

Fundamentals of Hindu Philosophy

**V Srinivasan
Chairman, eMudhra Limited**

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About the Author

About the Author

- **Mr. Srinivasan** is the **Founder Chairman of eMudhra Limited** since its inception in 2008.
- Prior to this, he was the **Managing Director and Global Chief Executive Officer of 3i Infotech Limited since April 1999.**
- Born in Kumbakonam (a religious hub in South India), Mr. Srinivasan developed deep interest in religion due to his curiosity and through dialogue with his father, exposure to ancient texts, and teachings of Kanchi Sankaracharya.
- He is a graduate in Mathematics from Madras University and secured the First Rank in the university. Apart from being a rank holder in the Chartered Accountancy examination, he is also a qualified Cost and Works accountant and a Company Secretary. He had also attended the Executive Development Programme at the Kelloggs School of Management in Chicago, USA.
- Mr. Srinivasan has authored a book titled “**New Age Management Philosophy from Ancient Indian Wisdom**” based on his learning from the **Thirukural**, a 2000 year old Indian text.
- He has given lectures on Hindu Philosophy in several forums including Swami Dayanand Saraswati's ashram in Pennsylvania.
- He combines business acumen with ancient Indian teachings to create and run successful businesses.

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
येन जातानि जीवन्ति ।
यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ।
तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्वहोति ।



ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं
पूर्णत्पुर्णमुदच्यते पूर्णस्य
पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

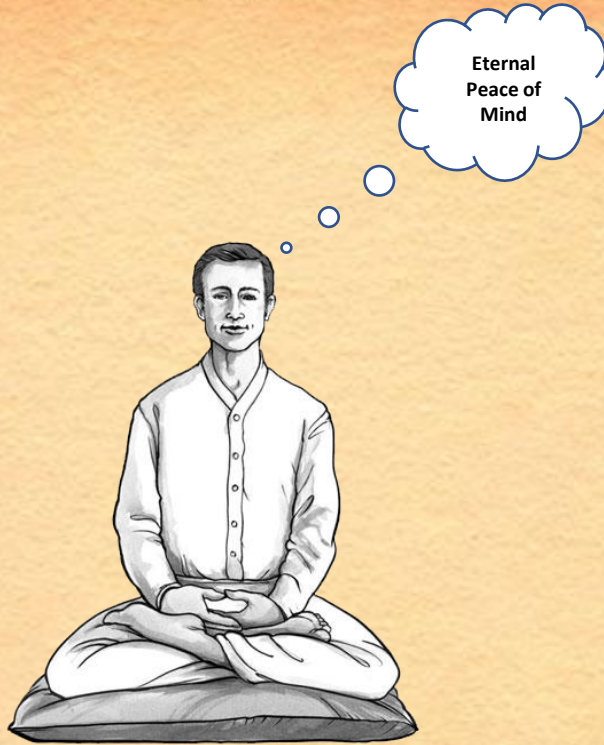
Introduction

Introduction

- Most of the books on Hinduism do not give the overall context of the religion, its goal, various ways of reaching the goal etc.,
- There are some books which go too much in detail on many aspects thereby the reader gets lost in volumes without being able to understand the key principles.
- There are several other books which go into specific procedural aspect of each and every part of the religion without giving any overall context which makes the reader to discard the book after a few pages.
- In this background, the aim of this presentation is :
 1. To broadly summarize the teachings of Hindu Religion
 2. To give a broad understanding to the reader about the goal of the religion and the various paths to reach the goal.
 3. To give a broad understanding of the various procedures involved in following varying paths to reach the goal.

Introduction

- The idea is to give a broader understanding and sense of direction so that anyone wanting deeper understanding on any particular topic can go through relevant books and understand as well as relate the same to the broader context.
- Hinduism is not subject to any central control or authority to specify what is correct and what is not correct. It is a way of life evolved over several generations , which have been captured in various teachings.
- Hence the religion and its teachings are open to different interpretations and conclusions. The thoughts expressed in this presentation may also be subject to different interpretations which may vary from author's interpretation. Further these interpretations may be constrained by Author's limited understanding of the vast ocean of teachings related to Hindu Philosophy.
- In a way this presentation is a quick guide in understanding the Hindu Philosophy and way of life.
- Anybody wanting to understand any one or more areas deeper can get relevant books from Ramakrishna Mutt Stores in different cities, Amazon (online) or search in Google or Wikipedia.



Goal of Hindu Religion

Goal Of Hindu Religion

- The Goal of the Hindu Religion is to attain Mukthi
- Mukthi means eternal peace of mind (Sath-chith-Ananda). Mukthi can be achieved only when one is able to get rid of fear, greed or any trace of attachment to worldly things.
- If the mind has to be eternally peaceful, gradually it has to be peaceful at every point of time.
- This cannot be achieved easily.
- This is a very slow process which has to be achieved over a period by continuous training and practice.
- The Hindu Philosophy prescribes various ways by which peacefulness of mind can be achieved, which over a long period can be improved to eternal peace of mind (without fear, greed , or any trace of attachment to worldly things), which is Mukthi.
- Even if the desire for materialistic things such as wealth etc are subdued, desires for finer and stronger desires like fame, name, status, honour etc prove very hard nuts to crack. They remain hidden in the subconscious depths of mind. This makes the task of attaining Mukthi almost impossible.
- When Mukthi is attained the soul is liberated from samsara (birth and death cycles of this world).



Importance of Mind

Importance of Mind

- It is the mind which controls all the actions of all beings. It is central to everything.
- Our hands, legs, ears, speech, vision everything is controlled by the Mind.
- For eg., though our eyes may be open and there may be ten things in front of your eyes, we may only perceive two or three things which appeal to our mind and may not notice all others.
- Same thing happens with our ears, speech etc.,
- The factors affecting the peace of mind could be
 1. **Self inflicted** – mind itself loses its peace by thinking in a negative way about various matters.
 2. **Inflicted by others** – Because of the other's actions the mind loses its peace. Invariably those other's actions could be a reaction to some wrong action on our part. Still mind loses its peace.
 3. **Inflicted by Nature** – Fear of huge Rain, Cyclone, etc etc.

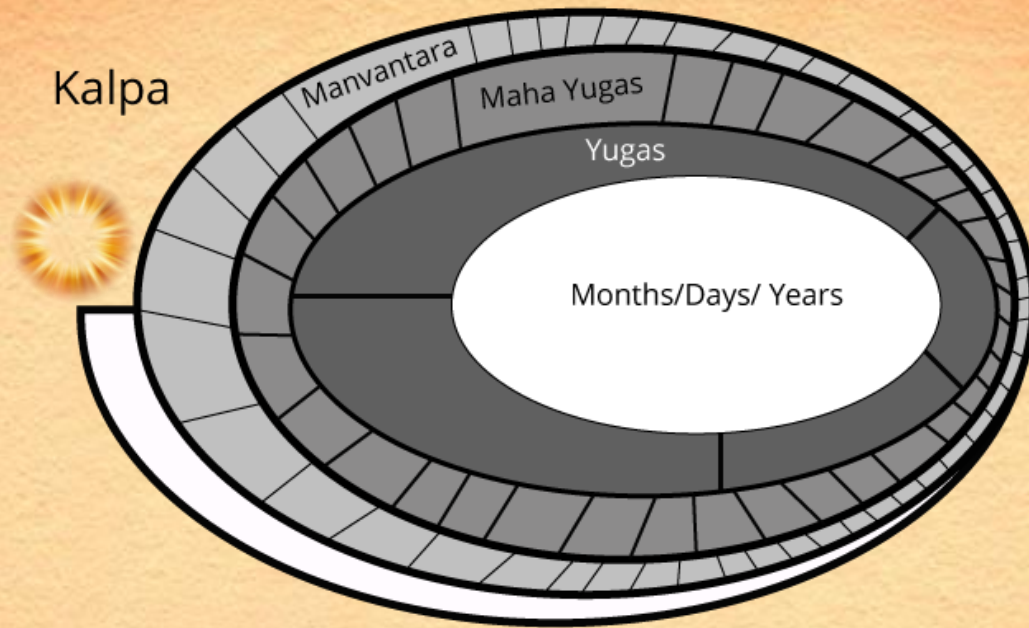
The loss of peace of mind due to above factors are due to greed, enmity, miserliness, fear etc

Importance of Mind

- The sum and substance is we lose peace of mind due to any one or more of the above.
- The aim of the religion is how to come out of these and reach towards more and more of peace, leading to ultimate peace, that is Mukthi.
- Even if one is not able to reach Mukthi, if he or she gets more and more peace of mind by following the path prescribed by the religion, it is better for his/her well being and peaceful existence in society.
- As more and more people adopt this approach, the society at large would exist in a more peaceful and harmonic manner.

