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# Divya Darshan

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## Guru Purnima: Issue 2024



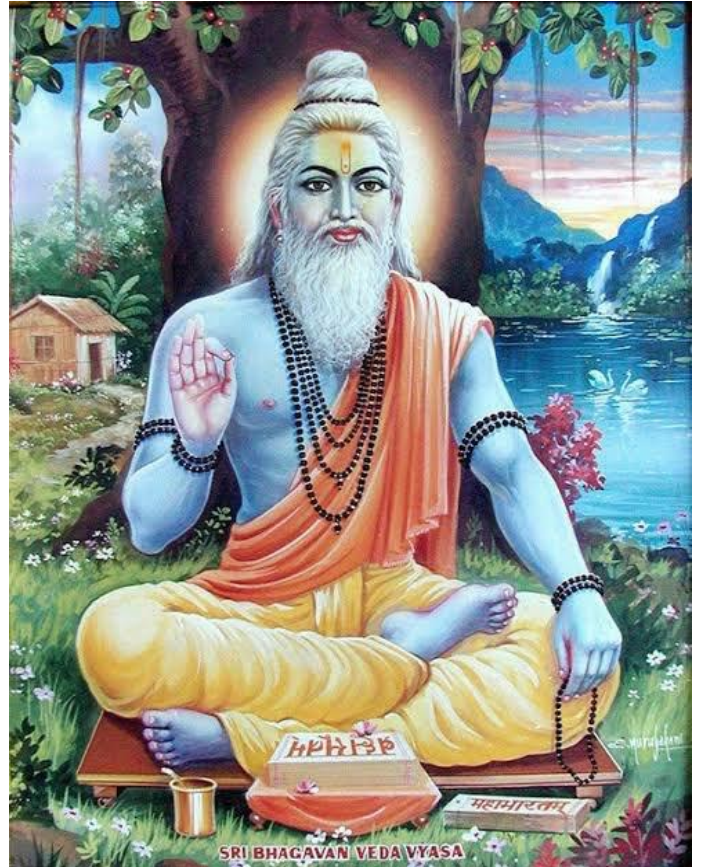
*NA TU MAM SHAKYASE DRASHTUMANENAIV SVACHAKSHUSHA I*

*DIVYAM DADAMI TE CHAKSHU PASHAY ME YOGAMESHWARAM*

Your external eyes will not be able to comprehend my Divine form. I grant you the Divine Eye to enable you to behold Me in my Divine Yoga. Gita Chapter 11.

### This issue includes

- **Thank you from the president**
- **Guru Mahima**
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## Guru Parampara

**Paramparā** denotes a succession of teachers and disciples in traditional Indian culture. It is also known as guru-shishya paramparā, succession from guru to disciple. In the paramparā system, knowledge (in any field) is passed down (undiluted) through successive generations. The Sanskrit word literally means an uninterrupted series or succession. In the traditional residential form of education, the shishya remains with his guru as a family member and gets education as a true learner.

In some traditions there is never more than one active master at the same time in the same guru parampara (lineage).

## *Thank you from the President*

On behalf of the Hindu Heritage Society, thank you for your attendance and participation of Guru Purnima on 21st July 2024. The event was a success and we had more than 100 attendees and more than 5 presenters on each Guru Purnima topic.

Guru Purnima has been one of the significant events organised by the Hindu Heritage Society for over 25 years. The event is free for all to attend like all other events organised by HHS. The event focuses on Guru Purnima, where Hindus honor the sacred bond between guru (teacher) and shishya (disciple), celebrating the unspoken trust and the silent lessons that have shaped our paths.

The event consisted of various speakers on Sanatan Vedas, Vedic Guru Mahimas (salutation to Gurus) and Bhajans.

I also thank our executive committee members who have volunteered their time, over the last two decades to shape successful events as we have just experienced. The HHS society could not do what it does without the generous support and donations from our community, sponsors and volunteers. Thank you again for your thoughtful donations on the day and supporting HHS in any shape and form.

"In the presence of a great teacher, every day is an opportunity to grow"

Sachin Shandil

President Hindu Heritage Society Inc - 2024

**Service is what life is all about.**

**"Great acts are made up of small deeds." "Goodness is the only investment that never fails." As we serve others we are working on ourselves; every act, every word, every gesture of genuine compassion naturally nourishes our own hearts as well.**

# Guru Mahima

*Sab Dharti Kagaz Karu, Lekhan Ban Raye  
Sath Samundra Ki Mas Karu Guru Gun Likha Na Jaye ~ Kabir*

This beautiful doha (couplet) is by the great saint Kabir. The meaning of this doha is “Even if the whole earth is transformed into paper with all the big trees made into pens and if the entire water in the seven oceans are transformed into writing ink, even then the glories of the Guru cannot be written. So much is the greatness of the Guru.”

**Guru** means a teacher, master, mentor etc. “Gu” means the dark and “Ru” means preventing. Thus the literary meaning of “Guru” is preventing the dark. It means showing the path which leads to the light. Therefore, Kabir again, expresses his feelings for Guru as follows:

*Guru Govind donou khade, kake lagav paay  
Balihari guru apne, jin Govind diyo dikhay*

And meaning of this doha is “Guru (Teacher) and Govind (God) stand together, to whose feet should I bow. I will bow to my Guru as he guided the way to reach the Govind (God)”.

Today is **Guru Purnima**. The full moon day in the Hindu month of Ashad (July-August) is observed as the auspicious day of Guru Purnima. This particular day has been chosen to give ritualistic expression to this feeling because it is the birth anniversary of Sage Veda Vyasa, who is regarded as the greatest Guru of all and edited the four Vedas, wrote the 18 Puranas, the Mahabharata and the Srimad Bhagavata. Vyasa even taught Dattatreya, who is regarded as the Guru of Gurus.

