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vaiśvānara -

relating or belonging to all men, omnipresent, known or worshipped, everywhere, universal, general, common;

consisting of all men, full in number, complete;

relating or belonging to the gods collectively;

all-commanding;

relating or sacred to Agni Vaiśvānara;

N. of Agni or Fire;

the fire of digestion;

the sun, sunlight;

(in the Vedānta) N. of the Supreme Spirit or Intellect when located in a supposed collective aggregate of gross bodies (= Virāj, Prajāpati, Purusha);

N. of a Daitya;

of various men;

(pl.) of a family of Rishis;

a sacrifice performed at the beginning of every year;

men collectively, mankind;

N. of a Sāman

Wikipedia

In Hinduism, Vaishvanra or Vaiswanara was an Asura, more specifically a Danava, being one of the sons of Danu. He had two daughters, Kalaka (mother of the Kalakeyas and Puloma (mother of the Paulomas). Updanavi and Harashira are additionally considered his daughters...

In the Rig Veda, Vaishvanara is an epithet of deity Agni.

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

The gross bodies also, in their fourfold variety, may be regarded, like the subtle bodies, collectively or individually. They may be regarded as a whole, like a wood, or as separate bodies like the trees in a wood. Consciousness limited or conditioned by the up-âdhi of the aggregate of gross bodies is called Virāt or Vaiśvānara; it regards all the gross bodies of the universe as its own body. The body belonging to Virāt, through which it functions, is called the annamayakosa the gross physical sheath, on account of its being a modification of food. It functions in the waking state and experiences gross objects.

Ramakrishna tradition

[Sarvananda. Mandukya Upanishad](#)

9. Vaisvanara, who has the waking state for his field, is the letter 'A', the first part of Om, because they are both all-pervasive¹ and have a beginning². One who knows this, obtains verily all desires and becomes the first.

[NOTES — 1. All-pervasive - - According to Sanskrit orthography, the letter A is included in all other sounds, because no sound can be produced without opening the mouth and the first sound produced on opening the mouth is A. Hence it is all-pervasive. Similarly this Upanisadic passage maintains that Vaisvanara, identified with the waking state, pervades everything, Moreover all knowledge of other states is from the waking state, and hence it may be said to pervade them.

2. Beginning — 'A' being the first letter, it has no preceding letter or sound. So also the waking state, identified with Vaisvanara, is known from the commonsense point of view to precede dream and sleep states.]

Descriptions

General

[Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Vaisvanara is derived from Visva, the world or universe, and is rendered as “the fire of life”. It is the fire of the sun of manifestation. It relates to the physical plane: the Element Earth.

...

Dagur, the God of the Day, that is to say, Manifestation in general... The name “Dagur” implies “burning”. The word “day” is derived from it. It corresponds to the Sanskrit Vaisvanara, the Fire of Life or Universal Fire.

[Wikipedia](#)

As per the Mandukya Upanishad, the Self has four aspects or states of consciousness. The first is the Vaishvanara manifestation, under the jagrat or the waking state which is outwardly cognitive. The Self in Vaishvanara form has seven limbs, nineteen mouths and has the capability to experience material objects.

The seven limbs of Vaishvanara pertain to the ‘cosmic body’ of ‘Vaishvanara’. These are enumerated in verse 18.2 of the Chandogya Upanishad,

[T]he heavens are his head, the sun his eyes, the air his breath, the fire his heart, the water his stomach, the earth his feet, and space his body.

The seven limbs of Vaishvanara have also referred to in the first verse of the Mandukya Upanishad, which have been described to encompass the entire manifest universe. The nineteen “mouths” comprise of:

- (i) The five sense organs,
- (ii) The five organs of action (walking, talking, expelling, procreating, and handling) and
- (iii) The five pranas, the mind, the intellect, the ego sense, and thought (çitta).

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Chandogya Upanisad

Chapter VI : The Vaiśvānara, which comes to light at the close of the last chapter, is the essential content of one’s own being — atman, Self. The entire sixth chapter is the revelation of this secret as taught to Śvetaketu by his father and Guru, Āruṇi. The Master tries to impart the core of wisdom with the aid of numerous analogies, each ending in one and the same conclusion — tat tvam asi śvetaketo (O Śvetaketu, that thou art).

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. The Word That is God

“This fire which is within a man and digests food that is eaten is Vaisvanara. Its sound is that which one hears by stopping the ears.” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 5.9.1)

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

The four kinds of gross bodies are those that are born of the womb, the egg, moisture and the soil...

Consciousness associated with this aggregate of gross bodies is called Vaiswanara and Virat on account of its identification with all bodies, and from its manifestation in diverse ways respectively.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The theme of the Mandukya Upanishad is an exposition of the Mystic Syllable, Om, with a view to training the mind in meditation, for the purpose of achieving freedom, gradually, so that the individual soul is attuned to the Ultimate Reality.

The basis of this meditation is explained in the Vidya (meditation), known as the Vaisvanara Vidya. This is the secret of the knowledge of the Universal Being, designated as Vaisvanara. Its simple form of understanding is a transference of human attributes to the Divine Existence, and vice versa. In this meditation, one contemplates the Cosmos as one’s Body. Just as, for example, when one contemplates one’s individual body, one simultaneously becomes conscious of the right eye, the left eye, the right hand, the left hand, the right leg, the left leg, the head, the heart, the stomach, and all the limbs of the body at one and the same time, and one does not regard the different limbs of the body as distinguished from one another in any manner, all limbs being only apparently different but really connected to a single personality, so in this meditation, the consciousness is to be transferred to the Universal Being. Instead of one contemplating oneself as the individual body, one contemplates oneself as the Universal Body. Instead of the right eye, there is the sun. Instead of the left eye, there is the moon. Instead of the feet, there is the earth. Instead of the head, there is the heaven, and so on. The limbs of the Cosmic Person are identified with cosmic elements, and vice versa,

so that there is nothing in the cosmos which does not form an organic part of the Body of the Virat, or Vaisvanara. When you see the vast world before you, you behold a part of your own Body. When you look at the sun, you behold your own eye. When you look above into the heavens, you are seeing your own head. When you see all people moving about, you behold the various parts of your own personality. The vast wind is your breath. All your actions are cosmic movements. Anything that moves, does so on account of your movement. Your breath is the Cosmic Vital Force. Your intelligence is the Cosmic Intelligence. Your existence is Cosmic Existence. Your happiness is Cosmic Bliss.

Though the Mandukya Upanishad gives certain symbolic instances of identification of limbs with the Cosmic Body, the meditator, in fact, can choose any symbol or symbols for such form of identification. The creation does not consist merely of the few parts that are mentioned in the Upanishad. There are many other things which may come to our minds when we contemplate. So, we can start our meditation with any set of forms that may occur to our minds. We may be sitting in our rooms, and the first things that attract our attention may be the objects spread out in the rooms. When we identify these objects with our Body, we will find that there are also objects outside these, in the rooms. And, likewise, we can slowly expand our consciousness to the whole earth and, then, beyond the earth, to the solar and stellar regions, so that, we reach as far as our minds can reach. Whatever our mind can think, becomes an object for the mind; and that object, again, should become a part of the meditator's Body, cosmically. And, the moment the object that is conceived by the mind is identified with the Cosmic Body, the object ceases to agitate the mind any more; because that object is not any more outside; it becomes a part of the Body of the meditator. When an object becomes a part of our own body, it no more annoys us because it is not an object at all. It is a subject. The object has become the Cosmic Subject, in the Vaisvanara meditation.

The Vidya has its origin, actually, in the Rig-Veda, in a famous Sukta, or hymn, called the Purusha-Sukta. The Purusha-Sukta of the Rig-Veda commences by saying that all the heads, all the eyes, and all the feet that we see in this world are the heads, eyes, and feet of the Virat-Purusha, or the Cosmic Being. With one head, the Virat nods in silence; with another face He smiles; with a third one, He frowns; in one form, He sits; in another form, He moves; in one form, He is near; in another form, He is distant. So, all the forms, whatever they be, and all the movements and actions, processes and relations, become parts of the Cosmic Body, with which the Consciousness should be identified simultaneously. When you think, you think all things at the same time, in all the ten directions; nay, in every way.

The Chhandogya Upanishad concludes this Vidya by saying that one who meditates in this manner on the Universal Personality of Oneself as the Vaisvanara, becomes the Source of sustenance for all beings. Just as children sit round their mother, hungry, and asking for food, all beings in creation shall sit round this Person, craving for his blessings; and just as food consumed by the body sustains all the limbs of the body at once, this meditator, if he consumes food, shall immediately communicate his blessings to the whole cosmos, for his Being is, verily, All-Being.

Vaishvanara and ahankara

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

vaiśvānara's consciousness of externality is of a different kind. It is a Universal Affirmation of 'I-am', 'I-am-ness', 'aham-asmi'. This is the first manifestation of Self-consciousness, - Cosmic ahamkāra. Therefore, it has no opposing objects in front of it. This ahamkāra does not wage a war with others. It has no misunderstandings with other persons or things, and it has, therefore, no pains of any kind. It has, also, no dealings with other persons and things, because it is vaiśvānara, and not viśva. We cannot even imag-

ine this state of the “I-am-ness” of the virāt. We have never been in that state, and so our minds are not capable of imagining that condition. To some extent, they say, this condition may be compared to the initial state of our becoming aware of ourselves immediately after we wake up from deep sleep.

See: Virat and Vaishvanara

See: Visva and Vaishvanara

Etymology

General

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

vaiśvānara - from viśvā-nara

[Wikipedia](#)

Etymologically, Vaishvanara, meaning “of or related to Visvanara”, is the genitive case of the conjoined word Vishvanara i.e. Vishva (Universe) + Narah (Man) i.e. the ‘Universal or Cosmic Man’.

Meditation

Sivananda tradition

[Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad](#)

This is the secret of the knowledge of the Universal Being, designated as Vaishvanara. Its simple form of understanding is a transference of human attributes to the Divine Existence, and vice versa. In this meditation, one contemplates the Cosmos as one’s body. Just as, for example, when one contemplates one’s individual body, one simultaneously becomes conscious of the right eye, the left eye, the right hand, the left hand, the right leg, the left leg, the head, the heart, the stomach, and all the limbs of the body at one and the same time, and one does not regard the different limbs of the body as distinguished from one another in any manner, all limbs being only apparently different, but really connected to a single personality. So, in this meditation, the consciousness is to be transferred to the Universal Being. Instead of one contemplating oneself as the individual body, one contemplates oneself as the Universal Body. Instead of the right eye, there is the sun. Instead of the left eye, there is the moon. Instead of the feet there is the earth. Instead of the head, there is the heaven, and so on. The limbs of the Cosmic Person are identified with the cosmic elements, and vice versa, so that there is nothing in the Cosmos which does not form an organic part of the body of the Virat, or Vaishvanara. When you see the vast world before you, you behold a part of your own body. When you look at the sun, you behold your own eye. When you look above into the heavens, you are seeing your own head. When you see all people moving about, you behold the various parts of your own personality. The vast wind is your breath. All your actions are cosmic movements. Anything that moves, does so on account of your movement. Your breath is the Cosmic Vital Force. Your intelligence is the Cosmic Intelligence. Your existence is Cosmic Existence. Your happiness is Cosmic Bliss.

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Related words

Jiva
Viraj
Virat
Visva

Sanskrit

Vaiśvānara — वैश्वानर
Vaiśvānara - वैश्वानर

Vak

Definitions

See: Vac

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vāk — ... (see vāc) — Vāgdevī, the Goddess of Speech; voice; word; primordial Word; Logos

1. She is the Divine Mother (sound) who became all the words.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vāk -

in compound. for vāc

Wikipedia

Personified, Vāk is a goddess, most frequently she is identified with Bharati or Sarasvati, the goddess of speech. In the Veda she is also represented as created by Prajapati and married to him; in other places she is called the mother of the Vedas and wife of Indra.

Descriptions

See also:

Saraswati

Sanskrit

Vāk — वाक्

vāk - वाक्

Valmiki

Name

Valmiki — वल्मीकि

Valmiki - वल्मीकि

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Valmiki — ... “ant hill”; author of the Rāmāyana

1. Considered the first poet of India.

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Valmiki author of the Ramayana Valmiki is the mythological author of India’s great epic the RAMAYANA. His authorship, however, consisted simply in putting into a lasting composition a story that was related to him by the ancient RISHI (seer) NARADA. Valmiki is said once to have seen a hunter shoot a male bird as it was making love to its mate. The female bird, seeing her mate bleeding and in distress, cried out piteously. In grief and sorrow, Valmiki uttered a poetic verse of two lines that upon reflection made a special meter. Because he received the line in sorrow (shoka), Valmiki termed the meter shloka. It is in this meter, suitable to be accompanied by the Indian lute (vina), that most of the Ramayana was composed.

Wikipedia

Valmiki (Sanskrit: वाल्मीकि, vālmīki) (during Lord Rama's time) is celebrated as the poet harbinger in Sanskrit literature. He is the author of the epic Ramayana, based on the attribution in the text of the epic itself. He is revered as the Adi Kavi, which means First Poet, for he discovered the first śloka i.e. first verse, which set the base and defined the form to Sanskrit poetry.

Life

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Valmiki. In Hindu mythology, a sage who is regarded as the first poet, and who is traditionally cited as the author of the Ramayana, the earlier of the two great Sanskrit epics. According to legend, Valmiki is a bandit in his early life. One day, one of his victims asks him whether his family will also share the sins he is committing, and when Valmiki finds out that they will not, he has a change of heart. He sits down in a secluded place and begins to do japa (recitation), but his heart is so blackened by his sins that the only words he can say are "mara mara" ("death, death"). After a long time the syllables become reversed, and by reciting "Rama Rama" he expiates his former sins. This recitation is so long that a colony of white ants (in Sanskrit, named "valmika") builds a hill over him, and when he emerges from this he is given the name Valmiki.

After his emergence, Valmiki builds an ashram on the banks of the Tamasa River and lives a quiet life. He gives shelter to Sita after she has been exiled from Ayodhya by her husband, Rama, and also cares for her sons, Lava and Kusha. One day when Valmiki is walking by the Tamasa River, he sees a hunter shoot a pair of courting Krauncha birds, and in his intense anger, his rebuke to the hunter comes out in verse; according to legend, this is the first poem ever composed. After this first verse composition, the god Brahma appears, and at Brahma's encouragement Valmiki composes the Ramayana.

Wikipedia

Valmiki was the son of Sumali. Maharishi Valmiki was born in a shudra family. His birth name was Ratnakara. But the trust factor of the sources is questionable. When everyone left to travel south Sumali took his son and wife and moved near the bank of Vipasa River (Northern India). The Uttara Khanda tells the story of Valmiki's early life, as an unnamed highway robber who used to rob people before killing them. Other versions name him Valya Meet. Robbing people who passed by was the only source of money for him.

Work

Wikipedia

The Rāmāyaṇa, originally written by Valmiki, consists of 24,000 verses in seven cantos (some say six i.e. excluding the Uttara Ramayana) (kāṇḍas). The Ramayana tells the story of a prince, Rama of Ayodhya, whose wife Sita is abducted by the demon (Rākshasa) king of Lanka, Rāvana. The Valmiki Ramayana is dated variously from 500 BC to 100 BC, or about co-eval with early versions of the Mahabhārata. As with many traditional epics, it has gone through a long process of interpolations and redactions, making it impossible to date accurately...

Valmiki is also quoted to be the contemporary of Rama. Rama met Valmiki during his period of exile and had interacted with him. Valmiki had Sita in his hermitage where Kusa and Lava were born to Sita. Valmiki taught Ramayana to Kusa and Lava, who later

sang the divine story in Ayodhya during the Aswamedha yaga congregation, to the pleasure of the audience, whereupon, King Rama summoned them to his royal palace. Kusa and Lava sang the story of Rama there, and Rama confirmed that whatever had been sung by these two children was entirely true.

Vanaprastha

Variant spellings
vānaprastha
vanaprastha

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vānaprastha — ... forest dweller

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vānaprastha -

a Brāhman in the third stage of life (who has passed through the stages of student and householder and has abandoned his house and family for an ascetic life in the woods ; see āśrama);

a class of supernatural beings;

Bassia Latifolia or Butea Frondosa;

relating to a Vānaprastha;

the third stage of a Brāhman's life, forest-life

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

In the orthodox Brahminical stages of life for men, vanaprastha, going into the forest, is the third stage or ASHRAMA. After he has completed his studentship and fulfilled his duty in life (when he has seen his children's children), the man enters the forest with or without his wife to devote himself to celibacy, austerity, study of the VEDAS, Vedic sacrifices, and spiritual discipline. This stage is also called the stage of SADHU. The man must wear animal skins, bark, or rags; leave his hair and nails uncut; and eat pure food. He may beg food, if necessary. The final stage is SANNYASI or mendicancy, when he emerges from the forest to wander alone, seeking alms. The vanaprastha and the sannyasi stage were clearly the most ideal course of conduct and were probably never followed completely by all BRAHMINS or other upper-CASTE men, for whom they were primarily intended.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vanaprastha ("forest-dweller"). According to the dharma literature, the vanaprastha was the third of the idealized stages of life (ashrama) for a twice-born man, that is, a man born into the brahmin, kshatriya, or vaishya communities, who had undergone the

adolescent religious initiation known as the “second birth.” According to this idealized pattern, after engaging in religious learning as a celibate student (brahmacharin), the first stage; marrying and raising a family as a householder (grhastha), the second stage; a man should, in the third, gradually disengage himself from the world by giving up his attachments and withdrawing to a more secluded place. The renunciation in this third stage of life is less severe than the last stage, the Sanyasi—the texts are very clear that he should remain with his wife and that he should continue to perform the prescribed daily domestic sacrifices. Although in contemporary times it is fairly common for older people to live a more retired life, bequeathing the bulk of the family affairs to their children, few people live by the strict prescriptions for the vanaprastha. The prescription for this third stage of life is generally considered to be a reaction to the growth of asceticism in the centuries before the turn of the common era, particularly the monastic asceticism of the Buddhists and Jains, which they claimed was religiously superior to the life of a householder. The vanaprastha is a transitional stage that paves the way for an ascetic life, but it is set in one’s old age and thus allows for the fulfilling of one’s duties to family and society.

Wikipedia

When a householder is considered to be older or advanced in years, perceiving his skin become wrinkled, his hair turns gray, and has grandchildren, the time is said to have come for him to enter the third stage of life, or vanaprastha. It is said that he should now disengage himself from all family ties, except that his wife may accompany him, if she chooses - although maintaining total celibacy, and retire to a lonely forest, taking with him only his sacred fires and the implements required for the daily and periodical worship. Clad in deerskin, a single piece of cloth, or in a bark garment, with his hair and nails uncut, the hermit is to subsist exclusively on food growing wild in the forest, such as roots, green herbs, wild rice, and grain. He must not accept gifts from any one, except of what may be absolutely necessary to maintain him; but with his own few possessions he should honor, to the best of his ability, those who visit his hermitage. His time must be spent in reading the metaphysical treatises of the Veda, in performing acts of worship, and in undergoing various kinds of austerities, with a view to mortifying his passions and producing in his mind an entire indifference to worldly objects. Having by these means succeeded in overcoming all sensual affections and desires, and in acquiring perfect equanimity towards everything around him, the hermit has fitted himself for the final and most exalted order, that of devotee or religious mendicant (sannyasin).

Sankara tradition

Sankara. *Atmabodha*, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

As a result of experience and observation he [the individual] gradually became disillusioned about the glitter of the outer world. He longed for inner peace. As the signs of old age crept in, he entrusted his worldly duties to his children and retired into the forest (aranya) with his wife. He entered upon the vānaprastha stage and became known as a vdnaprasthi, or forest-dweller. He was still, in the technical sense of the term, a householder and, as such, had to perform certain daily sacrifices obligatory for all but the monks. But as it was not possible for him to procure in the forest all the ingredients for such sacrifices, the Vedas laid down for him symbolic worship. He meditated on the symbolic meaning of the various phases of a sacrifice and thus reaped the fruit of its actual performance. To give an illustration: The Vedas enjoined upon all householders the daily performance of the Agnihotrasacrifice, which required several material ingredients. But the forest-dweller meditated on the various functions of the prāṇa, or life-breath, and regarded these as spiritual counterparts of the different ingredients. The third section of the Vedas, namely Āraṇyaka,

describes all of these symbolic interpretations of the sacrifices, as well as other forms of such worship. With one or two exceptions all four Vedas have their respective sections of Samhitā, Brāhmana, Āraṇyaka, and Upaniṣad.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

... the stage of vanaprastha. Here he withdraws his senses. All the activities get centered in the Self when the senses are withdrawn. Instead of external activity, there is now internal activity. A psychological function replaces all the physical duties such as sacrifices, the panchamahayajnas. The various services that he was rendering outwardly in the world previously now become the responsibilities of his life in an internal world of self-control and withdrawal of the senses.

See also:

in Ashrama: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

vānaprastha — from pra-sthā = "go forth" + vana = "wood".

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vānaprastha - from 'vana-prastha'.

Related words

Ashrama
Brahmacarya
Grihastha
Sannyasa

Sanskrit

Vānaprastha — वानप्रस्थ

vānaprastha - वानप्रस्थ

Vasana

Variant spellings

vāsanā
vasana

Definitions

General

Dasgupta. *A history of Indian philosophy*

Vāsanā - beginningless root desire.

Dictionary - Grimes

Vāsanā — ... latent tendency; impression; conditioning; self- limitation; predisposition; desires

1. A latent potency or residual impression which clings to the individual. It is also called samskara.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vāsanā -

imagination, idea, semblance of;

the impression of anything remaining unconsciously in the mind, the present consciousness of past perceptions, knowledge derived from memory Śaṅkara;

fancy, imagination, idea, notion, false notion, mistake;

thinking of, longing for, expectation, desire, inclination;

liking, respectful regard;

trust, confidence;

(in math.) proof, demonstration;

a kind of metre;

N. of Durgā;

of the wife of Arka

Wikipedia

Vāsanā is a technical term in Dharmic Traditions, particularly Buddhist philosophy and Advaita Vedanta.

... the impressions remaining in the mind, the present consciousness of past (life) perceptions, knowledge derived from memory.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. *The philosophy of Narayana Guru*

Vasana: Incipient memory factors and inborn traits in individuals. Such unconscious factors decide to a great extent how one behaves in life.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. *Raja Yoga*

Vāsanā. A habit or tendency arising from an impression remaining unconsciously in the mind from past Karma.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Vāsanā ... may be non-technically rendered into English with the following semantic field: past impressions, impressions formed; the impression of anything in the mind, the present consciousness formed from past perceptions, knowledge derived from memory; thinking of, longing for, expectation, desire, inclination.

Vasana and samskara

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

It [vāsanā] is often loosely used in the sense of samskāra... But vāsanā generally refers to the tendencies of past lives most of which lie dormant in the mind. Only those appear which can find scope in this life. But samskāras are the sub-conscious states which are being constantly generated by experience. Vāsanās are innate samskāras not acquired in this life.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

... whatever I have experienced in this life is kept in a condensed form in me as my samskara. When I take the essence of all those to my next life, they are further condensed. First the physical was made subtle, now it becomes causal. This causal element is called vasana.

Whatever has come to me from my previous lives is my present vasana, and my present samskara is added to it. My samskara in its turn will someday become vasana when I am passing to the next life. The vasana of previous lives and the samskara of this life are the past which is bearing on the present. That present is aspiring to experience the future. I look into the future with desire, and also with anxiety because of the painful experiences I previously had. Even as I get into the car to go to the dentist, I am already anticipating all those terrible things going on. Ouch! It's in the future, but the pain and the unpleasantness of it start from just going out the door. Past, present and future are all filled with the impact of vasana. The present is actually a manifestation of this vasana as it is being burned through the five senses.

See also:

in Avarana: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Etymology

General

[Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy](#)

The word *vāsanā* (Yoga sūtra, IV. 24) seems to be a later word. The earlier Upanishads do not mention it and so far as I know it is not mentioned in the Pāli pitakas. Abhidhānappadīpikā of Moggallāna mentions it, and it occurs in the Muktika Upanisad. It comes from the root “vas” to stay.

Related words

Samskara

Sanskrit

Vāsanā — वासना

vāsanā - वासना

Vastu

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Vastu — ... object; thing

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

vastu -

becoming light, dawning, morning;

the seat or place of;

any really existing or abiding substance or essence, thing, object, article;

(in philosophy) the real (opp. to a-v..., ‘that which does not really exist, the unreal’; a-dvitya-v..., ‘the one real substance or essence which has no second’);

the right thing, a valuable or worthy object, object of or for;

goods, wealth, property;

the thing in question matter, affair, circumstance;

subject, subject-matter, contents, theme (of a speech &c.), plot (of a drama or poem);

a kind of composition;

natural disposition, essential property;

the pith or substance of anything

Narayana Guru tradition

Isa Upanishad. Nitya

The Sanskrit word for matter is vastu, which means “a resident unit of the real.” In other words, it is a local fixation of the notion of the real in a delimited area where it resides.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankaracarya & Gambhirananda. Eight Upanisads

Vastu is a substance that can have attributes.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Mundaka Upanishad

There is no scope for poetry here. One has to cut out all those frills. One cannot gain Brahman poetically. Once one knows Brahman, then everything is poetry. Until then, one has to be very objective and deliberate.

One requires a mind that is not poetic, a mind that is not trying to find new adjectives. One is always interested in finding new adjectives. If one just says, “It is a blue sky,” it is not enough. So one has to say, “The spotless, vast, blue sky”. In literature one may have to make it more descriptive and flowery, if that is the style. But here, one is dealing with the teaching of the realities. One has to drop all the adjectives.

In a subject matter like mathematics or physics there is no place for adjectives. What adjectives will one use for the particle or the electron? There, at least one can say ‘a moving electron’ and so on, because particles and electrons have attributes and location. But here that is not possible. One has to seriously look into the need for removing the orientation towards adjectives. Only then will the mind relax to see the vastu that is free from adjectives. Some people use adjectives for Brahman like ‘the supreme Brahman’, ‘the divine Brahman’ and so on. But Brahman is always free from all attributes. What one needs are bare words, minimum words, and that too, words implying Brahman. When words themselves have to depend upon their implied meaning to reveal Brahman, adding more adjectives is dangerous.

See: Namarupa and vastu

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

vastu — from the verb root vas = “to live, dwell, remain, abide”.

Related words

Namarupa

Sanskrit

Vastu — वस्तु

vastu - वस्तु

Vayu

Variant spellings

Vāyu

vayu

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vāyu — ... air; life breath

1. It is of five types: prāṇa, apāna, samāna, vyāna, and udāna.
2. It is one of the five elements. (See mahābhūta and prāna.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vāyu -

wind, air (as one of the 5 elements);

the god of the wind (often associated with Indra in the Rig-veda, as Vāta with Parjanya, but although of equal rank with Indra, not occupying so prominent a position; in the Purushasūkta he is said to have sprung from the breath of Purusha, and elsewhere is described as the son-in-law of Tvashṭri; he is said to move in a shining car drawn by a pair of red or purple horses or by several teams consisting of ninety-nine or a hundred or even a thousand horses; he is often made to occupy the same chariot with Indra, and in conjunction with him honoured with the first draught of the Soma libation; he is rarely connected with the Maruts, although in ... he is said to have begotten them from the rivers of heaven; he is regent of the Nakshatra Svāti and north-west quarter; breathing, breath Vḍrāt;

the wind of the body, a vital air (of which 5 are reckoned, viz. prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna, and vyāna; or nāga, kūrma, kṛkara, devadatta, and dhanamjaya);

(in medicine) the windy humour or any morbid affection of it;

the wind as a kind of demon producing madness;

N. of the fourth Muhūrta;

a mystical N. of the letter 'ya';

N. of a Vasu;

of a Daitya;
of a king of the Gandharvas;
of a Marut;
pl. the Maruts

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vayu is the god of the wind in Indian mythology. He makes his first appearance in the VEDAS. He is associated with INDRA, king of the Vedic gods. He is seen as moving along in a chariot pulled by many horses. Most importantly he is regarded as the father of the monkey god HANUMAN. BHIMA, one of the five PANDAVA brothers in the MAHABHARATA, is said to be the son of Vayu. The term vayu is also used for one of the five elements in Hindu physics; in that context it is best translated as “air.”

Wikipedia

Vāyu is a primary Hindu deity, the Lord of the winds, the father of Bhima and the spiritual father of Lord Hanuman. He is also known as Vāta (वात), Pavana (पवन, the Purifier), and sometimes Prāna (प्राण, the breath).

Descriptions

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The God Vayu was also called Vata in the Vedas, and is now also known as Pavana, implying purity. Sometimes he is represented as sitting on an antelope or deer, and as having four arms. The deer is a symbol of Jnanam or wisdom and realization. The four arms indicate rulership over the four lower planes. Sometimes he is represented as sitting on a lotus-seat and holding his son Hanuman, the so-called Monkey-God, on his lap, embracing him with his right hand...

In the aspects considered so far, the God of Air is represented as the gracious Lord of Spirit, liberator from the involvements of the lower planes. But he is also known in another aspect: that of the Fall, the breaking off from Unity and the rebellion against God. In this more Martian aspect he is known by the name of Marut. The origin of Marut is related in the Ramayana.

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vāyu ... Air as an element, (in Vaiśeṣika) the fourth Eternal Reality (Dravya); (in Samkhya) the second Sense-Particular (Mahābhūta), the principle of motion, its function is impact, its Special Property (Viśeṣa) is Touch (Sṛarśa), its General Quality (Sāmānya Guṇa), is Sound (Sabda); (in Yoga) ten vāyus are given, five known as Prāṇādi, belonging to the inner body, viz. prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna, and vyāna; and five, known as Nāgādi, belonging to the outer body, viz. nāga, kūrma, kṛkara, devadatta, and dhanamjaya; of the first five, prāṇahas its seat in the heart, avāna in the anus, samana in the region of the navel, udāna in the throat, while vyānamoves all over the body; the remaining five perform the respective functions of eructation, opening the eyes, hunger and thirst, gaping or yawning, and hiccuping.

Wikipedia

Connotations of Vayu

As the word for air, (Vāyu) or wind (Pavana) is one of the Panchamahābhuta or five great elements. The Sanskrit word 'Vāta' literally means “blown”, 'Vāyu' “blower”, and 'Prāna' “breathing” (viz. the breath of life, cf. the *an- in 'animate'). Hence, the primary

referent of the word is the “deity of Life”, who is sometimes for clarity referred to as “Mukhya- Vāyu” (the chief Vāyu) or “Mukhya Prāna” (the chief of Life).