Importance of Mind – Societal Order

- Further for orderliness in the society the members in the society ie, people have to control their greed, enmity, miserliness, fear and other negative factors.
- If they do not control these, the society as a whole will get into problem due to in-fighting and various other negative factors.
- Hence even for the prosperity of the society as a whole controlling of the mind and preventing individual members of the society from doing harmful things is very important.
- In this context also the religion really helps as, if the people are fully engaged in pursuit of peace and happiness, there would be less time to engage in destructive activities.
- Thus the people in the society can be more peaceful.



Origin & Evolution

Origin & Evolution

- No one person is attributed to be the originator of Hindu religion.
- Vedas (sacred text of Hindu religion) are considered to have been floating in the air as hymns and heard by the Rishis (Saints) because of their super-natural powers.
- Though the periods in which the main Rishis (saints) like Vedavyasa and others lived are not clearly known in several texts they are considered to have lived about more than 3000 years back.
- Hence though the Vedas themselves might have evolved several thousands or even millions of years back the current practices and procedures seem to have evolved during Indus Civilization dating back to around 3000 years.
- When we write any agreement in the modern days we say this agreement made this ____ day of ____ month ____ year because the evolution is mainly considered from after the death of Christ.
- In Hindu religion whenever we perform any ceremony, we do what is called Sankalpa(taking solemn vow to do) for that Ceremony. Sankalpa traces the origin of the universe as explained in the next slide.

Origin & Evolution

In every Sankalpa we trace the origin of time as under:

- *Adhyabrahmanaha Dwithyaparardhe, Swethavaraha Kalpe, Vayvaswatha Manvanthare, Astavigumshathithame Kaliyuge, Prathame Paadhey, Jamboodweepe, Bharathvarshe, Bharathakande-, Meroho Dhakshineparsve/ Uttareparsve, ____ sakaapthe, ____ naama samvathsare , Uttarayame/ Dhakshinaayane, ____ Rithoo -, ____ Maase -, ____ Pakshe, ____ Nakshathre, ____ Thithi, ____ Vasara.....*

What this means is:

In the second half of the lifetime of the universe (Brahman), **in** swethavaraha kalpa (the whole lifetime of the Brahman is divided into 100 Kalpas and Swethavaraha is the 51st Kalpa), **in** Vayvaswatha manvanthara (each Kalpa is divided into 14 Manvantharas and Vayvaswatha is the 7th manvanthara in the Swethavaraha Kalpa), **in** 28th Kaliyuga (each Manvanthara is divided into 71 Mahayugas - each consisting of 43,20,000 years, each Mahayuga consists of 4 Yugas out of which the last one is Kaliyuga with 4,32,000 years), **in** first one fourth of Kaliyuga, **in** the Indian continent and south/north of Vindhya, **in** ----- cycle of Indian system of years (each Sakaaptha is period of 60 years which is one cycle of Indian system of years), **in** ----- year (Samvathsara means the year), **in** ----- northward/southward motion of the sun (the year is divided into two based on Sun's northward motion or the southward motion), **in** ----- season (every year is divided into six seasons called Rithoos), **in** ----- month (refers to the current month), **in** ----- phase of the moon (waxing or waning), **in** ----- star (refers to the moon's place in the galaxy on the day of the ceremony), **in** ----- lunar day (the day in the full-moon to new-moon and new-moon to full-moon cycle), **in** --- weekly day (refers to the day of the ceremony).

Origin & Evolution

The above can be established in tabular form as under:

Unit of Measure	Fractional Representation	Number of years
Lifetime of Brahman	100 kalpas	432,000,000,000 years
Kalpa	14 Manvanthara	4,320,000,000 (approx.)
Manvanthara	71 Mahayugas	306,720,000 years
Mahayuga	4 Yugas (each of different duration)*	4,320,000 years
Yuga	Variable number of Sakaapthas per Yuga	432,000 – 1,728,000 years
Sakaaptha	60 Samvathsara	60 years
Samvathsara	12 masa	1 year
Maasa	-	1 month

Going through the above table, it is established that in each sankalpa we trace several billion years of origin and history. **Hence, no one can trace the origin and originator of Hindu Philosophy.**

*The duration of Yugas are proportional in nature at a ratio of 1:2:3:4 with Kali Yuga being the shortest.



Routes (Maargas) to attain the goal

Routes (Maargas) to attain the goal

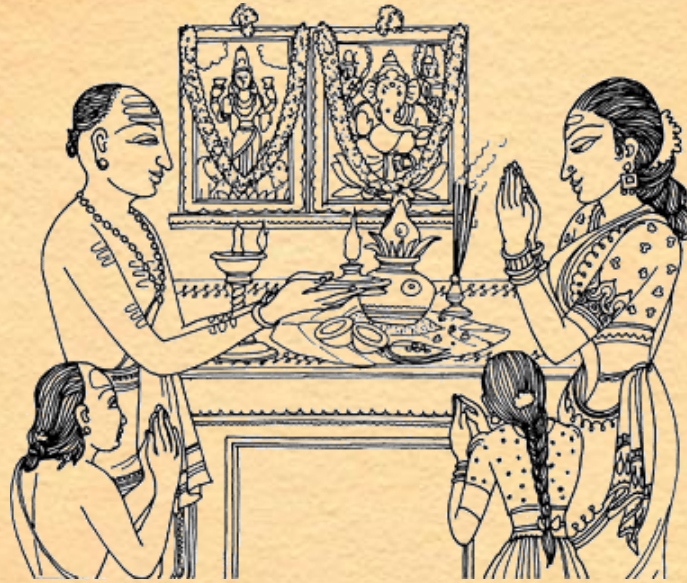
- Earlier we saw that the mind is the root cause of all the problems and the goal of the religion is to gradually attain more and more peace of mind leading to eternal peace called Mukthi.
- There are different schools of thought called 'Shad dharshana' (Six Ways) on how to reach Mukthi. These are Purvamimamsa (written by Jaimini), Uttaramimamsa (written by Vyasa), Saankhya (written by Kapila), Yoga (written by Patanjali), Nyaya (written by Gothama), Vysheshika (written by Kaanada).
- These lead to the following major routes (maargas) to reach the goal, Mukthi:
 - **Bhakthi Maarga** – prayers to gods increasing over time to only think of the god and forget about miseries of the world.
 - **Karma Maarga** – performing various ritualistic prayers prescribed by the religion in increasing proportions over time so that the mind is fully occupied in that and forget about miseries of the world.
 - **Gnana Maarga** – logical thinking and enlightenment on aspects such as who am I?, Who is god?, who are others?, when I say "I" is it my body or my mind or my soul etc to understand that everything is god and remove greed, fear, anger, miserliness etc. from the mind so that mind attains peace.
 - **Rajayoga** – the Raja Yoga is intended towards controlling of one's mind in such a way that it becomes dispassionate and peaceful under any kind of adverse circumstances and finally mingles with Brahman (God)
- It is not necessary that the person following the above paths should leave his family life.

Routes (Maargas) to attain the goal

- For attaining the goal through the above said maargas the religion prescribes two ways:
 - **Pravrithi Maarga** – Trying to attain more and more peace of mind leading to Mukthi while continuing with ones family life. Bhakthi and Karma Maarga can be largely followed along with family life. But ultimately towards the end one may have to shift to Nivrithi maarga.
 - **Nivrithi Maarga** – Leaving family life and taking up Saintly life to attain Mukthi. Gnyana Maarga at a more evolved stage and Rajayoga will invariably lead to Nivrithi Maarga (full detachment).
 - It is very difficult for anybody to choose Nivrithi Maarga directly. Unless and until somebody goes through pleasures and pains of family life it is very difficult to reach detachment and hence Mukthi.
 - **In view of this the religion has identified four stages of life (Ashramas):**
 1. Kuamara or Brahmacharya (youngster)
 2. Grahastha (Family man)
 3. Vanaprastha (half way into detachment)
 4. Sanyasa (full detachment)

Routes (Maargas) to attain the goal

- At each stage, depending on that stage and depending on a persons Varna (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya & Shudra) person can follow the relevant maarga to attain Mukthi over time.
- Under the religion, the varna is based on a persons guna and occupation (karma) chosen by him.
 - Brahmana – Person who undertakes activities exclusively aimed at pursuit of understanding the concept of ‘God’ & ‘Self’
 - Kshatriya – Person who undertakes activities aimed at commanding and protecting territories and people
 - Vaishya – Person who is engaged in business activities with the aim of being remunerated for such activities
 - Shudra – Person who is in the process of assisting any of the above except Brahmanas.