Guru refers to spiritual preceptor. Most Hindus would have Gurus. On Guru Purnima the devotees pay obeisance to their Gurus as thanksgiving for guiding them through the travails of life and towards spiritual liberation. Therefore, we have a shloka in which it says that Guru’s place is higher than the Divine Trinity.

*Guru Brahma Gurur Vishnu Guru Devo Maheshwaraha  
Guru Saakshat Para Brahma Tasmai Sree Gurave Namaha*

Guru is verily the representative of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. He creates, sustains knowledge and destroys the weeds of ignorance. I salute such a Guru.

In the Bhagavata Purana, Dattatreya enumerates a list of his twenty-four gurus- earth, air, sky or ether, water, fire, sun, moon, python, pigeons, sea, moth, bee, bull elephant, bear, deer, fish, osprey, a child, a maiden, a courtesan, a blacksmith, serpent, spider, and wasp. It proves that we can learn and get wisdom from anyone and everything. Everyone and everything can be our Guru from whom/which we can learn something and enrich our knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, we must be thankful to our parents, gurus, teachers, our elders, youngers, siblings, friends, acquaintances etc. from whom we learnt something new in our life.

Although we respect elders as our shiksha gurus, there is a difference between Shiksha Guru and Diksha Guru, thus: Lord Sri Krishna made an earthly appearance in roughly 3220 B.C., and He left this planet in 3102 B.C. However, because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, He is eternally existing. Therefore, these dates are simply a recording of His incarnation in Dvapara-yuga (the age prior to the present Age of Kali). He spoke the Bhagavad-Gita to Arjuna in Dvapara-yuga, but this does not limit His position as the Adi-purusha (the original Supreme Person) and the Adi-guru (the original teacher). In the Vedic



literature Lord Krishna is described as the ultimate source of all knowledge; hence, He is the most reliable source of knowledge. The whole Guru-parampara—the disciple succession—begins with Him because He is the original preceptor.

Matter is temporary, and spirit is eternal. Therefore, we eternal souls are more important than our bodies. To understand this point is real knowledge. Man has a two-fold duty here on earth - to preserve his life, and to realize his Self. To preserve his life, he has to learn to work for his daily bread. To realize his Self, he has to serve, love, and meditate. The Guru who teaches him the knowledge of worldly arts is the Siksha Guru. The Guru who shows him the path of Realization is the Diksha Guru. Siksha Gurus can be many -as many as the things he wishes to learn. The Diksha Guru can be only one - the one who leads him to Moksha).

## The Guru Parampara

In paramapara, not only is the immediate guru revered, the three preceding gurus are also worshipped or revered. These are known variously as the kala-guru or as the "four gurus" and are designated as follows:

- Guru - the immediate guru
- Parama-guru - the Guru's guru
- Parapara-guru - the Parama-guru's guru
- Parameshti-guru - the Parapara-guru's guru

In the Vedic culture therefore we find four primary disciplic lines which have come down through countless ages, sometimes appearing manifest, sometimes not, yet still the pure and unadulterated messages of Veda span our concepts of the temporal (material realm), and were, and are handed down from 'guru' to disciple.

guru parampara (Sanskrit: from guru teacher + parampara a row or uninterrupted series or succession) or "from one teacher to another") means a line of spiritual gurus in authentic succession of initiation; the chain of mystical power and authorized continuity, passed from guru to guru.

## Overview

There are two types of guruparampara: first, those who rise one above the other in spiritual dignity and in progressively greater esoteric degree; and, second, those who succeed each other in time and in one line in the outer world. Yet these two types are but the same rule of series manifesting in two slightly differing manners. This process copies the hierarchical structure of nature itself.

In the Indian religious and philosophical traditions, all knowledge is traced back to the Gods and to the Rishi who saw the Vedas. For instance, the advaita guru-parampara begins with the daiva-parampara, followed by the rishi-parampara.

- Brahma Madhwa Guru Paramparā —
- Advaita Guru Paramparā —

- Kailasa Parampara — The ancient spiritual lineage of Kauai's Hindu Monastery.

Advaita Guru Parampara

Paramparā » Guru Parampara » Advaita Guru Parampara

The prominent gurus of advaita, starts from Narayana through Sankara and his disciples, upto the Acaryas of today. It is typical of advaita that the first guru is called Narayan (Vishnu) in the first verse and sadASiva (Siva) in the second. The paramparA thus lists:



- Narayana
- Padmabhuva (Brahma)
- Vasishtha
- Sakti
- Parasara
- Vyasa
- Suka
- Gaudapada
- Govinda bhagavatpada
- Adi Sankara

Sankara's four well-known disciples were named padmapada, hastamalaka, totaka and suresvara (varttikakara). Tradition has it that Sankara appointed these four disciples as heads of the four mathas that he founded. The others are the gurus who come later in the tradition.



In the Brahma Sampradaya, which is the 'sampradaya' of Sri Sripad Madhwacharya, up until Madhwa, I have included in the flow of devotees the lineage accepted by the general Brahma Sampradaya, but after Sripad Madhwacharya there are some changes. The reason for this is that there is no mention of anyone from Brahma, and Narad, to Vyasa, and then to Madhwa. Definately they were the great 'acaryas' in our line, but as well as them there were many worthy souls who gave in many cases their very life to the mission of the 'parampara'.