Sometimes the word “vayu,” which is more generally used in the sense of the physical air or wind, is used as a synonym for “prāna”. There is however a separate set of five deities of Prāna (vital breath), Mukhya- Prāna being chief among them, so that, in Hindi and other Indian languages, someone’s death is stated as “his lives departed” (uske prān nikal gaye) rather than “his life departed.” These five Vāyu deities, Prāna, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna, and Samāna, control life (and the vital breath), the wind, touch/ sensation, digestion, and excretion.

Vāta, an additional name for Vāyu, is the root of the Sanskrit and Hindi term for “atmosphere”, vātāvaran (वातावरण).

In Hindu texts and philosophy

In the hymns, Vayu is “described as having ‘exceptional beauty’ and moving noisily in his shining coach, driven by two or forty-nine or thousand white and purple horses. A white banner is his main attribute.” Like the other atmospheric deities, he is a “fighter and destroyer”, “powerful and heroic.”

In the Upanishads, there are numerous statements and illustrations of the greatness of Vāyu. The Brhadaranyaka states that the gods who control bodily functions once engaged in a contest to determine who among them is the greatest. When a deity such as that of vision would leave a man’s body, that man would continue to live, albeit as a blind man, and would regain the lost faculty once the errant deity returned to his post. One by one, the deities all took their turns leaving the body, but the man continued to live on, though successively impaired in various ways. Finally, when Mukhya Prāna started to leave the body, all the other deities started to be inexorably pulled off their posts by force, “just as a powerful horse yanks off pegs in the ground to which he is bound.” This caused the other deities to realize that they can function only when empowered by Vayu, and can be overpowered by him easily. In another episode, Vāyu is said to be the only deity not afflicted by demons of sin who were on the attack. The Chandogya states that one cannot know Brahman except by knowing Vāyu as the udgitha (the mantric syllable “om”).

Followers of Dvaita philosophy hold that Mukhya-Vāyu incarnated as Madhvacharya to teach worthy souls to worship the Supreme God Vishnu and to correct the errors of the Advaita philosophy. Madhvacharya himself makes this claim, citing the Rig Veda as his evidence.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Pranayama

All animated bodies have six aspects: existence, birth, growth, evolution, involution, and the termination of a cycle which leads to another transformation. In all these stages there are different kinds of movements or actions. These several functions are carried out by differently oriented energies which we call here vayus. When man eats corn, wheat and tubers, or meat, the same food is to be split into different components and is to be sorted and re-assembled to build various tissues, such as bones, muscles, nerves, skin and brain cells. This implies different kinds of analysis and synthesis. These bodybuilding functions are also attributed to the vayu. In an ultimate sense, nothing perishes. There is only transformation. So, in one sense, we can say, everything floats in a cosmic ocean of vayu. This vayu has no synonymous English term and, hence, the commonly accepted translation as air is very misleading. Many enzymes and chemicals are produced in the body by directing emotions or thoughts in a certain way. From this it is evident that vayu is not a mere physical principle but is causally related to psychosomatics. One out of three major physical disorders comes from the disorganized functioning of vayu. Skin diseases, neurasthenia, muscular aches, nervous breakdowns, rheumatic pains, tuberculosis, mental derangement and hypertension are all caused by the malfunctioning of the vayu...

The normal functions of vayu in the body are circulation of blood, respiration of lungs, beating of the heart, digestion of food, re-generation of cells, rejection of impaired cells and all foreign matter, all variety of sensations and the supply of fuel for all mental activities.

Nitya. Saundaryalahari of Sankaracarya

In the natural process of creation, the next property [after sound - sabda] has to necessarily be touch, contact, cohesion, and reaction. All these characterize the second element, air, which is more pronouncedly materialistic. Vayu or air is, in one sense, akasa a bit more horizontalized. The Sanskrit word vayu, though translated as air, should not be looked upon as a gas. It is actually the great womb of fusion and combustion which generates all the physical elements, gaseous, liquid, and solid. According to the Nyaya and Vaisheshika schools of Indian philosophy, the basic material of the physical universe is paramanu. Parama means absolute and anu means a monad. It has no dimensions except a mathematical location. Only by the coming together or contact and structural cohesion of several paramanus is one anu or atom generated. Vayu is the field for generation of anu or atoms. Hence, it is misleading to identify it with the air, which is only a phenomenon of the atmosphere. The other property of vayu symbolizes the realization of the possible on the ground of the actual. Therefore, the higher functioning of the mind in spiritual visions, psychic experiences, intuitions and revelations are all considered aspects of the manifestation of vayu.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. The science and philosophy of religion

The akas'a, by the repeated blows of prana produces vayu or the vibratory state of the akas'a, which in turn produces gaseous matter.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Taittiriya Upanishad

Vāyu has dvauguna - it has got two gunas. One is ākāśa... Vāyu has śabdaguna by virtue of ākāśaguna - when the wind blows, there is sound. In addition, vāyu has its own guna, sparśaguna. Sparśa is touch; touch is vāyu. Vāyu cannot be seen, tasted or smelled. The gunas of the elementals are strictly in terms of your human experience.

See: Pramanu, anu, vayu

See also:

in Mahabhutas: [Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Evolution of prakriti (Sankhya)

Diagram: Mahabhutas

Etymology

General

[Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy](#)

Vāyu - from the root vā, to blow.

Related words

Akasa

Mahabhuta

Prana

Sparsa

Sanskrit

Vāyu — वायु

Vāyu - वायु

Veda

Descriptions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Veda — ... knowledge; wisdom; revealed scripture

1. The sacred scriptures (śruti) of the Hindu tradition. They are impersonal (apauruseya) and eternal (nitya). There are four Vedas as arranged by Vyāsa: Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, and Atharva Veda. These are divided into mantra, brāhmana, āraṇyaka, and upaniṣad sections. Strictly speaking, the Veda stands for the parts known as mantra and brāhmana. The appendages to the brāhmana are the āraṇyakas and the concluding portion of the āraṇyakas are the upaniṣads.

2. There once existed 1131 recensions (śākhās) of the Vedic Samhitās. The Ṛg Veda had 21, the Yajur Veda had 101, the Sāma Veda had 1000, and the Atharva Veda had 9.

3. The Ṛg Veda is the Veda of hymns of wisdom. The Sāma Veda is a liturgical collection of hymns, mostly taken from the Ṛg Veda, sung to certain melodies. The Yajur Veda is the scripture of sacrificial rites. The Atharva Veda is comprised of formulas

intended mainly to counteract evil, diseases, and other practical events. The Yajur Veda is said to be of two recensions: the white (śukla) and the black (kṛṣṇa).

4. The Ṛg Veda is for the priest whose function is to recite the hymns inviting the gods to the sacrificial altar. The Sāma Veda is for the Udgātṛ priest who sings the hymns. Yajur Veda is for the Adhvaryu priest who performs the sacrifice according to the rules. The Atharva Veda is for the Brāhmaṇa priest who is the general supervisor of the sacrifice.

5. The Ṛg Veda contains the Aitareya Upaniṣad. The Sāma Veda contains the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and the Kena Upaniṣad. The Yajur Veda contains the Īśa, the Taittirīya, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, and the Katha Upaniṣads. The Atharva Veda contains the Praśna, the Muṇḍaka, and the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣads.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

veda -

knowledge, true or sacred knowledge or lore, knowledge of ritual;

N. of certain celebrated works which constitute the basis of the first period of the Hindū religion (these works were primarily three, viz. 1. the Rig-veda, 2. the Yajur-veda [of which there are, however, two divisions see taittirīya-saṁhitā, vājasaneyi-saṁhitā], 3. the Sāma-veda ...; these three works are sometimes called collectively trayī, 'the triple Vidyā' or 'threefold knowledge', but the Rig-veda is really the only original work of the three, and much the most ancient [the oldest of its hymns being assigned by some who rely on certain astronomical calculations to a period between 4000 and 2500 B.C., before the settlement of the Aryans in India; and by others who adopt a different reckoning to a period between 1400 and 1000 B.C., when the Aryans had settled down in the Panjāb]; subsequently a fourth Veda was added, called the Atharva-veda, which was probably not completely accepted till after Manu, as his law-book often speaks of the three Vedas-calling them trayam brahma sanātanam, 'the triple eternal Veda', but only once [xi, 33] mentions the revelation made to Atharvan and Aṅgiras, without, however, calling it by the later name of Atharva-veda; each of the four Vedas has two distinct parts, viz. 1. Mantra, i.e. words of prayer and adoration often addressed either to fire or to some form of the sun or to some form of the air, sky, wind &c., and praying for health, wealth, long life, cattle, offspring, victory, and even forgiveness of sins, and 2. Brāhmaṇa, consisting of Vidhi and Artha-vāda, i.e. directions for the detail of the ceremonies at which the Mantras were to be used and explanations of the legends &c. connected with the Mantras [see brāhmaṇa, vidhi], both these portions being termed śruti, revelation orally communicated by the Deity, and heard but not composed or written down by men [cf. IW. 24 &c.], although it is certain that both Mantras and Brāhmaṇas were compositions spread over a considerable period, much of the latter being comparatively modern; as the Vedas are properly three, so the Mantras are properly of three forms, 1. Ric, which are verses of praise in metre, and intended for loud recitation; 2. Yajus, which are in prose, and intended for recitation in a lower tone at sacrifices; 3. Sāman, which are in metre, and intended for chanting at the Soma or Moon-plant ceremonies, the Mantras of the fourth or Atharva-veda having no special name; but it must be borne in mind that the Yajur and Sāma-veda hymns, especially the latter, besides their own Mantras, borrow largely from the Rig-veda; the Yajur-veda and Sāma-veda being in fact not so much collections of prayers and hymns as special prayer- and hymn-books intended as manuals for the Adhvaryu and Udgātṛi priests respectively [see yajur-veda, sāma-veda]; the Atharva-veda, on the other hand, is, like the Rig-veda, a real collection of original hymns mixed up with incantations, borrowing little from the Rig and having no direct relation to sacrifices, but supposed by mere recitation to produce long life, to cure diseases, to effect the ruin of enemies &c.; each of the four Vedas seems to have passed through numerous śākhās or schools, giving rise to various recensions of the text, though the Rig-veda is only preserved in the śākala recension, while a second recension, that of the Bhāshkalas, is only known by name; a tradition makes Vyāsa the compiler and arranger of the Vedas in their present form: they each have an Index or Anukramaṇī, the principal work of this kind

being the general Index or Sarvānukramaṇī; out of the Brāhmaṇa portion of the Veda grew two other departments of Vedic literature, sometimes included under the general name Veda, viz. the strings of aphoristic rules, called Sūtras, and the mystical treatises on the nature of God and the relation of soul and matter, called Upanishad,, which were appended to the Aranyakas,, and became the real Veda of thinking Hindūs, leading to the Darśanas or systems of philosophy; in the later literature the name of 'fifth Veda' is accorded to the Itihāsas or legendary epic poems and to the Purāṇas, and certain secondary Vedas or Upa-vedas, are enumerated; the Vedāṅgas or works serving as limbs [for preserving the integrity] of the Veda are explained under vedāṅga below: the only other works included under the head of Veda being the Parisiṣṭas, which supply rules for the ritual omitted in the Sūtras; in the Bṛihad-Araṇyaka Upanishad the Vedas are represented as the breathings of Brahmā, while in some of the Purāṇas the four Vedas are said to have issued out of the four mouths of the four-faced Brahmā and in the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa the Veda and Viṣṇu are identified);

N. of the number 'four';
feeling, perception

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Veda (from root vid, to know), the generic name for the most ancient sacred literature of the Hindus, consisting of the four collections (samhitā) called (i) Ṛgveda, hymns to gods, (2) Sāmaveda, priests chants, (3) Yajurveda, sacrificial formulae in prose, and (4) Atharvaveda, magical chants; each Veda is divided into two broad divisions, viz. (1) Mantra, hymns, and (2) Brāhmaṇa, precepts, which include (a) Āraṇyakas, theology, and (b) Upanisads, philosophy; the Vedas are classified as revealed literature (śruti); they contain the first philosophical insights and are regarded as the final authority; tradition makes Vyāsa, the compiler and arranger of the Vedas in their present form; the Vedic period is conservatively estimated to have begun about 1500 to 1000 B.C.

Wikipedia

The Vedas are a large body of texts originating in Ancient India. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.

In English, the term Veda is mostly used to refer to the Samhitas (collection of mantras, or chants) of the four canonical Vedas (Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda).

The Sanskrit term veda as a common noun means "knowledge", but can also be used to refer to fields of study unrelated to liturgy or ritual, e.g. in agada- veda "medical science", sasya-veda "science of agriculture" or sarpa- veda "science of snakes" (already found in the early Upanishads); durveda means "with evil knowledge, ignorant".

... The four Samhitās are metrical (with the exception of prose commentary interspersed in the Black Yajurveda). The term samhitā literally means "composition, completion". The individual verses contained in these compilations are known as mantras. Some selected Vedic mantras are still recited at prayers, religious functions and other auspicious occasions in contemporary Hinduism. The various Indian philosophies and sects have taken differing positions on the Vedas. Schools of Indian philosophy which cite the Vedas as their scriptural authority are classified as "orthodox" (āstika). Other traditions, notably Buddhism and Jainism, which did not regard the Vedas as authorities are referred to by traditional Hindu texts as "heterodox" or "non- orthodox" (nāstika) schools. In addition to Buddhism and Jainism, Sikhism and Brahmoism do not accept the authority of the Vedas.

Chronology

The Vedas are among the oldest sacred texts. The Samhitas date to roughly 1500–1000 BCE, and the "circum- Vedic" texts, as well as the redaction of the Samhitas, date to c. 1000- 500 BCE, resulting in a Vedic period, spanning the mid 2nd to mid 1st mil-

lennium BCE, spanning the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Gavin Flood sums up mainstream estimates, according to which the Rigveda was compiled from as early as 1500 BCE over a period of several centuries. The Vedic period reaches its peak only after the composition of the mantra texts, with the establishment of the various shakhas all over Northern India which annotated the mantra samhitas with Brahmana discussions of their meaning, and reaches its end in the age of Buddha and Panini and the rise of the Mahajanapadas (archaeologically, Northern Black Polished Ware). Michael Witzel gives a time span of c. 1500 BCE to c. 500-400 BCE. Witzel makes special reference to the Near Eastern Mitanni material of the 14th c. BCE the only epigraphic record of Indo-Aryan contemporary to the Rigvedic period. He gives 1500 BCE (Patañjali) as a terminus ante quem for all Vedic Sanskrit literature, and 1200 BCE (the early Iron Age) as terminus post quem for the Atharvaveda.[16]The general accepted historical chronology of the Vedas ranks the Rig Veda as the first, followed by the Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and finally the Atharva Veda. Transmission of texts in the Vedic period was by oral tradition alone, preserved with precision with the help of elaborate mnemonic techniques. A literary tradition set in only in post-Vedic times, after the rise of Buddhism in the Maurya period, perhaps earliest in the Kanva recension of the Yajurveda about the 1st century BCE; however oral tradition predominated until c. 1000 CE. Due to the ephemeral nature of the manuscript material (birch bark or palm leaves), surviving manuscripts rarely surpass an age of a few hundred years. The Benares Sanskrit University has a Rigveda manuscript of the mid- 14th century; however, there are a number of older Veda manuscripts in Nepal belonging to the Vajasaneyi tradition that are dated from the 11th century onwards.

The Four Vedas

The canonical division of the Vedas is fourfold (turīya) viz.,

Rigveda (RV)

Yajurveda (YV, with the main division TS vs. VS)

Sama-Veda (SV)

Atharva-Veda (AV)

Of these, the first three were the principal original division, also called “trayī vidyā”, that is, “the triple sacred science” of reciting hymns (RV), performing sacrifices (YV), and chanting (SV). This triplicity is so introduced in the Brahmanas (ShB, ABr and others), but the Rigveda is the older work of the three from which the other two borrow, next to their own independent Yajus, sorcery and speculative mantras.

Thus, the Mantras are properly of three forms: 1. Ric, which are verses of praise in metre, and intended for loud recitation; 2.

Yajus, which are in prose, and intended for recitation in lower voice at sacrifices; 3. Sāman, which are in metre, and intended for singing at the Soma ceremonies.

The Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda are independent collections of mantras and hymns intended as manuals for the Adhvaryu, Udgatr and Brahman priests respectively.

The Atharvaveda is the fourth Veda. Its status has occasionally been ambiguous, probably due to its use in sorcery and healing. However, it contains very old materials in early Vedic language. Manusmṛti, which often speaks of the three Vedas, calling them trayam- brahma- sanātanam, “the triple eternal Veda”. The Atharvaveda like the Rigveda, is a collection of original incantations, and other materials borrowing relatively little from the Rigveda. It has no direct relation to the solemn Śrauta sacrifices, except for the fact that the mostly silent Brahmán priest observes the procedures and uses Atharvaveda mantras to ‘heal’ it when mistakes have been made. Its recitation also produces long life, cures diseases, or effects the ruin of enemies.

Each of the four Vedas consists of the metrical Mantra or Samhita and the prose Brahmana part, giving discussions and directions for the detail of the ceremonies at which the Mantras were to be used and explanations of the legends connected with the Man-

tras and rituals. Both these portions are termed shruti (which tradition says to have been heard but not composed or written down by men). Each of the four Vedas seems to have passed to numerous Shakhas or schools, giving rise to various recensions of the text. They each have an Index or Anukramani, the principal work of this kind being the general Index or Sarvānukramanī.

Post-Vedic literature

Vedanga

These subjects are treated in Sūtra literature dating from the end of the Vedic period to Mauryan times, seeing the transition from late Vedic Sanskrit to Classical Sanskrit.

The six subjects of Vedanga are:

Phonetics (Śikṣā)

Ritual (Kalpa)

Grammar (Vyākaraṇa)

Etymology (Nirukta)

Meter (Chandas)

Astrology (Jyotisa)

Parisista

Parisista “supplement, appendix” is the term applied to various ancillary works of Vedic literature, dealing mainly with details of ritual and elaborations of the texts logically and chronologically prior to them: the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Sutras. Naturally classified with the Veda to which each pertains, Parisista works exist for each of the four Vedas. However, only the literature associated with the Atharvaveda is extensive.

The Āśvalāyana Grhya Parisista is a very late text associated with the Rigveda canon.

The Gobhila Grhya Parisista is a short metrical text of two chapters, with 113 and 95 verses respectively.

The Kātiya Parisistas, ascribed to Kātyāyana, consist of 18 works enumerated self-referentially in the fifth of the series (the Caranavyūha)

The Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda has 3 parisistas The Āpastamba Hautra Parisista, which is also found as the second praśna of the Saṅgīta Śrauta Sūtra, the Vārāha Śrauta Sūtra Parisista and the Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra Parisista.

For the Atharvaveda, there are 79 works, collected as 72 distinctly named parisistas.

Puranas

A traditional view given in the Vishnu Purana (likely dating to the Gupta period) attributes the current arrangement of four Vedas to the mythical sage Vedavyasa. Puranic tradition also postulates a single original Veda that, in varying accounts, was divided into three or four parts. According to the Vishnu Purana (3.2.18, 3.3.4 etc) the original Veda was divided into four parts, and further fragmented into numerous shakhas, by Lord Vishnu in the form of Vyasa, in the Dvapara Yuga; the Vayu Purana (section 60) recounts a similar division by Vyasa, at the urging of Brahma. The Bhagavata Purana (12.6.37) traces the origin of the primeval Veda to the syllable aum, and says that it was divided into four at the start of Dvapara Yuga, because men had declined in age, virtue and understanding. In a differing account Bhagavata Purana (9.14.43) attributes the division of the primeval veda (aum) into three parts to the monarch Pururavas at the beginning of Treta Yuga. The Mahabharata (santiparva 13,088) also mentions the division of the Veda into three in Treta Yuga.

Upaveda

The term upaveda (“applied knowledge”) is used in traditional literature to designate the subjects of certain technical works. Lists of what subjects are included in this class differ among sources. The Charanavyuha mentions four Upavedas:

Medicine (Āyurveda), associated with the Rigveda

Archery (Dhanurveda), associated with the Yajurveda

Music and sacred dance (Gāndharvaveda), associated with the Samaveda

Military science (Shastrashastra), associated with the Atharvaveda

But Sushruta and Bhavaprakasha mention Ayurveda as an upaveda of the Atharvaveda. Sthapatyaveda (architecture), Shilpa Shastras (arts and crafts) are mentioned as fourth upaveda according to later sources.

“Fifth Veda”

Some post-Vedic texts, including the Mahabharata, the Natyasastra and certain Puranas, refer to themselves as the “fifth Veda”. The earliest reference to such a “fifth Veda” is found in the Chandogya Upanishad. “Dravida Veda” is a term for canonical Tamil Bhakti texts.

Relations of Vedas to their objects, four elements, etc.

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

According to a tradition the Four Vedas relate to the Four Ends of Life; the Yajur-veda to Artha — which refers to the Element Earth; the Sama-veda to Kama — which refers to the Element Water; the Atharva-veda to Dharma — which refers to the Element Fire; and the Rig-veda to Moskha — which refers to Air, the Spirit. The Yajur-veda, the hymns of which have to be muttered, is said to have for its objects men. It refers to the physical plane. The Sama-veda, the hymns of which have to be sung, is said to have for its objects the Pitris or “ancestors”. ... The objects of the Atharva-veda are powers. The idea that “supernatural powers” can be attained by the practice of austerities tapas — is very common in it. Tapas means “heat”. ... The Atharva-veda refers to the Element Fire, the mental plane. Atharva has been derived from “athar” meaning “fire”. The hymns of this Veda are called Angiras, a word used for “descendants of Agni”. Agni is Fire and its God. The Rig-veda, the hymns of which have to be recited, is said to have for its objects the Gods. Many references to the Solar Light are found in it. ... The Sanskrit “Rig” is derived from the root “rich” or “arch”, meaning shine or praise. Closely connected is “arka” meaning especially ray, sun, praise and song in praise of a deity. Rig-veda, Yajur-veda and Sama-veda have been associated with the Satya, Treta and Dvapara Yugas, and the Atharva-veda, said to form a summary of the other three, with Kali Yuga.

In another context the Vedas have been traditionally classified as regards their contents into five headings: 1: vidhi or injunctions, 2: mantras or verses to be recited, 3: namadheya or names, 4: nisheda or prohibitions, and 5: arthavada or that part which deals with things, acts and historical facts. These five headings refer to the Five Elements, from Ether to Earth.

... The Vedas are said to be the whole of Manifestation, come forth from the Word, the OM. They are said to be eternal and perfect... The Word is the Quintessence of the Four: “OM is the essence of the four Vedas”, according to the Siva-Jnanamrita Upanishad. It is interesting to consider that the Four Vedas and the Four Gospels are both traditionally related to the Four Elements.

See: Sarada and Vedas

Veda and Vedanta

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Vedanta Revalued and Restated

Strictly speaking, the distinction between what is known as the Veda and its dialectical revaluation into Vedanta is one of the most central and difficult problems to be faced.

For this purpose, we have to draw first the preliminary distinction between Vedism as it manifested itself in its primitive form as a natural and actual historical occurrence, and critical Vedism, as it was subjected to later additions and amendments. Mere elaboration of the raw material of the Veda is one thing, and its subjection to dialectical revaluation is another. Both have gone on abreast in respect of the Veda, as it passed through the stages of Agamas (traditions), Brahmanas (commentaries) and Aranyakas (forest teachings), forming various sakhas (branches) tending to be more critical, rational or philosophical; from mere ritualistic beginnings, supplemented by hymns, chants or mantras, (evocative sound-spells).

The four stages in a man's life may be said to correspond to the stages of the historical development of Vedic thought itself, as it passed through simple sacrificial acts, with their connected gestures and chants, into more elaborated forms of ritual and mutterings, suited for various occasions and circumstances, and on to non-ritualistic pure wisdom.

Various Rishis (seers), Gurus (wisdom preceptors), or Munis (quietists), who lived in the forests away from society, had their own favourite or particular Vedic traditions and chants, each with a form of ritual belonging to it, which made them into distinct units of Vedic schools, some of whom specialised in Vedic exegetics, semantics or grammar.

In this way, a complex situation arose in which Vedism underwent a drastic modification of context as well as content.

Thus, if Veda is the tail end of a knowledge situation, we have to think of the Vedanta as belonging to the front pole, where it gets more finalised by ever-greater dialectical revaluations.

The intermediate literature presents a region where speculation thrives both ways as in a no-man's land between two contending armies. Each of the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita represents the various permutations and combinations possible in this dialectical revaluation, pertaining to the categories of Existence, Subsistence and Value in Vedanta philosophy. (As we have devoted a volume to the unravelling of the intricacies of the Bhagavad Gita it is not necessary to linger here on this subject any longer).

The two mimamsas (critiques) called the pracina (antique) or the purva (anterior), and the uttara (posterior or more finalised), have between them a subtle dialectical affinity, based on an apparent opposition. It is to explain this affinity that the subtlest polemical, logical, exegetic, and semantic powers of great teachers like Jaimini and Badarayana have been lavishly expended in their writings. When one is understood in terms of the other, reciprocally both ways, with all their subtle epistemological and axiological implications; cosmologically, psychologically, and eschatologically; we can consider ourselves to have touched the core of our subject.

There are three canonical texts, which have been accepted for this purpose in Vedanta: namely, the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras, and the Bhagavad Gita.

Between these three we can reasonably expect all Vedantic doctrines to have been touched upon in one context or another.

When these texts are treated together with the Mahavakyas (the great dicta of the Vedanta); if properly explained and understood with their significance and position in the body of knowledge; we can rest satisfied that we have given some definiteness of content to the complex and multi-apartmented mansion of what is vaguely referred to as Vedantic Wisdom.

Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Any of the four Vedas is properly divided into two parts, the mantra, or verse portion, and the Brahmana, or explicatory portion. Both of these parts of the text are considered revelation, or shruti. The Brahmanas reflect on both the mantra text and the ritual associated with it, giving very detailed, varied, and arcane explication of them. The Brahmanas abound in equations between ritual aspects, the ritual performers, and cosmic, terrestrial, and divine realities. Early Western scholars tended to discount these texts, as being nothing but priestly mumbojumbo. But most recent work recognizes the central importance of the Brahmanas to the development of Indian thought and philosophy.

The name Brahmana derives from a central word in the tradition, brahman. Brahman is generically the term for “prayer” but technically refers to the power or magic of the Vedic mantras. (It also was used to designate the one who prays, hence the term Brahmin.) ... In later philosophy, the term brahman refers to the transcendent, all-encompassing reality.

Within the Brahmanas two subdivisions are important in the development of later tradition. One of the subdivisions is called the Aranyaka. From its name one can understand that this portion of the text pertained to activity in the forest (aranya)...

Last, the Brahmanas included (commonly within the Aranyaka portion) the Upanishads, the last of the Vedic subdivisions or literary modes (no one really knows when these subdivisions were designated). As do the Brahmanas, many of these texts contained significant material that reflected on the nature of the Vedic sacrifice. Thus the division between Brahmana proper, Aranyaka, and Upanishad is not always clear.

Author(s)

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Two important points must be understood about the Vedic tradition. First, none of the Vedas is considered composed by humans. All are considered to be “received” or “heard” by the rishis, divinely inspired sages, whose names are noted at the end of each hymn. Second, none of the text of the Vedas was written down until the 15th century C.E. The Vedic tradition was passed down from mouth to ear for millennia and is, thus, the oral tradition par excellence. The power of the word in the Vedic tradition is considered an oral and aural power, not a written one. The chant is seen as a power to provide material benefit and spiritual apotheosis. The great emphasis, therefore, was on correct pronunciation and on memorization. Any priest of the tradition was expected to have an entire Veda memorized, including its nonmantric portions.

Wikipedia

According to Hindu tradition, the Vedas are apauruseya “not of human agency”, are supposed to have been directly revealed, and thus are called śruti (“what is heard”).

Etymology

General

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The Four Vedas are not the Root. The Root is Veda. Veda, freed from its literalistic and divisional implications, is the Tradition, Truth. The root of the word veda is “vid”, found also in other Sanskrit and Indo-European words. Vid is to know, and also to be. The object of spiritual practice is said to be the identification of Vedaka, the knower, Vidya, the knowing, and Vedya, the known. Related words are the English “to wit” and “witness” and the Dutch “weten”, to know. Veda is Pure Knowledge, Reality. Also related is “wisdom”. The Tradition is the highest wisdom.

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit word veda “knowledge, wisdom” is derived from the root vid- “to know”. This is reconstructed as being derived from the Proto- Indo- European root * υ eid-, meaning “see” or “know”.

As a noun, the word appears only in a single instance in the Rigveda, in RV 8.19.5, translated by Griffith as “ritual lore”:

“The mortal who hath ministered to Agni with oblation, fuel, ritual lore, and reverence, skilled in sacrifice.”

Geldner’s translation of the same passage has Wissen “knowledge”.

The noun is from Proto-Indo-European * υ eidos, cognate to Greek εἶδος “aspect”, “form”. English wit, etc., Latin video “I see”, etc.

Related words

Atharva Veda

Rig Veda

Rishi

Sama Veda

Saraswati

Sruti

Vedanta

Yajur Veda

Sanskrit

Veda — वेद

veda - वेद

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

In a simplified explanation, there were originally the four Vedas. Then Brahmanas were added to each Veda. After Brahmanas, Aranyakas were created. Finally, each Veda was complemented with Upanishads.