Bhakti Maarga

- **Bhakthi Maarga** focuses on offering prayers to gods.
- In Hindu religion, there is no specific god. There are multiple gods and each person has a choice of offering prayers to one or more of these gods. About the evolution of gods we will see in a later slide.
- Over the years for different kind of problems people started praying to specific gods and thought those gods are the most suitable for those kind of problems.
- Irrespective of these, the key purpose of Bhakthi maarga is to love the god of one's preference, develop deeper and deeper attachment to the god which leads to detachment from materialistic aspects which lead to misery. Thus one is able to attain more and more peace of mind by more and more prayers to a god of one's choice.
- As it is difficult for the mind to focus on infinite and it is easier to focus on something defined that one can relate to and visualize, Bhakthi around different gods have evolved, instead of a pure Bhakthi on infinite (Brahman)
- As more and more time is spent on the preparations for the prayer and on the prayer itself there is less time for focusing on materialistic aspects which lead to misery.
- The Sthothras, Pujas, Japas etc fall in this category called Bhakthi Maarga. The list of such Sthothras, Pujas & Japas which are usually done by a large number of people are given in appendix 1 & 2.

Sthothras - Prayers in praise of God

Pujas - Offerings in the course of prayers in praise of God

Japas - Repeated chanting of mantras



Karma Maarga

Karma Maarga

- **Karma Maarga** (for Brahmins) contemplates performing various ritualistic prayers prescribed by the religion. (For others it may also mean performing the duties as per their Varna; ie for Kshatriyas protecting the kingdom and for Vysyas doing their business).
- But the key thing is that the karma has to be done without expecting anything in return and only for the sole purpose of completing the karma.
- Like Bhakthi Maarga the key in Karma Maarga also is prayers. However Karma Maarga prescribes elaborate procedures on how to do various prayers
- The prayers in Karma Maarga broadly consists of the following:
 - **Daily Karmas** - Daily prayers to Gods & Natural Elements done by Brahman men. (Ex. Sandhya Vandana, Samidhadhaana, Agni Hotra)
 - **Homas for various gods**- Religious procedures where the element of Fire and offerings to the Fire God are compulsory. (Ex. Navagraha Homa - prayers to 9 planets, Ganapathi Homa - prayers to lord ganapathi)
 - **Yagas** - Religious procedures where Fire acts as a medium between man and god. (Ex. Ashwamedha Yaga, Vajapeya Yaga)
 - **Tarpanas** - Religious activities that primarily involve offerings to forefathers.(Ex. Pithru tarpanam)
 - Rituals for key events in one's life such as **Ayush Homa (1st birthday), Uppavitha (Thread Ceremony), Marriage** etc.
 - **Apara Kriyas** - religious procedures done for deceased persons
- Eternal calmness in the midst of intense activity is the ideal condition to be reached through karma maarga.

Karma Maarga

- The key purpose of Karma Maarga is to continuously do various prayers, by observing all the associated procedures, so as to develop deeper and deeper attachment to the god, which leads to detachment from materialistic aspects, which lead to misery. Thus one is able to attain more and more peace of mind by more and more prayers to the god.
- As more and more time is spent on the preparations for the various Karmas and on the actual execution of the Karma itself there is less time for focusing on materialistic aspects which lead to misery.
- The list of such rituals which are usually done by a large number of people are given in appendix 3.
- The Karma Maarga is contained in Jaimini Sutras, written by Jaimini and is also called Poorvamimamsa.
- The Bhakthi and Karma maarga also gives a lot of self confidence to the person thus enabling the person in doing good deeds and in overcoming fears associated with day-to-day life.
- In following Bhakti and Karma Maarga the following are very important:
 1. Choosing appropriate Guru and following him.
 2. concentration of the mind in what we are doing (Dhyana)
 3. Reciting of the mantras with appropriate rhythm, pitch and pronunciation.
 4. Giving away to others (Dhaana)



Gnana Maarga

- **Gnana Maarga** contemplates logical thinking and enlightenment on aspects such as who am I?, Who is god?, who are others?
- When I say "I" is it my body or my mind or my soul.
- Gnana Maarga delves into logical reasoning to these key questions so that a person can understand:
 - There is something beyond body and mind, which activates the body and mind.
 - That one which activates the body and the mind is nothing but soul (Atman).
- This leads to further questions whether soul of each person is separate or it is part of a universal/ cosmic soul. What is the relationship between the soul of each person called Jeevathma with the cosmic soul called Brahman.
- Finding answers to these questions through deduction and elimination processes leads to the finer understanding of who am I. The more the understanding matures the greed, fear, anger, miserliness etc are removed from the mind.
- Thus the mind attains more and more peace leading to Mukthi.

- At death of the body the entire sukshma sharira leaves the body and enters another body at rebirth. Based on its previous experience this sukshma sharira develops the new body into which it has entered. The instrument used in building the body is mainly the prana (Vital energy). The material out of which the physical body is built are gathered through food. While the physical body is a created one, the soul is inanimate and sentient. It is not created. The god himself appears as the soul of every living being. The soul is birthless, deathless and eternal.
- The Aathma (Soul) is neither the doer nor the experiencer. It is constant witness to all action and experiences of the Jeeva, as the later passes through the three states (Sushupti, Swapna, Jagruti) again and again from birth to death.
- The soul is one and undivided. The sukshma sharira consisting of mind and intellect of different living beings get illuminated or energised by the same soul like several distinct objects get illuminated by the sun.
- The infinite god has split himself into myriads of atomic souls and lodged himself separately within the minute vigyanamaya kosha (Intellect and sensory organs) of every creature.

Gnana Maarga

- The sukshma sharira consists of three sheaths called Vigyanamaya kosha (intellect and five subtle senses of knowledge -Gnanendriyas), Manomaya kosha(mind) and Pranamaya kosha(five pranas and five sense of action - karmendriyas). With these three koshas body is made up of five elementary bhuthas (also called Tanmatras) – ether, air, fire, water and earth (panchabhuthas)
- Prana is the vital energy and it is said to be in five kinds corresponding to different physiological functions. They are as under:
 - **Prana** moves down from the base of the throat to the navel (the pranic center or *kanda*) and energizes all the vayus. It also moves up from the navel to the throat.
 - **Apana** moves from the navel down to the floor of the pelvis.
 - **Vyana** moves from the core out to the periphery).
 - **Udana** moves primarily up from the throat up to the head.
 - **Samana** moves from the periphery of the body into the core.
- The various Upanishads put forth logics and arguments on Who am I and other questions explained earlier leading to finding answer about Brahman (God) through Gnana Maarga.
- The Gnana Marga is also contained in Brahmasutra written by Vedavyasa. The Gnana Maarga is contained in **Uttaramimamsa**.
- Through Gnana Maarga, when one realises that everyone is part of the same Brahman the fear, greed, miserliness, enmity etc., disappears and mind becomes more and more peaceful leading to Mukti.
- When the mind has reached full peace, that is Parmananda or Mukthi, even if the life and body are existent, that stage is called Jeeva Samadhi.



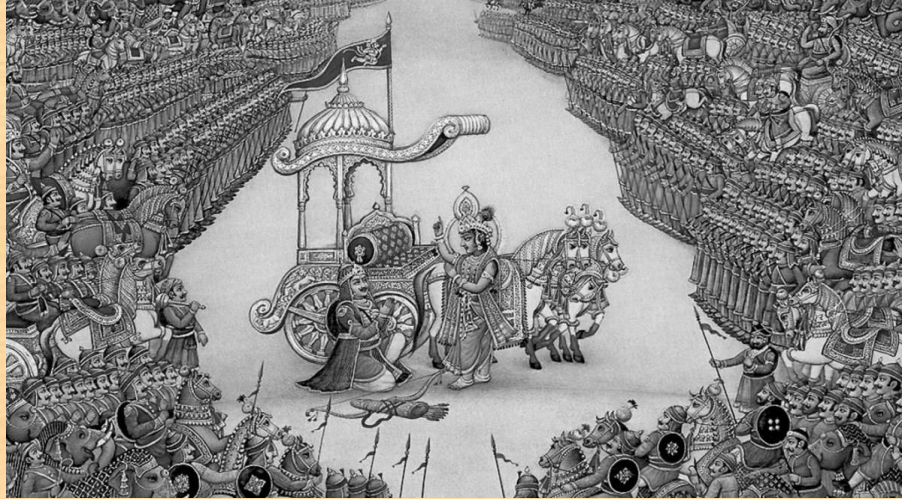
Raja Yoga & Tantras

Raja Yoga & Tantras

- Generally when we say Yoga we all think Yoga is exercise to various parts of the body including breathing techniques which can make our body and mind very active.
- These techniques are called Hathayoga.
- While Hathayoga is mainly for the well being of the body, the Raja Yoga is intended towards controlling of one's mind in such a way that it becomes dispassionate and peaceful under any kind of adverse circumstances and finally mingles with Brahman (God).
- Rajayoga consists of eight successive courses , which are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyachara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.
- Through these levels one has to focus his mind more and more towards the God (Brahman) so that at the stage of Samadhi, mind loses its grip on all other matters and only the object of Dhyana, ie the God occupies the mind.
- Thus one reaches Mukthi.