Over the course of the entire span of time that the 'parampara' has existed there has been one main root of the tree, with many four main trunks, and then many branches, sub-branches, etc., coming from them. During the sojourn of that tree in spanning the yugas to reach where we are today in the Kali Yuga different devotees have branched out to further spread the 'parampara'. I have tried to include some of these changes, but with branches, and sub-branches, .....this tree is so vast!

On various trips to India it has brought great pleasure and inspiration to visit the various temples in the mutts especially in South India. The devotees there, in those 'mutts', and associated with them, in most cases, seem to carry a special quality of Madhwacharya with them. Naturally there will always be more or lesser favourites, that's the nature of individuality.

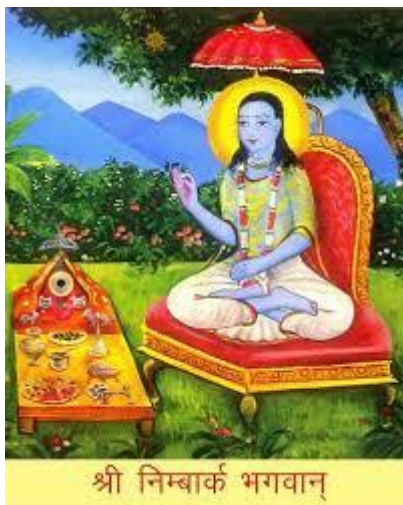


However, as an aspiring Brahma-Madhwa-Gaudiya Vaisnava my main presentation is of that line. To those in other Madhwa Mutts I offer my respects as great Vaishnavas, but for a moment let us look into the dynamic preaching arm of the Madhwa body, the ISKCON Gaudiya line, which has now spread the glories of Sripad Madhwacarya not only throughout the world, but throughout the universe.(A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in the purport of Sri Caitanya Caritamrta Adi lila 1:19.)

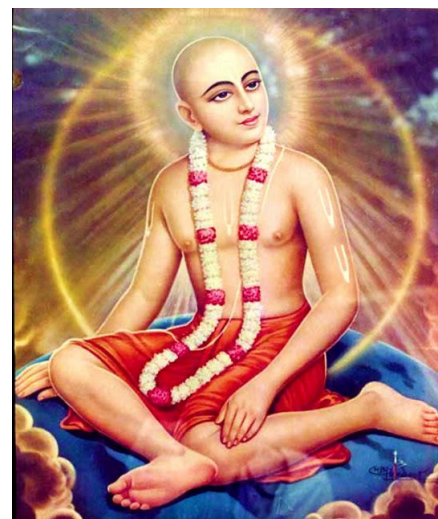
I hope and pray, that as no offence is intended, that no offence will be taken due to my presentation. Although we unfortunate souls, due to karmas and the Lord's design have taken our present birth in families outside of the Vedic culture it was not entirely an ordinary thing, by the great good fortune and extreme mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and by the mercy of our Srila Prabhupada, we have been brought back into the Vedic culture, and have received 'Vaishnava diksha', initiation again according to the 'agamas' of the 'Pancaratriki' system of 'Vaishnava' initiation - such initiation has been recognised by the line of guru parampara purvacharyas.



Shree Ballabhacharya



Shree Nimbarkacharya



Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu



Jagat guru Shree Ramanandacharya



Jagat guru Shree Ramanujacharya

# Hindu Sects:

*By Swami Shivananda, The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh*

Hinduism is extremely catholic, liberal, tolerant, and elastic. This is the wonderful feature of Hinduism. A foreigner (visiting India) is struck with astonishment when he hears about the diverse sects and creeds of Hinduism. But these varieties are really an ornament to Hinduism. They are certainly not its defects. There are various types of minds and temperaments. So there should be various faiths also. This is but natural. This is the cardinal tenet of Hinduism. There is room in Hinduism for all types of souls- from the highest to the lowest- for their growth and evolution.

The term 'Hinduism' is most elastic. It includes a number of sects and cults, allied, but different in many important points. Hinduism has, within its fold, various schools of Vedanta; Vaishnavism, Saivism, Saktism, etc. It has various cults and creeds. Hinduism accommodates all types of men. It prescribes spiritual food for everybody, according to his qualification and growth. This is the beauty of this magnanimous religion. This is the glory of Hinduism. Hence there is no conflict among the various cults and creeds.

The Rig-Veda declares: "Truth is one; sages call it various names- Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti." The Upanishads declare that all the paths lead to the same goal, just as cows of variegated colours yield the same white milk. Lord Krishna says in the Gita: 'Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine.'" All diversities are organized and united in the body of Hinduism.

Hinduism provides food for reflection for the different types of thinkers and philosophers all over the world. All sorts of philosophy are necessary. What appeals to one may not appeal to another, and what is easy for one may be difficult for another. Hence the need for different standpoints. All philosophies of Hinduism are points of view. They are true in their own way. They take the aspirant step by step, stage by stage, till he reaches the acme or the pinnacle of spiritual glory. Sanatana-Dharmists, Arya-Samajists, Deva- Samajists, Jainas, Buddhists, Sikhs and Brahmo-Samajists are all Hindus only, for they rose from Hinduism, and emphasized one or more of its aspects.

**The Hindus are divided into three great classes, namely:**

1. Vaishnavas who worship the Lord as Vishnu;
2. Saivas who worship the Lord as Siva; and
3. Saktas who adore Devi or the Mother aspect of the Lord.

In addition, there are the Sauras, who worship the Sun-God; Ganapatyas who worship Ganesh as supreme; and Kumaras who worship Skanda as the godhead.