Rig Veda

Brahmanas

Aitareya

Kausitaki

Paingi

Aranyakas

Aitareya

Kausitaki

Upanishads

Aitareya

Kausitaki

Sama Veda

Brahmanas

Tandya

Talavakara

Arseya

Vamsa

Daivatadhyaya

Mantra

Sama-vidhana

Samhitopanisad Brahmana

Upanishads

Chandogya

Kena

Yajur Veda

Krishna Yajur Veda

Brahmanas

Taittiriya

Ballavi

Satyayani

Maitrayani

Katha

Aranyaka

Taittiriya

Upanishads

Taittiriya

Katha

Svetasvatara

Mahanarayana

Maitrayaniya

Sukla Yajur Veda

Brahmana

Satapatha

Aranyaka

Satapatha

Upanishads

Isha

Brhadaranyaka

Jabala

Paingala

Atharva Veda

Brahmana

Gopatha

Upanishads

Mundaka

Mandukya

Prasna

Vedanta

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Vedānta — ... end of the Vedas; Uttara-Mīmāṃsā; end of knowledge; wisdom

1. A name of the Upaniṣads.
2. A name of the different schools of philosophy founded on the teachings of the Upaniṣads. The major schools are Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Dvaita Vedānta.
3. The basic texts of Vedānta are the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and the Brahma-sūtra. (See prasthāna-traya.)
4. The central question considered in the Vedāntic schools concerns the nature of God or the Absolute (Brahman).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vedānta -

end of the Veda (= 'complete knowledge of the Veda');

N. of the second and most important part of the Mīmāṃsā or third of the three great divisions of Hindū philosophy (called Vedānta either as teaching the ultimate scope of the Veda or simply as explained in the Upanishads which come at the end of the Veda; this system, although belonging to the Mīmāṃsā and sometimes called Uttara-mīmāṃsā, 'examination of the later portion or jñāna-kāṇḍa of the Veda', is really the one sole orthodox exponent of the pantheistic creed of the Hindūs of the present day - a creed which underlies all the polytheism and multiform mythology of the people; its chief doctrine [as expounded by Śaṅkara] is that of Advaita i.e. that nothing really exists but the One Self or Soul of the Universe called Brahman [neut.] or Paramātman, and that the Jīvātman or individual human soul and indeed all the phenomena of nature are really identical with the Paramātman, and that their existence is only the result of Ajñāna [otherwise called Avidyā] or an assumed ignorance on the part of that one universal Soul which is described as both Creator and Creation; Actor and Act; Existence, Knowledge and Joy, and as devoid of the three qualities [see guṇa]; the liberation of the human soul, its deliverance from transmigrations, and re-union with the Paramātman, with which it is really identified, is only to be effected by a removal of that ignorance through a proper understanding of the Vedānta; this system is also called Brahma-mīmāṃsā and Śāṅkarakamīmāṃsā, 'inquiring into Spirit or embodied Spirit'; the founder of the school is said to have been Vyāsa, also called Bādarāyaṇa, and its most eminent teacher was Śaṅkarācārya);

pl. the Upanishads or works on the Vedānta philosophy

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Vedanta: When the Vedic teaching had been revalued in philosophical terms by later rsis, a body of literature called Vedanta arose in the history of Indian thought. This often goes contrary to the Vedic tendency of rituals and obligations, announcing freedom and stressing self- realization. Latter we find Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, referred to as three typical Vedantic philosophers, although the Gurus of the Vedantic line (parampara) are many.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Vedanta ... was originally a word used as a synonym for that part of the Veda known also as the Upanishads. The name is a sandhied form of Veda-anta = "Veda-end" = "the appendix to the Vedas". Vedanta is considered to be source of all vedic literature. Original Vedanta contained four verses, later expanded to thousands. By the 8th century CE, the word also came to be used to describe a group of philosophical traditions concerned with the self- realisation by which one understands the ultimate nature of

reality (Brahman). The word Vedanta teaches that the believer's goal is to transcend the limitations of self-identity. Vedanta is not restricted or confined to one book and there is no sole source for Vedantic philosophy. Vedanta is based on two simple propositions:

Human nature is divine.

The aim of human life is to realize that human nature is divine.

... Vedānta is also called Uttarā Mīmāṃsā, or the 'latter enquiry' or 'higher enquiry', and is often paired with Purvā Mīmāṃsā, the 'former enquiry'. Pūrva Mimamsa, usually simply called Mimamsa, deals with explanations of the fire-sacrifices of the Vedic mantras (in the Samhita portion of the Vedas) and Brahmanas, while Vedanta explicates the esoteric teachings of the Āranyakas (the "forest scriptures"), and the Upanishads, composed from ca. the 9th century BC until modern times.

History

History

While the traditional Vedic Karma kānda, or ritualistic components of religion, continued to be practiced through the Brahmins as meditative and propitiatory rites to guide society to self-knowledge, more jnana (gnosis)- or knowledge-centered understandings began to emerge. These are mystical streams of Vedic religion that focused on meditation, self-discipline and spiritual connectivity rather than on rituals. In earlier writings, Sanskrit 'Vedānta' simply referred to the Upanishads, the most speculative and philosophical of the Vedic texts. However, in the medieval period of Hinduism, the word Vedanta came to mean the school of philosophy that interpreted the Upanishads. Traditional Vedanta considers scriptural evidence, or shabda pramana, as the most authentic means of knowledge, while perception, or pratyaksa, and logical inference, or anumana, are considered to be subordinate (but valid).

Formalization

The systematization of Vedantic ideas into one coherent treatise was undertaken by Badarayana in the [Vedanta Sutra](#) which was composed around 200 BCE. Scholars know the Vedānta-sūtra by a variety of names, including (1) Brahma-sūtra, (2) Śārīraka, (3) Vyāsa-sūtra, (4) Bādarāyana-sūtra, (5) Uttara-mīmāṃsā and (6) Vedānta-darśana. The cryptic aphorisms of the Vedanta Sutras are open to a variety of interpretations, resulting in the formation of numerous Vedanta schools, each interpreting the texts in its own way and producing its own sub-commentaries claiming to be faithful to the original. Consistent throughout Vedanta, however, is the exhortation that ritual be eschewed in favor of the individual's quest for truth through meditation governed by a loving morality, secure in the knowledge that infinite bliss awaits the seeker. Nearly all existing sects of Hinduism are directly or indirectly influenced by the thought systems developed by Vedantic thinkers. Hinduism to a great extent owes its survival to the formation of the coherent and logically advanced systems of Vedanta.

Sub-schools of Vedanta

Advaita Vedanta

Advaita Vedānta was propounded by Adi Sankara and his grand-guru Gaudapada, who described Ajativada. According to this school of Vedānta, Brahman is the only reality, and the world, as it appears, is illusory. As Brahman is the sole reality, it cannot be said to possess any attributes whatsoever. An illusionary power of Brahman called Māyā causes the world to arise. Ignorance of this reality is the cause of all suffering in the world and only upon true knowledge of Brahman can liberation be attained. When a person tries to know Brahman through his mind, due to the influence of Māyā, Brahman appears as God (Ishvara), separate from the world and from the individual. In reality, there is no difference between the individual soul jīvātman and Brahman. Liberation

lies in knowing the reality of this non- difference (i.e. a-dvaita, “non-duality”). Thus, the path to liberation is finally only through knowledge (jñāna).

Vishishtadvaita

Vishishtadvaita was propounded by Ramanuja and says that the jīvātman is a part of Brahman, and hence is similar, but not identical. The main difference from Advaita is that in Visishtadvaita, the Brahman is asserted to have attributes, including the individual conscious souls and matter. Brahman, matter and the individual souls are distinct but mutually inseparable entities. This school propounds Bhakti or devotion to God visualized as Vishnu to be the path to liberation. Māyā is seen as the creative power of God.

Dvaita

Dvaita was propounded by Madhwacharya. It is also referred to as tatvavādā - The Philosophy of Reality. It identifies God with Brahman completely, and in turn with Vishnu or his various incarnations like Krishna, Narasimha, Srinivasa etc. In that sense it is also known as sat- vaishnava philosophy to differentiate from the Vishishtadvaita school known by sri-vaishnavism. It regards Brahman, all individual souls (jīvātman) and matter as eternal and mutually separate entities. This school also advocates Bhakti as the route to sattvic liberation whereas hatred (Dvesha) and indifference towards the Lord will lead to eternal hell and eternal bondage respectively. Liberation is the state of attaining maximum joy or sorrow, which is awarded to individual souls (at the end of their sadhana), based on the souls’ inherent and natural disposition towards good or evil. The achintya- adbhuta shakti (the immeasurable power) of Lord Vishnu is seen as the efficient cause of the universe and the primordial matter or prakrti is the material cause. Dvaita also propounds that all action is performed by the Lord energising every soul from within, awarding the results to the soul but Himself not affected in the least by the results.

Dvaitādvaita

Dvaitādvaita was propounded by Nimbārka, based upon an earlier school called Bhedābheda, which was taught by Bhāskara. According to this school, the jīvātman is at once the same as yet different from Brahman. The jiva relation may be regarded as dvaita from one point of view and advaita from another. In this school, God is visualized as Krishna.

Shuddhadvaita

Shuddhadvaita was propounded by Vallabha. This system also identifies Bhakti as the only means of liberation, ‘to go to Goloka’ (lit., the world of cows; the Sankrit word ‘go’, ‘cow’, also means ‘star’). The world is said to be the sport (Leela) of Krishna, who is Sat-Cit- Ananda.

Achintya Bhedābheda

Achintya Bhedābheda was propounded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (Bengal, 1486- 1534). He was a follower of the Dvaita vedanta of Sri Madhwacharya. This doctrine of inconceivable and simultaneous oneness and difference states that the soul or energy of God is both distinct and non-distinct from God, whom he identified as Krishna, Govinda, and that this, although unthinkable, may be experienced through a process of loving devotion (bhakti).[6] This philosophy of “inconceivable oneness and difference” is followed by a number of modern Gaudiya Vaishnava movements, including ISKCON.

Purnadvaita or Integral Advaita

According to his followers, Sri Aurobindo, in his The Life Divine, synthesized all the exant schools of Vedanta and gave a comprehensive resolution integrating cues from the Western metaphysics and modern science. He is said to have restored the umbilical cord of the Vedantic exegesis with the Vedas.

Modern Vedanta

The term “modern Vedanta” is sometimes used to describe the interpretation of Advaita Vedanta given by Swami Vivekananda of the Ramakrishna order of monks. He stressed that:

Although God is the absolute reality, the world has a relative reality. It should therefore not be completely ignored.

Conditions of abject poverty should be removed; only then will people be able to turn their minds toward God.

All religions are striving in their way to reach the ultimate truth. Narrow sectarian bickering should therefore be abandoned, and religious tolerance should be practiced — between different Hindu denominations, as well as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc.

Vivekananda traveled to the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago in 1893, and became an influential figure in synthesising Eastern and Western thought. He played a major role in the spread of Vedanta to Western nations. His travel to the West was criticised by some orthodox Hindus. His proponents claim that he made Vedanta living, by understanding how it could be applied to the modern world, and by investing it with his own spirit. For Vivekananda, Vedanta was not something dry or esoteric, but a living approach to the quest for self- knowledge.

In his interpretation of Advaita (as in Shankara’s), there is still a place for Bhakti (devotion). Monks of the Ramakrishna order suggest that it is easier to begin meditation on a personal God with form and qualities, rather than the formless Absolute, of which everyone is said to be part. Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman are viewed as obverse and reverse of the same coin.

List of teachers

There have been many teachers of Vedanta in India and other countries over the centuries. A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada Maharshi Swami Dayananda Saraswati (Arya Samaj), Hari Prasad Shastri, D. Krishna Ayyar, Swami Niranjanji Maharaj, Bhagavan Shri Ramana Maharshi, Narayana Guru, Shri Bhausahab Maharaj, Shri Siddharameshwar Maharaj, Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj, Sri Ranjit Maharaj, Swami Rama Tirtha, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda, Swami Jyotirmayananda, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, Swami Krishnananda, Swami Paramananda, Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Sri Dayananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Swami Sri Lilashahji Maharaj, Shri Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Sri Aurobindo, Shri Swami Tapovan Maharaj, Sengalipuram Muthannaval, Mannargudi periyaval, Paruthiyur Krishna Sastri, Anantarama Dikshitar, Kanchi Mahaswami-gal, Swami Ranganathananda were great Vedanta scholars. Swami Parthasarathy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Pujya Sri Prem Siddharth, Baba Ramdev, Nithyananda Swamigal, Muralidara Swamigal, Swami Krsnapriyananda Saraswati, None are distinguished, traditional teacher of Vedanta of the present day. Additionally Paramahansa Yogananda.

Influence in the West

The influential philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel refers to Indian thought reminiscent of Advaita- Vedanta in his introduction to his *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and in his *Science of Logic*. Arthur Schopenhauer was influenced by the Vedas and Upanishads; in his own words: “If the reader has also received the benefit of the Vedas, the access to which by means of the Upanishads is in my eyes the greatest privilege which this still young century (1818) may claim before all previous centuries, if then the reader, I say, has received his initiation in primeval Indian wisdom, and received it with an open heart, he will be prepared in the very best way for hearing what I have to tell him.” (*The World as Will and Representation*) Among western figures who have been influenced by or have commented on Vedanta are Ram Dass, Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Müller, Voltaire, J.D. Salinger, Aldous Huxley, T. S. Eliot, J.B. Priestley, Christopher Isherwood, Romain Rolland, Alan Watts, Eugene Wigner, Arnold Toynbee, Joseph Campbell, Hermann Hesse, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Will Durant, Nikola Tesla, Erwin Schrödinger and John Dobson.

J. Robert Oppenheimer, theoretical physicist and director of the Manhattan Project, also was a professed Vedantist. In reference to the Trinity test in New Mexico, where his Los Alamos team tested the first atomic bomb, Oppenheimer famously recalled the Bhagavad Gita: “If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendor of the mighty one. Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”

List of teachers of Vedanta

Pre-19th century

Badarayana

Gaudapada

Govinda Bhagavatpada

Adi Shankara

Bhaskara

Padmapāda

Sureśvara

Mandana Misra

Hastamalakacharya

Totakacharya

Appayya Dikshitar

Vācaspati Miśra

Ramanuja

Madhva

Vidyaranya

Vallabha

Caitanya

Vyasathirtha

Madhusudhana Saraswati

Nimbarka

Baladeva Vidyabhushana

Vijnanabhiksu

Sankaradeva (Assam)

19th-21st century

Sant Shri Asaramji Bapu

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Swami Niranjanji Maharaj

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Swami Vivekananda

Ramana Maharshi

Swami Parthasarathy

Swami Rama Tirtha
Mannargudi Raju Sastri
Paruthiyur Krishna Sastri
Paiganadu Ganapathy Sastri
Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswati Mahaswami
Nisargadatta Maharaj
Eli Marozzi
Sri Aurobindo
Mata Amritanandamayi
Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharathi
Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswami
Gopal Krishna Goswami
Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Swamigal
Sri Bharati Teertha Swamigal
Jagatguru Brahmashree Shree Narayanaguru Swami Trippadangal
Swami Sivananda
Swami Jyotirmayananda
Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami
Swami Chinmayananda
Paramahansa Yogananda
Hubli Siddharudha swamy
Sai Baba of Shirdi
Sathya Sai Baba
Prema Pandurang
Tamala Krishna Goswami
Satchidaanandendra Saraswati Swamiji
Swami Siddheswarananda
Krishnaguru [Assam]
Swami Tejomayananda
Sri. Sri. Ravishankar
Pujya Sri. Prem Siddharth

Source texts

Source texts

All forms of Vedanta are drawn primarily from the Upanishads, a set of philosophical and instructive Vedic scriptures. “The Upanishads are commentaries on the Vedas, their putative end and essence, and thus known as Vedānta or “End of the Veda”. They are considered the fundamental essence of all the Vedas and although they form the backbone of Vedanta, portions of Vedantic thought are also derived from some of the earlier Aranyakas.

The primary philosophy captured in the Upanishads, that of one absolute reality termed as Brahman is the main principle of Vedānta. The sage Vyasa was one of the major proponents of this philosophy and author of the Brahma Sūtras based on the Upanishads. The concept of Brahman – the Supreme Spirit or the eternal, self-existent, immanent and transcendent Supreme and Ultimate Reality which is the divine ground of all Being - is central to most schools of Vedānta. The concept of God or Ishvara is also there, and the Vedantic sub-schools differ mainly in how they identify God with Brahman.

The contents of the Upanishads are often couched in enigmatic language, which has left them open to various interpretations. Over a period of time, several scholars have interpreted the writings in Upanishads and other scriptures like Brahma Sutras according to their own understanding and the need of their time. There are a total of six important interpretations of these source texts, out of which, three (Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita) are prominent, both in India and abroad. These Vedantic schools of thought were founded by Shri Adi Shankara, Shri Ramanuja and Shri Madhvacharya, respectively. It should be noted, however, that the Indian pre-Shankara Buddhist writer, Bhavya, in the Madhyamakahrdaya Karika describes the Vedānta philosophy as “Bhedabheda”. Proponents of other Vedantic schools continue to write and develop their ideas as well, although their works are not widely known outside of smaller circles of followers in India.

While it is not typically thought of as a purely Vedantic text, the Bhagavad Gita has played a strong role in Vedantic thought, with its representative syncretism of Samkhya, Yoga, and Upanishadic thought. Indeed, it is itself called an “upanishad” and thus, all major Vedantic teachers (like Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhvacharya) have taken it upon themselves to compose often extensive commentaries not only on the Upanishads and Brahma Sutras, but also on the Gita. In such a manner, Vedantists both old and new have implicitly attested to the Gita’s importance to the development of Vedantic thought and practice

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Professor Deussen, during his visit to India, sought to ascertain the percentage of followers belonging to each sect. A Ramanujist, “a zealous adversary of Sankara, estimated that out of a hundred Vedantins, fifteen perhaps adhere to Ramanuja, five to Madhva, five to Vallabha, and seventy-five to Sankaracharya.”

Goal of Vedanta

General

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

This is indeed the real object of the Vedānta-philosophy, to overcome all Nescience, to become once more what the Atman always has been, namely Brahman, and then to wait till death removes the last Upadhis or fetters, which, though they fetter the mind no longer, remain like broken chains hanging heavy on the mortal body. The Atman, having recovered its Brahmahood, is even in this life so free from the body that it feels no longer any pain, and cannot do anything, whether good or bad.

Wikipedia

The goal of Vedānta is a state of self-realization or cosmic consciousness. Historically and currently, it is assumed that this state can be experienced by anyone, but it cannot be adequately conveyed in language.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

The traditionally held ultimate goal of Vedantic enquiry is attaining **moksa**, meaning “Liberation”-- liberation from everything that binds one. All such bondages in general are signified by the term **bandha**. Liberation thus is from all bandhas. Bandhas eventually end up in making life fearful. Therefore, to become free of all fears (**bhaya**) is thought of as another facet of the final goal of Vedanta, and the goal on this account is known as **abhaya** (fearlessness).

Although everyone is well aware of its inevitability, the most terrific of all fears in life is that of death (mrtyu). How to attain immortality? This, in a sense, is one thing everyone aspires for. Is it possible to attain immortality even as death has its natural role in the on-going creative process of nature? Vedanta’s answer is positive. Enabling the seeker to attain immortality in the absolute sense, is yet another aspect of the purpose of Vedanta. The goal in this respect is known as amrtatva (immortality).

To go back again to the problem of suffering, why is it that some are destined to lead a miserable life for no fault of their own? Why is it that some others apparently live happy and comfortable lives in spite of being involved in not-so- good activities? Is it because of their karmas of previous births, as is popularly held? What then is karma? What is its role in deciding the future of the individual as well as of the world? How can one become free of such karmas? To make one free from all such entangling karmas and the resultant reincarnations, is yet another facet of Vedanta’s goal.

All these, though differently stated, are not different goals. They simply are one goal differently viewed.

See: Sankhya and Vedanta

See: Veda and Vedanta

Related words

Advaita Vedanta

Dvaita

Veda

Visishta-Advaita

Sanskrit

Vedānta — वेदान्त

Vedānta - वेदान्त

Vibhuti

Variant spellings

vibhuti

vibhūti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vibhūti — ... sacred ash (bhasma); manifestations of divine power; might; prosperity; welfare; splendor; exalted rank; greatness; superhuman power resembling that of God (Īśvara)

1. One of the eight aids, according to Vīra Saivism. It is the smearing of the sacred ash upon the body.
2. Incarnations such as spiritual teachers, etc., who aid humanity, are called vibhūtis.
3. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, the manifestations of Vāsudeva— e.g., Sankaraṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha.
4. Miraculous powers are also called vibhūtis.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vibhūti -

penetrating, pervading;

abundant, plentiful;

mighty, powerful;

presiding over;

N. of a Sādhyā;

of a son of Viśvāmitra;

of a king;

development, multiplication, expansion, plenty, abundance;

manifestation of might, great power, superhuman power (consisting of eight faculties, especially attributed to Śiva, but supposed also to be attainable by human beings through worship of that deity, viz. aṇiman, the power of becoming as minute as an atom; laghiman, extreme lightness; prāpti, attaining or reaching anything [e.g. the moon with the tip of the finger]; prākāmya, irresistible will; mahiman, illimitable bulk; Īsitā, supreme dominion; vazitā, subjugating by magic; and kāmāvasāyitā, the suppressing all desires);

a particular Śakti;

the might of a king or great lord, sovereign power, greatness;

successful issue (of a sacrifice);

splendour, glory, magnificence;

splendour, glory, magnificence;

riches, wealth, opulence;

N. of Lakshmi (the goddess of fortune and welfare);

the ashes of cow-dung &c. (with which Śiva is said to smear his body, and hence used in imitation of him by devotees);

(in music) a particular Śruti

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vibhuti (“power”). Name for the sacred ash with which devotees (bhakta) of the god Shiva mark their bodies, usually with three horizontal lines (tripundra). According to one interpretation, the three lines represent the three prongs of Shiva’s trident, according

to another, they symbolize Shiva's third eye. Ash is associated with Shiva in several different contexts. On one hand, he is said to smear his body with ashes from the cremation ground, which indicates his lack of concern for all conventional distinctions between purity and impurity (ashaucha); the ash could also symbolize Shiva's destruction of Kama, the god of love, who is burned to ash by Shiva's third eye. In earlier times vibhuti was made from wood ash that had been sifted through cloth until it was as fine as talcum powder. This is still done today, particularly by ascetics who usually use the ash from a dhuni or smoldering ascetic fire, which is believed to give the ash a sacred quality; in modern times vibhuti has become available in stores that sell religious supplies.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

The term vibhuti is a technical name given in the science of harmonious union for any special affection generated in the consciousness of a person who consistently retains a certain impression in his or her awareness. Each type of affectivity—whether psychological, moral, or spiritual—is a distraction from the ultimate goal. So a yogic aspirant needs to know about the various affections that can arise and how they can be resolved. Patanjali places Vibhuti Pada after the chapter on sadhana to guide the yogi to reach pure aloneness without being affected by many predictable distractions of allurements.

Many people have misunderstood the purpose of this chapter, seeing it as a study of supernatural powers to be actualized. Induced hallucinations have been called vibhutis by pseudo-yogis, and the subject has been lost in crowd consciousness. Many aspirants have thus unfortunately experienced hazardous results. If you choose to explore further, we wish to caution you, dear reader, not to attempt Vibhuti Pada by taking its sutras or several of its prior commentaries literally. You need to keep your peace and patience to arrive at a precise and useful knowledge of Vibhuti Pada.

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

In the myths of creation we hear that God felt himself to be alone. He wanted to have company, so he decided to create all this. In some of the Upanishads, similar stories are related of the aloneness of the first spirit. The Brihadaranyaka and other Upanishads, which are highly philosophical and metaphysical rather than legendary, say that the same knowledge that is within us as being shows itself only by becoming vibhuti, specific manifestations.

So the Self itself changes, transforms. In those transformations are many new possibilities. It is like an artist who wants to express her artistic talent. If she does nothing, no one will be aware of her abilities. So she makes a sketch. But there are so many other possibilities. She can also paint, sculpt, build and combine materials, creating a tremendous variety of compositions. With a single pen or brush she can make innumerable artistic creations. All this variety is nothing but the expression of one single mind.

Similarly, when we speak we use only our single mind and our organ of articulation, but when properly manipulated it can produce an infinitude of sound systems. With the utterance of each word, a new concept arises, new meaning arises. These are also vibhuti.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Taaittiriya Upanishad

In a temple, there is an intentional guhā, a darkness. You walk into the mandapa, and then you go to the main shrine. As you go further, it becomes darker and darker. Then, in the place where the Lord sits, you cannot see anything. The place is dark, and the

stone image should be black stone. There is one small flame that is just enough to light up all the ornaments, the jewels and precious metal. That is the only vibhūti you see there in the sanctum.

Bhagavadvibhūti alone is what you see with the buddhi. You know bhagavān asti [bhagavān 'is'], because that vibhūti is there. In the same way, you know bhagavān asti when you see the stars sparkle, when you see dawn's golden rose rays brush the swelling twilight. Every human buddhi enjoys these heavenly vibhūti.

...

When you burn a body or a tree, what is left over, the avasānabhūtam, are the ashes, the carbon, the vibhūti. All vibhūti is Bhagavān's vibhūti. That is what is. That is what is left out after all the ndmarūpas are gone. Bhagavan's vibhūti is in the various forms: tree, body, jagat....

...

When kama controls you, it is your enemy. When it is under your control, it is vibhuti. A desire is a vibhuti as long as it does not drive you to cross dharma. Otherwise, you come under desire's spell, and it is your master.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

vibhūti — the verb root bhū = “the existent, manifest” + vi = “apart”.

Sanskrit

Vibhūti — विभूति

vibhūti - विभूति

Vicara

Variant spellings

vicara

vicāra

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vicāra — ... reflection; enquiry; introspection; investigation

1. According to the Yoga school, it is a state of samādhi. It is of two kinds: nirvicāra (when the mind concentrates and is one with the tanmātras without any notion of their qualities) and savicāra (when the mind concentrates on the tanmātras with a remembrance of their qualities).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vicāra -

mode of acting or proceeding, procedure (also = a single or particular case);
pondering, deliberation, consideration, reflection, examination, investigation;
doubt, hesitation;
a probable conjecture;
dispute, discussion;
prudence

Wikipedia

Vicara (Pali, Sanskrit: vicāra) means the way mind maintains attention toward any object. It first referred to pre-Hindu yoga, later in Buddhist meditation. It has been translated as “consideration,” “deliberation,” “examination,” and “investigation.”

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

[in buddhist practice] ... objects of concentration may either be earth, water, fire, wind, blue colour, yellow colour, red colour, white colour, light or limited space ... Thus the sage may take a brown ball of earth and concentrate his mind upon it as an earth ball, sometimes with eyes open and sometimes with eyes shut. When he finds that even in shutting his eyes he can visualize the object in his mind, he may leave off the object and retire to another place to concentrate upon the image of the earth ball in his mind. In the first stages of the first meditation ... the mind is concentrated on the object in the way of understanding it with its form and name and of comprehending it with its diverse relations. This state of concentration is called vitakka (discursive meditation). The next stage of the first meditation is that in which the mind does not move in the object in relational terms but becomes fixed and settled in it and penetrates into it without any quivering. This state is called vicāra (steadily moving). The first stage vitakka has been compared in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga to the flying of a kite with its wings flapping, whereas the second stage is compared to its flying in a sweep without the least quiver of its wings. These two stages are associated with a buoyant exaltation (pīti) and a steady inward bliss called sukha instilling the mind.

Wikipedia

In Buddhism

Vicara is a term of buddhist psychology. This term is mostly used to describe the internal feeling of the yogi who practices samatha bhavana, that is the meditation technique consisting in focusing the mind to one single point. Nevertheless, this term can be used to describe the practice of vipassana or even, outside of any meditation context, the simple fact to maintain awareness on any object.

In the meditation practices, the mind catches a mental object (see: vitakka), which means the meditator tries to notice a feeling and to stay aware of it. He cultivates consciousness of this object - and the term object is understood as a psychological object, a perception.

Vicara is focusing on an object, and holding it in consciousness, to meditate on it - like meditating over a candle flame. You meditate on the flame, watch it move, so eventually you are no longer yourself, but you can “become” the flame. The meditator focuses all his attention on the object but not on the self image, or the distinction between himself and his environment. Vicara eventually become one of the five factors of the first jhana.

See: Manana, vicara, cinta

See also:

in Nididhyasana: [Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad](#)

Related words

Cinta
Manana
Nididhyasana

Sanskrit

Vicāra — विचार
vicāra - वचिर

Vidvan

Variant spellings

vidvan
vidvān
vidwan

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Vidvān — ... one who has learned the kāvyas, the lexicon, and grammar.

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

vidvas -

one who knows, knowing, understanding, learned, intelligent, wise, mindful of, familiar with, skilled in;

a wise man, sage, seer;

N. of a Brāhman

Wikipedia

A vidwan (or vidvan) is a person who has vidya (knowledge) of a particular science or art. This term is usually used for Indian Classical Musicians to denote their scholarship and experience in performing classical music concerts. Vidwan may also be referred to as a doctorate in layman's terms.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

... the enlightened one and the Self are identical. There is no vidvatta (enlightenment) insofar as it relates to the sum total of the body etc. As such, it follows that the vidvan (the enlightened one, who is identical with the Self) shares the attributes of the Self, viz. immutability. Since karma is impossible in the case of such an enlightened one, its denial in the words katham sa purusha etc. (how does such a man slay) is justifiable. Though the Self remains immutable, due to ignorance and knowledge arising from an intellectual pursuit devoid of discrimination, it is said to be responsive to sensory objects like sound etc., whereas (actually) the intellect (buddhi) alone is responsive (to sound etc. and not the Self). In the same manner by means of knowledge arising from Atma-anatma viveka (i.e. discrimination between the real and the unreal), though such an intellectual pursuit is ever of an unreal nature, the Self, even though immutable, is regarded as vidvan (knower). Since karma is impossible for a vidvan, it is said that the intention of the Lord is that all the karma laid down in the sastras, is for the laymen (unenlightened ones) only...

Jnani (vidvan) is referred to by the words, Kathani sa purusha (How can such a one slay or cause to be slain) and to him karma is denied...

... when a man abandons by effort the various desires entirely, which have gone to the very core of his mind, of his heart, and becomes content himself in the (thought of) the inner Self, i.e. without any thought of external possessions, indifferent to everything else, for the reason of his having gained the essence of the nectar constituted by the vision of the absolute reality, he is then said to be a sthiiaprajna, i.e. one in whom the awareness born of discrimination between Self and non-Self is firmly rooted. In other words, such a man is then said to be a Vidvan.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

"Mā bhaiṣṭa vidvan - Oh vidvan! do not be afraid". The teacher addresses the student as vidvān, learned one, the one who knows. The student has just now come for learning. He is not a vidvan really but he has all other forms of disciplines necessary to gain this knowledge. That is why the teacher calls him vidvān. So vidvān here means upadista-padapadārtha saṅgatijña, the one who is capable of understanding the meaning of words and sentences along with the connection between them.

Krishnananda. Mundaka Upanishad

With these methods, viz., strength, carefulness and knowledge connected with renunciation, one who aspires to attain the Supreme Being becomes a Vidvan, or a Knower of the Self, and his Self enters into the essence of the Absolute.

Etymology

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

The root vid means to know. Hence Vidwan is one who has known.

Related words

Jnanin

Vidya

Sanskrit

Vidvān — विद्वान्

vidvān - वद्वान्

Vidya

Variant spellings

vidya

vidyā

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vidyā — ... knowledge; meditation; wisdom; insight

1. There are thirty-two types or varieties of Brahmavidyā described in the Upaniṣads for securing liberation. These are various types of meditation; for instance, meditation on the praṇava mantra, om.