Raja Yoga & Tantras

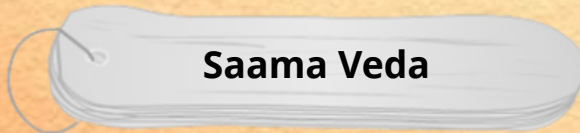
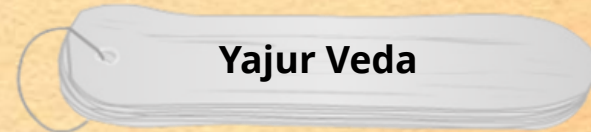
- Tantras are another group of Shashtras which dwell on Shakthi (energy). Tantra means liberation of energy and expansion of consciousness from its gross form. It is a method to expand the mind and liberate the dormant potential energy.
- There are different group of Tantras prescribed for Tamasic (laid back), Rajasik (energetic and ambitious) and Satvik (spiritually evolved) people called Pashwachara, Virachara and Divyachara.
- There are 64 prominent Tantras and they prescribe hundreds of rituals and ceremonies for three different groups of people indicated above. Tantras' principles form the basis of all yogic practices.
- Some of the tantras require the sadhakas (practitioners of tantra) to contact with attractive sense objects such as wine and woman but at the same time draw his mind away from such things and fix it towards his chosen god. Sometimes the tantra sadhakas has to sit on a corpse in a lonely crematorium on the darkest night.
- It is expected that by Tantric practices mind becomes dispassionate about various matters which create greed, fear, anger etc and attain Mukthi over a period.
- The practitioner of Tantra gets ability to influence the mind of the audience through the use of appropriate tantric methods depending on the nature of the audience (Tamasic, Rajasik, Satvik).



Vedas & other Scriptures

Vedas & Other Scriptures

- Vedas are the fundamentals of the Hindu religion
- When the universe got created these vedic hymns were supposed to be humming in the air and the saints could infer these due to their super natural powers
- There are four vedas in Hindu religion which have evolved as above.
 1. Rig Veda,
 2. Yajur Veda,
 3. Saama Veda
 4. Atharva Veda



Vedas & Other Scriptures

- **While Rig, Yajur and Saama veda**, are called Thrayee ie, three fundamental pillars for realizing Brahman (god), the Atharva veda is a synthesis of these three.
- While Saama veda is mostly poetic, Rig and Yajur veda consists of poetry and prose.
- Several portions of the Rig veda are also found in Yajur veda and Saama veda
- While Rig veda focuses on Gnana Maarga, Yajur veda's key focus is Karma Maarga and Saama veda's focus is Bhakthi Maarga
- The texts of the various vedas are called **Veda Samhitha** or **Shruthi**. They are based on direct revelation and hence their authority is unquestioned.
- Apart from the veda samhithas, there are various annotations and detailed explanations to vedas called **Brahmanas** and **Aaranyakas**.
- Based on the concepts relating to Gnana Maarga in vedas various Rishis have expounded and analysed the concept of Brahman and these are called **Upanishads**.
- **Bhashyas** are the commentary on vedas, upanishads and sutras etc
- **Shashtras** are the teachings of Hinduism by which the people are governed. 'Shas' – rule to govern. 'Shastras' – that by which one is governed.
- All other Hindu Shastras (Ithihasa, Purana, Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, Kavya, Bhashya, Sutra, Nibandhans etc.) are called **Smruti**.

Vedas & Other Scriptures

- **Itihasas and Puranas** are also other major part of Hindu Shastras.
- **Itihasas** are considered to be the stories which happened in a particular period when the people who created them lived (Ramayana happened during the period of Valmiki) and Mahabharatha happened during the period of Vedavyasa). Itihasa means history as it truly happened. Ramayana and Mahabharatha are considered to be Itihasas for the Hindus. Bhagavadgita, a part of Mahabharatha, also contains very important teachings.
- The key teachings of Ramayana, Mahabharatha and Bhagavadgita are given in Appendix 5.

Puranas are ancient texts eulogizing various deities, primarily Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva through divine stories. Puranas may also be described as a genre of important Hindu 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. The Puranas are frequently classified according to the three aspects of the divine Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. For people who cannot understand the teachings of Vedas and Upanishads, Puranas tell the same teachings by way of stories so that the teachings get imbibed in the minds of the person. Thus Puranas are shastras for common man told by way of stories. In each of the Puranas, righteousness is upheld by god and the people doing misdeeds get punished.

The key teaching of the Puranas also is that the Brahman is the ultimate .

The list of Puranas is given in Appendix 6.



Upanishads

- Based on the concepts relating to Gnana Maarga in vedas ,various Rishis have expounded and analysed the concept of Brahman and these are called Upanishads.
- There are more than 100 Upanishads out of which 10 to 15 Upanishads are quite famous.
- The key questions analysed in the Upanishads are under:
 - **Who am I?** – is it my body or my mind or something beyond this.
 - **Who is god?** - is it within me or outside of me, is it separate or is it all-pervasive.
 - **What is my relationship to god ?**
 - **What is the characteristics of the god?**
 - **Whether it has form, fragrance etc etc.**
- These questions are analysed through deduction and elimination process in different Upanishads in different ways

- One of the ways in which it is established that there is something which activates the body and mind is as under:
 - There are three states of Human existence as under:
 1. when a person is awake (called **Jagruthi**)
 2. When a person is sleeping and in dream (called **Swapna**)
 3. When a person is in deep sleep (**Sushupthi**)
 - When somebody is awake, his inner organs (**gnanendriyas**) relating to various feelings such as pleasure, fear etc are activated by the actions of his various organs (eyes, ears, mouth, hand etc) called karmendriyas
 - When he is in dream (Swapna) even though his karmendriyas are idle and not working, he still perceives pleasure, fear etc through his mind directly controlling gnanendriyas. This shows that the mind is independently working even when body is at sleep.
 - In deep sleep (sushupthi) even the mind is at rest but when he gets up the next day he is able to realise himself and understand upto the previous sleep what all had happened. This shows that there is something beyond body and mind which keeps a tab of all these and which makes the body and mind to act.

- The Hindu Philosophy calls this as the Soul of the person. Thus the existence of the soul beyond body and mind is proved by one of the Upanishads.
- There are discussions in various Upanishads about what happens to the soul after death of a person ; as per Upanishads when a person dies only his body dies and the soul is eternal.
- There are various discussions as to whether the soul of each person is individual or is it part of cosmic soul. These discussions lead to evolving of various philosophies like Advaita, Dvaita and Vishitadvaita as we will see later.
- In Taitreya Upanishad the god (Brahman) is defined as the one :
 - from which every living being in the world has come
 - Because of which every living being in the world lives.
 - To which every living being in the world goes back once it ceases to exist
- Against this definition various items such as Anna (food) , Prana (breath), Mano (Mind) and Ananda(bliss) are compared to find that everything is god.
- The outline and key matters discussed in the main Upanishads are given in Appendix 7