## 1. The Vaishnavas - Sri Sampradaya:

*The Vadagalai School and The Tengalai School*

The Vaishnavas are usually distinguished into four principal Sampradayas or sects. Of these, the most ancient is the Sri Sampradaya founded by Ramanuja Acharya about the middle of the twelfth century. The followers of Ramanuja adore Vishnu and Lakshmi, and their incarnations.

They are called Ramanujas or Sri Sampradayins or Sri Vaishnavas. The teachers are Brahmins. The disciples may be of any caste. They all recite the Ashtakshara Mantra: "Om Namō Narayanaya." They put on (display) two white lines and a central red line on the forehead.

Vedantacharya, a follower of Ramanuja, made some reform in the Vaishnava faith. This gave rise to the formation of two antagonistic parties of Ramanujas, one called the Northern School (Vadagalai) and the other the Southern School (Tengalai). The Tengalais regard Prapatti or self-surrender as the only way to salvation. The Vadagalais think that it is only one of the ways. According to them, the Bhakta or the devotee is like the young one of a monkey which has to exert itself and cling to its mother (Markata-Nyaya or Monkey Theory); whereas, according to the Southern School, the Bhakta or the devotee is like the kitten which is carried about by the cat without any effort on its own part (Marjala-Nyaya or Cat Theory).

The Northern School accept the Sanskrit texts, the Vedas. The Southerners have compiled a Veda of their own called 'Nalayira Prabandha' or 'Four Thousand Verses', in Tamil, and hold it to be older than the Sanskrit Vedas. Really, their four thousand verses are based on the Upanishad portion of the Vedas. In all their worship, they repeat sections from their Tamil verses.

The Vadagalais regard Lakshmi as the consort of Vishnu, Herself infinite, uncreated and equally to be adored as a means (Upaya) for release. The Tengalais regard Lakshmi as a created female being, though divine. According to them, she acts as a mediator or minister (Purushakara), and not as an equal channel of release.

The two sects have different marks on their foreheads. The Vadagalais make a simple white line curved like the letter U to represent the sole of the right foot of Lord Vishnu, the source of the River Ganga (Ganges). They add a central red mark as a symbol of Lakshmi. The Tengalais make a white mark like the letter Y that represents both the feet of Lord Vishnu. They draw a white line half way down the nose.

Both the sects brand the emblems of Vishnu- the discus and the conch- on their breasts, shoulders and arms.

The Tengalais prohibit their widows from shaving their heads.

The usual surnames of the Ramanuja Brahmins are Aiyangar, Acharya, Charlu and Acharlu.

## Ramanandis

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The followers of Ramananda are the Ramanandis. They are well-known in upper Hindusthan (India). They are branch of the Ramanuja sect. They offer their worship to Lord Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman. Ramananda was a disciple of Ramanuja. He flourished at Varanasi about the beginning of the fourteenth century. His followers are numerous in the Ganga (Ganges) valley of India. Their favourite work is the 'Bhakti-Mala.' Their sectarian marks are like those of the Ramanujas. The Vairagis are the ascetics among the Ramanandis.



## Vallabhacharins or Rudra Sampradayins (Rudra Sect)

The Vallabhacharins form a very important sect in Mumbai, Gujarat and the Central India. Their founder was born in the forest Camparanya in 1479. He is regarded as an incarnation of Krishna. The Vallabhacharins worship Krishna as Baba-Gopala. Their idol is one representing Krishna in his childhood till his twelfth year. The Gosains or teachers are family men. The eight daily ceremonials for God in the temples are Mangala, Sringara, Gvala, Raja Bhoga, Utthapana, Bhoga, Sandhya and Sayana. All these represent various forms of adoration of God.

The mark on the forehead consists of two red perpendicular lines meeting in a semicircle at the root of the nose and having a round dot of red between them. The necklace and rosary are made of the stalk of the Tulasi (holy Basil plant).

The great authority of the sect is the Srimad Bhagavata as explained in the Subodhini, the commentary thereon of Vallabhacharya. The members of the sect should visit Sri Nathdvara, a holy shrine, at least once in their lives.

## The Chaitanyas (Hare Krishna Movement)

This sect is prominent in Bengal and Orissa. The founder Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or Lord Gouranga, was born in 1485. He was regarded as an incarnation of Lord Krishna. He took sannyasa (monkhood) at the age of twenty-four. He went to Jagannath where he taught Vaishnava doctrines.

The Chaitanyas worship Lord Krishna as the Supreme Being. All castes are admissible into the sect. The devotees constantly repeat the Name of Lord Krishna.

Chaitanya's Charitamrita by Krishna Das is a voluminous work. It contains anecdotes of Chaitanya and his principal disciples and the expositions of the doctrines of this sect. It is written in Bengali.

The Vaishnavas of this sect wear two white perpendicular streaks of sandalwood paste or Gopichandan (a kind of sacred clay). Down the forehead uniting at the root of the nose and continuing to near the tip. They wear a close necklace of small Tulasi beads of three strings.

[Note: During the twentieth century, Swami Prabhupada, A.C. Bhaktivedanta became the founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness with branches all over the world. This movement urges devotees to recite with faith and devotion the following Hare-Krishna Mantra:

"Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare"

'Rama' in the above mantra of the Hare-Krishna movement does not refer to Sri Rama from the Ramayana but to Balarama, the elder brother of Sri Krishna.]

## The Nimbarkas

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The founder of this sect was Nimbarka or Nimbaditya. He was originally named Bhaskara Acharya. He is regarded as an incarnation of the Sun-God (Surya). The followers worship Krishna and Radha (Krishna's consort) conjointly. Their chief scripture is the Srimad Bhagavata Purana.