2. The chief branches of knowledge are four, according to Vaiśeṣika: ānvīkṣikī (logic and philosophy), trayī (the Vedic religion), vārtā (economic science and philosophy of wealth), and daṇḍanīti (the science of polity).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vidyā -

knowledge (cf. kāīa-jāta-v...), science, learning, scholarship, philosophy RV. &c. &c. (according to some there are four Vidyās or sciences, 1. trayī, the triple Veda; 2. ānvīkṣikī, logic and metaphysics; 3. daṇḍa-nīti, the science of government; 4. vārtā, practical arts, such as agriculture, commerce, medicine &c.; and Manu vii, 43 adds a fifth, viz. ātma-vidyā, knowledge of soul or of spiritual truth; according to others, Vidyā has fourteen divisions, viz. the four Vedas, the six Vedāngas, the Purāṇas, the Mīmāṃsā. Nyāya, and Dharma or law; or with the four Upa-vedas, eighteen divisions; others reckon 33 and even 64 sciences [= kaīās or arts]; Knowledge is also personified and identified with Durgā; she is even said to have composed prayers and magical formulas);

any knowledge whether true or false (with Pāśupatas);
a spell, incantation;
magical skill;
a kind of magical pill (which placed in the mouth is supposed to give the power of ascending to heaven);
Premna Spinosa;
a mystical N. of the letter i;
a small bell

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vidya (knowledge) from the SANSKRIT root “to know” is an important philosophical term in Hindu tradition. Initially it connoted the knowledge of the Vedic MANTRAS and ritual, and it bestowed great power. When the UPANISHADS concluded that Vedic rituals alone could not help break the cycle of birth and rebirth, Vedic knowledge began to be called the “lower knowledge” (apara vidya) while the Upanishadic knowledge was called the higher or liberating knowledge (para vidya). Buddhism also used the term to refer to knowledge of the path that breaks the cycle of birth and rebirth.

Ramakrishna tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

A higher knowledge is called vidya, something distinct from ordinary knowledge, scientific or artistic knowledge, and the like.

Descriptions

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

A man asked Sri Bhagavan: “How is it that Atma vidya is said to be the easiest?”

M.: Any other vidya requires a knower, knowledge and the object to be known, whereas this does not require any of them. It is the Self. Can anything be so obvious as that? Hence it is the easiest. All that you need do is to enquire, “Who am I?”

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

... certain meditations. They are processes of the attunement of the mind to higher levels of being. They are called vidyas because they are specific types of knowledge. Vidya also means a meditation, a contemplation. A higher knowledge is called vidya, something distinct from ordinary knowledge, scientific or artistic knowledge, and the like.

...

As I mentioned, vidya means knowledge, meditation, a comprehensive insight into the nature of the reality behind any phenomenon. Now, what are these phenomena? The insight into which the Upanishad here leads us is the phenomenon of the descent of souls from the other regions into this world and the phenomenon of the ascent of souls from this region to the higher ones,—how souls descend and how souls ascend. When we consider these processes as mere events among many others, they exert a binding influence upon us. You know people are born; you know people die. This much of knowledge we do have. And, perhaps, we have also a knowledge that certain actions that we perform are responsible for our births and deaths and our experiences in life.

The good that we do brings good experiences, the pleasant ones; and the bad ones produce contrary results. This much of information we have gathered by study, hearing etc. But this is not the knowledge that will liberate us.

The Five Fires, called the Panchagnis, mentioned here, are not actually fires in the physical sense. They are meditational techniques...

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

The term vidya may be taken both in its Vedic connotation and in its literal dictionary meaning. In its Vedic application, vidya means upasana—concentrated and devoted meditation wherein the intellect tries to get away from its circumscribing vanities through a deliberate identification with a vaster concept as— “I am Prana, the All-pervading”, or “I am the Sun, the Almighty” or “I am Fire, the Effulgent” or “I am Indra, the Omnipotent”, etc. Vidya, in its other sense, means mere learning or book-knowledge.

Vidya and avidya

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

There is a recurring idea in several Upanishads, of the two kinds of knowledge that influence our life on earth. One is called avidya, ignorance, and the other is vidya, knowledge. Living according to the motivations of one's ego-centered interest is called avidya. It is mentioned in the Isa Upanishad that such people are living in darkness. Giving one's attention to transcendental ideas is called vidya. Paradoxically, it is mentioned in the same Upanishad that those who are attached to transcendental ideas live in even greater darkness, as it were.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

There exist in God both vidya and avidya. Vidyamaya leads one to God, and avidyamaya away from Him. Knowledge, devotion, compassion, and renunciation belong to the realm of vidya. With the help of these a man comes near God. One step more and he attains God, Knowledge of Brahman.

...

There are two aspects of maya: vidya and avidya. Avidya deludes one with worldliness, and vidya—wisdom, devotion, and the company of holy men—leads one to God.

He who has gone beyond maya, through the grace of God, views alike both vidya and avidya. Worldly life is a life of enjoyment. After all, what is there to enjoy in 'woman and gold'? As soon as a sweetmeat has gone down the throat, one doesn't remember whether it tasted sweet or sour.

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

Man is born in this world with two tendencies— Vidya, the tendency to pursue the path of liberation, and Avidya, the leaning towards worldliness and bondage. At his birth, both these tendencies are, as it were, in equilibrium like the two scales of a balance. The world soon places its enjoyments and pleasures in one scale, and the Spirit, its attractions in the other. If the mind chooses the world, the scale of Avidya becomes heavy, and man gravitates towards the earth; but if it chooses the Spirit, the scale of Vidya becomes heavier and pulls him towards God.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

People ask: "How did ignorance (avidya) arise at all?" We have to say to them: "Ignorance never arose. It has no real being. That which is, is only vidya(knowledge).

Vidya and jnana

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Vidya ... helps you attain jnana.

Vidya and maya

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

MAYA AS THE LIBERATING POWER (VIDYA)

62. In God there are both Vidya Maya and Avidya Maya. The Vidya Maya takes man towards God, whereas the Avidya Maya leads him astray. Knowledge, devotion, dispassion, compassion—all these are expressions of Vidya Maya; only with their help can one reach God.

63. It is Maya which reveals Brahman. Without Maya, who could have known Brahman? Without knowing Sakti, the manifested power of God, there is no means of knowing Him.

64. It is only due to Maya that the attainment of supreme knowledge and final beatitude becomes possible for us. Otherwise who could even dream of all this? From Maya alone spring duality and relativity; beyond Maya there is neither the enjoyer nor the object of enjoyment.

65. The cat catches her kitten with her teeth and they are not hurt; but when a mouse is so caught, it dies. Thus Maya never kills the devotee, though it destroys others.

See also:

in Veda: [Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness](#)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vidyā is derived from the root vid 'to know.'

Related words

Avidya

Brahmavidya
Jnana
Maya
Saraswati
Upasana
Vidvan

Sanskrit
Vidyā — विद्या
vidyā - वदिया

Vijnana

Variant spellings
vijnana
vijñāna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vijñāna — ... wisdom; cognition; intellect, consciousness; stream of consciousness

1. One of the twelve links in the causal chain of existence.
2. One of the five aggregates.
3. The intellect. It is also called buddhi.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vijñāna -

the act of distinguishing or discerning, understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge;

skill, proficiency, art;

science, doctrine;

worldly or profane knowledge (opp. to jñāna, 'knowledge of the true nature of God');

the faculty of discernment or of right judgement;

the organ of knowledge (= manas);

the understanding of (a particular meaning), regarding as;

(with Buddhists) consciousness or thought-faculty (one of the 5 constituent elements or Skandhas, also considered as one of the 6 elements or Dhātus, and as one of the 12 links of the chain of causation)

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Darsanamala of Narayana Guru

Seeing one Reality alone existing is called jñāna (wisdom) in Vedānta... Those of this insight perceive in each and every changeable aspect and experience of life, different transitory facets of the one Atma becoming manifest.

The Bhagavad-Gītā calls this aspect of wisdom vijñāna, and it has set apart a whole chapter (Chapter 7) to elucidate it. For example, water is a particular manifestation of the Real, and its specific quality is having taste. When sipping water and tasting it, you should see in that experience the one Reality or Atmā becoming manifest in a specific way, signified by the prefix “vi” of the word “vijñāna.” That kind of awareness is vijñāna.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

Vijnana or Transcendental Knowledge

... After jnana comes vijnana.

... “What is vijnana? It is knowing God in a special way. The awareness and conviction that fire exists in wood is jnana, knowledge. But to cook rice on that fire, eat the rice, and get nourishment from it is vijnana. To know by one’s inner experience that God exists is jnana. But to talk to Him, to enjoy Him as Child, as Friend, as Master, as Beloved, is vijnana. The realization that God alone has become the universe and all living beings is vijnana.

...

“He who has merely heard of milk is ‘ignorant’. He who has seen milk has ‘knowledge’. But he who has drunk milk and been strengthened by it has attained vijnana.” Thus the Master described his own state of mind to the devotees. He was indeed a vijnani.

...

“Suppose a thorn has pierced a man’s foot. He picks another thorn to pull out the first one. After extracting the first thorn with the help of the second, he throws both away. One should use the thorn of knowledge to pull out the thorn of ignorance. Then one throws away both the thorns, knowledge and ignorance, and attains vijnana. What is vijnana? It is to know God distinctly by realizing His existence through an intuitive experience and to speak to Him intimately. That is why Sri Krishna said to Arjuna, ‘Go beyond the three gunas.’

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Osborne. The collected works of Ramana Maharshi

2. What is knowledge (vijnana)?

It is that tranquil state of existence-consciousness which is experienced by the aspirant and which is like the waveless ocean or the motionless ether.

3. What is bliss?

It is the experience of joy (or peace) in the state of vijnana, free of all activities and similar to deep sleep. This is also called the state of kevala nirvikalpa (remaining without concepts).

See: Jnana and vijnana

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vijñāna — from the verb root jñā = “to know” + vi = “apart,” hence, “to discern”.

Related words

Jnana

Vijnanamaya kosha

Sanskrit

Vijñāna — विज्ञान

vijñāna - वज्जान

Vijnanamaya kosha

Variant spellings

vijnanamaya kosha

vijñānamaya-kośa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vijñānamaya-kośa — ... the sheath of the intellect

1. It is located within the mental sheath {manomaya-kośa}. These two, together with the prāṇamaya-kośa, constitute the subtle body.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vijñānamaya-kośa -

the sheath consisting of intelligence, the intelligent sheath (of the soul accord. to the Vedānta) or the sheath caused by the understanding being associated with the organs of perception

Wikipedia

Vijnanamaya kosha. Vijnanamaya means composed of vijnana, or intellect, the faculty which discriminates, determines or wills. Chattampi Swamikal defines vijnanamaya as the combination of intellect and the five sense organs. It is the sheath composed of more intellection, associated with the organs of perception. Sankara holds that the buddhi, with its modifications and the organs

of knowledge, form the cause of man's transmigration. This knowledge sheath, which seems to be followed by a reflection of the power of the cit, is a modification of prakrti. It is endowed with the function of knowledge and identifies itself with the body, organs etc.

This knowledge sheath cannot be the supreme self for the following reasons;

It is subject to change.

It is insentient.

It is a limited thing.

It is not constantly present.

Descriptions

General

Mees. *The Revelation in the Wilderness*

The fourth [kosa] is the Vijnanamayakosa, "the sheath made of Buddhi", for Vijnana and Buddhi are synonyms.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*

'Vijnanamaya' means identified with the intellect [about the self]; the self is so called because of our failure to discriminate its association with its limiting adjunct, the intellect, for it is perceived as associated with the intellect... The intellect is the instrument that helps us in everything, like a lamp set in front amidst darkness. It has been said, 'It is through the mind that one sees and hears' (I. v. 3). Every object is perceived only as associated with the light of the intellect, as objects in the dark are lighted up by a lamp placed in front; the other organs are but the channels for the intellect. Therefore the self is described in terms of that, as 'identified with the intellect.' Those who explain the word 'Vijnānamaya' as a modification of the consciousness that is the Supreme Self, evidently go against the import of the Śrutis, since in the words 'Vijñānamaya,' 'Manomaya,' etc., the suffix 'mayaḥ' denotes something else than modification; and where the meaning of a word is doubtful, it can be ascertained by a reference to a definite use of the word elsewhere, or from a supplementary statement; or else on the strength of irrefutable logic. From the use of the expression, 'Through its association with the intellect,'" a little further on, and from the words 'within the heart (intellect),' the word 'Vijñānamaya' ought to mean 'identified with the intellect.'

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Osborne. *The collected works of Ramana Maharshi*

The Self which is self-luminous and the witness of everything manifests itself as residing in the vijnanakosa (sheath of the intellect). By the mental mode which is impartite, seize this Self as your goal and enjoy it as the Self.

Ramana. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

As a rule Vijnanamaya kosa prevails on waking...

The common man is aware of himself only when modifications arise in the intellect (vijnanamaya kosa); these modifications are transient; they arise and set. Hence the vijnanamaya (intellect) is called a kosa or sheath.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Vivekachudamani Tr. Chatterji

The buddhi with its functions and combined with the organs of sensation becomes the vijñānamaya sheath whose characteristic is action and which is the cause of the revolution of births and deaths. 186

The modification of prakṛti called vijñānamaya sheath, follows after the individuality (sheath) which reflects the ātman and is possessed of the faculties of cognition and action, and its function is to specialize the body, organs and the rest as the ego. 187

... It [jiva] gathers experience by wandering through various grades of incarnation and comes below and goes above. It is to this vijñānamaya that belongs the experiences of the pleasure and pain pertaining to waking, dreaming and the other conditions. 189

Pre-eminently characterized by the closest proximity to the Paramātmān, this vijñānamaya becomes its objective basis. It produces the difference between “I” and “mine” and all actions pertaining to different stages of life and condition, and through ignorance it passes with the spiritual intelligence from one existence to another. 190

This vijñānamaya, reflecting the Light of the Logos, is manifested in the vital breaths (subtle currents of the sūksma sarira) and in the heart [The seat of abstract thought.]. This ātman being encased in this upādhi, appears to be the actor and enjoyer. 191

... the supreme spirit is not that which is called the vijñānamaya. By reason of its changeable, detached character and limited consciousness, as well as on account of its objectivity and liability to error, it (the vijñānamaya sheath) cannot be regarded as eternal. 208

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

Verse: 52

The buddhi with its thought modifications and the organs of perception is the vijñānamaya-kośa which is of the nature of the doer and the cause of samsara for the person.

... the word ‘vijñānamaya’ is used in the sense of both the doer and the enjoyer. The identification here is with the aham-vṛtti, “I” thought; therefore the vijñānamaya is aham-vṛtti-viśaya, the locus of “I” thought. Being the locus of “I” thought, it becomes the subject - knower and doer. Everything else is idam-vṛtti or object, which is looked upon as ‘this’, something different from me. So the world becomes idam-vṛtti-viśaya. the object of ‘this’ thought.

... The vijñānamaya performs [all the actions] and enjoys their results. Therefore the vijñānamaya is the central figure in the whole complex of human life.

But who is this vijñānamaya? The śāstra says, “ ... it is the buddhi alone, with the sense organs”.

... What does it do? It becomes the cause of samsāra for the person... The vijñānamaya can keep the person in samsāra for ever or it can free the person also. It is the cause for both the perpetuation of samsāra as well its elimination.

Verse: 53

This kośa known as vijñāna has the power of illumining due to the reflected consciousness which has entered it; it is a modified form of prakṛti having the function of knowledge and action and always identifies totally with the body, sense organs etc., as “I”.

The vijñānamaya is conscious of everything. It is the one which has got the power of illumining everything because of consciousness borrowed from the cit. Vijñānamaya is one in which the cit, the caitanya has entered as though. This is so because the vijñānamaya is vṛtti and every vṛtti reflects the consciousness. So the aham-vṛtti is a conscious entity. The caitanya exists in idam-vṛtti also. It is there in the whole antahkarana. This vijñānamaya looks at the object of the idam-vṛtti and says, “This is differ-

ent from me”, because he identifies with one body-mind-sense-complex. It has got the cit-śakti or power of consciousness even though borrowed. And he is called vijñāna, vijñāna-samjñah. The vijñāna is not karana here but kartā. The vijñānamaya is the modified form of the prakṛti or avidyā alone, prakṛ-ter-vikārah. Among all the vṛttis of the antahkaraṇa, the vijñānamaya is the main vṛtti. Also it is jñāna-kriyāvān, one who does the act of knowing. He is the knower who uses all the means of knowledge and gathers knowledge. He is the one who does a variety of jobs. Not only that, he does not stand away from the body-mind-sense-complex but identifies himself with it. With reference to body, senses and the mind he has ‘I’-sense. When the body goes he says, ‘I go’ and that ‘I go’ is very real. Therefore all the attributes of the physical body are assumed by the vijñānamaya. Similarly, he identifies with the prāna, senses and mind and assumes their attributes. All the attributes of the body-mind-sense-complex are loaded on the ātmā. The vijñānamaya becomes the ātmā until one knows the real ātmā. What is the intensity of this identification? It is total, complete, bhrśam. The identification is so total that he does not even entertain any doubt that ‘I may be wrong’. That is why it is very difficult to make the person even to see the fact that the ātmā is to be understood and that it is other than the vijñānamaya. Ísvara’s grace alone makes him listen to this. One may undergo psychotherapy but not the ātmā-vicāra. Until Ísvara-anugraha, grace of the Lord is gained, crossing the vijñānamaya cannot take place.

Vijnanamaya kosha and aham

[Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

The mind is formed of thoughts only Idam (this) is the object and aham (‘I’) is the subject; the two together form the vijnanamaya-kosa (intellect-sheath).

See also:

in Anandamaya kosha: [Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Diagram: The five sheaths (pancha-kosas)

Related words

Aham
Buddhi
Kosha
Suksma sarira
Vijnana

Sanskrit

Vijñānamaya-kośa — विज्ञानमयकोश

vijñānamaya-kośa - वज्ज्ञानमयकोश

Vikshepa

Variant spellings

vikshepa

vikṣepa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vikṣepa — ... projection; false projection; distraction

1. It is the projecting power of ignorance, according to Advaita Vedānta.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vikṣepa -

the act of throwing asunder or away or about, scattering, dispersion;

casting, throwing, discharging;

moving about or to and fro, waving, shaking, tossing;

drawing (a bow-string);

letting loose, indulging (opp. to saṁyama);

letting slip, neglecting (time);

inattention, distraction, confusion, perplexity;

extension, projection;

abusing, reviling;

compassion, pity;

celestial or polar latitude;

a kind of weapon;

a camp, cantonment;

a kind of disease Cat.;

sending, dispatching;

refuting an argument

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

211. Distraction (Vikshepa) is the resting of the mental state on things other than the Absolute, because of the failure to rest on It.

Descriptions

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Lessons on the Upanishads

... other defect of the mind is known as vikshepa – which is fickleness; the inability to concentrate on anything for a long time. Instability is the basic nature of the mind. It thinks twenty things in one minute and is not able to fix its attention on one thing, even for a few seconds. These are the superficial aspects of the defects of the mind.

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

111. Rajas has projecting power (Vikshepasakti). Activity is its very nature. From it the initial flow of activity has originated. From it, mental modifications such as attachment and grief are also continuously produced.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

The Rajas attitude of Maya creates the agitations of the mind (Vikshepa). Maya expressed at the mental level manifests in the form of mental agitations. The Maya which creates restlessness in the mind is called Rajoguna, from which all activities are born.

...

Rajoguna creates agitations in the mind. Due to these mental agitations, objectively we act in the world and subjectively we experience desires, passions, lust and consequently, joys and sorrows.

See: Avarana and vikshepa

See also:

in OM: [Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga](#)

Related words

Ajnana
Avarana
Avidya
Maya
Rajas

Sanskrit

Vikṣepa — विक्षेप

vikṣepa - विक्षेप

Viraj

Variant spellings

viraj
virāj

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Virāj— ... the macrocosm; the manifested universe; the world man

1. According to Advaita Vedānta, *viśva* (sthūla) and *vaiśvānara* are equated with *virāj*.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

virāj -

to reign, rule, govern, master (gen. or acc.), excel (abl.); to be illustrious or eminent, shine forth, shine out (abl.), glitter; to appear as (nom.) ... cause to shine forth, give radiance or lustre, brighten, illuminate;

ruling far and wide, sovereign, excellent, splendid;

a ruler, chief. king or queen (applied to Agni, Sarasvatī, the Sun &c.);

excellence, pre-eminence, high rank, dignity, majesty;

the first progeny of Brahmā (according to Mn. i, 32 &c., Brahmā having divided his own substance into male and female, produced from the female the male power *Virāj*, who then produced the first *Manu* or *Manu Svāyambhuva*, who then created the ten *Prajāpatis*; the *BhP.* states that the male half of Brahmā was *Manu*, and the other half *Śata-rūpā*, and does not allude to the intervention of *Virāj*; other *Purāṇas* describe the union of *Śata-rūpā* with *Virāj* or *Purusha* in the first instance, and with *Manu* in the second; *Virāj* as a sort of secondary creator, is sometimes identified with *Prajāpati*, *Brahmā*, *Agni*, *Purusha*, and later with *Vishṇu* or *Kṛishṇa*, while in *ṚV.* x, 90, he is represented as born from *Purusha*, and *Purusha* from him; in the *AV.* viii, 10, 24; xi, 8, 30, *Virāj* is spoken of as a female, and regarded as a cow; being elsewhere, however, identified with *Praṇa*);

(in Vedānta) N. of the Supreme Intellect located in a supposed aggregate of gross bodies (= *vaiśvānara*), *Vedāntas*;

a warrior (= *kṣatriya*);

the body;

a particular *Ekāha PañcavBr.*;

N. of a son of *Priya-vrata* and *Kāmyā*;

of a son of *Nara*;

of *Buddha*;

of a son of *Rādhā*;

of a district;

a particular Vedic metre consisting of four *Pādas* of ten syllables each (and therefore also a symbolical N. of the number 'ten'; in *ṚV.* x, 130, 5 this metre is represented as attaching itself to *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, and in *AitBr.* i, 4 *Virāj* is mystically regarded as

'food', and invocations are directed to be made in this metre when food is the especial object of prayer; in prosody Virāj is applied to any metre defective by two syllables;
N. of particular bricks (40 in number)

Lurker. Dictionary of Gods

Viraj ('she who extends herself in might'). In Indian mythology, a primeval being generated by → Brahman; often thought of as the primeval cow. Another tradition makes Viraj a female creative principle which has arisen from → Purusa.

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Psychology of Darsanamala

The principles that illuminate, indha, and animate, virāj, come together in each individuated person. This coming together is described as similar to the synchronization of the light that comes from the right eye, indha, and the light from the left eye, virāj. The gross body, in which these powers manifest, is maintained by the essence of nourishment processed and evenly administered by prāna. The union of indha and virāj is in the heart, from where a network of minute conductors of energy, called hita, runs in all directions.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. A Commentary on the Upanishads

"Yajnavalkya said: 'Indha is the Self identified with the physical self. Viraj, the physical world is his wife, the object of his enjoyment. The space within the heart is their place of union in dream, when the Self is identified with the subtle body, or mind. The Self in dreamless sleep is identified with the vital force. Beyond this is the Supreme Self—he that has been described as Not This, Not That. He is incomprehensible, for he cannot be comprehended; he is undecaying, for he never decays; he is unattached, for he does not attach himself; he is unfettered, for nothing can fetter him. He is never hurt. You have attained him who is free from fear, O Janaka, and free from birth and death.'

Janaka said: 'May that fearlessness come to you who teach us fearlessness. I bow down to you. Behold, this empire of Videha, and I myself, are at your service.'" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4:2:1-4)

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Ballantyne

"Viraj, the spirit of waking sentiences. The third and lowest of the progressive emanations [after Isvara and Hiranyagarbha] is Viraj, Vaisvanara, Prajapati, or Purusha. His body is the whole mundane egg, the outer shell of the visible world, or the sum of the visible and perishing bodies of migrating souls. He is identified with the totality of waking consciousness, with the sum of souls in the waking state and the sum of their gross visible and tangible environments. He is the sum of souls that illusively identify themselves with their outer bodies, and thus suffer hunger, thirst and faintness. and all the other miseries of metempsychosis."

See also:

in Hita: [Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom](#)

Related words

Indra
Vaishvanara
Visva

Sanskrit

Virāj — विराज्

virāj - वरिज्

Virat

Variant spellings

Virat
Virāt

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Virāt — ... the cosmic form of the Self as the cause of the gross world.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

[Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi](#)

Virat: totality of gross beings

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

[Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda](#)

The gross bodies also, in their fourfold variety, may be regarded ... collectively or individually. They may be regarded as a whole, like a wood, or as separate [entities], like the trees in a wood. Consciousness limited or conditioned by the upādhi of the aggregate of gross bodies is called Virat or Vaiśvānara; it regards all the gross bodies of the universe as its own body. The body belonging to Virāt, through which it functions, is called the annamayakośa the gross physical sheath, on account of its being a modification of food. It functions in the waking state and experiences gross objects.

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda

113. The worshippers of Virat hold that no subtle body is seen without a physical body. So Virat, who has a physical body with head and other organs, is the real Ishvara.

114. The Shruti says that the form of Virat is the form of the universe, extending in all directions with an infinite number of heads and eyes. So they meditate on Virat.

115. Then there are worshippers who object to the worship of Virat on the ground that according to this conception of Virat even insects and worms will have to be regarded as Ishvara. So the four-faced Brahma, the creator, is Ishvara and nobody else.

...

204. In Virat the world appears distinct and shining, like objects in broad day-light or like the figures of a fully painted picture or the fruit of a fully matured tree. In Virat all the gross bodies are plainly seen.

205. In the Vishvarupa chapter and in the Purusha Sukta there is a description of Virat. From the creator Brahma to a blade of grass, all objects in the world form part of Virat.

206. The forms of Virat, such as Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Indra, Agni, Ganesha, Bhairava, Mairala, Marika, Yakshas, demons.

207. Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras, cows, horses and other beasts, birds, fig, banyan and mango trees, wheat, rice and other cereals and grasses;

208. Water, stone, earth, chisels, axes and other implements are manifestations of Ishvara. Worshipped as Ishvara they grant fulfilment of desires.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

The temples, especially in Southern India, are constructed in the shape of the Virāt. The Holy of Holies inside is the head of the Virāt, which is represented by a luminous glow of a sacred light in a dark room, comparable to the Ānandamaya Koṣha (causal sheath) which is dark, but illumined by the Ātman within, and encompassed by seven Prakaras, or corridors. Sometimes these are five, comparable to the five Koṣhas or vestures of the body—Annamaya, Prāṇamaya, Manomaya, Vijñānamaya, Ānandamaya—the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and causal sheaths. And there is the Balipitha, the sacrificial altar, at the entrance, which is represented by a huge post. Before you enter the body of the Virāt, you have to offer yourself first; otherwise, no entry is possible. You have to pay a fee to the Virāt before you gain access into it, and the fee is your own self. You have to cease to be, first, as you are now, in order that you may become what you want to become. This is the symbol of temple construction, and also of the patterns drawn in the Aśvamedha Sacrifice. That pattern is described here in its correlation with the parts of the universe. Such is the geometrical description of the creation of the universe, with its deep philosophical significance and spiritual connotation. One who knows this becomes strong and obtains a resting place, wherever he be.

Dayananda. Taittiriya Upanishad

Virat means the total of that which is in the form of the five elements.

Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad

... they gave him food. Now follows a very complicated passage. It is peculiarly archaic, as many of the mantras in the Vedas and the Upanishads are. I give you merely the literal translation of what it is. This five and the other five make ten. This is the enigmatic

meaning of this sentence. This is called the krita. Therefore, food comes from all the ten directions. The Virat is the eater of everything. Whatever it sees, it eats. The food itself is the eater of food. This is the effect that follows in respect of anyone who knows this secret.

Now, what do we make out of this? We cannot make out any sense if we read it literally like that. But it has a significant mystical meaning. The five are the eater and five are the eaten. The eater is Vayu cosmically, the absorber, the supreme deity into which everything enters. The other four are the articles of diet for this supreme deity. According to some it is fire, sun, moon and water. If we do not want it to be so complicated, we may say that they are the four elements,—ether, fire, water and earth which are absorbed into this Supreme Absorber. Inwardly the prana is the eater, and the food is the sense-organs, speech, eye, ear and mind. So the four items which are regarded as food or which are the eaten, together with the eater, constitute the five. The five in the macrocosm and the five in the microcosm make ten. ...

Another very interesting word that is mentioned here is virat. In the Veda, virat is a metre which has ten letters. So there is a comparison introduced here between the metre virat having ten letters, and the number ten which has association with the deity as the eater of food and the eaten... Or, in a more general way, it means Virat, the cosmic Person, is the All-Being, the most comprehensive Reality to which everything is food. In the Virat you cannot say which is the eater and which is the eaten. There is no object-subject difference in the Virat. Food flows from all directions to the Virat and in the form of the Virat. The Virat is the name that we give to the all-comprehensive Reality where subject-object distinction cannot be made, as it is no more. The seer and the seen are indistinguishable. There is no difference between the eater and the eaten. The eaten itself is the eater, and the eater is the eaten. We can look at it either way. Whatever perceives is the stuff that is eaten, and whatever is eaten is also that which perceives. One who knows this mystery also becomes like this. What is this mystery will be clear to anyone who has read and understood these passages.

See: Brahman, Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat

See: Hiranyagarbha and Virat

Virat and Vaishvanara

Ramakrishna tradition

Sarvananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The gross macrocosmic aspect of the Universal Soul is called Virat and the microcosmic is known as Vaisvanara. The Upanishad describes here only the Visva or the Vaisvanara, and not the Virat. Thereby it tacitly alludes to the fact that the same Atman who is viewed from the individual standpoint as the individual soul, is also the Universal Soul.

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

The theme of the Mandukya Upanishad is an exposition of the Mystic Syllable, Om, with a view to training the mind in meditation, for the purpose of achieving freedom, gradually, so that the individual soul is attuned to the Ultimate Reality. The basis of this meditation is explained in the Vidya (meditation), known as the Vaisvanara Vidya. This is the secret of the knowledge of the Universal Being, designated as Vaisvanara. Its simple form of understanding is a transference of human attributes to the Divine

Existence, and vice versa. In this meditation, one contemplates the Cosmos as one's Body. Just as, for example, when one contemplates one's individual body, one simultaneously becomes conscious of the right eye, the left eye, the right hand, the left hand, the right leg, the left leg, the head, the heart, the stomach, and all the limbs of the body at one and the same time, and one does not regard the different limbs of the body as distinguished from one another in any manner, all limbs being only apparently different but really connected to a single personality, so in this meditation, the consciousness is to be transferred to the Universal Being. Instead of one contemplating oneself as the individual body, one contemplates oneself as the Universal Body. Instead of the right eye, there is the sun. Instead of the left eye, there is the moon. Instead of the feet, there is the earth. Instead of the head, there is the heaven, and so on. The limbs of the Cosmic Person are identified with cosmic elements, and vice versa, so that there is nothing in the cosmos which does not form an organic part of the Body of the Virat, or Vaisvanara. When you see the vast world before you, you behold a part of your own Body. When you look at the sun, you behold your own eye. When you look above into the heavens, you are seeing your own head. When you see all people moving about, you behold the various parts of your own personality. The vast wind is your breath. All your actions are cosmic movements. Anything that moves, does so on account of your movement. Your breath is the Cosmic Vital Force. Your intelligence is the Cosmic Intelligence. Your existence is Cosmic Existence. Your happiness is Cosmic Bliss.