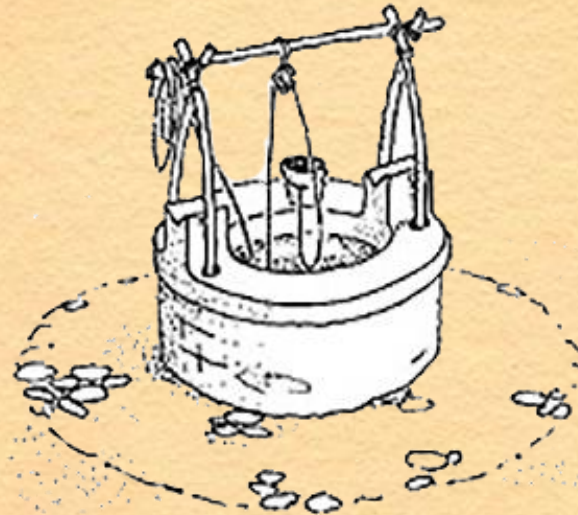
Gods & Prayers

Gods & Prayers

- In vedic period predominantly the natural forces were considered as gods.
- In Vedas, all prayers are towards natural gods – Agni, Vayu, Apas (Varuna), Aakasha and Prithvi (earth) . Further Sun (Aditya), moon (Soma) and the planets (Navagrahas) were also considered as gods. There are also references to Indra (King of Heaven) and Mitra (the principal guardian of Truth , Order) as Gods.
- As the life depended on these natural forces these were considered as gods and all prayers (under Bhakthi or Karma Maarga) were directed to these..
- At the next level since creation, preservation and destruction are three major pillars around which the world functions, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were considered as god for creation, preservation and destruction respectively and were worshipped.
- Since creation needs intelligence, Saraswati goddess of Intelligence was associated as wife of Brahma.
- Since preservation is about wealth, Lakshmi goddess of wealth was associated as wife of Vishnu.
- Since destruction is about showing the valour, Shakthi or Kaali goddess of destruction was associated as wife of Shiva.
- Thus Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kaali were also worshipped along with Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Gods & Prayers

- However in vedas the prayers are more towards natural gods than Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
- Over the years gods such as Ganapathi and Subramanya considered to be children of Shiva and Shakthi also were added as god and are being prayed. Ganapathi is considered to be incharge of Ganas who are attendants of shiva, who reside in locations such as cemeteries and burial ground. The gana also attend Shiva on Mount Kailash.
- Further 8 vasus(Prithvi, Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Aditya, Dyaus (sky), Chandramas, Nakshatras), 11 Rudras (considered to be born to Bhrahma and Surabhi) and 12 Adityas (considered to shine in each of the solar month) are also prayed especialy in prayers relating to died ancestors.
- Dashavatara including Rama, Krishna are considered as various avatars of god Vishnu and are being worshipped. Further some of the acharyas like Shankara, Ramanuja, Sai Baba etc are also being worshipped.
- As it is difficult for the mind to focus on infinite and it is easier to focus on finite and concrete, Bhakthi around different gods have evolved instead of a pure Bhakthi on infinite (Brahman)
- The worships are mainly in the form of sthothra, puja and homa as indicated earlier.
- The broad procedure for puja and homa are indicated in Appendix 3
- The often chanted mantras are given in Appendix 4



Different Schools on God

Different Schools on Brahman (God)

- We saw earlier that every living being has a soul which energises the body and mind and which is distinct from the body and mind.
- On the death of a person while the body loses its energiser and thus starts to decay it is believed that the soul never dies and continues to exist.
- In this there are several schools of thought as under:

1. Advaita (Monoism) – the soul of each living being is part of the cosmic soul (Brahman) and hence there is no difference between the individual soul and the cosmic soul. Hence there are no two and everything is one. This theory is propounded by Sankaracharya.

2. Vishistadvaita (Qualified Monoism) – Under this theory the soul of each individual is different from the cosmic soul (Brahman); it has come out of the cosmic soul into each individual and upon his death it goes back and joins the cosmic soul. Hence it is two but ultimately becomes one. This theory is propounded by Ramanujacharya

3. Dvaita (Dualism) – under this theory the soul of each individual is distinct and different and always remains different from cosmic soul. This theory is propounded by Madhvacharya.

Different Schools on Brahman (God)

- In this connection, we can consider the following example:

When a mud pot is put into the well to remove some water one can argue that

- Water in the pot and water in the well are same water (Advaita)
- water in the pot was part of the water in the well but it has become separate and when you are taking out if the pot breaks (like the death of our body) the water in the pot again joins the water in the well (Vishistadvaita)
- Once taken out the water in the pot is always a separate water (Dvaita)

Like this there are several examples have been given to illustrate this point.

From this it can be inferred that ultimately both under Advaita and Vishistadvaita individual soul and the cosmic soul becomes the same.



Astronomy, Astrology & Festivals

Astronomy, Astrology & Festivals

- Astronomy and Astrology are deeply connected with Hindu religion.
- The Hindus had detailed knowledge of the motion of sun, moon, planets of the solar system in the galaxy and the stars contained in the galaxy (knowledge of Astronomy). They further had the knowledge of the effects of these motions on the lives of human beings (knowledge of Astrology).
- They defined the planets as well as houses in which they were positioned as responsible (Karakas) for various aspects of life and depending on the strengths/ weakness of the planets or the positions, advocated various Pujas/ Homas to be done or various stones to be worn to attain prosperity and overcome obstacles.
- Hindus believed that the position of the ascending sign at the time of birth, sun, moon, and the planets at the time of birth and at different points of time due to their motion have effects on various aspects of life of the human beings.
- The Hindu calendar follows the movement of sun (Sauramaana) or moon (Chandramaana). In the solar based calendar every year starts from the time the sun enters the first point of Aries and ends when the sun leaves the last point of Pisces. Every month starts from the time sun enters each zodiacal sign (Raashi) and ends at the time when it leaves that sign. Thus the entire calendar is based on exact times and not based on any approximations.
- In the Lunar based calendar, every month is from one new moon to the next new moon and the shortfall between the lunar month and the solar movements is adjusted by one extra month in every 2.7 years.

Astronomy, Astrology & Festivals

- Further the Hindus were aware that the earth revolved around the sun in an elliptical path. In English astronomy there is a theory called Kepler's laws of planetary motion which states that in its path around the sun each planet traverses equal area in equal interval of time. This means when the earth is nearest to the sun (perigee) it will travel 30 degrees (one Raashi) in less time compared to the time taken to travel the same 30 degrees when it is farthest to the sun (apogee). If we see the Indian solar calendar the months near January(perigee) are around 28/29 days and months near July(apogee) are 31/32 days. Thus it is very clear that the Hindus were aware of the laws relating to planetary motion even thousands of years back.
- All Hindu festivals are related to astronomical movement of sun and moon; new moon, full moon, sun entering a particular zodiacal sign, sun starting its northwardly or southwardly motion etc etc.
- In Hindu Astrology, there are 12 zodiacal signs (Raashis), 27 major stars (Nakshatras) and 9 planets (7 actual planets and 2 shadow planets (Chaya grahas) representing the points of intersection of the paths of the Sun and the Moon as they travel in the celestial sphere).



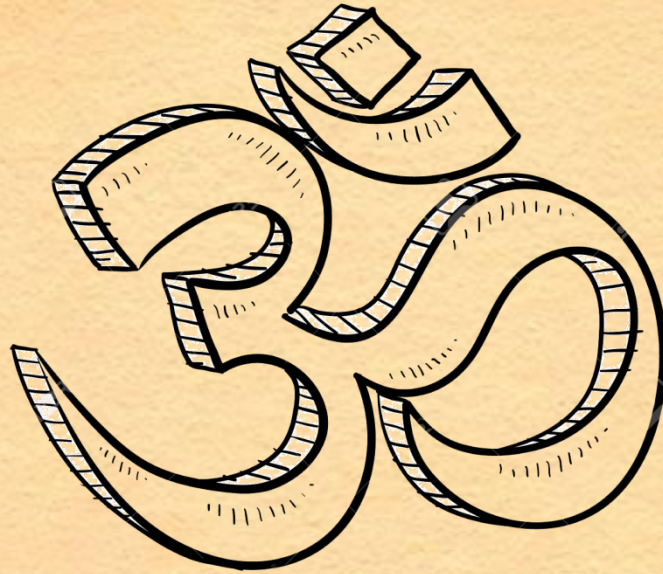
The Universe as per Hinduism

Hindu thinking about the Universe

- The Universe (Brahmanda) goes through the creation (Shrishti), Preservation (Sthithi) and destruction (Pralaya) cycles eternally.
- These cycles repeat at different levels at the end of each Yuga, Mahayuga and Kalpa.
- The Universe (Brahmanda) comes from Brahman, rests in him and merges with him.
- It is under the mighty rule of Brahman everything in nature is kept in its proper place, every function is regulated, order and harmony everywhere are maintained.
- Brahman cannot be directly understood by the senses, mind and intellect but he resides in every living being (Antharyami) and controls them. He is the Aathman or Soul.
- Brahman is eternal, infinite, ever-free and is beyond time, space and causation. He cannot be limited by any form or attribute and he is transcendental.
- Nobody knows creation (Shrishti). The why and how of Shristi can be never be traced by human intellect.
- As per the Hindu philosophy god by his own will and mysterious powers become all objects in the world. First he appears as Akasha, then as Vayu, then as Agni, then as Varuna, then as earth. The process goes on and he forms himself as the first living being in the world called Hiranya Garbha. Then he proceeds to manifest into numerous worlds, gross and fine, as well as their contents. – Jeevas.
- Jeevas may be either Chara (Moving) or Achara(non-moving). However every jeeva is conscious and able to recognise.