The followers have two perpendicular yellowish lines made from Gopichandan clay and applied from the root of the hair to the commencement of each eye-brow and there meeting in a curve. This represents the footprint of Lord Vishnu.

The Nimbarkas or Nimavats are scattered throughout the whole of upper India. They are very numerous around Mathura. They are also the most numerous of the Vaishnava sects in Bengal.

## The Madhavas

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The Madhavas are Vaishnavas. They are known as Brahma Sampradayins. The founder of the sect was Madhavacharya, otherwise called Ananda Tirtha and also called Purna-Prajna. He was born in 1200 ad. He was a great opponent of Sankaracharya's Advaita system of philosophy. He is regarded as an incarnation of Vayu or the Wind-God. He erected and consecrated at Udipi the image of Lord Krishna.

The Gurus of the Madhava sect are Brahmins and Sannyasins. The followers bear the impress of the symbols of Vishnu upon their breasts and shoulders. They are stamped with a hot iron. Their marks on the foreheads consist of two perpendicular lines made with Gopichandana and joined at the root of the nose. They make a straight black line (using charcoal from incense offered to Krishna), which terminates in a round mark made with tumeric.

The Madhavas are divided into two classes called the Vyasakutas and the Dasakutas. They are found in Karnataka.

Truthfulness, study of scriptures, generosity, kindness, faith and freedom from envy form the moral code of Madhavas. They give the Lord's names to their children (Namakarana Sanskar), and mark the body with His symbols (Ankana). They practise virtue in thought, word and deed (Bhajana).

## Radha Vallabhis

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Radha Vallabhis worship Krishna as Radha-Vallabha, the Lord or the Lover of Radha. Harivans was the founder of this sect. Seva Sakhi Vani gives a detailed description of the notion of this sect and more of their traditions and observances.

Charana Dasis, Dadu Panthis, Hari Chandis, Kabir Panthis, Khakis, Maluk Dasis, Mira Bais, Madhavis, Rayi Dasis, Senais, Sakhi Bhavas, Sadma Panthis, are all Vaishnava sects.

## 2. The Saivas

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- **Smarta Brahmins of the South**

The Saiva Brahmins of the Tamil India have their title Aiyer. They are called Smartas. They all wear three horizontal lines of Bhasma or Vibhuti (holy ash) on their forehead. They all worship Lord Siva. The different sects are:

1. Vadamas : Vada Desa Vadamas, Chola Desa Vadamas and Inji Vadamas
2. Brihatcharanam: Mazhainattu Brihatcharanam, Pazhamaneri Brihatcharanam, Milaghu Brihatcharanam and Kandramanikka Brihatcharanam
3. Vathimars
4. Ashtasahasram
5. Choliyas: Otherwise called Pandimars and inhabitants of Tiruchendur, and
6. Gurukkal: A sub-sect of Vadamas not recognized as one amongst them and whose duties are to worship at temples. They are also known by the name of Oattar in southern districts of Madras. These are different from Archaks. Archaks belong to any of the above sub-sects and inter-marry with persons of other professions, but not Gurukkal or Pattar. While Gurukkal is used only for Saivites, Pattar and Archak are used for Vaishnavites also.

- **Saiva Brahmins of Malabar**

1 Nambuduri 2.Muse, and 3.Embrantiri

- **Saiva Brahmins of Bengal**

1.Chakravarti 2.Chunder 3.Roy 4.Ganguli 5.Choudhury 6. Biswas 7. Bagchi 8. Majumdar, and 9.Bhattacharji

- **Saiva Brahmins of Karnataka**

1.Smarta 2. Haviga 3.Kota 4.Shivalli 5.Tantri 6.Kardi 7.Padya

### **Telugu Smartas**

1. Murukinadu, 2.Velanadu 3.Karanakammalu 4.Puduru Dravidis

1. Telahanyam 6.Konasima Dravidi and 7.Aruvela Niyogis

### **Lingayats**

They are called Vira Saivas. They are found in Mysore and Karnataka. They wear on their neck a Linga of Lord Siva that is placed in a small silver box.

### **Other Saiva sects**

Akas Mukhis, Gudaras, Jangamas, Karalingis, Nakhis, Rukharas, Sukharas, Urdhabahus, Ukkaras are al Saiva sects.

## **3.The Saktas**

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The saktas are worshippers of Devi, the Universal Mother. Dakshinis,

- Vamis,
- Kanchelias,
- Kararis are all Sakta sects.



## **Miscellaneous**

The Sauras adore the Sun, the Ganapatyas adore Ganesh, and the Kaumaras adore Skanda.

The non-Brahmins of South India are Naidu, Kamma Naidu, Chetty, Mudaliar, Gounder, Pillai, Nair, Nayanar and Reddy.

Nanak Shahis of seven classes (viz., Udasis, Ganj-bhakshis, Ramrayis, Sutra Shahis, Govinda Sinhis, Nirmalas, Nagas), Baba Lalis, Prana nathis, Sadhus, Satnamis, Siva Narayanis are other miscellaneous sects.

## **The Arya Samaj**

The founder of the Arya Samaj was Swami Dayananda Saraswati, who was born in Kathiawar in 1824. This Samaj is more of a social institution, with a religious background. It has Gurukulas, schools, and Pathshalas. The Suddhi Sabha is a proselytizing branch of the Arya Samaj.