... Whatever our mind can think, becomes an object for the mind; and that object, again, should become a part of the meditator's Body, cosmically. And, the moment the object that is conceived by the mind is identified with the Cosmic Body, the object ceases to agitate the mind any more; because that object is not any more outside; it becomes a part of the Body of the meditator. When an object becomes a part of our own body, it no more annoys us because it is not an object at all. It is a subject. The object has become the Cosmic Subject, in the Vaisvanara meditation.

The Vidya has its origin, actually, in the Rig-Veda, in a famous Sukta, or hymn, called the Purusha-Sukta. The Purusha-Sukta of the Rig-Veda commences by saying that all the heads, all the eyes, and all the feet that we see in this world are the heads, eyes, and feet of the Virat-Purusha, or the Cosmic Being. With one head, the Virat nods in silence; with another face He smiles; with a third one, He frowns; in one form, He sits; in another form, He moves; in one form, He is near; in another form, He is distant. So, all the forms, whatever they be, and all the movements and actions, processes and relations, become parts of the Cosmic Body, with which the Consciousness should be identified simultaneously. When you think, you think all things at the same time, in all the ten directions; nay, in every way.

See also: Evolution of Prakriti (Sankhya)

Meditation

in Vaishvanara: [Krishnananda. Chhandogya Upanishad](#)

in Upasana: [Sankara & Gambhirananda. Chandogya Upanishad](#)

Related words

Hiranyagarbha
Ishvara

Jagrat
Vaishvanara

Sanskrit
Virāt — विराट्
Virāt - वरिट्

Visishta-Advaita

Variant spellings
visishta-advaita
Viśiṣṭādvaita

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Viśiṣṭādvaita — ... qualified nondualism; pansynthetic monism

1. A theistic school of Vedānta whose great consolidator and exponent is Rāmānuja. It posits three ultimate realities: God, individuals, and matter (Īśvara, cit, and acit), which exist in an inseparable relationship, though cit and acit are dependent upon the independent God (īśvara). The complex whole forms an organic unity and thus its name, Viśiṣṭādvaita.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

Viśiṣṭādvaita -

'qualified non-duality', the doctrine that the spirits of men have a qualified identity with the one Spirit (see Rāmānuja)

Descriptions

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Visishta-Advaita: Vishesha is the specialized aspect of nature or creation. The supreme divinity is the culminating stage of such specialization as the highest of its effects or the flower of perfection. That school of Vedanta as revalued by Ramanuja which holds that this perfected being, while retaining his status as a specialized aspect of reality, could still represent non-duality in its philosophical implications, is called the Visishta Advaita school of Vedanta.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

The second type of students ... insist, "I am a composite being, comprising an anatomical structure with physiological functions and also a psychological entity with intellectual abilities. I am the body as well as the jeeva, the individuality, the thinking-feeling

entity”. The psychological and intellectual entity has the glow of reflected divinity, just as in the achievements of an artist or a scientist, there is certainly a spark of divinity. Such students are addressed by Sri Ramanujacharya. He says, “You are not separate from Truth. You are a part and He is the whole.” This school of thought is Visishla-advaita or “Qualified Non-dualism”.

Related words

Advaita Vedanta
Dvaita
Vedanta
Vishnu

Sanskrit

Viśiṣṭādvaita — विशिष्टाद्वैत
Viśiṣṭādvaita - विशिष्टाद्वैत

Vishnu

Name

Viṣṇu — विष्णु
Viṣṇu - विष्णु
Vishnu

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Viṣṇu — ... the supreme Lord; the all-pervading

1. A name for the all-pervasive supreme Reality. One of the Hindu trinity of gods, representing God as the sustainer, the personal God of the Vaiṣṇavas. In His personal form, He is portrayed as four-armed holding a conch, a discus, a lotus, and a mace. He is dark blue in color. During times of great wickedness and trouble, Viṣṇu incarnates on the earth in order to protect men and gods and reestablish righteousness. There are ten such incarnations in our present world cycle, with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa being the most popular and important.
2. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, he is the sole Reality, one without a second, having the sentient (cit) and insentient (acit) for his qualifications. He is the means to liberation and the goal to be attained.
3. He abides in a fivefold form as para, vyūha, vibhava, antarydmin, and area.
4. He has six divine qualities: knowledge (jñāna), strength (bala), lordship (aiśvarya), power (śakti), virility (vīrya) and splendor (tejas).
5. Among His manifestations are Sañkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and Vāsudeva.

6. His weapons include the conch (śaṅkha), discus (cakra), club (gadd), sword (khadga), and bow (śārṅga).

7. One of the names of the Law Books and a name of a Purāṇa.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vishṇu -

N. of one of the principal Hindū deities (in the later mythology regarded as 'the preserver', and with Brahmā 'the creator' and Śiva 'the destroyer', constituting the well-known Tri-mūrti or triad; although Vishṇu comes second in the triad he is identified with the supreme deity by his worshippers; in the Vedic period, however, he is not placed in the foremost rank, although he is frequently invoked with other gods [esp. with Indra whom he assists in killing Vṛitra and with whom he drinks the Soma juice; cf. his later names Indrānuja and Upendra]; as distinguished from the other Vedic deities, he is a personification of the light and of the sun, esp. in his striding over the heavens, which he is said to do in three paces [see tri-vikrama and cf. bali, vāmana], explained as denoting the threefold manifestations of light in the form of fire, lightning, and the sun, or as designating the three daily stations of the sun in his rising, culminating, and setting; Vishṇu does not appear to have been included at first among the Adityas, although in later times he is accorded the foremost place among them; in the Brāhmaṇas he is identified with sacrifice, and in one described as a dwarf; in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa he rises to the supremacy which in some places he now enjoys as the most popular deity of modern Hindū worship; the great rivalry between him and Śiva [cf. vaiṣṇava and śaiva] is not fully developed till the period of the Purāṇas: the distinguishing feature in the character of the Post-vedic Vishṇu is his condescending to become incarnate in a portion of his essence on ten principal occasions, to deliver mankind from certain great dangers [cf. avatāra...]; some of the Purāṇas make 22 incarnations, or even 24, instead of 10; the Vaishṇavas regard Vishṇu as the supreme being, and often identify him with Nārāyaṇa, the personified Purusha or primeval living spirit [described as moving on the waters, reclining on Śesha, the serpent of infinity, while the god Brahmā emerges from a lotus growing from his navel; cf. Manu i, 10]; the wives of Vishṇu are Aditi and Sinlvāll, later Lakshmi or Śri and even Sarasvatī; his son is Kāma-deva, god of love, and his paradise is called Vaikuṅṭha; he is usually represented with a peculiar mark on his breast called Śri-vatsa, and as holding a śaṅkha, or conch-shell called Pāñcajanya, a cakra or quoit-like missile-weapon called śu-darśana, a gadā or club called Kaumodaki and a padma or lotus; he has also a bow called Śārṅga, and a sword called Nandaka; his vāhana or vehicle is Garuḍa; he has a jewel on his wrist called Syamantaka, another on his breast called Kaustubha, and the river Ganges is said to issue from his foot; the demons slain by him in his character of 'preserver from evil', or by Kṛishṇa as identified with him, are Madhu, Dhenuka, Cāṇūra, Yamala, and Arjuna [see yamalārjuna], Kāla-nemi, Haya-grīva, Śakaṭa, Arishṭa, Kaiṭabha, Kaṁsa, Keśin, Mura, Śāiva, Mainda, Dvi-vida, Rāhu, Hiraṇya-kaśipu, Bāṇa, Kāliya, Naraka, Bali; he is worshipped under a thousand names, which are all enumerated in MBh. xiii, 6950-7056; he is sometimes regarded as the divinity of the lunar mansion called Śravaṇa)

N. of the month Caitra;

(with prājāpatya) of the author of RV;

of a son of Manu Sāvarṇa and Bhautya;

of a son of Manu Sāvarṇa and Bhautya;

of the writer of a law-book;

of the father of the 11th Arhat of the present Avasarpiṇī;

of various authors and others;

= agni;

= vasu-devatā;

śuddha;

N. of the mother of the 11th Arhat of the present Avasarpiṇī

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vishnu in his various forms is one of the most worshipped gods in the Indian pantheon. His tradition, known as VAISHNAVISM, constitutes the second largest sect within Hinduism.

Vishnu first appears in the VEDAS as a rather insignificant divinity, with only minor ritual importance. There are only 64 mentions of him in the RIG VEDA, most of them in passing, with only a handful of hymns addressed to him alone. He is celebrated in the Vedas mostly for his “three steps” that saved the world, in his incarnation as VAMANA AVATAR.

Vishnu first gains prominence in the later Vedic period, apparently after being identified with VASUDEVA, a non-Vedic god popular in western India in the last centuries before the Common Era, and with the god Narayana of the Vedic BRAHMANA literature. By the time of the MAHABHARATA and RAMAYANA epics his prominence was assured. He was identified both with the gods KRISHNA, hero of the Mahabharata, and RAMA, hero of the Ramayana.

Eventually, Vishnu’s cult reached full development when he was recognized as Mahavishnu (great Vishnu), preserver of the universe, who entered into the world when needed in successive AVATARS or “descents.” Before the world is created, Vishnu sleeps on the cosmic MILK OCEAN on the back of the divine serpent ADISHESHA. Out of his navel grows a lotus from which BRAHMA the creator god emerges to create the universe. Once the world is created Vishnu reigns in his heavenly realm of Vaikuntha. Iconographically, Vishnu is depicted as being of dark blue color with four arms. He is seated on a throne. In his four hands he holds a conch, a war discus, a mace, and a lotus. He wears the Kaustubha gem around his neck and has a tuft of hair on his chest called Shrivatsa. His vehicle is the man-eagle GARUDA. His spouse is LAKSHMI, or Sri. In the highest understanding he exists as all things and also transcends them.

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

There is evidence to show that, like the conception of Śiva, that of Viṣṇu also had reached pre-eminence by the time of the Greek invasion. There was also another conception, viz. that of Nārāyaṇa, gradually evolving in the later Vedic period. The word ‘Nārāyaṇa’ means ‘descendant of Nara or the primeval male,’ i.e. Puruṣa from whom the whole universe springs into existence, according to the Puruṣa-sūkta. He appears as supreme in certain passages of the Brahmanas, and later is identified with Viṣṇu giving rise to the conception of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, parallel to that of Rudra-Siva. Thenceforward these two conceptions dominate the religious thought of India. Brahmā has his origin and basis in speculation rather than in popular cult and therefore he did not appeal, in spite of his sublime character, to the religious feelings of the masses.

The supremacy of the Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa conception appears oftenest in the Mahābhārata. But it is generally found blended there with another, whose origin and general features we must now indicate. This second current of theistic thought is what is described as theism of the Bhāgavata type. It recognized only a transcendent God while Vedic theism, as may be expected from its kinship with the Upanisads, tended to view him as both immanent and transcendent. The Bhāgavata creed seems to have been non-Brahminic in its origin, though not non-Aryan. It probably originated in that part of the country which lies west of the classic Madhya-deśa between the Ganges and the Jumna, where most of the early Upanisads were composed. The creed was founded

long before Buddha's time by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a hero of the Aryan tribes dwelling there. Its essential features were belief in a single personal God, Vasudeva, and in salvation as resulting from an unswerving devotion to him. ... Later, as it so often happens, the hero who preached this creed was himself deified and identified with the Supreme. In Śrī Kṛṣṇa's time, the designation of the supreme God was probably 'Bhagavat' or 'the worshipful,' whence the name Bhāgavata or 'worshipper of Bhagavat.' The name 'Bhagavadgītā' ('Lord's song') given to the well-known work, which appears as an inset in the epic, suggests that when it was composed Śrī Kṛṣṇa had come to be worshipped as the Supreme. This religion in still later times was amalgamated with the theistic teaching of the Madhya-deśa, probably as a set-off against the secessions that were gaining strength in the East; and then Śrī Kṛṣṇa was identified with Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, who had by that time, come to be looked upon there as the Highest. In this final form the doctrine is very elaborately treated of in the sections of the Mahābhārata known as the Nārāyaṇīya; but it there indicates a development which almost certainly is in advance of the period with which we are now concerned. An earlier phase of the same is seen in the Bhagavadgītā where, for instance, the identification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa does not yet appear.

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vishnu ("all-pervasive"). Along with Shiva and the Goddess, one of the three most important deities in the Hindu pantheon. All three of these are notable for being almost unmentioned in the Vedas, the earliest Hindu religious texts, and the ascendancy of these three and the gradual eclipse of the Vedic gods points clearly to a definitive shift in Hindu religious life. Of the three, Vishnu has the most significant presence in the Vedas. Many of the hymns in which he is mentioned describe him as a helper to the storm-god Indra, the primary Vedic god, and one of Vishnu's epithets here is Upendra ("junior Indra"). Yet he also appears in some of the late hymns as an independent agent, who is associated with marvelous deeds for the good of the cosmos, such as taking three steps to measure out the universe. Vishnu is also associated with the sun, both in his ability to move through the heavens, and to fall on (and thus "observe") all things.

In the divine triad of Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, Vishnu is identified as the sustainer or maintainer of the cosmos. One manifestation of this can be seen in a common creation myth, which begins with Vishnu lying on the back of his serpent couch, Shesha, in the primordial ocean at the time of cosmic dissolution (pralaya). A lotus sprouts from Vishnu's navel, which opens to reveal Brahma, the creator, who begins the work of creation. Vishnu presides over the creation, and when the time for dissolution comes again, the entire process reverses, and the universe is drawn back into Vishnu, who is thus seen as the source of all.

The other way that Vishnu sustains the cosmos is through the action of his avatars or incarnations, who come into the world to restore balance to a universe dangerously out of equilibrium, usually because of a demon grown disproportionately strong. There are ten generally reckoned avatars. The first four are in nonhuman forms: the Fish avatar, Tortoise avatar, Boar avatar, and Man-Lion avatar. The other six are in human form, often as sages or heroes: Vamana avatar, Parashuram avatar, Rama avatar, Krishna avatar, Buddha avatar, and Kalki avatar; the last has yet to come. In each of these cases, Vishnu takes form to avert some sort of disaster and to maintain the integrity of the cosmos. The doctrine of the avatars provided a mechanism to assimilate existing deities into the larger pantheon and to give them recognizable status of their own. Although most of the avatars are no longer objects of worship (the Boar and Man-Lion avatars each had a substantial following early in the common era), in much of northern India the worship of Rama and Krishna has largely eclipsed that of Vishnu himself, who has largely faded into the background. In southern India, Vishnu is still an important object of worship, particularly in the Shrivaiṣṇava community. Aside from the doctrine of the avatars, important local deities have also been assimilated into the pantheon as forms of Vishnu; the most significant examples are Jagannath, Venkateshvara, and Vithoba.

In medieval Hinduism sectarian rivalry developed between Vaishnavas and Shaivas, with each claiming that their chosen deity (Vishnu and Shiva, respectively) was supreme. Although Vaishnavas see Vishnu as the supreme power in the universe, his mythic character and activity differ sharply from Shiva's. Whereas Shiva is associated with ascetic life and practices (tapas), and thus with the religious power generated by such practices, Vishnu's headdress is a crown, and his persona is that of an allruling king. Whereas Shiva destroys his mythic adversaries using raw power, from which all subtlety is absent, Vishnu more often triumphs through cunning, cleverness, and trickery. Each deity's adherents affirm their divinity as the preeminent power in the universe, from which all the other gods gain their power, and both are seen as gracious and loving to their devotees (bhakta).

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Footprints of Gods, Angels and Gurus have been worshipped in many traditions. They have been found in Brittany, Scandinavia, Ireland and elsewhere. For the Aztecs in Mexico they were symbols of the presence of the Sun-God. Footprints symbolize the perfect meeting of the two Great Extremes: Heaven and Earth. In them Heaven leaves its mark on Earth. In Hinduism the (sole of the) Foot of Vishnu is worshipped by Vaishnavites. The main centre of this worship is the Vishnupada or "Vishnu-foot" temple at Gaya, only a few miles away from the Buddha-Gaya temple, built at the place where Buddha obtained Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. In the earliest period of Buddhism, Buddha was not worshipped in the form of an image, but in his footprint or representations of his footprint.

...

In Ceylon is found on the top of Adam's Peak the famous footprint which is venerated by Mohammedans and Christians as the footprint of Adam, by Hindus as a footprint of Vishnu and by Buddhists as a footprint of Buddha.

...

The Vishnupada or Foot of Vishnu, which is worshipped by Vaishnavites, has fourteen symbols represented on its sole. The relation between the Sun and the sole of the foot, which has been referred to before, is found in Hindu tradition in the relation between the words "pādam", meaning foot, and "padam". Both words are from a common root. To "pādam" are related the Greek "pous, podos", the Latin "pes, pedis" and the English "foot". To "padam" is related the English "path". "Padam" means "path, goal, abode, and ray of light" in the symbolical as well as in the literal sense of these words. "Padam" further means the Word in the sense of Logos. OM is called a padam. The Pole Star is also called a padam. The Paramapada is the "Highest Abode or State" of Vishnu. Many of the symbolic implications of "padam" attach to Aquarius, the Highest Abode of Divinity, the House of the Spiritual Pole, and the Goal. On account of these traditional matters it is understandable that the Vaishnava Upanishad says concerning the Padam or Foot of Vishnu: If you daily worship this Padam, the ancestors will be liberated from all sins, Jnana (God-Realization) will be given to you, and the outcome will be Moksha (Liberation). In view of what has been said concerning the deeper meaning of "ancestors" it becomes clear what this verse implies. Many devout Hindus make the pilgrimage to Gaya, where the Vishnupada temple is, in order "to liberate their ancestors" in some sense or other, or in a way which has little sense at all at the present time.

Avataras of Vishnu

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vishnu as the sustainer divinity takes human or animal incarnations when needed to maintain or defend the world. The BHAGAVAD GITA says that whenever there is a decrease in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness in the world, Vishnu

(there KRISHNA) sends himself forth. Only Vishnu among the gods is seen to take on incarnations as part of a divine duty. Other gods such as SHIVA and the Goddess will be found in various forms, but these will not be referred to in general as avatars or incarnations.

There are different lists of avatars or incarnations of Vishnu in different texts and traditions, variously containing 10, 12, or 22 god names. The most common list of avatars is MATSYA (fish), KURMA (tortoise), VARAHA (boar), Narasimha (man-lion), VAMANA (dwarf), PARASHURAMA (RAMA with the axe), Rama of the RAMAYANA, KRISHNA, BUDDHA, and KALKI (his future incarnation). Sometimes Krishna's brother BALARAMA is made the 11th avatar and sometimes both Krishna and Balarama are classified as one avatar. Whenever Vishnu takes an avatar, he is subject to birth and death just as a human is. Krishna of the MAHABHARATA, for instance, dies by being shot in the heel.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

Among the myths of Hinduism an important place is taken by those about the Avatars. This word, generally translated by "incarnation", means literally "descent". It first of all signifies Divine Descent in the world and secondarily Divine Descent during the Ages. The Avatars of Vishnu are usually mentioned in a group of ten, and often and generally this group is as follows: 1. Matsya or Fish; 2. Kurma or Tortoise; 3. Varaha or Boar; 4. Narasimha or Man-Lion; 5. Vamana; 6. Parasurama; 7. Rama; 8. Krishna; 9. Balarama, and 10. Kalki. In a less orthodox group Balarama, the half-brother of Krishna, is replaced by the Buddha Avatara; in that case Buddha is considered to be an Avatara of Vishnu. This is an effort to give Buddha a place within Hinduism and demonstrates ignorance of the original meaning of the Ten Avatars. Outside this group of ten, many other Avatars are mentioned and described in the myths. Sometimes great Sages are called Avatars.

Matsya, Kurma, Varaha and Narasimha are said to have been born in the Krita or Satya Yuga, Vamana, Parasurama and Rama in the Treta Yuga, Balarama and Krishna in the Dvapara Yuga and Buddha and Kalki in the Kali Yuga. They are said to have been born in three different Manvantaras...

Of the Ten Avatars four belonged to the First Age, three to the Second Age, two to the Third Age and only one to the Fourth Age. This is in accordance with the tradition that in the First Age Dharma (in the form of a Cow) manifested itself "with four legs", in the Second with three, in the Third with two and in the Fourth only with one.

...

The Avatars of Vishnu should not be confused with Forms of the Murtis or "Forms" of Vishnu. Tradition knows a group of twenty-four of such Forms.

...

The Vishnu Purana says that in the Treta Age the Lord was born "to repress the wicked and to protect the three worlds." This was done by the three most common Avatars of this Age. In the form of Parasurama and Ramachandra the Lord "repressed the wicked" and as Vamana he protected the three worlds. The Treta Age is the Age of the Dharma...

Vamana, Parasurama and Ramachandra ... represent the entire Treta Age. We understand from the Ramayana that Parasurama and Ramachandra lived simultaneously. At the end of the Balakanda a meeting of the two Ramas is described. Rama, the son of Jamadagni (Parasurama) recognized Rama, the son of Dasaratha, as "the Foremost of Celestials, the Indestructible". He said that it was not a shame to be humbled by the Lord of the three worlds, when Rama proved to be greater than himself. In this encounter we have a meeting of two Avatars of Vishnu...

Vishnu was born as Vamana in order to overcome a king called Bali or Mahabali. "Bali" means "sacrifice". Mahabali was known for his great ambition. He performed the ViSvajit Sacrifice, the object of which is World-domination. After attaining great power,

Mahabali went against the City of Heaven, ruled by Indra, and laid siege to it with his Army. After taking it, he established himself there, while the Gods either hid themselves or became subject to him.

When Mahabali was about to perform an Asvamedha or Horse sacrifice — which we have seen to be symbolically connected with World domination ... — Vishnu entered the king's sacrificial hall in the form of a religious beggar. Mahabali received him and paid due respects to him, washing his feet. He said...: "Welcome and obeisance to you, O Brahman! What we can do for you? ... take from me whatever you desire..." Vamana replied that he wanted nothing but three feet of land, measured by his feet. Mahabali urged him to ask for something more worthy of him to give, but the Brahmachari refused. When the king wanted to ratify his promise, he was warned ... by his Guru, Sukra,... that the beggar was Vishnu in disguise, that a great calamity would befall him if he were to fulfil his promise, and that everything would be taken from him. But Mahabali replied: "How shall I, a descendant of Pahlada, like some cheat, refuse (the gift) to a Brahman after having promised to give him ? I consider everything bearable except the man of falsehoods. I do not fear Hell or even poverty or the sea of Samsara so much as deceiving a Brahman"... After receiving the ratification of the king's promise through pouring water, the dwarf Vamana expanded till his form filled the Universe. "That dwarf-form of Hari expanded itself encompassing all that are composed of the three Gunas, namely, the earth, the heavens, the cardinal points, heaven, caves, seas, birds and beasts, human beings, gods, sages and whatever there was" ... Bali had the vision of the Universe-form. Then the Lord paced with two steps the Universe, above and below, reclaiming it for the Gods ... And because then there was nothing left to pace, he accused Mahabali of having deceived him, and condemned him to pass a few years in the Underworld... Thereupon Mahabali, who had been vouchsafed the World-Vision of God, knelt down and said: "If you consider the words I had spoken as insincere and worthless, I shall make them true; there shall be no insincerity, pray place your third step (foot) on my head. Fallen as I am from my position, hell I fear not ... or any suffering or want of wealth or Thy punishment so much as I am afraid of being called an unrighteous creature"... At these noble words his ancestor Pahlada manifested himself and said, addressing Vishnu: "The great abode of Indra was given by Yourself; and to-day it is taken back by Yourself. The latter is as well done as the former, for, I think that a great blessing has been bestowed on Bali since he has been rescued from wealth and power which deludes the mind and self-consciousness" ... The Lord said: "I destroy the possessions of him whom I show My Grace, for he who is intoxicated with wealth and power becomes haughty and disregards the world and Myself also" ... The Lord further sent the blessed Pahlada to accompany Bali to Sutala and bring happiness to his relations. To Mahabali the Lord granted the boon that every year on that day he could come back to the world and see that his people were living in prosperity and happiness.

On the face of it, this myth is very puzzling, and it has seemed very unfair to people that God should put down a righteous man in this wise and send him down to the Underworld. People searching for an exoteric explanation of the myth, have been much perplexed by it. In modern days of anti-Brahman feeling people have even read into it an attempt of "Aryan" Brahmans to usurp power from the "Dravidian" ruling race!

In the light of esoteric traditions the myth is deeply suggestive and illuminating. It should be understood in connection with the Zodiacal stage of the Height of Manifestation, and particularly with the climax and end of that stage. We have seen before that this stage is one of pride and ambition, and of the anti-traditional voice... The shortcoming of Mahabali was arrogance of power. He had made his kingdom into a materialistic Utopia and went on expanding it at the expense of the more introvert tendencies of the soul.

The crashing of Mahabali to the Underworld depicts the Fall of the soul from the Treta to the Dvapara Age. A worldly paradise or Utopia can exist only on condition of obedience to the Spirit. Mere goodness, uninspired by the higher realms of the soul, cannot

exist for long. It leads either to psychical stagnation or to psychical inflation. We learn from the words of Vishnu, however, that the Underworldabode to which Mahabali was sent — Sutala — is a “region, prayed for by the denizens of heaven”.

See: Siva and Vishnu

Meditation

[Ramakrishna tradition](#)

[Ramakrishna. Tales and parables of Sri Ramakrishna](#)

VISHNU EVERYWHERE

THERE was a holy man who used to live in a state of ecstasy and would not speak with anyone. He was regarded as a lunatic. One day having begged some food in the village, he took his seat by the side of a dog and fell to eating. A strange sight now presented itself and attracted a crowd of spectators, for the holy man would put one morsel into his own mouth and the next into that of the dog, so that the man and the beast went on eating together like a pair of friends. Some of the spectators began to laugh at the holyman as being a mad fellow.

Thereupon he said,

“Why do you laugh?

Vishnu is seated with Vishnu;

Vishnu is feeding Vishnu;

Why do you laugh, O Vishnu?

Whatever is, is Vishnu.” (153)

Related words

Brahma

Krishna

Narayana

Rama

Siva

Trimurti

Visva

Variant spellings

visva

Viśva

Viswa

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Viśva — ... the individual form of the Self having egoism in a gross body while awake; universe

1. It is the form of the Self in its waking state according to Advaita Vedānta.
2. It is pervasive of the entire body but, for purposes of meditation, it has its seat in the right eye. Its limiting adjunct is the gross body (sthūla-śarīra).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

viśva -

all, every, every one;

whole, entire, universal;

all-pervading or all-containing, omnipresent (applied to Viṣṇu-Kṛiṣṇa, the soul, intellect &c.);

(in phil.) the intellectual faculty or (accord. to some) the faculty which perceives individuality or the individual underlying the gross body (sthūla-śarīra-vyaṣṭy-upahita) Vedāntas.;

N. of a class of gods;

N. of the number 'thirteen';

of a class of deceased ancestors;

of a king;

of a well-known dictionary = viśva-prakāśa;

all the gods collectively ' or the 'All-gods ' (a partic. class of gods, forming one of the 9 Gaṇas enumerated under gaṇadevatā q.v.;

accord. to the Viṣṇu and other Purāṇas they were sons of Viśvā, daughter of Dakṣha, and their names are as follow, 1. Vasu, 2.

Satya, 3. Kratu, 4. Dakṣha, 5. Kāla, 6. Kāma, 7. Dhṛiti, 8. Kuru, 9. Purū-ravas, 10. Mādravas [?]; two others are added by some,

viz. 11. Rocaka or Locana, 12. Dhvani [or Dhūri; or this may make 13]: they are particularly worshipped at Śrāddhas and at the

Vaiśvadeva ceremony; moreover accord. to Manu, offerings should be made to them daily - these privileges having been be-

stowed on them by Brahmā and the Pitṛis, as a reward for severe austerities they had performed on the Himālaya: sometimes it is

difficult to decide whether the expression viśve devāḥ refers to all the gods or to the particular troop of deities described above);

the whole world, universe;

dry ginger;

myrrh;

a mystical N. of the sound 'o'

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Consciousness limited by the individual gross body ... is called *viśva*. Though it functions through the gross body, yet it does not dissociate itself completely from the subtle body or the mind, which is endowed with the power of thinking and imagining. The gross body belonging to *viśva*, through which it functions, is also called the *annamayakośa*. the gross physical sheath or alimentary sheath, on account of its being a product of food. [The gross body is created by the sperma and ovum of the parents, which are products of food. After birth the body is sustained by food.] It functions in the waking state and it experiences, through the organs of perception, objects of sound, touch, form, taste, and smell. It uses the five organs of action for the purpose of speaking, holding, walking, excreting, and procreating. Further, through the inner organ of the mind, it experiences uncertainty, determination, egoism, and remembrance.

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Consciousness associated with the individual gross body is designated as *Visva* on account of its entering the gross body etc. without giving up its identification with the subtle body.

[Individual gross body—Any one of the various individual gross bodies of the four kinds enumerated above. The *Jiva* or embodied soul has three kinds of limitations, viz., that of ignorance, the subtle body, and the gross and the subtle body—in dreamless sleep, dream state and waking state respectively. The embodied soul identifying itself with each of these limitations is known as *Prajna*, *Taijasa* and *Visva* respectively.]

Visva, Taijasa, Prajna

Sankara tradition

Nikhilananda. Mandukya Upanishad

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

From the ordinary empirical standpoint, *Visva*, *Taijasa* and *Pvajha* are generally related to three states, viz., waking, dream and deep sleep. But the three states are comprehended from the standpoint of the waking state alone. That dream and deep sleep are two states, having different characteristics, is known in the waking state alone. Therefore these two become known to the waking consciousness. Besides *jagrat* (waking), in so far as it denotes the absence of the knowledge of Reality, covers the dream and sleep states as well. The three apparent cognisers known as *Visva*, *Taijasa* and *Prajna* are really one, because a plurality of perceivers in the same state, namely, the waking, and in the same body is an absurdity, as that would preclude the possibility of the continuity of perception as revealed through memory. Therefore the apparently three different perceivers are identical and their apparent distinction is due to their identification with the three states.