Hindu thinking about the Universe

- Every jeeva is subject to the sensations of pain and pleasure. It is a Kartha and Bhoktha.(doing and experiencing) – Based on their action in one life Jeeva goes from birth to birth.
- Between the man and Brahman there are various living beings outside the earth which human beings cannot perceive. Inhabitants of each of these worlds form a class by themselves.
- Some of these classes are: Yaksha; Sadhya; Kinnaras, Gandarvas and Devas. Each occupy worlds of their own.
- Further as per Hindu Philosophy, the Brahmanda (Universe) comprise of higher world (Swarga), our world and lower world (Paathala)
- There is also a theory of seven worlds above the earth (Bhu, Bhuva, Suva, Jana, maha, Thapa, Satya) and seven worlds below the earth (Athala, Vithala, Suthala, Rasathala, Thalathala, mahathala, Paathala)
- There is also another way of classification of the higher worlds as Pithru loka, Deva loka and Brahma Loka. All these suggest numerous sub divisions of Brahmanda(universe)
- Another thought was each of these worlds are under a presiding deity Agni, Vaayu, Varuna etc.
- The gross body (cosmic body) to which all the souls belong is called Brahman.
- The gross mind and intellect (cosmic mind and intellect) which controls all the mind and intellects of jeevas and who creates all Jeevas is called Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagabha is the first being which came out of Brahman in this Universe.
- The gross physical mechanism (cosmic physical body) which pervades all the physical bodies of the universe is called Virat.
- Each jeeva is a portion of Brahman, Hlranyagarbha and Virat.



Conclusion

- As may be seen from the previous pages various ways have been prescribed by the Hindu religion to reach Mukthi. As the people are of different levels of intellectual maturity and are of different characters the same way or process may not appeal to everyone, hence the different ways (maargas).
- However the fundamental for everyone is to reach Mukti (which is ultimate peace of mind). Reaching Mukti is a very difficult task.
- No singular path may give us peace of mind. Hence we may have to follow a combination of paths which appeal to us and syncs in our mind so that we get more and more peace of mind.
- The key is to overcome Bhaya (fear) and get rid of Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Moha (desire), Lobha (greed), Mada (pride), Ahankara (ego), Irshya (jealousy), Ghrina (hatred). These are very difficult to overcome.
- Hence even to whatever extent we get peace of mind and overcome these negative qualities , by practicing these maargas, it is good for us and the for the society.

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Appendices

Sahasranaama

- Lalitha sahasranama
- Vishnu sahasranama

Ashtottara

- Shiva Ashtottara
- Sri Vinayaka Ashtottara
- Durga Ashtottara
- Lakshmi Ashtottara
- Lakshmi Narasimha Ashtottara
- Rama Ashtottara

Pancharatna

- Ganesha Pancharatna
- Durga Pancharatna
- Lalita Devi Pancharatna

Sahasranaama - 1008 names of a certain god

Ashtottara - 108 names of a certain god

Pancharatna - 5 forms of praise for a certain god

Ashtaka - Poetry written in 8 stanzas

Suprabhata - Prayers done in dawn to wake up god

Pratah Smarana Stotra - Prayers done in dawn wishing for a prosperous day

Ashtaka:

- Mahalakshmi Ashtaka
- Madhurashtaka
- Govindaashtaka
- Ramashtaka
- Shivaashtaka
- Bilvaashtaka

Suprabhata

- Venkatesa Suprabhata
- Shiva Suprabhata

Pratah Smarana Stotra

- Ganesh Pratah Smarana
- Vishnu Praatah Smarana
- Shiva Pratah Smarana
- Lalita Devi Pratah Smarana

Others

- Navagraha Stotra
- Kanakadhara stotra

Appendix 2: Pujas & Japas

Commonly done Pujas are as under:

- Ganapathi or Siddhi Vinayaka Puja
- Saraswathi Puja
- Lakshmi Puja
- Durga Puja
- Satyanarayana Puja
- Suryanarayana Puja
- Jhanmashtami Puja
- Ramanavami Puja
- Hanumath Jayanthi Puja
- Any Guru Puja (Sankara Jayanthi etc.,)
- In praise of any of these gods Japas can be done where the same mantras are repeated 12, 27 or 108 times.

Appendix 2: Pujas & Japas

Common procedures for doing Pujas are as under:

1. **Sankalpa** – declaring the intention to do a particular Puja indicating the time and place for the benefit of self, family and society.
2. **Vigneshwara Puja** – Before doing every Puja a small Puja is done to Lord Vigneshwara to pray that everything should happen without any Vigna (obstacles)
3. **Kalasa Puja** – Taking a pot of water, invoking Varuna and purifying that water with Mantras. This water is later sprinkled on all the people who attend the Puja.
4. **Aathma Puja** - Purifying self by mantras and sprinkling the water.
5. **Peeta Puja** – Purifying the base on which the deity is proposed to be invoked.
6. **Pranaprathishta** – Invoking the god for which Puja is to be done either by keeping respective idol or photograph and by chanting the relevant mantras for the invocation.
7. **Main Puja** – Praising of the god with 108 or 1008 names (Astothra or Sahasranama) and offering flower or turmeric-mixed rice ; showing Dupam, Deepam and offering Neyvedya
8. **Punar Puja**– Next day of the Puja removing the god from the Peeta with appropriate mantras
9. While the main puja is different for each god the other procedures are similar

Japas :

Japas relating to any god involves chanting of the relevant mantras for that god again and again for 12 or 108 or 1008 times. For eg, in Gayathri Japa the Gayathri Mantra is chanted for 108 times or 1008 times.

Appendix 3: List of Rituals including Homa

- The rituals given here are based on Yajurveda and Abasthamba sutra. For people following other vedas/sutras there could be some variations in rituals
- **In the rituals there are two major types ;**
 - Srauthavihitha – 7 Havis Yagnas and 7 Soma Yagnas. This practise is currently almost non-existent.
 - Smarthavihitha – consist of Nithyakarmas and various samskaras
- **Nithyakarmas (Daily):**
 - Sandhyavandhana (daily three times)
 - Samidhadhana (daily two times for people in Brahmacharya ie before marriage)
 - Brahma Yagna
 - Agni Hotra (continuously maintaining Agni in the house and doing prayers to Agni starting from the day of marriage when Agni becomes part of a certain household through Aupasana)

Appendix 3: List of Rituals including Homa

- **Other Samskaras:**

- **Garbha-Dhaana** – before starting sexual relationship praying for good progeny
- **Jaatha Karma** – this is done upon birth of a child to pray for good health and long life of the child
- **Naama Karana** – generally done on the 10th day after child birth to name the child and to pray for its good health and prosperity.
- **Anna praachana** - generally done around 6th month to start food (other than mother's milk) to the child
- **Chaula** – to start having a tuft on the head for the child.
- **Upanayana** – to start Veda related education for the child. At this time the knowledge of what is Bhrahman (Brahma Upadesa) is imparted to the child.
- **Vedavratha** – to take Vratha (vow) to learn vedas
- **Samavarthana** – is done after learning Veda but before marriage.
- **Vivaha (marriage)** - This consists of Kanyadhaan, Mangalya dhaaran, paanigrahana and Saptapathi. During these the couple pray for long life, prosperity and togetherness even in adverse situations.
- **Poomsavana** – This is done after the pregnancy is fully confirmed (generally 5th month etc). This ceremony is to pray that the pregnant woman delivers a good progeny.
- **Seemandha** – this function is to divide the hair on the pregnant woman's head with a porcupine's quills with a prayer that she should deliver a progeny with a sharp mind as porcupine's quill.
- **For most of these rituals Homa is performed**

Appendix 3: List of Rituals including Homa

- **Other Homas:**
 - **Ayush Homa** – Homa done during the first birthday of a child.
 - **Mrithyunjaya Homa** – Homa done for overcoming death.
 - **Navagraha Homa** – Homa done to pray to the nine planets towards prosperity.
 - **Ganapathi Homa** – Homa done to pray to Lord Ganapathi.
 - **Homa on Ambika** – Homa done to pray to Lord Ambika.