[Note: The followers of the Arya Samaj do not perform idol worship. Swami Dayanand Saraswati wrote "Satyarth Parkash" (Light of Truth). This volume serves as the principal guiding light of the Arya Samaj. Some of the principles of the Arya Samaj are: God is the primary source of true knowledge and of all that is known by its means. The Vedas are the scriptures of all true knowledge. All acts ought to be performed in conformity with Dharma i.e. after due consideration of right and wrong. The primary object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world i.e. to ameliorate physical, spiritual and social standards of all men. All ought to be treated with love, justice, righteousness and due regard to their merits.]

## **The Brahma Samaj**

The Brahma Samaj was founded originally by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, early in the nineteenth century. The Brahma Samajists do not perform idol worship. Keshab Chandra Sen introduced some changes in the year 1860. There are now two branches within the Samaj, viz., Adi Brahma Samaj which holds to the tenets laid down by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Sadharana Brahma Samaj which is somewhat modern and which follows Keshab Chandra Sen more closely. This Samaj has followers in Bengal.

## **The Jains**

The first founder of the sect was Parsvanatha. Its first active propagator was Mahavira. The Jains are found in great numbers especially in the western coast of India. They are divided into two principal sects- the Svetambaras (clothed in white garments) and the Digambaras (sky-clad or naked).

The Jains do not admit the divine origin of the Vedas. They do not believe in any Supreme Deity. They pay reverence to holy men or saints who are styled Tirthankaras, who dwell in the heavenly abode and who, by long discipline, have raised themselves to divine perfection. The images of one or more of these Tirthankaras are placed in every Jain temple.

The Jains are strict vegetarians. They attach great sanctity to life. They practise Ahimsa (non-killing, non-violence). Strict Jains strain water before drinking, sweep the ground with a brush

before treading on it or before sitting, never eat or drink at night and sometimes cover their mouths with muslin to prevent the risk of swallowing minute organisms.

There are two classes of Jains, viz., Sravakas who engage themselves in secular occupations and Yatis or monks who lead an ascetic life.

## The Sikhs

"Sikhism, while some of its' founding Guru's were Hindu, was created as a response to Hinduism and the reign of the Muslim Mughal empires."

-KS Gidda

'Obedience to the Guru brings release from future births' this is a firm conviction of the Sikhs. Sikhs adopt the five Kakas, viz., 1. The Kes (uncut hair), 2. The Kachhca (short drawers), 3. The Kara (iron bangle), 4. The Kirpan (steel dagger), and 5. The Kangha (small-tooth comb worn in the hair).

The Udasis are an ascetic order of the Nanaksahi Sikhs. Srichand, son of Guru Nanak, embraced Sannyasa. Udasis are his followers. Lakshmichand, another son of Guru Nanak, led the life of a house-holder. Vedis are his followers. Nirmalas are ascetic followers of Guru Govind Singh.

The Akalis are brave warriors. The Akalis wear a distinctive dress of blue, and a black turban.

The teachings of Guru Nanak are contained in the first book of the Adi Granth.

No Sikh smokes tobacco.

## Sadhus and Sannyasins

Salutations unto the ancient Rishis, seers, saints, paramhansa sannyasins and sadhus, who are the repositories of divine knowledge and wisdom and who guide the destiny of the world in the past, present and future.

Every religion has a band of anchorites who lead the life of seclusion and meditation. There are Bhikshus in Buddhism, Fakirs in Mohammedanism (Islam), Sufistic Fakirs In Sufism, and Fathers and Reverends in Christianity. The glory of a religion will be lost absolutely if you remove these hermits or Sannysins or those who lead a life of renunciation and divine contemplation. It is these people who maintain or preserve the religions of the world. It is these people who give solace to the householders when they are in trouble and distress. They are the messengers of the Atman-knowledge and heavenly peace. They are the harbingers of divine wisdom and peace. They are the disseminators of Adhyatmic science and Upanishadic revelations. They heal the sick, comfort the forlorn and nurse the bed-ridden. They bring hope to the hopeless, joy to the depressed, strength to the weak and courage to the timid, by imparting the knowledge of the Vedanta and the significance of the ""Tat Tvam Asi" Mahavakya (great saying).

## Dasanama Sanyasins

Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat-Kumara and Sanat-Sujata were the four mind-born sons of Lord Brahma. They refused to enter the Pravritti Marga or worldly life and entered the Nivritti Marga

or the path of renunciation. The four Kumaras were the pioneers in the path of Sannyasa. Sri Dattatreya also is among the original Sannyasins. The Sannyasins of the present day are all descendants of the four Kumaras, Dattatreya and Sankaracharya.

Sri Sankaracharya, regarded as an Avatara of Lord Siva and the eminent exponent of Kevala Advaita philosophy, established four Maths (monasteries) one at Sringeri, another at Dvaraka, a third at Puri and a fourth at Joshi Math in the Himalayas, on the way to Badrinarayana shrine.

Sri Sankara had four Sannyasin disciples, viz., Suresvara, Padmapada, Hastamalaka and Totaka. Suresvara was in charge of Sringeri Math, Padmapada was in charge of Puri Math, Hastamalaka was in charge of Dvarka Math and Totaka was in charge of Joshi Math.

The Sannyasins of Sringeri Math, the spiritual descendants of Sri Sankara and Suresvacharya, have three names, viz., Sarasvati, Puri and Bharati. The Sannyasins of the Dvaraka Math have two names, viz., Tirtha and Asrama. The Sannyasins of the Puri Math have two names, viz., Vana and Aranya. The Sannyasins of the Joshi Math have three names, viz., Giri, Parvata and Sagara.

The Dasanamis worship Lord Siva or Lord Vishnu, and meditate on Nirguna Brahman. The Dandi Sannyasins, who hold staff in their hands, belong to the order of Sri Sankara. Paramhansa Sannyasins do not hold staff. They freely move about as itinerant monks. Avadhutas are naked Sannyasins. They do not keep any property with them.

The Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission belong to the order of Sri Sankara. They have the name Puri.

Then, there are Akhada Sannyasins, viz., Niranjana Akhada and Jhuni Akhda. They belong to the order of Sri Sankara. They are Dasanamis. They are found in the Uttar Pradesh State only.

Rishikesh and Haridwar are colonies for Sannyasins. Varanasi also is among the chief abodes of Sannyasins.

### **Saivas**

In South India, there are Tamil Sannyasins who belong to the Kovilur Math and Dharmaputram Adhinam. They do not belong to the Sri Sankara order. They are Saivas.

### **Nagas**

Nagas are Saiva Sannyasins. They are in a naked state. They smear their bodies with ashes. They have beard and matted locks.

### **Udasis**

Guru Nanak's order of ascetics is called Udasis. They correspond to Sannyasins and Vairagis. They are indifferent to the sensual pleasures of this world (Udasina). Hence they are called Udasis.

### **Vairagis**

A Vairagi is one who is devoid of passion. Vairagis are Vaishnavas. They worship Lord Rama, Sita and Hanuman. They read the Ramayana of Tulasidas. The mendicant Vaishnavas of the Ramanandi class are the Vairagis. Sri Ananda, the twelfth disciple of Ramananda, instituted this ascetic order.



### **Rama Sanehis**

The founder of this order was Ramcharan who was born in the year 1718 in a village near Jaipur in Rajasthan. The Rama Sanehi mendicants are of two classes, viz., the Videhis who are naked and the Mihinis who wear two pieces of cotton cloth dyed red in ochre. Their monastery is in Shahapur in Rajasthan. The Rama Sanehi sect has the largest following in Mewar and Alwar. They are found also in Mumbai and Poona (in Maharashtra State), Surat, Ahmedabad in Gujarat State), and Hyderabad and Varanasi.

### **Kabir Panthis** (panthi = followers)

Kabir Panthis are the followers of saint Kabir. They are numerous in all the provinces of Upper and Central India. There are twelve branches. Kabir Chaura is at Varanasi. It is a big monastery of Kabir Panthis. Dharamdas was the chief disciple of Kabir. The followers are expected to have implicit devotion to the Gurus, in thought, word and deed. They should practise truthfulness, mercy, non-injury and seclusion. The followers of Kamal, son of Kabir, practise Yoga.

### **Dadu Panthis**

The Dadu Panthis form one of the Vaishnava cults. Dadu, the founder of this sect, was a disciple of one of the Kabir Panthi teachers. The followers worship Lord Rama.

Dadu was a cotton cleaner. He was born at Ahmedabad. He flourished about the year 1600. The Dadu Panthis are of three classes, viz., the Viraktas who are bareheaded (clean shaven head) and have one cloth and one water-pot, the Nagas who carry arms and who are regarded as soldiers and the Vistar Dharis who do the avocations of ordinary life.

The Dadu Panthis are numerous in Marwar and Ajmer. Their chief place of worship is at Naraina, which is near Sambhur and Jaipur. Passages from the Kabir writings are inserted in their religious scriptures.

### **Gorakhnath Panthis**

Gorakhnath was a contemporary of Kabir. He is regarded as the incarnation of Lord Siva. He calls himself as the son of Matsyendranath and grandson of Adinath. There is a temple of Gorakhnath at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. Bhartrihari was a disciple of Gorakhnath.

Gorakhnath wrote Goraksha-Sataka, Goraksha-Kalpa and Goraksha-Nama. They are in Sanskrit.

The followers of Gorakhnath are usually called Kanphatas, because their ears are pierced and rings are inserted in them, at the time of their initiation. They worship Lord Siva.

### **Nimbarka Sampradayis and Ramanuja Sampradayis**

These are Sadhus of the Nimbarka Sampradaya. They are Vaishnavas. The Sannyasins of the Ramanuja Sampradaya wear orange coloured cloth, a holy thread and tuft and Tri-danda or three-staff. At present, they are very few in number.

## Parinami Sect

Sri Pirannath was the founder of this sect. He was born in 1675 at Jamnagarh, district Rajkot, in Kathiawar. He was the Devan (chief minister) of Raja Jam Jasa. The followers are to practise Ahimsa, Satya and Daya – non-violence, truthfulness and compassion. They study the sacred book, Kul Jam Svarup or Atma-Bodha, in Hindi, which contains the teachings of Sri Pirannath. It contains 18000 Chaupais. They worship Bala-Krishna, i.e., Krishna as a small child.

The followers are found mostly in the Punjab, Gujarat, Assam, Nepal and Mumbai. There are two Maths or monasteries –one at Jamnagarh and the other at Pamna.

## None Hindu Sects

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### The Message of the Guru

***Reproduced from our page 'Stories and episodes (32)'***

*Taittiriya Upanishad*

*Paraphrased- simplified- abridged By R.R.Diwakar*

[The span of ashrama life for students was usually twelve years. The students lived with their preceptors and served them and the ashrama during that period. They learnt the Vedas, maintained the sacrificial fire and studied whatever the guru taught them. Below is given a model message from a guru to a departing disciple at the end of the period. This might be said to be a 'Convocation Address' if we liken the ashramas of old to the 'residential universities' of today. This occurs in the Taittiriya Upanishad.]

Young boys eight or more entered the ashramas and were entrusted to the care of the guru or the preceptor. They spent twelve long years in study and sport, in service and sadhana or spiritual discipline. They were called brahmacharis, that is, those who adopt a particular discipline in order to know Brahman. Brahmacharya is not mere continence, but a whole code of disciplined conduct which aims at the conservation, development and concentration of physical, mental and moral energy, in order to attain the highest spiritual goal.