Visva and Vaishvanara

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

What is true of *visva* is also true of *Vaiśvānara*, or Consciousness functioning through the collective gross body in the waking state...

The collective gross body and the individual gross body are in essence identical, like a wood and the trees that constitute it. So, likewise are the two forms of consciousness which are limited by them, known as *Vaiśvānara* and *viśva*, like the space limited by the wood and the trees.

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Both Viswa and Vaiswānara at that time¹, perceive the gross objects, viz., sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell, respectively through the five sense-organs, such as the ears etc., controlled respectively by (the presiding deities, viz.) the Quarters² (Dik), Air (Vdyu), Sun, Varuna and the two Aswins. They also perform the functions of speech, acceptance, walking, excretion and enjoyment, respectively through the five organs of action, such as the tongue etc., controlled respectively by Fire, Indra, Vishnu, Yama and Prajāpati. They also experience uncertainty, determination, personality and remembrance, respectively through the four inner organs, viz., mind, intellect, egoism and memory (Chitta) controlled respectively by the Moon, Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. Witness such Sruti passages' as: "Whose place is the waking state, who is conscious of the external world" (Mand. Up. 3).

[1. The way in which Vishwa and Vaiswānara come into touch with the universe, internal and external, during the waking state is being indicated.

2. Quarters etc.—These are the presiding deities of the various external organs. They regulate the activities of these organs.

3. Passages—The remaining portion of the passage is "and who enjoys the gross objects, is the first aspect (of the Atman)."]

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Mandukya Upanishad

While the consciousness in terms of the totality of all the physical bodies, inclusive of all animate and inanimate things, may be regarded as the vaiśvānara, or the virāt, the very same consciousness animating a particular body in the waking consciousness is called viśva. The viśva is the Ātman enlivening the physical body; vaiśvānara is the Ātman reigning supreme in the physical cosmos. This is the twofold waking life, individual and the Cosmic; - jāgnritasthāna.

See also:

in Jiva: **Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda**

Diagram: Catuspada, Four States of Consciousness

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

viśva - prob. from the root 1. 'viś' , to pervade ; declined as a pron. like sarva, by which it is superseded in the Brāhmanas and later language.

Related words

Jagrat

Prajna

Taijasa

Vaishvanara

Viraj

Sanskrit

Viśva — विश्व

Viśva - विश्व

Vivarta

Variant spellings

vivarta

vivartha

vivartta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vivartha — ... transfiguration; apparent change; illusory appearance

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vivarta -

'the revolving one', N. of the sky;

a whirlpool;

turning round, rolling onwards, moving about;

turning away;

dance;

changing from one state to another, modification, alteration, transformation, altered form or condition;

(in Vedānta) error, illusion, an apparent or illusory form, unreality (caused by Avidyā, 'ignorance', and removed by Vidyā, 'true knowledge') Vedāntas.;

collection, multitude;

N. of two Sāmans

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vivarta ... (in Vedānta) an 'appearance' the forms that manifest in the phenomenal world, regarded as illusions.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. The philosophy of Narayana Guru

Vivarta: Illusory appearance. Denoting the process by which an effect appears in a cause without the latter undergoing any intrinsic change, e.g., the appearance of waves in ocean.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Dhole

9. When there is no change of its former condition but a substance is perceived in a different form it is Vivartta, as the illusion of snake in rope. And it appears equally to form, less substances; as for instance, to ether which has no form, yet perceived blue, resembling a frying pan in appearance.

10. Therefore it is fit to believe that the objective world is but a Vivartta of blissfulness; and the force of Maya is the potent cause for such a belief, like things created in a magic performance by the use of chemical re-agents, spells, and charms.

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda

9. But Vivarta is mere appearance of change of a thing or its state, not a real change: like a rope appearing as a snake. It is seen even in a partless substance, e.g., the Akasa (which has no shape or colour) appearing as the blue dome.

10. So the illusive appearance of the world in the partless bliss can be explained. Like the power of a magician, the power of Maya may be said to bring the objective world into being.

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

... in explaining creation the Vedantin applies the Law of Vivarta which means the transformation of the cause into effect without the former losing its own character, hence, apparent transformation. According to the Vedantin the world is the Vivarta of Brahman, i.e., the whole visible universe is a mere illusion—an unreal and illusory appearance—while Brahman is the only real entity. As the snake is the Vivarta of the rope, so is the world the Vivarta of Brahman. The law of Vivarta is fundamentally different from the law of evolution (Parinama), which admits real change in the cause. Therefore if Brahman is posited as the material cause of the universe, it does not follow that the universe is also a conscious entity like its cause. Ignorance is unreal and therefore the phenomenal universe which is its effect is also unreal.

See also:

Material and efficient cause

in Brahma-sutra: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

in Vivarta-vada: [Prasad. Darsanamala of Narayana Guru](#)

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

from pr. vi, apart, away, without + varta <root vart, to turn, 'revolving'

Vivarta, derived from vi-vart, "to turn round, go astray," used in this sense to mean error or illusion.

Related words

Parinama
Vivarta-vada

Sanskrit

Vivārtha — विवर्थ
vivārtha - वविर्थ

Vivarta-vada

Variant spellings

vivarta-vada
vivarta-vāda
vivartavāda

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vivarta-vāda — ... the theory of apparent change; the theory of phenomenal appearance

1. The Advaita Vedānta theory of causation which posits that the world is an illusory appearance superimposed by ignorance (avidyā) on the Absolute (Brahman).

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vivartavāda -

a method of asserting the Vedānta doctrine (maintaining the development of the Universe from Brahma as the sole real entity, the phenomenal world being held to be a mere illusion or Māyā; cf. pariṇāma-vādā).

Descriptions

General

Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy

The most important of Sankara's works is the bhāṣya on the Vedānta-sūtra, which is as remarkable for the charm of its style as for the logical consistency of its arguments. ... he therein maintains the vivarta-vāda or the doctrine that the world is a phenomenal appearance of Brahman. According to him, the belief to be refuted before the Advaita is established is not so much the Sankhya or Prakṛtipariṇāma- vāda as Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda. ... his real objective is to establish the vivarta-vāda or Maya-vāda as against the pariṇāma-vāda of certain commentators on the Vedānta-sūtra, especially Bhartr-prapafica that preceded him.

...

Brahman according to him [Śamkara] ... only gives rise to appearances which, though entirely depending upon it, affect it no more than the silver does the shell in which it appears. He thus enunciates a new view of causation which is different from both the pariṇāma-vāda and the ārambha-vāda... . According to it, the cause produces the effect without itself undergoing any change whatsoever. It is vivartavāda or the doctrine of phenomenal development. Viewed in the light of this theory, Brahman only appears as the world. It is the original of which the world ... may be regarded as 'a translation at the plane of space-time'; and Brahman depends as little for its being on the world as an original work does on its translation. This is what is otherwise known as the Māyā doctrine.

Narayana Guru tradition

Prasad. Darsanamala of Narayana Guru

According to ... [vivarta-vāda (the theory of superimposed illusory appearances)], the causal substance, while itself undergoing no intrinsic change, appears as all the effects, i.e. as the apparent world. This argument is clarified with the help of an example. A piece of rope seen at twilight may appear to be a snake, making you frightened. Not seeing the real rope and seeing the unreal snake as real do not make any intrinsic change in what really exists there, it always remains a piece of rope. It is in the wrong perception of the observer that the rope appeared as a snake. The unreal snake-appearance is thought of as vivarta on the real rope. Similar is the perceiving of the apparent world in the really existing Brahman or Atman, effected by mūyū. Narayana Guru also following the line of thought of Śaṅkara, the propounder of the Advaita school of Vedānta, admits this vivarta-vāda and rejects the theory of evolution, as is evident from many references to it in his philosophical works.

How do the illusory appearances emerge in the one Absolute Reality or Atman? The answer is, it is like a grand magic show. A magician makes his spectators see certain nonexistent phenomena. Similar is the way the Self makes itself appear as the unreal world.

Is this a sufficient explanation? Of course, this is not a logical explanation. Yet the analogy of magic makes it clear how an element of mystery inheres in what we are trying to understand. Our minds, in a way, are so conditioned that only logical explanations based on analysis satisfy us when trying to understand something. In philosophy too we attempt our best to represent reality in a logical way. Most of the philosophers of the West think with a mind conditioned by the preconceived notion that philosophical thinking means logical reasoning about what is ultimately real.

Such a prejudice has never corrupted the Indian thinkers. They do not hesitate to declare openly that the Reality as a whole is a Great Mystery. Their goal has never been arriving at a "reasonable" conclusion about what is real, but to directly and intuitively perceive their own inseparable oneness with what they are searching for, and to make life meaningful by realizing their identity with the meaningfulness of the Total Existence. Such is the ultimate goal of Indian thinkers, particularly of Vedāntins. They therefore have no reluctance to declare as part of their scientific thinking, "All this is a magic-like mystery!", "How could any recognized valid means of knowledge help us know this!", "Ineffable and unthinkable indeed is this!" and so on.

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vivartavāda - compounded of vivarta + vāda

Related words

Parinama-vada
Vivarta

Sanskrit

Vivarta-vāda — विवर्तवाद
vivarta-vāda - वविवर्तवाद

Viveka

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Viveka — ... discrimination

1. Viveka is defined as an awareness by means of which one can tell the true from the false, the eternal from the impermanent. It is an understanding that the world is impermanent and perishable and that the Self is permanent.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

viveka -

discrimination, distinction;

consideration, discussion, investigation;

true knowledge, discretion, right judgement, the faculty of distinguishing and classifying things according to their real properties; (in Vedānta) the power of separating the invisible Spirit from the visible world (or spirit from matter, truth from untruth, reality from mere semblance or illusion);

a water trough (= jala-droṇī);

N. of work

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Viveka - right discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal, the real and the unreal. This comes from proper study.

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Atmabodha, tr. Nikhilananda

Commentary by Nikhilananda:

Viveka or discrimination between the Real and the unreal: This is an intuitive and unshakable conviction of the mind that Brahman alone is the real Substance and all other things are unreal and illusory. Discrimination is the first and foremost discipline; without it the second one, namely renunciation [vairāgya], is not possible.

Descriptions

General

Muller. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*

... the creation of the phenomenal world and our position in the phenomenal world are due to nescience (Avidyâ) with the Vedântist, but to a want of discrimination (Aviveka) with the Samkhya philosopher... Where then, we may well ask, is the difference between the two views of the universe? There is a difference in the mode of representation, no doubt, but in the end both Vedânta and Samkhya look upon what we call reality as the result of a temporary error, call it nescience, illusion, want of discrimination, or anything else. ... No doubt these two philosophies diverged in their later development, but they started with the same object in view, and they advanced for a time in the same direction. If the Vedântists desired to arrive at what is called Atmâ-anâtma-viveka, discrimination between Atman and Anâtman, the Samkhyas looked forward to Prakriti-purusha-viveka, discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti. Where then is the difference? If their later defenders forgot their common interest and laid greater stress on the points of difference than on the points of similarity between them, it was but right that those who could see deeper, should bring to light whatever features there were left of the original family likeness between the two philosophies.

Ramakrishna tradition

Ramakrishna. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*

556. It is useless to pore over the holy scriptures if one's mind is not endowed with Viveka and Vairagya. No spiritual progress can be made without these.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

In the beginning one has to be told that he is not the body, because he thinks that he is the body only. Whereas he is the body and all else. The body is only a part. Let him know it finally. He must first discern consciousness from insentience and be the consciousness only. Later let him realise that insentience is not apart from consciousness.

This is discrimination (viveka). The initial discrimination must persist to the end. Its fruit is liberation.

...

D.: Viveka is said to be discrimination between the Self and the nonself. What is the non-self?

M.: There is no non-self, in fact. The non-self also exists in the Self. It is the Self which speaks of the non-self because it has forgotten itself. Having lost hold of itself, it conceives something as non-self, which is after all nothing but itself.

Osborne. *The collected works of Ramana Maharshi*

20. What is the sign of wisdom (viveka)?

Its beauty lies in remaining free from delusion after realising the truth once. There is fear only for one who sees even a slight difference in the Supreme Brahman. So long as there is the idea that the body is the Self one cannot be a realizer of truth whoever he might be.

Sivananda tradition

Chinmayananda. Sankara. Vivekachudamani

17. He alone is considered qualified to enquire after the supreme Reality, who has discrimination [viveka], detachment [vairagya], qualities of calmness etc., and a burning desire for liberation.

Commentary by Chinmayananda:

Viveka is the capacity to discriminate between the Real and the unreal, between the true and the false, between the permanent and the impermanent. It is faculty which we employ in almost all our day to day decisions but when it is brought to play into the inner constitution of the individual it is called viveka.

...

Though potentially there, viveka is not generally awakened in all men. However actually intelligent the generation might be, it is the special privilege of a few to have the subtlety of intellect to delve deep into things and happenings and discriminate between the true and the false. Those who are sufficiently evolved, exhibit a greater keenness of intellect but those who do not have it, should not despair. For, it is not a God-given bonus which comes to us from the heavens but it is the aroma of a well-developed and integrated mind and intellect. Where there is a large amount of viveka, it is safe to presume that the individual has a fairly well-integrated personality.

...

... he alone who has destroyed the shark of desire lurking in the ocean of samsar can safely cross to the other shore. In order to kill the enemy we have no other instrument save the sword of discriminative knowledge. With viveka alone can we end our desires. Desires can come and sabotage our happiness only when the discriminative faculties in us have, as it were, gone to sleep. So long as the pure intellect is awake, the whims and fancies of the mind cannot emerge to loot and plunder the peace of the inner kingdom.

See also:

“Shankara. Vivekachudamani, tr. Madhavananda” on page 789

Diagram: Sadhanacatustaya, Four-fold discipline

Related words

Sadhanacatustaya

Vairagya

Sanskrit

Viveka — विवेक

viveka - वविक

Vritti

Variant spellings

vritti
vr̥tti
vr̥ṭti

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vṛtti — ... mental mode; a modification of the mind whose function is to manifest objects; being; condition; fluctuation; activity
1. It is what makes knowledge possible, according to Advaita Vedānta. It serves as the connecting link between the knowing subject and the known object. It is a transformation of either the internal organ or of nescience {avidyā}. It goes out through the senses and pervades the object.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vṛtti -
rolling, rolling down (of tears);
mode of life or conduct, course of action, behaviour, (esp.) moral conduct, kind or respectful behaviour or treatment;
general usage, common practice, rule;
mode of being, nature, kind, character, disposition;
state, condition;
being, existing, occurring or appearing in;
practice, business, devotion or addiction to, occupation with;
profession, maintenance, subsistence, livelihood;
wages, hire;
working, activity, function;
mood (of the mind) Vedāntas;
the use or occurrence of a word in a partic. sense (loc.), its function or force;
mode or measure of pronunciation and recitation (said to be threefold);
(in gram.) a complex formation which requires explanation or separation into its parts (as distinguished from a simple or uncompounded form);
style of composition;
(in rhet.) alliteration, frequent repetition of the same consonant;
final rhythm of a verse;
a commentary, comment, gloss, explanation (esp. on a sūtra);
N. of the wife of a Rudra

Descriptions

General

Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy

... though all things are but illusory impositions on consciousness yet for the illumination of specific objects it is admitted even by Vedānta that this can only take place through specific sense-contact and particular mental states (vrtti) or modes; ... the Vedānta ... [says] that the phenomenon of illumination has not to undergo any gradual process, for it is the work of one flash like the work of the light of a lamp in removing darkness; so it is not possible that the external reality should have to pass through any process before consciousness could arise; what happens is simply this, that the reality (sat) which subsists in all things as the same identical one reveals the object as soon as its veil is removed by association with the vrtti (mental mould or state). It is like a light which directly and immediately illuminates everything with which it comes into relation. Such an illumination of objects by its underlying reality would have been continuous if there were no veils or covers, but that is not so as the reality is hidden by the veil of ajñāna (nescience). This veil is removed as soon as the light of consciousness shines through a mental mould or vrtti, and as soon as it is removed the thing shines forth. Even before the formation of the vrtti the illusory impositions on the reality had still been continuing objectively, but it could not be revealed as it was hidden by ajñāna which is removed by the action of the corresponding vrtti; ... The action of the senses, eye, etc. serves but to modify the vrtti of the mind, and the vrtti of the mind once formed, the corresponding ajñāna veil which was covering the corresponding specific part of the world-appearance is removed, and the illumination of the object which was already present, being divested of the veil, shows itself forth. ... So consciousness in itself is the ever-shining light of reality which is never generated but ever exists; errors of perception (e.g. silver in the conch-shell) take place not because the dosa consisting of the defect of the eye, the glaze of the object and such other elements that contributed to the illusion, generated the knowledge, but because it generated a wrong vrtti. It is because of the generation of the wrong vrtti that the manifestation is illusory. ... Objective phenomena as such have reality as their basis, whereas the expression of illumination of them as states of knowledge is made through the cit being manifested through the mental mould or states. Without the vrtti there is no illuminating knowledge. Phenomenal creations are there in the world moving about as shadowy forms on the unchangeable basis of one cit or reality, but this basis, this light of reality, can only manifest these forms when the veil of nescience covering them is temporarily removed by their coming in touch with a mental mould or mind-modification (vrtti).

...

In continuous perception of anything for a certain time as an object or as pleasure, etc. the mental state or vrtti is said to last ... all the while so long as any other new form is not taken up by the antahkarana for the acquirement of any new knowledge.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Principles and practice of Patanjali's Yoga

Vrtti, as the word suggests, has many implications. It is an operation in the time-space continuum that structures the several ensembles of the present. The sense of the present is generated by vrtti. The "present" in Sanskrit is called vartamanam. Vartanam is existence; manam is measuring. Vartamanam is the occasion provided for direct perception and evaluation. Vrtti is also suggestive of repetitive function, avarti. It is also the centripetal closing in from all sides that preserves an impression for future reference, avrti. It is also suggestive of a vortex that is formed in consciousness, a circular motion of repetitive thinking. In that sense it is avartini, a whirlpool. In the formation of a vrtti, a centrifugal reverberation that spreads out physically and emotionally occurs

simultaneously with a centripetal containment of the experience within a certain limit. From all sides a closing in happens which, in physical terms, amounts to the consolidation of both the electrical and chemical energies involved in the reverberation.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Sri Bhagavan explained: Vritti is often mistaken for consciousness. It is only a phenomenon and operates in the region of abhasa (reflected consciousness). The knowledge lies beyond relative knowledge and ignorance. It is not in the shape of vritti. There are no subject and object in it.

Vritti belongs to the rajasic (active) mind. The satvic mind (mind in repose) is free from it. The satvic is the witness of the rajasic. It is no doubt true consciousness. Still it is called satvic mind because the knowledge of being witness is the function of abhasa (reflected consciousness) only. Mind is the abhasa. Such knowledge implies mind. But the mind is by itself inoperative. Therefore it is called satvic mind.

Sankara tradition

Sadananda. Vedantasara, tr. Nikhilananda

In perception according to the Vedanta philosophy, the mind (Antahkarana) through a particular sense-organ is projected upon an object and pervades it. It then takes the form of the object. This transformation is called Vritti or mental state. As, for instance, the water of a lake issues through a hole as a thin stream and enters a field. It then takes the form of the field.

Vidyaranya. Panchadashi, tr. Swahananda

4. An external object, such as a pot, is cognised through the Vrittis (modifications of the intellect) assuming its form, but the knowledge 'I know the pot' comes (directly) through pure consciousness, Brahman.

5. Before the rise of the Vritti (i.e., before the intellectual operation) my experience was 'I do not know that there is a pot over there'; after the rise, the experience is 'I know that there is a pot over there'. This is the difference the intellectual operation or Vritti brings about. But both the above experiences of knowledge or non-knowledge of the pot are due to Brahman.

...

8. If the intellect is without Chidabhasa, the cognition of an object cannot take place. For how does intellect in such a case differ from a lump of clay which is unconscious and insentient?

9. Nowhere is a pot said to be known when it is besmeared with clay. Similarly when a pot is besmeared or covered by a Vritti only (not along with Chidabhasa) it cannot be said to be known (for both the clay and the Vritti are themselves unconscious and insentient).

10. Hence cognition (of a pot) is that reflection of consciousness (on the pot) which is produced as a result of the enveloping operation of the Vritti-cum-Chidabhasa. Brahman or pure consciousness cannot be this resultant reflection of consciousness inasmuch as it (being the eternal and immutable existence) exists prior to cognition.

Sivananda tradition

Dayananda. Talks on Vivekachudamani

Ātmā is already self-evident and it is alupta-dr̥k, a seer that never ceases, it never even winks. It is always a witness. But it is a witness only with reference to whatever is seen. By itself it is in the form of consciousness. This self-evident ātmā is Brahman, that

is the teaching. Because of this teaching a vṛtti takes place in the mind which destroys the ignorance and itself goes away. That vṛtti, “All that is here is myself” is called ātmaikya-bodha or aparokṣa-jñāna.

...

The whole world enters only through the mind. The mind goes on objectifying the things. The sense organs bring in the data about an object and the mind then undergoes a change relevant to the object. That mental modification is called vṛtti - thought form or pratyaya. In fact the mind pervades the very object you cognise and becomes the very form of the object. This is called vṛtti-vyāpti. You see or cognise only that object which obtains in this vṛtti. So, if the object is rope and your vṛtti also has the form of rope then you see the rope outside. But if the object in your vṛtti is snake, even though the object outside is rope, you see only the snake and not the rope. Therefore whatever you see, wherever you see is only what is there in your mind. And what is there in your mind may be the object as it is outside or other than what is outside. So the mind is responsible for samjñādi-bheda - the duality, ‘this is pot’, ‘this is tree’ etc., - duality of names and forms.

The mind moves very fast. It is like a movie camera and each vṛtti is like a frame in the movie camera. The vṛtti’s like the frames are in motion all the time and what you cognise is not the whole motion but one frame at a given point of time and place.

... every emotion is a vṛtti.

See: Citta and vritti

See also:

in Antahkarana: [Dasgupta. A history of Indian philosophy](#)

in Jnana, antahkarana, sakshin: [Hiriyanna. Outlines of Indian philosophy](#)

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

vṛtti - from the verb root vṛt = “to turn, revolve, roll, move”.

Related words

Antahkarana

Citta

Jnana

Vritti-jnana

Sanskrit

Vṛtti — वृत्ति

vṛtti - वृत्ति

Vyakta

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vyakta — ... manifest; revealed

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vyakta -

adorned, embellished, beautiful;

caused to appear, manifested, apparent, visible, evident ;

developed, evolved;

distinct, intelligible (see -vāc);

perceptible by the senses (opp. to a-vyakta, transcendental);

specified, distinguished;

specific, individual;

hot;

wise, learned;

heat;

a learned man;

an initiated monk;

'the manifested One';

of one of the 11 Gaṇādhīpas (with Jainas);

(in Sāṃkhya) ` the developed or evolved ' (as the product of a-vyakta)

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vyakta ... manifest matter; (in Samkhya) 'the evolved or developed,' a product of Nature (prakṛti), op. avyakta.

Descriptions

Sankara tradition

Sankara. Bhagavad Gita. Tr.Panoli

... the Lord said:

4. This entire world is pervaded by Me, the Unmanifest. All beings abide in Me, but I do not abide in them.

This entire earth is pervaded by that supreme nature of Mine, who am unmanifest since My form is not vyakta (manifest). The meaning is, I am not perceptible to the senses.

...

Whatever in the world is subject to sense perception, is indeed called vyakta (manifested), as the root of the word connotes.

Etymology

General

Theos Bernard. Hindu philosophy

Vyakta from pr. vi, apart, away, without + akta, pref. pass, participle of the root añj, to anoint.

Related words

Opposite: Avyakta

Sanskrit

Vyakta — व्यक्त

vyakta - व्यक्त

Vyasa

Name

Vyasa

vyāsa - व्यास

Veda Vyasa

veda vyāsa, वेद व्यास, (the one who split the Vedas, ... The word vyasa means split, differentiate, or describe.)

Badarayana

Krishna Dvaipayana (referring to his complexion and birthplace)

Dwaipayana, meaning 'island- born'

Pârâsarya is a name of Vyâsa, the son of Parâsara

Vyāsa — व्यास

Descriptions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vyāsa — ... “arranger”; “compiler”

1. Vedic sage credited with the compilation of the Vedas and the author of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vyāsa -

severing, separation, division;

a kind of drawl (as a fault in pronunciation);

extension, diffusion, prolixity, detailed account;

width, breadth, the diameter of a circle;

‘distributing, disjoining’, N. of the Pada-pāṭha or ‘disjoined text’;

‘arranger, compiler’, N. of a celebrated mythical sage and author (often called Veda-vyāsa and regarded as the original compiler and arranger of the Vedas, Vedānta-sūtras &c.; he was the son of the sage Parāśara and Satyavatī, and half-brother of Vicitra-vīrya and Bhīṣma; he was also called Vādarāyaṇa or Bādarāyaṇa, and Kṛishṇa from his dark complexion, and Dvaipāyana because he was brought forth by Satyavatī on a Dvīpa or island in the Jumnā; when grown up he retired to the wilderness to lead the life of a hermit, but at his mother’s request returned to become the husband of Vicitra-vīrya’s two childless widows, by whom he was the father of the blind Dhṛita-rāshTra and of Pāṇḍu; he was also the father of Vidura by a slave girl, and of Śuka, the supposed narrator of the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, he was also the supposed compiler of the Mahā-bhārata, the Purāṇas, and other portions of Hindu sacred literature; but the name Vyāsa seems to have been given to any great typical compiler or author);

a Brāhman who recites or expounds the Purāṇas &c. in public (= pāṭhaka-brāhmaṇa);

a bow weighing 100 Palas

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Vyasa. In Hindu mythology, a sage who is traditionally considered to be the author of the Mahabharata, the later of the two great Sanskrit epics. Vyasa is the son of the sage Parashara as a result of his dalliance with the ferrywoman Satyavati. Later in life Satyavati marries King Shantanu but only after extracting the promise that their children will rule, instead of Shantanu’s eldest son, Bhishma. Satyavati’s first son dies in childhood, and the second dies after his marriage but before having any children. In her desperation to preserve Shantanu’s line, Satyavati calls on Vyasa to sleep with her younger son’s wives, Ambika and Ambalika. According to tradition Vyasa is very ugly, and both of the women involuntarily react when Vyasa appears in her bed. Ambalika turns pale, causing her son, Pandu, to be born with an unnaturally pale complexion, and Ambika covers her eyes, causing her son, Dhrtarashtra, to be born blind. Vyasa also has sexual relations with Ambika’s maidservant, who gives herself to him willingly, and from her is born Vidura. The descendants of Pandu and Dhrtarashtra are the Pandavas and Kauravas, respectively, who are the two warring factions whose enmity drives the Mahabharata. Thus Vyasa is not only the author of the Mahabharata, but also the source of the two families whose struggle is described in it.

Muller. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

... if, as we are told, Vyāsa collected (Vivyāsa) not only the Vedas, the Mahābhārata, the Puranas, but also the Vyāsa-Sūtras, nay even a prose commentary on Patanjali’s Yoga-Sutras, we can hardly doubt that the work ascribed to him must be taken as the work of several people or of a literary period rather than of one man. I formerly thought that Vyāsa might have represented the period in which the first attempts were made to reduce the ancient mnemonic literature of India to writing, but there is nothing in tradition to support such a view, unless we thought that Vyāsa had some connection with Nyāsa (writing). Indian tradition places the great Vyāsa between the third and fourth ages of the present world, whatever that may mean, if translated into our modern chronological language. If Vyāsa had really anything to do with our Vedānta-Sūtras, it would hardly have been more than that he arranged or edited them. His name does not occur in the Sūtras themselves, while that of Bādarāyana does, and likewise that of Bādari, a name mentioned by Gaimini also in his Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā. In the Bhagavad-gītā, which might well be placed as contemporary with the Vedānta-Sūtras, or somewhat later, Vyāsa is mentioned as one of the Devarshis with Asita and Devala (X, 13), and he is called the greatest of Rishis (X, 37). But all becomes confusion again, if we remember that tradition makes Vyāsa the author of the Mahābhārata, and therefore of the Bhagavad-gītā itself, which is even called an Upanishad.

...

As to the commentary on Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras being the work of the same Vyâsa, this seems to me altogether out of the question. There are hundreds of people in India who have the name of Vyâsa.

...

It has actually been asserted that Vyâsa, the author of a late commentary on Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras, is the same person as Vyâsa, the collector of the Vedas, the reputed author of the Mahâbhârata and of the Vedânta-Sûtras. But there are ever so many Vyâsas living even now, and no solid argument could possibly be derived from the mere recurrence of such a name.

Wikipedia

Vyasa is a central and revered figure in the majority of Hindu traditions. ... He is accredited as the scribe of both the Vedas, and the supplementary texts such as the Puranas. A number of Vaishnava traditions regard him as an avatar of Vishnu. Vyasa is also considered to be one of the eight Chiranjivins (long lived, or immortals), who are still in existence according to general Hindu belief. He is also the fourth member of the Rishi Parampara of the Advaita Guru Paramparâ of which Adi Shankara is the chief proponent.

The festival of Guru Purnima, is dedicated to him, and also known as Vyasa Purnima as it is the day, which is believed to be his birthday and also the day he divided the Vedas.

...

It has been debated whether Vyasa was a single person or a class of scholars who did the splitting. The Vishnu Purana has an interesting theory about Vyasa. The Hindu view of the universe is that of a cyclic phenomenon that comes into existence and dissolves repeatedly. Each cycle is presided over by a number of Manus, one for each Manvantara, that has four ages, Yugas of declining virtues. The Dvapara Yuga is the third Yuga. The Vishnu Purana (Book 3, Ch 3) says:
In every third world age (Dvapara), Vishnu, in the person of Vyasa, in order to promote the good of mankind, divides the Veda, which is properly but one, into many portions. Observing the limited perseverance, energy, and application of mortals, he makes the Veda fourfold, to adapt it to their capacities; and the bodily form which he assumes, in order to effect that classification, is known by the name of Veda-vyasa. Of the different Vyasas in the present Manvantara and the branches which they have taught, you shall have an account. Twenty-eight times have the Vedas been arranged by the great Rishis in the Vaivasvata Manvantara... and consequently eight and twenty Vyasas have passed away; by whom, in the respective periods, the Veda has been divided into four. The first... distribution was made by Svayambhu (Brahma) himself; in the second, the arranger of the Veda (Vyasa) was Prajapati... (and so on up to twenty-eight).