There are many other types of Homas which are performed.

Appendix 3: List of Rituals including Homa

Common procedures for Homa:

- **Sankalpa** – Taking a vow to do a religious activity by defining the time, location, and nature of activity to be performed.
- **Vigneshwara Puja** – Taking the blessings of Lord Ganapathi
- **Udhagasanthi** - Taking a pot of water, invoking Varuna and purifying that water with Mantras.
- **Punyavachana** – praying all natural gods for peace, harmony and good health for everyone and sprinkling the purified water.
- **Ankura Arpana** – Sowing the seeds in a mud pot, see them growing and realising and praising the power of the god in such growth. **Prathisarabandha** – to put saradu or kankana in hand and taking vow to complete the task properly.
- **Abyuthaye Srardha (Naandi)** – invocation of blessings from Pithrus (ancestors who have passed away)
- **Vichinna agni sandhana** – generally homa for agni has to be done everyday from the day of marriage and the fire should be kept alive. If it has stopped for any reason, before doing any karma, Vichinna Agni Sandhana is done to bring back the agni.
- **Aupasana** – installing agni for the purpose of praying everyday to Surya and Agni.
- **Main Homa** – Homa for that particular occasion or God.
- **Purnahuti** - It includes the offering of nine types of grains and ghee into the fire while chanting specified mantras.
- **Jayaadhi Homa** – at the end of every homa, this is done. This consists of mantras towards agni, Indra, Yama, Varuna, Vaayu, Surya, Chandra, Guru, Mithra etc.,
- **Aashirvaad** – taking the blessings from the guru and all those who have assembled to witness that particular ceremony.

Appendix 3: List of Rituals including Homa

- While the main Homa is different for each god and for each circumstance, the other procedures listed above are similar.
- For doing different procedures and Homas different hand gestures called **Mudhras** are prescribed.

Appendix 3: List of Rituals including Homa

Apara Prayoga (rituals to be done after death of a person by his descendants):

- On the day of death – praying that the soul of the dead person should attain Moksha and for the welfare of everyone else.
- 2nd Day – Sanchayana – collecting the bone remains of the dead after the cremation (Asthi) and immersing in the river/ sea.
- Everyday until 10th Day – giving water (Tilodhaka and Vasodhaka) to quench the thirst and giving cooked rice balls (Pinda) to quench the hunger of the Preta (the dead persons Sukshma sharira) which is considered to be wandering around the place of death
- 10th Day – the same rituals are performed at a higher frequency and variety by all the relatives.
- 11th Day - Ekoddishtha Sraaddham where the intended person for whom the Shrardha is performed is only the deceased and not the other ancestors. On this day Adya masikam is also performed.
- 12th Day – Sodakumba – joining the deceased Preta with the ancestors in the pitru loka.
- 13th Day – Grihayagna – purifying the house after the above ceremonies.
- Shrardha, during first year – between 27 to 30 days, between 40-45 days, around 6 months, at the end of the year and every month.
- Shrardha After first year – every year
- Tharpana – every Amavashya (new moon) and certain month beginnings

Appendix 4: Often chanted Mantras

- **Rudra** – is a stotra or homage hymn to lord Rudra (an epithet of Lord Shiva taken from the Krishna Yajurveda's Taittiriya Samhita. The hymn enumerates the names of the deity Shiva. This is chanted during every Abhisheka for Lord Shiva and also on various temple functions.
- **Chamaka** - After praying and identifying Rudra with everything in the Namakam, the Chamakam is recited, in which the devotee identifies himself with Lord Shiva and asks him to give him everything. This is also invariably recited along with Rudra.
- **PurushaSukta** explains how Brahman evolved as cosmic being and how all other living beings evolved from Brahman.
- **Sri Sukta** is a devotional hymn revering Sri Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, prosperity and fertility. Śrī Sūkta is recited to invoke the goddess' blessings
- **Narayana Sukta** is chanted to worship Lord Narayana, a form of Lord Vishnu.
- **PavamanaSukta** is chanted for purification of any place etc.
- **Mantra Pushpa** is a Vedic hymn chanted at the time of offering of the flowers to the deities at the very end of the pujas.

Appendix 5:Key Teachings of Ithihasa

Ramayana:

Ramayana teaches the duties and responsibilities of each relationship. It portrays ideal relationships like the ideal son, the ideal brother, the ideal husband, the ideal wife, the ideal king and the ideal devotee.

Lord Rama is the epitome of righteousness [Dharma]. He embodies everything that is good, positive and divine. He is known as the 'Mariyada Purushottam' which means 'He, who is the greatest of all men'. The teachings of Ramayana are relevant in all ages and for everyone to follow a path of righteousness. Some of the key teachings of Ramayana are as under:

- 1. Respect elders and be duty bound towards parents** – Ram left for vanvas after his step-mother expressed her desire to see her biological son Bharath as the future king of Ayodhya.
- 2. Remain united with siblings even during the toughest of times** – Bharat refused to accept the throne after his father's demise and waited for Ram to return from his vanvas. Lakshman accompanied his brother Ram for the 14-year-long vanvas.
- 3. Be loyal to your spouse** – Ravana tried to lure Sita after abducting her. But Sita never let him succeed in his attempts. Ram didn't remarry after Sita was forcefully abandoned by him even after conducting the 'Agni Pariksha'. Being a King, he enjoyed the privilege of having many queens, but he chose to remain loyal to his beloved wife – Sita.
- 4. Be deeply committed to your duty** – Besides being Sita's husband, Ram was also the King of Ayodhya. And the duty of the king is to keep his subjects happy. And hence, he had to abandon his wife for the sake of the masses after they questioned her chastity. As a husband, he was duty bound towards his wife. But as a King, he had to think of his subjects' wishes ahead of his personal ones.

Appendix 5:Key Teachings of Ithihasa

Ramanayana:

5. Choose the path of righteousness – Vibhishana, younger brother of Ravana chose to not support his sibling in the war against Ram. He knew his brother had committed a sin by abducted someone—a married lady.

6. Remain humble no matter how powerful you become – Hanuman could have easily rescued Sita from Ravana's Ashoka Vana. He had the power to single-handedly fight against Ravana's army. But he chose to surrender to Lord Ram's divinity and let him do the needful.

7. Never consider anyone inferior – Mighty prince Ram took the help of Vanar sena (monkey army) to build a bridge (Ram Setu) so that he could reach Lanka to free Sita. The little monkeys not just helped him build the setu but also took part in the war against Ravana.

8. All that glitters is not gold – Sita got attracted to a spotted deer that looked incredibly beautiful. She wanted Ram to get the deer for her from the jungle. Actually, it wasn't a deer, but Mareech, Ravana's accomplice in disguise of the animal.

9. Embrace all irrespective of caste, creed or colour – Prince Ram ate fruits that were already tasted by Shabri, a poor old woman who had nothing much to offer but pure love.

10. Abandon the following- Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Moha (desire), Lobha (greed), Mada (pride), Ahankar (ego), Irshya (jealousy), Jaddata (insensitivity), Ghrina (hatred), Bhaya (fear).

Appendix 5:Key Teachings of Ithihasa

Mahabharatha:

Major teachings from mahabharata are:

1. **Greed and jealousy leads to misery** – the root cause of Mahabharata war was greed, jealousy and revenge. Dhritarashtra had the desire that his son Duryodhana should become the next king. Duryodhana himself was also greedy for becoming a king. He could have easily shared part of his kingdom with pandavas and avoided the war, but the desire of taking revenge and jealousy overpowered his intelligence and ultimately he lost everything.

2. **Fight for dharma (righteousness)** – if you have to choose between saving dharma with a war and non-violence, then choose war to save the dharma. If pandavas had not fought the war then you don't know what bigger calamity duryodhana rule would have brought on bharat (india). most importantly it would have set a bad precedence.

3. **Choose adharma, if needed to save dharma** – Kauravas broke many rules of war like how they killed Abhimanyu, so they lose the right to be treated with dharma. So Lord Krishna suggested adharmic means to defeat Kauravas like killing of Bhishma Pitamah, Dronacharya, Karna, and Duryodhana.

4. **Do your Karma without identifying with your actions** – after the war Pandavas were in deep pain as they knew they had killed their family members to win the war. on the other hand Lord Krishna was not in pain. this is because Pandavas had identified themselves with the action of killing. Pandavas were fighting for their rights and for their respect. Bhima also wanted to take revenge for draupadi insult. so they were very much identified with their actions. whereas lord krishna was detached during the war. Krishna participated in the war to save dharma but he was not identified with any emotions like revenge, anger, jealousy.

Appendix 5:Key Teachings of Ithihasa

Mahabharatha:

5. **Listen to your gurus and wise people** – Duryodhana did not listen to his guru Dronacharya and wise people Bhishma Pitamah, Vidhura and Kripacharya. By ignoring the advise of wise people he brought the destruction to his entire clan. on the other hand, Pandavas listened to their advisor Lord Krishna. Although they didn't agree with Krishna's suggestions every time, but despite that they chose to follow what Krishna said and they won the war. So listen to the wise people.

Appendix 5:Key Teachings of Ithihasa

Bhagavadgita:

Major teachings of Bhagavadgita are:

1. Know the reality of the world in which you live. Know it to be impermanent, unreal and the source of your suffering and delusion.
2. Know the Reality about yourself, who you are and what you are really. Know that you are neither your body nor your mind, but the true self that can neither be slain nor hurt. It is eternal, divine and transcendental.
3. Know that the senses are responsible for your desires, attachment and the instability of your mind and that by restraining your senses you can achieve the stability of your mind and become impervious to the pairs of opposites, such as pain and pleasure, which is the key to self-realization.
4. Cultivate buddhi or your discriminating intelligence to discern true knowledge, and practice wisdom so that you will know the difference between truth and untruth, reality and illusion, your false self and true self, the divine qualities and demonic qualities, knowledge and ignorance and how true knowledge illuminates and liberates while ignorance veils your wisdom and holds you in bondage.

Appendix 5:Key Teachings of Ithihasa

Bhagavadgita:

Major teachings of Bhagavadgita are:

5. Know the true nature of action and inaction and how actions bind you to the world and cause you suffering. know that it is not actions but the desires and the attachment behind your actions which are responsible for your karma. Know the truth about the doer-ship and who the real doer is. Do not seek to escape from your responsibility because not doing your obligatory duties is also bad karma. To neutralize your karma, perform your actions without desires, without attachment and without seeking the fruit of your actions, as a sacrificial offering to God, accepting Him as the True Doer and yourself as a mere instrument. Know that true renunciation is the renunciation of your desires and the fruit of your actions.

6. Know the Supreme-Self to be the all-pervading and all-knowing Creator of all. Accept Him to be the cause of everything and the real Doer in your life. Surrender yourself to Him completely and offer Him everything that you have.

7. Cultivate the quality of sattva or purity so that you can experience true love for God and know the true meaning of devotion, surrender and sacrifice. Restraining your mind and senses, focusing your mind on the thoughts of God, and surrendering yourself to Him completely. Make your life and actions as true offerings to Him, acknowledging His role in all your affairs and expressing your gratitude. If you persist in your practice, you will begin to experience total devotion to God and His unconditional love. He will take full responsibility for your life and manage your affairs for you.

PURANAS – shastras for common man told by way of stories

- Brahma Purana
- Padma Purana
- Vishnu purana
- Shiva Purana
- Bhagavatha Purana
- Narada Purana
- Markandeya purana
- Agni Purana
- Bhavishya Purana
- Brahma Vyvartha Purana
- Linga Purana
- Varaha Purana
- Skanda purana
- Vamana Purana
- Koorma Purana
- Matsya Purana
- Vaayu Purana
- Garuda Purana
- Bramhanda Purana

Appendix 7: Key Teachings of Main Upanishads

- **Ithreya Upanishad** – initially only god was there. As he wanted to create the world he created the world and entered into everything he created. Thus he is the energy (or soul) behind every living being. Only if you understand this energy or soul (god) you can come out of the sorrows of the world.
- **Santhokya Upanishad** – It teaches various ways (Vidyai) of praying god so that one reaches eternal peace of mind or Mukthi. Further this Upanishad also says that the key principle is to understand the three states (Jagruti, Swapna, Sushupti) and thereby realise the soul and thus realise Brahman(god). It also gives example where birth does not decide the varna chosen by a person.
- **Kaivalya Upanishad** – It says that to know Brahman(god) Dhyana (prayers) is very important. It also explains the relationship between the Aathma (soul) and the Brahman like other Upanishads
- **Isavasya Upanishad** – the key thought in this Upanishad is that whoever sees the soul (god) within himself as well as in every other living being he attains salvation (Mukthi). Further as per this Upanishad the Brahman (god) is full and everything created by Brahman (God) is also full. From the fullness whatever comes is also full. When something is removed from the fullness the balance is also full.
- **Brahadaranya Upanishad** – the key for every living being is the soul. Soul is very close to us and is responsible for all our actions. To understand the soul, one has to leave all desires and engage in continuous prayers. Once the soul and Brahman is understood, a person attains Mukthi.

Appendix 7: Key Teachings of Main Upanishads

- **Katha Upanishad** – this Upanishad is about how Yama teaches Aathma Gnana to Nachiketa. It lays two choices for every human being; choice one being physical enjoyment (Preyas) and choice two being spiritual enjoyment (Shreyas). It says that the people choosing Shreyas over Preyas reach peace of mind and Mukthi over a period of time. Shreyas is all about understanding soul and its connection to Brahman (god). As per this Upanishad Jeevathma and Paramathma are like two birds in the same tree.

Further the living beings work with soul as the rider, Body as the chariot, Buddhi as the charioteer, mind as the reins, Indriyas as the horses and sense objects as the road.

- **Kena Upanishad** – This Upanishad explains the soul and how soul is behind our physical actions and mind. It also explains why the soul and Brahman (god) are same. As per this Upanishad to reach Brahman Tapas (penance), Self-control and doing all karmas as per shastras are the basic needs. This Upanishad also praises Brahma gyan.
- **Maandukya Upanishad** – this explains the three states (Jagruti, Swapna, Sushupti) and from there explains about the soul. It also explains the connections between the soul in each living being to the cosmic soul (Brahman) and says both are same.
- **Mundaka Upanishad** – this Upanishad divides all knowledge into Para (higher level knowledge) and Apra (lower level knowledge). As per this Upanishad the knowledge of Brahman (god) is considered Para and all other knowledge is considered Apra. This Upanishad also explains that everything has come from Brahman (god). It also says that only through Sanyasa and continuous Dhyana one can understand the soul and thereby reach Brahman (god). Further when Jeevathma ie soul within each person realises Paramathma ie Brahman (god), it goes beyond sorrows and attains peace.

Appendix 7: Key Teachings of Main Upanishads

- **Prachna Upanishad** – This Upanishad is in question and answer form. The Upanishad starts with a question what is the root cause of all living beings. It says all living beings are formed by a combination of Prana and Manas. Prana is the one which makes the body active. Prana comes from Brahman (Soul) and acts in the body in five different ways (Prana Apana Vyana Udhana Samana)*. Further the Upanishad explains the three states (Awake, dream and deep sleep) and says that at deep sleep (sushupti) Jeevathma becomes one with Paramathma. It also says that when the body dies its soul merges with Brahman.

*Note:

- **Prana** moves down from the base of the throat to the navel (the pranic center or *kanda*) and energizes all the vayus. It also moves up from the navel to the throat.
- **Apana** moves from the navel down to the floor of the pelvis
- **Vyana** moves from the core out to the periphery
- **Udana** moves primarily up from the throat up to the head..
- **Samana** moves from the periphery of the body into the core.

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Appendix 7: Key Teachings of Main Upanishads

- **Taitreya Upanishad** – this consists of three portions called Shikshavalli, Brahmananda valli and BruguValli
 - **Shikshavalli** explains about the significance of sound and how all learnings should be done keeping in mind various nuances of the sound. Then it prays that by proper learning everyone should attain fame and the knowledge of Brahman(god).
 - **Brahmanandavalli** – explains koshas (anna, prana, Mana, Ananda) that control the body. It also says that the Aathma controls these Koshas. Further it says Brahmananda that is Mukthi is much higher than all other enjoyments in life.
 - **Bruguvalli** – as per this the Brahman(god) is defined as the one:
 - from which every living being in the world has come
 - Because of which every living being in the world lives.
 - To which every living being in the world goes back once it ceases to exist

Against this definition various items such as anna, prana, mana and ananda are compared to find that everything is god. Further this Upanishad says that Ananda (Mukthi) is the ultimate god.



Thank You

Contact the Author
Srinivasan.v@emudhra.com