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. That alone, the core of wisdom

It is believed that Krsna Dvaipayana Vyasa composed the Mahabharata. There are other great works attributed to Vyasa, such as the Vedanta Sutras and the Patanjali Sutra Bhasya. We do not know whether both these Vyasas are the same person. Like the term "Pope", names such as Vyasa, Vasistha, Narada, and Kasyapa, often mentioned in the archaic literature of India, were not personal names but spiritual appellations vested on the succeeding heads of the respective hierarchies. Therefore we cannot say whether the Mahabharata and other works were written by the same Vyasa or a number of Vyasas. All that we can surmise is that it was written by a certain Vyasa. The name Vyasa literally means a compiler or editor.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Jnana Yoga

All these Darśanas (schools of philosophy) that you have seen, or ever heard of, are based upon Upanishadic authority. Whenever they quote a Śruti (scriptural text), they mean the Upanishads. They are always quoting the Upanishads. Following the Upanishads there came other philosophies in India, but every one of them failed in getting that hold upon India which the philosophy of Vyāsa obtained. The philosophy of Vyāsa is a development out of an older one, the Sāṅkhya; and every philosophy and every system in India—and possibly throughout the world—owes much to Kapila, the great founder of the Sāṅkhya system, perhaps the greatest name in the history of India in psychological and philosophical lines. The influence of Kapila is everywhere throughout the world. Wherever there is a recognized system of thought, there you can trace his influence; it may be thousands of years back, but yet he stands there, the shining, glorious, wonderful Kapila. His psychology and a good deal of his philosophy have been accepted by all the different sects of India with but very slight differences. ... The philosophy of Vyāsa as embodied in the Vyāsa Sūtras is firm-seated, and has attained the permanence of that which it intended to present to men, the orthodox and Vedantic side of philosophy. Reason was entirely subordinated to the Śrutis and as Śaṅkarācārya declares, Vyāsa did not care to reason at all. His idea in writing the Sūtras was just to bring together with one thread and make a garland of the flowers of Vedantic texts. His Sūtras are admitted so far as they are subordinate to the authority of the Upanishads and no further. And as I have said, all the sects of India now hold these Vyāsa Sūtras to be the great authority, and every new sect in India starts with a fresh commentary on the Vyāsa Sūtras according to its light. The difference between some of these commentators is often very great, giving rise to not a little text-torturing. The Vyāsa Sūtras however have got the place of authority in India to-day, and no one can expect to found a new sect until he can write a fresh commentary on them.

Life

General

Wikipedia

Vyasa ... was the son of Satyavati, daughter of a ferryman or fisherman, and the wandering sage Parashara. He was born on an island in the river Yamuna. This is said to be near Kalpi in Jalaun district in Uttar Pradesh. Many also point out that the sage was born on the confluence of the rivers Koel, Sankha and Brahmani at the present steel city of Rourkela in Northern Orissa. The place is named after him as Vedvyas....

Vyasa was grandfather to the Kauravas and Pandavas. Both Dhritarashtra and Pandu, adopted as the sons of Vichitravirya by the royal family, were fathered by him. He had a third son, Vidura, by a serving maid.

Works

Brahma Sutra

General

Wikipedia

The Brahma Sūtra is attributed to Badarayana — which makes him the proponent of the crest- jewel school of Hindu philosophy, i.e., Vedānta. As the island on which Vyasa was born is said to have been covered by Badara (Indian jujube/Ber/Ziziphus mauri-

tiana) trees, he is known as Badarayana. Though traditionally, Vyasa is considered the Badarayana who wrote the Sutras, many historians think these were two different personalities.

Mahābhārata

General

Wikipedia

Vyasa is traditionally known as author of this epic. But he also features as an important character in it. His mother later married the king of Hastinapura, and had two sons. Both sons died without an issue and taking recourse to an ancient practice called Niyoga where a chosen man can father sons with the widow of a person who dies issueless, she requests Vyasa to produce sons on behalf of her dead son Vichitravirya.

Vyasa fathers the princes Dhritarashtra and Pandu (by Ambika and Ambalika, the wives of the dead king Vichitravirya). Vyasa told them that they should come alone near him. First did Ambika, but because of shyness and fear she closed her eyes. Vyasa told Satyawati that her child would be blind. Later this child was named Dhritarashtra. Thus Satyawati sent Ambālika and warned her that she should remain calm. But Ambālika's face became pale because of fear. Vyasa told her that child would suffer from anaemia, and he would not be fit enough to rule the kingdom. Later this child was known as Pāndu. Then Vyasa told Satyawati to send one of them again so that a healthy child can be born. This time Ambika and Ambālika sent a maid in the place of themselves. The maid was quite calm and composed, and she got a healthy child later named as Vidura. While these are 'legally' not his sons, another son Śuka, born of his wife, sage Jābāli's daughter Pinjalā (Vatikā), is considered his true spiritual heir. He was thus the grandfather of both the warring parties of the Mahābhārata, the Kauravas and the Pāndavas. He makes occasional appearances in the story as a spiritual guide to the young princes.

In the first book of the Mahābhārata, it is described that Vyasa asked Ganesha to aid him in writing the text, however Ganesha imposed a condition that he would do so only if Vyasa narrated the story without pause. To which Vyasa then made a counter-condition that Ganesha must understand the verse before he transcribed it. This is supposed to explain the complicated Sanskrit used in some sections of the Mahābhārata, recited by Vyasa when he wanted a break.

Thus Lord VedVyas had narrated the whole Mahabharta & All Upanishads and 18 Puranas, Lord Ganesha Wrote Vyasa is supposed to have meditated and authored the epic by the foothills of the river Beas (Vipasa) in the Punjab region.

Reference to writing

Within the Mahābhārata, there is a tradition in which Vyasa wishes to write down or inscribe his work:

The Grandsire Brahma (creator of the universe) comes and tells Vyasa to get the help of Ganapati for his task. Ganapati writes down the stanzas recited by Vyasa from memory and thus the Mahābhārata is inscribed or written. Ganapati could not cope up with Vyasa's speed and he misses many words or even stanzas.

The latest portions of the Mahābhārata are estimated to date from roughly the 4th century BC, the time of the introduction of writing to India.

There is some evidence however that writing may have been known earlier based on archeological findings of styli in the Painted Grey Ware culture, dated between 1100 BC and 700 BC and archeological evidence of the Brahmi script being used from at least 600 BC.

The difficulty faced by Ganapati (Ganesha) in writing down Mahābhārata as described in the tradition, could be real, and was most probably faced by those people who first attempted to write it down as some reciter recited it continuously. This is because, the

reciter will not be able to stop the recitation in between and resume it, as the lines are committed to his memory as a continuous recording.

(The name Ganapati, was used in ancient days, to denote the head of a republic. In ancient India, there were kingdoms ruled by kings or Rajas as well as republics ruled by elected heads or Ganapatis. Kambojas were a republic. To some extent Dwāraka had republican style of rule. Ganapati who wrote down Mahābhārata, probably was one of these republic chiefs, well educated in the art of writing or inscription).

Puranas

[General](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

Vyasa is also credited with the writing of the eighteen major, if not all, Purāṇas. His son Shuka is the narrator of the major Purāṇa Bhagavat-Purāṇa.

Vedas

[General](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

Hindus traditionally hold that Vyasa categorised the primordial single Veda into four. Hence he was called Veda Vyasa, or “Splitter of the Vedas,” the splitting being a feat that allowed people to understand the divine knowledge of the Veda.

Yoga Bhashya

[General](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

This text is a commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Vyasa is credited with this work also, though this is impossible, if Vyasa’s immortality is not considered, as it is a later text.

Related words

Brahma-sutra

Mahabharata

Puranas

Veda

Vyavaharika

Variant spellings

vyavaharika

vyāvahārika

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vyāvahārika — ... the relative viewpoint; empirical

1. The standpoint of ignorance, according to Advaita Vedānta. At this level, the Absolute is with attributes (saguṇa), one individual differs from another, and the entire pluralistic universe exists. (See prātibhāsika and pāramārthika.)

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

vyāvahārika —

relating to common life or practice or action, practical, usual, current, actual, real (as opp. to 'ideal');

(in phil.) practical existence (opp. to pāramārthika, 'real', and prātibhāsika, 'illusory');

sociable, affable;

belonging to judicial procedure, judicial, legal;

a counsellor, minister, official;

N. of a Buddhist school;

business, commerce, trade

Descriptions

See: Paramarthika, vyavaharika, pratibhasika - three types of reality

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vyāvahārika — from vi = “apart” + ava = “down” + hr = “to take”

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

Vyāvahārika — fr. vyava-hāra

Related words

Paramarthika

Pratibhasika

Sanskrit

Vyāvahārika — व्यवहारिक

vyāvahārika - व्यवहारिकि

Vyavaharika satyam

Variant spellings

vyavaharika satyam
vyāvahārika-satya

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Vyāvahārika-satya — ... phenomenal (or relative) reality; the empirical world

Descriptions

See also:

Paramarthika, vyavaharika, pratibhasika - three types of reality

Related words

Paramarthika satyam
Pratibhasika satyam

Sanskrit

Vyāvahārika-satya — व्यवहारिकसत्य

vyāvahārika-satya - व्यवहारिकसत्य

Yajna

Variant spellings

yajna
yajña
yagya
yadna

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Yajña — ... sacrifice; sacrificial ceremony.

1. Every twice-born Hindu is enjoined to perform regularly the five great sacrifices (pañca-mahā-yajña). Deva-yajña is deity worship; Brahma-yajña is worship of Brahma, a sacrifice to the sages by studying, teaching, or meditating on the Vedas; Pitṛ-yajña is ancestor worship; Bhūta-yajña refers to gratification of living beings— viz., animals and birds; and Nara-yajña consists in welcoming the guests and honoring them.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

yajña -

worship , devotion , prayer , praise;

act of worship or devotion , offering , oblation , sacrifice (the former meanings prevailing in Veda , the latter in post-Vedic literature);

a worshipper , sacrificer;

fire;

= Atman;

Sacrifice personified;

(with prājāpatya) N. of the reputed author of RV;

N. of a form of Viṣṇu;

of Indra under Manu Svāyambhuva

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Yajna is from the SANSKRIT root yaj, “to honor a god with oblations.” A yajna is a ritual involving oblations in the Vedic tradition. It may be simply an offering of clarified butter into a fire, or it may involve 17 priests in an elaborate 12-day ritual including the building of a large fire altar as in the AGNICHAYANA. The ritual of the yajna always includes a fire, Sanskrit MANTRAS, and some sort

of offering. In the larger public rituals a sacrifice of some animal or animals has been common. The word yajna is frequently translated roughly as “sacrifice.”

Wikipedia

In Hinduism, Yagya is a ritual of sacrifice derived from the practice of Vedic times. It is performed to please the gods or to attain certain wishes. An essential element is the sacrificial fire - the divine Agni - into which oblations are poured, as everything that is offered into the fire is believed to reach the gods.

A Vedic (shruta) yagya is typically performed by an adhvaryu priest, with a number of additional priests such as the hotar, udgatar playing a major role, next to their dozen helpers, by reciting or singing Vedic verses. Usually, there will be one or three fires in the centre of the offering ground and items are offered into the fire. Among the items offered as oblations in the yagya include large quantities of ghee, milk, grains, cakes, or soma. The duration of a yagya depends on the type; some can last a few minutes, hours or days and some even last for years, with priests continuously offering to the gods accompanied with sacred verses. Some yagyas are performed privately, others with a large number of people in attendance.

Post-Vedic yagyas, where milk products, fruits, flowers, cloth and money are offered, are called “yaga”, homa or havana.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

Brahmins and certain other castes receive a yagyopavita “sacred cord” at their upanayana rite of passage. The yagyopavita symbolizes the right of the individual to study the Vedas and to carry out yagyas or homas.

Temple worship is called agamic, while communication to divinity through Agni, is considered Vedic. Today’s temple rites are a combination of both Vedic and Agamic rituals. The sacrificial division of Hindu scripture is the Karma-Kanda portion of the Vedas which describe or discuss most sacrifices...

There are 400 yagyas described in the Vedas. Of these, 21 are theoretically compulsory for the Twice-Born (Dvijas: Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya). They are also called nityakarmas. The rest of the yagyas are optional, which are performed kamyakarma (for particular wishes and benefits). The Aupasana is not part of the above list, but is also compulsory .

Out of the 21 nityakarmas, only the Agnihotra and the Aupasana are to be performed twice daily, at dawn and dusk. The remaining ones have certain allotted frequencies over the course of the year. The more complicated the yagya, the less frequently it is performed. The most complex ones need to be performed only once in a lifetime. The first seven yagyas are called pākayagyas “cooked sacrifice”, the second seven haviryagyas “oblation, burnt offering”, and the third seven are called somayagyas “Soma sacrifice”. yagyas such as Putrakameshti (for begetting sons), Ashvamedha (to rule), Rajasuya (royal consecration) etc. are among the 400 which are not compulsory.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. The Word That is God

The word yajna, usually translated “sacrifice,” has more the idea of offering. Japa of Om is certainly the highest offering possible, for it is God Who is being offered.

Five Sacrifices

General

Wikipedia

Hindu tradition has the Pancha Mahayagyas (“Five Great Yajnas”, Taittiriya Aranyaka 2.10). These sacrifices are to be performed daily by all “householders” (married couples) daily to best of one’s ability:

Devayagya - worship of the gods (devas) through the twilight prayers (sandhya), aupasana, and agnihotra;

Pitryagya - offering libations to ancestors or pitrs;

Bhutayagya - offering food (“bali”) to animals;

Manushyayagya - charitable offerings of food to fellow humans;

Brahmayagya - recitation of a section of one’s Veda (“bráhma”) in rotation.

See: Pancagnividya and yajna

Yajna and puja

General

Encyclopedia of religion

From ancient times, Hinduism has known two preeminent methods of approaching divinity in ritual: (1) the method of yajna, which conveys offerings to a distant god by consigning them to an intermediary fire, and (2) the method of puja, which extends offerings to a present divinity by placing them before, or applying them to, the god’s symbol or image. The yajna appears in the earlier records; it was the principal ritual method of the ancient Aryan peoples whose priests produced the collection of texts known as the Veda. The puja is first mentioned in texts supplementary to the Veda that are known as sutras (composed around 600–400 BCE). It first became prominent in India as a result of the god-centered devotional movements that spread throughout India during the early centuries of the common era. The method of puja now predominates in Hindu practice, although the yajna remains important to priestly and domestic ritual.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

yajña — from the verb root yaj = “to sacrifice”.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

The word “sacrifice”, by forgetfulness of its original meaning, has assumed the sense of painful, almost compulsory, dutiful, renunciation of attachments, whatever they are. Originally and philologically it meant “holy-making”. Such is indeed the true intention of a sacrifice. The Latin “Sacrum” included all things dedicated to the Light-Gods. A sacrifice was an offering symbolical of some aspect of human nature. Consecratio was the rite of dedication with the laying of the obligation on the God concerned to protect and watch over the person or object involved. The Hindu word for sacrifice is Yajna, or Yajanam, both words from the root Yaj, meaning primarily to offer and hence to shine, to worship, to combine, to dedicate. In Yajna this is combined with jna, the root of reali-

zation. In Hindu philosophy the word Yajna may also indicate the relation between God and his World. ... Life itself, in the highest sense, is sacrifice. In the Gita (IV; 23) it is said that “When a man’s attachment is gone, when he is harmonized and his mind is well-established in wisdom and he works for yajna (sacrifice) alone, his whole karma melts away.” The same Chapter of the Gita enumerates a vast number of forms of sacrifice, referring to different temperaments according to the focus of consciousness on one or other of the Planes.

Related words

Japa

Sanskrit

Yajña — यज्ञ

yajña - यज्ञ

Yajur Veda

Title

Yajur Veda — यजुर्वेद

yajurveda - यजुर्वेदः

Wikipedia: Yajurveda is a compound of yajus “sacrificial formula’, + veda”knowledge”.

Author(s)

See Veda: Author(s)

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

The Yajur Veda is the VEDA of the sacrificial formula, the YAJUS. The priest of the Yajur Veda, the ADHVARYU, is responsible for the major sacrificial duties at the Vedic ritual, including pouring oblations and killing the sacrificial animals in the prescribed way. The formulas from the Yajur Veda must be uttered in proper fashion at the proper times.

The Yajur Veda consists to a large extent of passages from the RIG VEDA rearranged for sacrificial purposes. The Yajur Veda has two recensions: the White and the Black. The White Yajur Veda consists of hymns alone, numbering around 800. The Black Yajur Veda includes the exact same hymns, but it intersperses the explanatory. BRAHMANA sections among the hymns. It is apparently this “muddied” or mixed aspect of the Veda that caused it to be named the Black Yajur Veda.

Wikipedia

The Yajurveda is the third of the four canonical texts of Hinduism, the Vedas. By some, it is estimated to have been composed between 1,400 and 1000 BCE, the Yajurveda 'Samhita', or 'compilation', contains the liturgy (mantras) needed to perform the sacrifices of the religion of the Vedic period, and the added Brahmana and Shrautasutra add information on the interpretation and on the details of their performance.

Narayana Guru tradition

Nitya. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

Yajur Veda was split into Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda and Śukla Yajur Veda. Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda preceded Śukla Yajur Veda. There are thirty-two Upaniṣads associated with Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda of which the main ones are Kaṭha, Taittiriya and Śvetāśvatara. Of the nineteen Upaniṣads connected with the Śukla Yajur Veda the most significant are: Ísavasya and Bṛhadāranyaka. Relations of Vedas to their objects, four elements, etc.

Diagram: Summary of Vedic literature

Synopsis

General

Wikipedia

Legend

According to tradition, the vedic seer Yajnavalkya studied the Yajurveda collection under the tutelage of sage Vaishampayana maternal uncle of Yajnavalkya. Yajnavalkya's birth was with a purpose as purported by Gods. He was an Ekasandhigrāhi, meaning he learnt anything with just once teaching. The two came to have serious differences in interpretation. On one occasion, Vaishampayana was so enraged that he demanded the return of all the knowledge he had imparted to Yajnavalkya. Yajnavalkya returned in indignation or (literally vomited) all the knowledge he had learnt. The other disciples of Vaishampayana, eager to receive this knowledge, assumed the form of tittiri birds and absorbed while being recited during the return (or ate the knowledge). Thus, that knowledge came to be called the Taittiriya Samhita (a derivation of tittiri). After having regurgitated the knowledge acquired from his teacher, Yajnavalkya worshipped Surya (the Sun God) and acquired new knowledge directly from Narayana who taught the Shukla Yajurveda taking the shape of a stallion (vāji-rūpa).

Publications

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Related words

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Isha Upanishad

Yati

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Yati — ... wandering ascetic.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

yati -

a 'striver', an ascetic, devotee, one who has restrained his passions and abandoned the world;

N. of a mythical race of ascetics (connected with the Bhṛigus and said to have taken part in the creation of the world);

N. of a son of Brahmā;

of a son of Nahusha;

N. of Śiva

Descriptions

General

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Yati ... From the time of the Vedas, the earliest Hindu religious texts, the word yati has been one of the terms used to designate an ascetic, as someone who had gained control over himself. At the time of the Vedas there seems to be some ambivalence for the yatis, since the storm-god Indra is said to have fought with them, but in later times the word takes on an unequivocally positive connotation.

Ramakrishna tradition

Nirmalananda. A Commentary on the Upanishads

yati ... means a wanderer. This is because in the ancient times in India the wandering ascetics who moved about teaching dharma were given this title. They were not monks or sannyasis in the later sense. Obviously they were not married, as their mode of life prevented that, and their life was dedicated to spiritual discipline and teaching. Nevertheless, they were not considered outside society as the sadhu is today in India. They were simply those who sacrificed personal life to serve others. It was a noble way of life, but not a separation. The original Christian ascetics were just the same. They wore ordinary clothes and were considered Christian laity. The only distinctive thing about them was their way of life. The men usually lived on the edge of towns, usually as

hermits. The women lived together in houses within the town for mutual protection. In the eyes of everyone they were pious bachelors and spinsters, not at all distinct from other Christians in an official sense.

Etymology

General

[Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism](#)

Yati from Sanskrit yam, “to restrain”.

Sanskrit

Yati — यति

yati - यत्ति

Yoga

Definitions

General

[Dictionary - Grimes](#)

Yoga — ... “union”; yoke; a process or path or discipline leading to oneness with the Divine or with one’s Self...; the state of oneness with the Self, God; the practices leading to that state

1. The chief systems of yoga are hatha-yoga (the yoga of the body and life breath), karma- yoga (the path of action), bhakti-yoga (the path of devotion), raja-yoga (the kingly yoga), japa-yoga or mantrayoga (the yoga of repeating God’s names or of repeating holy words), kundaliri-yoga (the serpent power yoga), jnana-yoga (path of knowledge).
2. It is also the name for the school of philosophy founded by Patanjali. Its object is the union of individual soul with the divine Self within. It is one of the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy.
3. According to Saiva Siddhanta, it is a path to liberation characterized by contemplation and internal worship. It is called the path of friendship to God (sakha- marga). Its goal is gaining the form of God (sarupya).

[Dictionary - Monier-Williams](#)

yoga -

the act of yoking, joining, attaching, harnessing, putting to (of horses)

a yoke, team, vehicle, conveyance;

employment, use, application, performance;

equipping or arraying (of an army);

fixing (of an arrow on the bow-string);

putting on (of armour);

a remedy, cure;

a means, expedient, device, way, manner, method;

a supernatural means, charm, incantation, magical art;
a trick, stratagem, fraud, deceit;
undertaking, business, work;
acquisition, gain, profit, wealth, property;
occasion, opportunity;
any junction, union, combination, contact with;
mixing of various materials, mixture;
partaking of, possessing;
connection, relation;
putting together, arrangement, disposition, regular succession;
fitting together, fitness, propriety, suitability;
exertion, endeavour, zeal, diligence, industry, care, attention;
application or concentration of the thoughts, abstract contemplation, meditation, (esp.) self-concentration, abstract meditation and mental abstraction practised as a system (as taught by Patañjali and called the Yoga philosophy; it is the second of the two Sāṃkhya systems, its chief aim being to teach the means by which the human spirit may attain complete union with Izvara or the Supreme Spirit; in the practice of self-concentration it is closely connected with Buddhism);
any simple act or rite conducive to Yoga or abstract meditation;
Yoga personified (as the son of Dharma and Kriyā);
a follower of the Yoga system;
(in Sāṃkhya) the union of soul with matter (one of the 10 mūlikarthās or radical facts);
(with Pāśupatas) the union of the individual soul with the universal soul;
(with Pāñcarātras) devotion, pious seeking after God;
(with Jainas) contact or mixing with the outer world;
(in astron.) conjunction, lucky conjuncture;
a constellation, asterism;
the leading or principal star of a lunar asterism;
N. of a variable division of time (during which the joint motion in longitude of the sun and moon amounts to 13 degrees 20 minutes; there are 27 such Yogas beginning with Vishkambha and ending with Vaidhṛiti);
(in arithm.) addition, sum, total;
(in gram.) the connection of words together, syntactical dependence of a word, construction;
a combined or concentrated grammatical rule or aphorism;
the connection of a word with its root, original or etymological meaning;
a violator of confidence, spy

[Wikipedia](#)

Yoga refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines originating in India. The word is associated with meditative practices in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. In Hinduism, it also refers to one of the six orthodox (āstika) schools of Hindu philosophy, and to the goal toward which that school directs its practices. In Jainism it refers to the sum total of all activities—mental, verbal and physical.

Major branches of yoga in Hindu philosophy include Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Hatha Yoga. Raja Yoga, compiled in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and known simply as yoga in the context of Hindu philosophy, is part of the Samkhya tradition. Many other Hindu texts discuss aspects of yoga, including Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, the Shiva Samhita and various Tantras.

Narayana Guru tradition

Narayana. One hundred verses of Self-instruction

Commentary by Nataraja:

Yoga: (from root yuj, to join) Psychic union of the self with the Self. In the history of Indian spirituality yoga has often been associated with psycho-physical self-discipline, and has many branches such as Hatha-yoga where the physical postures gain primacy, and Raja-yoga (meaning royal, public or rational yoga) which is very little if at all distinguishable from philosophical or global attitudes, or contemplative stages of the personality in a philosophic context. Thus there is Jnana (wisdom) yoga, Karma (action) yoga, and Bhakti (devotion) yoga, besides Raja-yoga. The last is associated with the system of Patanjali, while the Narada Sutras may be said to be the basis of Bhaktiyoga. Jnana and Karma are the two broad divisions of yoga. The former is philosophical while the latter is connected with activity and discipline, religious or psycho-physical. In its broadest connotation yoga can only mean contemplative vision, as we find the word employed, for instance, at the end of each of the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, where even the distress of Arjuna is called Arjuna-vishada-yoga. Yoga thus means just a unitive contemplative way.

Nitya. Meditations on the self

Yoga - A discipline to achieve union with God or the universal Self.

Ramakrishna tradition

Vivekananda. Raja Yoga

Yoga - Joining; union of the lower self with the higher self, by means of mental control. Any sort of culture that leads us to God.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Yoga is an ancient Hindu practice and belief system that aims at releasing the adept from the bonds of the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. The word yoga is derived from the root yuj, "to yoke," probably because the early practice concentrated on restraining or "yoking in" the senses. Later the name was also seen as a metaphor for "linking" or "yoking to" God or the divine.

The earliest form of yoga may have been the Jain yoga (c. 900 B.C.E.), which involved severe sensual denial and restraint. To free the soul from birth and rebirth Jains felt it was necessary to restrain the senses completely so as to be beyond both "love" and "hate," or more accurately, beyond any positive or negative emotion...

An element of worldly denial has always been part of all yoga, and even today yogis can be found who perform extreme feats of restraint. Yoga of this sort is ultimately about controlling all bodily functions, so that even the autonomic nervous system can be under the adept's control...

The BUDDHA's yoga (c. 600 B.C.E.) was created specifically to counter the earlier push toward complete bodily denial. He declared that mental control was the final object of yoga and did not need to be accomplished by hurting the body. Central to his yoga were watching of the breath and observing of the sensations of the body.

The UPANISHADS (c. 900–300 B.C.E.) do not discuss yoga per se, but they point toward a mental practice that aims to realize the unity of one's own self with the ultimate Self. This yoga is known as JNANA YOGA, sometimes called "the Yoga of Knowledge." Nothing is said about postures and only one Upanishad speaks of sitting in a quiet place to meditate. A form of MEDITATION, however, seems to have been central to this type of yoga. A number of passages in the Upanishads imply both bodily denial and attention to the breath...

HATHA YOGA is an amalgam of practices that may have emerged separately and were later combined. It includes the basic practices that can be found in Patanjali as well as postures. The term hatha originally meant "violent," and it is possible that this style of yoga originated in certain types of severe yoga that were softened for protection of the body...

Tantra is the most esoteric of all of the yogas. All yogas, and in fact all paths toward spiritual advance in the Indian tradition, depend upon the guidance of a GURU. However, the tantra yoga practices are so complicated and often dangerous that a guru is of the utmost importance. The basic realization of tantra yoga is that the phenomenal world is nothing but the divine truth—the transcendent and the earthly divinity are one and the same. Whereas other yogas look toward a retreat from the sensual, tantra plunges into the dangers of the senses in order to reach the highest realization...

Apart from these general categories of yoga, many specialized disciplines have emerged, including KRIYA YOGA and Integral Yoga.

Encyclopedia of religion

In Indian religion the term yoga serves, in general, to designate any ascetic technique and any method of meditation. The "classical" form of yoga is a darsana ("view, doctrine"; usually, although improperly, translated as "system of philosophy") expounded by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra, and it is from this "system" that this article must set out if the reader is to understand the position of yoga in the history of Indian thought. But side by side with classical Yoga there are countless forms of sectarian, popular (magical), and non-Brahmanic yogas such as Buddhist and Jain forms.

Patanjali is not the creator of the Yoga darsana. As he himself admits, he has merely edited and integrated the doctrinal and technical traditions of yoga (Yoga Sutra 1.1). Indeed, yogic practices were known in the esoteric circles of Indian ascetics and mystics long before Patanjali. Among these practices Patanjali retained those that the experiences of centuries had sufficiently tested.

... Thanks to Patanjali, Yoga, which had been an archaic ascetic and mystical tradition, became an organized "system of philosophy." Nothing is known of the author of the Yoga Sutra, not even whether he lived in the second or third century BCE or in the fifth century CE, although claims to both datings have been vigorously defended. The earliest commentary known is the Yogabhasya of Vyasa (seventh to eighth century CE), annotated by Vacaspatimisra (ninth century) in his Tattvavaisaradī. These two works, indispensable for understanding the Yoga Sutra, are complemented by two works of later centuries. At the beginning of the eleventh century King Bhoja wrote the commentary Rajamartanda, which is very useful for its insights into certain yogic practices, and in the sixteenth century Vijnanabhikṣu annotated Vyasa's text in his remarkable treatise the Yogavartika.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

To regain that lost state, that Golden Age, man's birth-right, various Hindu traditions teach about the Four Yogas, or Ways of Union; the Four Margas or Ways; and the Four Padas or Paths. These words have a meaning much wider and deeper than the

English terms given. Each of these Four Paths is suited to the temperament of people in accordance with the focus of consciousness and activity on any of the Four Planes...

Yoga is fourfold, in accordance with the four temperaments. It is impossible to make a clear-cut division between the four Yogas, because every one of them is found in the other three forms. Even if one of the Elements predominates in a person's life, he has also to deal with the other three. The four Yogas, from the point of view of the path of pilgrimage, as represented in "one lifetime" as well as in the greater life through the cycles, succeed one another in stages.

The Yoga for the physical plane, consisting of postures and exercises for the body and its members and organs, is called Hatha Yoga. The Yoga for the emotional plane is Bhakti Yoga. It comprises purification of the emotional life and love urge, leading to devotion and love of God, and communion with the God of Love. The Yoga for the mental plane, the Element Fire, is Raja Yoga or "the Kingly Yoga", comprising the purification of the mind and the development and training of its powers in coordination with the other functions. The Yoga for the plane of Buddhi, the Element Air, is Jnana Yoga, the Way of Union based on Realization, the Science, Gnosis.

Very often Karma Yoga is given as the first of the Four Yogas. In that case it applies to actions in the physical world. Karma or action is not really a separate Yoga, for action has to take place on all the planes of existence. It is unavoidable. ... Karma Yoga has yet another meaning: Karma is also ritual, as a means of communion with the divine. As such again all the planes, including the physical, are involved.

Wikipedia

In Indian philosophy, Yoga is the name of one of the six orthodox philosophical schools.

History of yoga

The Vedic Samhitas contain references to ascetics, while ascetic practices (tapas) are referenced in the Brāhmanas (900 to 500 BCE), early commentaries on the Vedas. Several seals discovered at Indus Valley Civilization (c. 3300–1700 B.C.E.) sites in Pakistan depict figures in positions resembling a common yoga or meditation pose, showing "a form of ritual discipline, suggesting a precursor of yoga", according to archaeologist Gregory Possehl. Some type of connection between the Indus Valley seals and later yoga and meditation practices is speculated upon by many scholars, though there is no conclusive evidence.

Techniques for experiencing higher states of consciousness in meditation were developed by the shramanic traditions and in the Upanishadic tradition.

While there is no clear evidence for meditation in pre- Buddhist early Brahminic texts, Wynne argues that formless meditation originated in the Brahminic tradition, based on strong parallels between Upanishadic cosmological statements and the meditative goals of the two teachers of the Buddha as recorded in the early Buddhist texts. He mentions less likely possibilities as well. Having argued that the cosmological statements in the Upanishads also reflect a contemplative tradition, he argues that the Nasadiya Sukta contains evidence for a contemplative tradition, even as early as the late Rg Vedic period.

The Buddhist texts are probably the earliest texts describing meditation techniques. They describe meditative practices and states which had existed before the Buddha as well as those which were first developed within Buddhism. In Hindu literature, the term "yoga" first occurs in the Katha Upanishad, where it refers to control of the senses and the cessation of mental activity leading to a supreme state. Important textual sources for the evolving concept of Yoga are the middle Upanishads, (ca. 400 BCE), the Mahabharata including the Bhagavad Gita (ca. 200 BCE), and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (150 BCE).

Upanishadic

While the most ancient mystic practices are vaguely hinted at in the Vedas, the ascetic practices (tapas) are referenced in the Brāhmanas (900 BCE and 500 BCE), early commentaries on the Vedas.

In the Upanishads, an early reference to meditation is made in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, one of the earliest Upanishads (approx. 900 BCE). The main textual sources for the evolving concept of Yoga are the middle Upanishads, (ca. 400 BCE), the Mahabharata (5th c. BCE) including the Bhagavad Gita (ca. 200 BCE), and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (200 BCE- 300 CE).

In the Maitrayaniya Upanishad (ca. 200-300 BCE) yoga surfaces as:

Shadanga-Yoga - The uniting discipline of the six limbs (shad-anga), as expounded in the Maitrayaniya-Upanishad: (1) breath control (pranayama), (2) sensory inhibition (pratyahara), (3) meditation (dhyana), (4) concentration (dharana), (5) examination (tarka), and (6) ecstasy (samadhi).

An early reference to meditation is made in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the earliest Upanishad (approx. 900 BCE). Yoga is discussed quite frequently in the Upanishads, many of which predate Patanjali's Sutras. The actual term "yoga" first occurs in the Katha Upanishad. A Rig Vedic cosmogonic myth declares an ascetic with "folded legs, soles turned upwards" as per his name.

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is a foundational text of Yoga. It forms part of the corpus of Sutra literature dating to India's Mauryan period.

In Indian philosophy, Yoga (also Raja Yoga to distinguish it from later schools) is the name of one of the six orthodox philosophical schools. Though brief, the Yoga Sutras are an enormously influential work on yoga philosophy and practice.

Compilation and dating

Radhakrishnan and Moore attribute the text to Patanjali, dating it as 2nd century BCE. Scholars such as S.N. Dasgupta, claim this is the same Patanjali who authored the Mahabhasya, a treatise on Sanskrit grammar.

Indologist Axel Michaels disagrees that the work was written by Patanjali, characterizing it instead as a collection of fragments and traditions of texts stemming from the second or third century. Gavin Flood cites a wider period of uncertainty for the composition, between 100 BCE and 500 CE.

Philosophical roots and influences

The Sutras are built on a foundation of Samkhya philosophy and also exhibit the influence of Upanishadic, Buddhist and Jain thought. Karel Werner writes that "Patanjali's system is unthinkable without Buddhism. As far as its terminology goes there is much in the Yoga Sutras that reminds us of Buddhist formulations from the Pāli Canon and even more so from the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma and from Sautrāntika." Robert Thurman writes that Patanjali was influenced by the success of the Buddhist monastic system to formulate his own matrix for the version of thought he considered orthodox. The five yamas or the constraints of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali bear an uncanny resemblance to the five major vows of Jainism, indicating influence of Jainism. This mutual influence between the Yoga philosophy and Jainism is admitted by the author Vivian Worthington who writes: "Yoga fully acknowledges its debt to Jainism, and Jainism reciprocates by making the practice of yoga part and parcel of life." Christopher Chappel also notes that three teachings closely associated with Jainism appear in Yoga: the doctrine of karma described as colourful in both traditions; the telos of isolation (kevala in Jainism and Kaivalyam in Yoga); and the practice of non-violence (ahimsa). He also notes that the entire list of five yamas (II:30) is identical with the ethical precepts (Mahavratas) taught by Mahavira. In the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali prescribes adherence to eight "limbs" or steps (the sum of which constitute "Ashtanga Yoga", the title of the second chapter) to quiet one's mind and achieve kaivalya. The Yoga Sutras form the theoretical and philosophical basis

of Raja Yoga, and are considered to be the most organized and complete definition of that discipline. The division into the Eight Limbs (Sanskrit Ashtanga) of Yoga is reminiscent of Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path; inclusion of Brahmaviharas (Yoga Sutra 1:33) also shows Buddhism's influence on parts of the Sutras.

The Sutras not only provide yoga with a thorough and consistent philosophical basis, they also clarify many important esoteric concepts which are common to all traditions of Indian thought, such as karma.

Text

Patanjali divided his Yoga Sutras into 4 chapters or books (Sanskrit pada), containing in all 196 aphorisms, divided as follows:

Samadhi Pada (51 sutras)

Samadhi refers to a blissful state where the yogi is absorbed into the One. The author describes yoga and then the nature and the means to attaining samādhi. This chapter contains the famous definitional verse: "Yogaś citta- vritti-nirodhaḥ" ("Yoga is the restraint of mental modifications").

Sadhana Pada (55 sutras)

Sadhana is the Sanskrit word for "practice" or "discipline". Here the author outlines two forms of Yoga: Kriya Yoga (Action Yoga) and Ashtanga Yoga (Eightfold or Eightlimbed Yoga).

Kriya yoga, sometimes called Karma Yoga, is also expounded in Chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita, where Arjuna is encouraged by Krishna to act without attachment to the results or fruit of action and activity. It is the yoga of selfless action and service.

Ashtanga Yoga describes the eight limbs that together constitute Raja Yoga.

Vibhuti Pada (56 sutras)

Vibhuti is the Sanskrit word for "power" or "manifestation". 'Supra- normal powers' (Sanskrit: siddhi) are acquired by the practice of yoga. The temptation of these powers should be avoided and the attention should be fixed only on liberation.

Kaivalya Pada (34 sutras)

Kaivalya literally means "isolation", but as used in the Sutras stands for emancipation, liberation and used interchangeably with moksha (liberation), which is the goal of Yoga. The Kaivalya Pada describes the nature of liberation and the reality of the transcendental self.

The eight limbs (ashtanga) of Raja Yoga

The eight "limbs" or steps prescribed in the second pada of the Yoga Sutras are: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Ashtanga yoga consists of the following steps: The first five are called external aids to Yoga (bahiranga sadhana)

Yama refers to the five abstentions. These are the same as the five vows of Jainism.

Ahimsa: non-violence, inflicting no injury or harm to others or even to one's ownself, it goes as far as nonviolence in thought, word and deed.

Satya: truth in word & thought.

Asteya: non-covetousness, to the extent that one should not even desire something that is not his own.

Brahmacharya: abstain from sexual intercourse; celibacy in case of unmarried people and monogamy in case of married people. Even this to the extent that one should not possess any sexual thoughts towards any other man or woman except one's own spouse. It's common to associate Brahmacharya with celibacy.

Aparigraha: non-possessiveness

Niyama refers to the five observances

Shaucha: cleanliness of body & mind.

Santosha: satisfaction; satisfied with what one has.

Tapas: austerity and associated observances for body discipline & thereby mental control.

Svadhya: study of the Vedic scriptures to know about God and the soul, which leads to introspection on a greater awakening to the soul and God within,

Ishvarapranidhana: surrender to (or worship of) God.

Asana: Discipline of the body: rules and postures to keep it disease-free and for preserving vital energy. Correct postures are a physical aid to meditation, for they control the limbs and nervous system and prevent them from producing disturbances.

Pranayama: control of breath. Beneficial to health, steadies the body and is highly conducive to the concentration of the mind.

Pratyahara: withdrawal of senses from their external objects.

...

The last three levels are called internal aids to Yoga (antaranga sadhana)

Dharana: concentration of the citta upon a physical object, such as a flame of a lamp, the mid point of the eyebrows, or the image of a deity.

Dhyana: steadfast meditation. Undisturbed flow of thought around the object of meditation (pratyayaikatanata). The act of meditation and the object of meditation remain distinct and separate.

Samadhi: oneness with the object of meditation. There is no distinction between act of meditation and the object of meditation.

Samadhi is of two kinds:

Samprajnata Samadhi conscious samadhi. The mind remains concentrated (ekagra) on the object of meditation, therefore the consciousness of the object of meditation persists. Mental modifications arise only in respect of this object of meditation.

This state is of four kinds:

Savitarka: the Citta is concentrated upon a gross object of meditation such as a flame of a lamp, the tip of the nose, or the image of a deity.

Savichara: the Citta is concentrated upon a subtle object of meditation, such as the tanmatras

Sananda: the Citta is concentrated upon a still subtler object of meditation, like the senses.

Sasmitha: the Citta is concentrated upon the ego- substance with which the self is generally identified.

Asamprajnata Samadhi supraconscious. The citta and the object of meditation are fused together. The consciousness of the object of meditation is transcended. All mental modifications are checked (niruddha), although latent impressions may continue.

Combined simultaneous practice of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna & Samādhi is referred to as Samyama and is considered a tool of achieving various perfections, or Siddhis.

Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita ('Song of the Lord'), uses the term yoga extensively in a variety of ways. In addition to an entire chapter (ch. 6) dedicated to traditional yoga practice, including meditation, it introduces three prominent types of yoga:

Karma yoga: The yoga of action,

Bhakti yoga: The yoga of devotion,

Jnana yoga: The yoga of knowledge.

Madhusudana Sarasvati (b. circa 1490) divided the Gita into three sections, with the first six chapters dealing with Karma yoga, the middle six with Bhakti yoga, and the last six with Jnana (knowledge). Other commentators ascribe a different 'yoga' to each chapter, delineating eighteen different yogas.

Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga is a particular system of Yoga described by Yogi Swatmarama, compiler of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika in 15th century India. Hatha Yoga differs substantially from the Raja Yoga of Patanjali in that it focuses on shatkarma, the purification of the physical body as leading to the purification of the mind (ha), and prana, or vital energy (tha). Compared to the seated asana, or sitting meditation posture, of Patanjali's Raja yoga, it marks the development of asanas (plural) into the full body 'postures' now in popular usage. Hatha Yoga in its many modern variations is the style that many people associate with the word "Yoga" today.

Yoga practices in other traditions

Buddhism

Early Buddhism incorporated meditative absorption states. The most ancient sustained expression of yogic ideas is found in the early sermons of the Buddha. One key innovative teaching of the Buddha was that meditative absorption should be combined with the practice of mindfulness. The difference between the Buddha's teaching and the yoga presented in early Brahminic texts is striking. Meditative states alone are not an end, for according to the Buddha, even the highest meditative state is not liberating. Instead of attaining a complete cessation of thought, some sort of mental activity must take place: a liberating cognition, based on the practice of mindful awareness. The Buddha also departed from earlier yogic thought in discarding the early Brahminic notion of liberation at death. Liberation for the Brahminic yogin was thought to be the realization at death of a nondual meditative state anticipated in life. In fact, old Brahminic metaphors for the liberation at death of the yogic adept ("becoming cool", "going out") were given a new meaning by the Buddha; their point of reference became the sage who is liberated in life.

Jainism

According to Tattvarthasutra, 2nd Century CE Jain text, Yoga, is the sum total of all the activities of mind, speech and body. Uma-svati calls yoga as the cause of asrava or karmic influx as well as one of the essentials—samyak caritra—in the path to liberation. In his Niyamasara, Acarya Kundakunda, describes yoga bhakti—devotion to the path to liberation—as the highest form of devotion. Acarya Haribhadra and Acarya Hemacandra mention the five major vows of ascetics and 12 minor vows of laity under yoga. This has led certain Indologists like Prof. Robert J. Zydenbos to call Jainism as essentially a system of yogic thinking that grew into a full- fledged religion. Dr. Heinrich Zimmer contended that the yoga system had pre- Aryan origins which did not accept the authority of the Vedas and hence was reckoned as one of the heterodox doctrines similar to Jainism. Jain iconography depicts Jain Tirthankaras meditation in Padmasana or Kayotsarga yogic poses. Mahavira was said to have achieved Kevala Jnana "enlightenment" sitting in mulabandhasana position which has the first literary mention in the Acaranga Sutra and later in Kalpasutra. The five yamas or the constraints of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali bear an uncanny resemblance to the five major vows of Jainism, indicating a strong influence of Jainism. This mutual influence between the Yoga philosophy and Jainism is admitted by the author Vivian Worthington who writes: "Yoga fully acknowledges its debt to Jainism, and Jainism reciprocates by making the practice of yoga part and parcel of life." The Indus valley seals and iconography also provide a reasonable evidence of the existence of a proto- yogic tradition akin to Jainism. More specifically, scholars and archaeologists have remarked on close similarities in the yogic and meditative postures depicted in the seals with those of various Tirthankaras: the "kayotsarga" posture of Rsabha and the mulabandhasana of Mahavira along with seals depicting meditative figure flanked by upright serpents bearing similarities to

iconography of Parsva. All these are indicative of not only links between Indus Valley Civilisation and Jainism, but also show the contribution of Jainism to various yogic practices.

Islam

The development of Sufism was considerably influenced by Indian yogic practises, where they adapted both physical postures (asanas) and breath control (pranayama). The ancient Indian yogic text, Amritakunda, (“Pool of Nectar”) was translated into Arabic and Persian as early as the 11th century.

Malaysia’s top Islamic body in 2008 passed a fatwa, which is legally non- binding, against Muslims practicing yoga, saying it had elements of “Hindu spiritual teachings” and could lead to blasphemy and is therefore haraam. Muslim yoga teachers in Malaysia criticized the decision as “insulting”. Sisters in Islam, a women’s rights group in Malaysia, also expressed disappointment and said they would continue with their yoga classes. The fatwa states that yoga practiced only as physical exercise is permissible, but prohibits the chanting of religious mantras, and states that teachings such as uniting of a human with God is not consistent with Islamic philosophy. In a similar vein, the Council of Ulemas, an Islamic body in Indonesia, passed a fatwa banning yoga on the grounds that it contains “Hindu elements” These fatwas have, in turn, been criticized by Darul Uloom Deoband, a Deobandi Islamic seminary in India.

In May of 2009, Turkey’s head of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, Ali Bardakoğlu, discounted Yoga as a commercial venture promoting extremism- comments made in the context of Yoga practice possibly competing with and eroding participation in Islam.

Christianity

In 1989, the Vatican declared that Eastern meditation practices such as Zen and yoga can “degenerate into a cult of the body”. In spite of the Vatican statement, many Roman Catholics bring elements of Yoga, Buddhism, and Hinduism into their spiritual practices.

Some fundamentalist Christian organizations consider yoga practice to be coherent to its religious background and therefore a non- Christian religious practice. It is also considered a part of the New Age movement and therefore inconsistent to Christianity.

Tantra

Tantrism is a practice that is supposed to alter the relation of its practitioners to the ordinary social, religious, and logical reality in which they live. Through Tantric practice an individual perceives reality as maya, illusion, and the individual achieves liberation from it. This particular path to salvation among the several offered by Hinduism, links Tantrism to those practices of Indian religions, such as yoga, meditation, and social renunciation, which are based on temporary or permanent withdrawal from social relationships and modes.

During tantric practices and studies, the student is instructed further in meditation technique, particularly chakra meditation. This is often in a limited form in comparison with the way this kind of meditation is known and used by Tantric practitioners and yogis elsewhere, but is more elaborate than the initiate’s previous meditation. It is considered to be a kind of Kundalini Yoga for the purpose of moving the Goddess into the chakra located in the “heart,” for meditation and worship.

Ramana Maharshi tradition

Ramana. Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

M: ... What is yoga? Yoga means ‘union’. Yoga is possible only when there is ‘viyoga’ (separation). The person is now under the delusion of viyoga. This delusion must be removed. The method of removing it is called yoga.

...

D.: Is yoga necessary?

M.: It is a sadhana. It will not be necessary after jnana is attained. All the sadhanas are called yogas, e.g., Karma yoga; Bhakti yoga; Jnana yoga; Ashtanga yoga.

See: Jnana and yoga

Yoga and dialectics

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

Commentary by Scott Teitsworth:

First and foremost, Nataraja Guru thought dialectically. While dialectics has many definitions, the kind he employed is similar to a type that occurs in the West from Plato to Hegel, where polar opposites — a thesis and antithesis — are combined to effect a synthesis. The actual source for the Guru was the yoga of the Upanisads and the Bhagavadgita, but he found it explicitly or implicitly present in Western philosophy also. Yoga is another name for the process by which opposite poles are viewed synthetically, to be united in a common scheme of understanding.

To Nataraja Guru, dialectics springs out of the notions of complementarity, reciprocity, compensation and cancellation. In logical terms, a immediately implies not a. When they are taken together, there is a balance, which in a sense produces a virtual zero that embraces the entire picture. The formula is simply: $a + (-a) = 0$. This zero factor is another name for the Absolute. By the use of dialectics to balance life elements, the Absolute is brought in as a unifying factor in each and every situation. Therefore, the task of the yogi is to constantly seek out the element not a or not this to add to whatever situation presents itself, and in so doing restore a state of harmonious balance. 'The verity that is thus neutral and central between two terms of reciprocal propositions may be said to represent the Absolute norm of that context. . . ' is how the Guru puts it in Dialectical Methodology...

Whatever the type of Yoga one might be interested in, there is always a subtle cancellation of counterparts implied, when Yoga is treated as a discipline in the most general terms.

See also:

Buddhi-yoga

Yoga and Sankhya

General

Encyclopedia of religion

As to the theoretical framework and the metaphysical foundation that Patanjali provides for such techniques, his personal contribution is of the smallest. He merely rehandles the Samkhya philosophy in its broad outlines, adapting it to a rather superficial theism and exalting the practical value of meditation. The Yoga and Samkhya darsanas are so much alike that most of the assertions made by the one are valid for the other. The essential differences between them are two: (1) Whereas Samkhya is atheistic, Yoga is theistic, since it postulates the existence of a "Lord" (.Isvara); (2) Whereas according to Samkhya the only path to final deliverance is that of metaphysical knowledge, Yoga accords marked importance to techniques of purification and meditation.

Wikipedia

The Yoga philosophical system is closely allied with the Samkhya school. The Yoga school as expounded by the sage Patanjali accepts the Samkhya psychology and metaphysics, but is more theistic than the Samkhya, as evidenced by the addition of a divine entity to the Samkhya's twenty-five elements of reality. The parallels between Yoga and Samkhya were so close that Max Müller says that "the two philosophies were in popular parlance distinguished from each other as Samkhya with and Samkhya without a Lord..."

Narayana Guru tradition

Nataraja. Saundarya lahari

The fourth and fifth chapters of the Bhagavadgita are specifically directed to the purpose of cancelling the duality between Samkhya and Yoga, and verse 4 of Chapter V goes to the extent of saying that only children think they are distinct disciplines.

See: Yoga of Patanjali and Advaita Vedanta

Etymology

General

Wikipedia

The Sanskrit word yoga has many meanings, and is derived from the Sanskrit root "yuj", meaning "to control," "to yoke" or "to unite." Translations include "joining," "uniting," "union," "conjunction," and "means."

Related words

Bhagavad Gita
Bhakti Yoga
Hatha Yoga
Jnana Yoga
Karma Yoga
Patanjali
Raja Yoga
Sadhana
Sankhya
Siddhi
Tapas

Sanskrit

Yoga — योग

yoga - योग

Yogi

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

yogi -

= yogin (only in gen. pl. yogīnām);

being in conjunction with

yogin -

joined or connected with, relating to, accompanied by, possessed of;

being in conjunction with;

possessed of superhuman powers;

a follower of the Yoga system, a Yogin (usually called Yogī) or contemplative saint, devotee, ascetic;

a magician, conjurer;

a partic. mixed caste;

an orange tree;

natron, alkali;

N. of Yājñavalkya;

of Arjuna;

of Viṣṇu;

of Śiva;

of a Buddha

Illustrated-Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Yogi. Literally meaning “one possessing yoga,” in practice the word refers only to a yogic adept—someone who “possesses” yoga in the sense of having mastered it—rather than to anyone simply practicing yoga. True yogis are widely believed to have superhuman powers (siddhi) as a by-product of their long spiritual development, which they can and will exercise for the benefit of their disciples—for physical healing of diseases, for psychological help, or for giving guidance on both spiritual and mundane matters.

The yogi is seen as a spiritually realized person, and their authority stems completely from this attribution, which paradoxically is not subject to any sort of external verification. Consequently, there are significant differences of opinion on whether or not any particular person is a yogi.

Descriptions

General

Wikipedia

A yogi or yogin (Sanskrit: yogin-, nominative yogī (Devanagari योगी; feminine yoginī) is a term for a male practitioner of various forms of spiritual practice. The Sanskrit term is an -in adjective of the root yuj “to connect”, with a general meaning “joined with,

relating to” in Epic Sanskrit, but in the Classical Sanskrit of the Puranas taking the specific meaning of “a practitioner of Yoga”. The feminine yoginī in Classical Sanskrit literature is the name of a class of female demons, witches or sorceresses, created by or attending to Durga.

In Hinduism the term refers to an adherent of Yoga. As an Urdu term, yogī (Nastaliq یوگی) is mostly used to refer to wandering Sufi saints and ascetics. The word is also often used in the Buddhist context to describe Buddhist monks or a householder devoted to meditation.

Related words

Yoga

Sanskrit

Yogin — योगिन

yogi - योगी

Yuga

Definitions

General

Dictionary - Grimes

Yuga — ... age or cycle; aeon; world era.

1. Four ages are said to exist: the Golden Age (satya or kṛta), the Silver Age (treta), the Bronze Age (dvapara), and the Iron Age (kali).
2. In a day of Brahma (see kalpa) there are four yugas, each preceded by a period called its sandhya (evening twilight). Four yugas make a half kalpa (4,320,000,000 years), which is the duration of one day or one night of Brahma.

Dictionary - Monier-Williams

yuga -

a yoke, team (exceptionally masculine);

a pair, couple, brace;

(also with mānuṣya or manuṣya) a race of men, generation (exceptionally masculine);

a period or astronomical cycle of 5 (rarely 6) years, a lustrum (esp. in the cycle of Jupiter);

an age of the world, long mundane period of years (of which there are four, viz. 1. Kṛita or Satya, 2. Tretā, 3. Dvāpara, 4. Kali, of which the first three have already elapsed, while the Kali, which began at midnight between the 17th and 18th of Feb. 3102 B.C.

[O. S.], is that in which we live; the duration of each is said to be respectively 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 864,000, and 432,000 years of men, the descending numbers representing a similar physical and moral deterioration of men in each age; the four Yugas comprise an aggregate of 4,320,000 years and constitute a 'great Yuga' or Mahā-yuga;

a measure of length = 86 Aṅgulas;

a symbolical N. for the number'four';

for the number'twelve';

N. of a partic. position or configuration of the moon;

of a partic. Nābhasa constellation (of the class called Sāmkhya-yoga, when all the planets are situated in two houses);

of a double śloka or two ślokas so connected that the sense is only completed by the two together

Wikipedia

Yuga ... in Hindu philosophy is the name of an 'epoch' or 'era' within a cycle of four ages. These are the Krita Yuga, the Treta Yuga, the Dvapara Yuga, and finally the Kali Yuga. According to Hindu cosmology, life in the universe is created, destroyed once every 4.1 to 8.2 billion years, which is one full day (day and night) for Brahma. The lifetime of a Brahma himself may be 311 trillion and 40 Billion years. The cycles are said to repeat like the seasons, waxing and waning within a greater time-cycle of the creation and destruction of the universe. Like Summer, Spring, Winter and Autumn, each yuga involves stages or gradual changes which the earth and the consciousness of mankind goes through as a whole.

Descriptions

General

Encyclopedia of Hinduism

Yuga. In Hindu cosmology a Yuga, or "Age," is the smallest unit of cosmological time. Four Yugas make up one MAHAYUGA, or Great Age: the Golden Age (KRITA, or Satya, YUGA), the Silver Age (TRETA YUGA), the Bronze Age (DVAPARA YUGA), and the Iron Age (KALI YUGA, no connection with the goddess Kali). The Yugas are named after an ancient dice game, in which a 1, or kale, was the worst throw and a 4, or krita (literally, the one that makes it!), is the best.

The Yugas decrease in duration: Satya Yuga lasts 1,728,000 years, Treta 1,296,000 years, Dvapara 864,000 years, and Kali 432,000 years. The figures are sometimes given in "god-years," each divine year equal to 360 human years. Then the Satya Yuga is 4,800 divine years; the Treta Yuga 3,600 divine years; the Dvapara Yuga 2,400 divine years; and the Kali Yuga 1,200 divine years. Each Mahayuga totals 12,000 divine years.

As the Yugas follow one another, every aspect of human life suffers a decline, including human height, longevity, and morality. We are currently in the Kali Yuga, the most corrupt of the ages. At its end, a new Satya Yuga will begin. Mahayugas follow one another cyclically; after a long series, the universe undergoes a dissolution, or pralaya. After this interlude, the progression of the Yugas resumes. The process goes on to infinity. Jain tradition has a similar progression of ages with different names.

Mees. The Revelation in the Wilderness

In the Rig-Veda the word Yuga is used many times, but not in the sense of "Age" that was later given to it. It means sometimes "yoke", sometimes "generation" and sometimes "period". The names of the Four Yugas were used in the Vedas as the names of four throws in gambling, the Krita being the most lucky and the Kali being the most unlucky. This shows either that the tradition of the Four Ages formed part of Vedic tradition (even if not found in early Vedic literature) and that its terminology was applied to characterize the throws of gambling, or that the names of the throws of gambling became used in a later period for the purpose of spiritual symbolism. When we study the references to gambling in Hindu mythology, we understand that the first must be the case. Gambling symbolizes the desirous and blindly adventurous urge of the Dragon. In Diagram 2 "gambling" is noted to refer to Taurus, the House of the Dragon's Head. Gambling is symbolically connected with the Fall. The Four Yugas denote states and stages

of the Fall. In the Taittiriya Brahmana (III; 4, 16) we read: “to the Krita (pertains) the master of the gambling hall, to the Treta one who takes advantage of mistakes, to the Dvapara one who sits outside, to the Kali (one who is like) a post of the gaming house (i.e. never leaves it)”. The gaming house is the World of the Fall. The most favourable position of the four is to be its master! The Krita-Age is the same as the Satya-Age. “Krita” means “achieved”. The Age begins at the mystic hour of Achievement. In the earliest reference, the symbolic nature of which cannot be mistaken even by literalists, the names of the Four Yugas are used not for stages on the Path of the Fall, but for stages on the Spiritual Path of the individual. It is found in the Aitareya Brahmana (33; 3 or VII; 15), where we read: “A man while lying is the Kali; when moving himself, he is Dvapara; when rising, he is the Treta; and when walking he becomes the Krita.” This symbolism refers to stages of awakening out of the sleep-like state of the Fall. “Lying down” concerns the Element Earth; “moving”, the Element Water; “rising”, the Element Fire; and “walking” represents the “walking of the Path” of the Spirit.

Wikipedia

According to the Laws of Manu, one of the earliest known texts describing the yugas, the length is 4800 years + 3600 years + 2400 years + 1200 years for a total of 12,000 years for one arc, or 24,000 years to complete the cycle (one precession of the equinox). There is no mention of a year of the demigods or any year longer than the solar year, which is consistent with description in The Holy Science. However, the more recent and popular interpretation from the Srimad Bhagavatam states the following: “The duration of the Satya millennium equals 4,800 years of the years of the demigods; the duration of the Dvāpara millennium equals 2,400 years; and that of the Kali millennium is 1,200 years of the demigods... As aforementioned, one year of the demigods is equal to 360 years of the human beings. The duration of the Satya-yuga is therefore 4,800 x 360, or 1,728,000 years. The duration of the Tretā-yuga is 3,600 x 360, or 1,296,000 years. The duration of the Dvāpara-yuga is 2,400 x 360, or 864,000 years. And the last, the Kali-yuga, is 1,200 x 360, or 432,000 years.” (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.11.19). These 4 yugas follow a timeline ratio of (4:3:2:1).

The ages see a gradual decline of dharma, wisdom, knowledge, intellectual capability, life span, emotional and physical strength.

Satya Yuga:- Virtue reigns supreme. Human stature was 21 cubits. Average human lifespan was 400 years.

Treta Yuga: - There was 3 quarter virtue & 1 quarter sin. Normal human stature was 14 cubits. Average human lifespan was 300 years.

Dwapar Yuga: - There was 1 half virtue & 1 half sin. Normal human stature was 7 cubits. Average human lifespan was 200 years.

Kali Yuga: - There was 1 quarter virtue & 3 quarter sin. Normal human stature was 3.5 cubits. Average human lifespan will be 100 years

Sivananda tradition

Krishnananda. Commentary on the Bhagavadgita

There are four yugas – called Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali. These are the time cycles or ages, as we say. We are supposed to be in Kali Yuga, the worst age, where there is conflict. The age of conflict is called Kali Yuga. This age is supposed to extend for 432,000 years. The duration of Dvapara Yuga is double that, the duration of Treta Yuga is triple, and Krita Yuga is quadruple. The total of all these figures is called one thousand divine years; but according to us, it is a multiple of several thousands of human years. Imagine what it means: 432,000 multiplied by 2, then multiplied by 3, and then multiplied by 4. That total is the duration of one day of Brahma. One day of Brahma is as long as this computation of the years of the four yugas, and one night of Brahma is equally long. This is twelve hours of day and twelve hours of night of Brahma.

Etymology

General

Dictionary - Grimes

yuga — from the root yuj = “to unite”.

Related words

Kalpa

Pralaya

Sanskrit

Yuga — युग

yuga - युग