The twelve strenuous years thus spent by the youngsters in the very home of the guru in close association with him, built up very affectionate relations between them. The gurus were expected to take almost parental interest in their charges, while the disciples were to render filial obedience to the gurus.

Let us imagine in one such ashrama, a day dawns when a disciple or a group of them is about to depart and plunge into the wide world. He is leaving the charmed circle of the ashrama to battle with the currents and cross-currents of life. He is to transfer himself from the cloister to the market place. He is now to test in the world of experience what he has learnt within the precincts of the academy. He is to cut off his moorings in the sheltered bay and launch the boat of his life into the open sea. Fears and thrills of anticipated adventures fill the young man as he contemplates the prospect before him. The guru too feels the wrench and his heart is full of emotion. He has some anxiety about the future of his young disciple. But the separation is inevitable- it has to come one day. In fact, by that separation alone can the future development of his student be ensured.

Such are the mixed feelings that surge in the heart when the Vedic guru gives the parting message to the brahmachari after his study of the Vedas is over.

“My dear child, your study of the Vedas is over. Now go forth into the wide world.

“Speak the truth and practise the Dharma or the Law. Never fail nor falter in the study of that part of the Veda that has been assigned to you. Study more but never less than thy portion.

“Give to your preceptor such wealth and such things as are dear to him. Never allow your line of life to lapse. Behind you, you must leave children.

“Never falter from the truth nor from the Law (Dharma). Never stint nor make mistakes in doing good. Never neglect to do that which would lead to prosperity.

“Do not give up your studies and do not stop teaching.

“You ought not to omit to do your duties towards your gods and ancestors; commit no mistakes in performing them.

“Revere your mother and your father as much as you revere god. Let your guru (preceptor) be looked upon as god. Let your guest get the same respect as is due to god.

“Be thou faultless and pure in thought and action. Only such of your qualities and actions as are clearly good should be cherished by you, and not others. Such knowers of Brahman as are greater than ourselves ought to be highly respected by you.

“Whilst giving, give with faith; never without it. Give richly. Give with humility. Give with fear, lest you give too little. Give with feeling and with full knowledge.

“At times you may be in doubt about the wisdom of a certain course of action. At such a time you should act in a manner in which thoughtful and virtuous knowers of Brahman who are desirous of following the Law, do act.

“So also, as regards your conduct towards men of ill fame; it should be like that of a thoughtful, virtuous knowers of Brahman who follow the Law.

“This is the message. This is the advice. This is the knowledge. This is the command. Thus should you live and act in life.”

## The Guru

**By Sri Ramana Maharshi**

*Preamble by David Godman*

### Preamble

God and Guru are in truth not different. Just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger cannot escape, so those who have come under the glance of the Guru's grace will surely be saved and will never be forsaken; yet one should follow without fail the path shown by the Guru.



From Bhagavan's (Sri Ramana's) point of view there are no disciples but from the point of view of the disciple the grace of the Guru is like the ocean. If the disciple comes with a cup he will only get a cupful. It is no use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean; the bigger the vessel the more he will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him.

The term Guru is often loosely used to describe anyone who gives out spiritual advice, but in Sri Ramana's vocabulary the word has a much more restricted definition. For him, a true Guru is someone who has realized the Self and who is able to use his power to assist others towards the goal of Self-realization.

Sri Ramana often said that God, Guru and the Self are identical; the Guru is God in human form and, simultaneously, he is also the Self in the Heart of each devotee. Because he is both inside and outside, his powers work in two different ways. The outer Guru gives instructions and by his power enables the devotee to keep his attention on the Self; the inner Guru pulls the devotee's mind back to its source, absorbs it in the Self and finally destroys it.

It is a basic tenet of Sri Ramana's teaching that a Guru is necessary for almost everyone who is striving towards a permanent awareness of the Self. The catalytic role of the Guru in spiritual development is therefore crucial; except in rare instances, ignorance of the Self is so deeply rooted that individual seekers are unable to escape from it by their own efforts.

Although Sri Ramana taught that a Guru is indispensable for those seeking Self-realization, he also pointed out that the Guru has no power to bring about realization in those who are not energetically seeking it. If the individual seeker makes a serious attempt to discover the Self, then the grace and power of the Guru will automatically start to flow. If no such attempt is made, the Guru is helpless.

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## **Guru and disciple - An episode from real life**

### ***Narendra and Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa***

*(Narendra was Swami Vivekananda's name before taking sanyas)*

One day when Narendra was on the ground floor, meditating, the Master (Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa) was lying awake in his bed upstairs. In the depths of his meditation Narendra felt as though a lamp were burning at the back of his head. Suddenly he lost consciousness. It was the yearned-for, all-effacing experience of nirvikalpa samadhi, when the embodied soul realises its unity with the Absolute.

After a very long time he regained partial consciousness but was unable to find his body. He could see only his head. "Where is my body?" he cried. The elder Gopal entered the room and said, "Why, it is here, Naren!" But Narendra could not find it. Gopal, frightened, ran upstairs to the Master. Sri Ramakrishna only said: "Let him stay that way for a time. He has worried me long enough."

After another long period Narendra regained full consciousness. Bathed in peace, he went to the Master, who said: "Now the Mother has shown you everything. But this revelation will remain under lock and key, and I shall keep the key. When you have accomplished the Mother's work you shall find the treasure again."

Some days later, Narendra being alone with the master, Sri Ramakrishna looked at him and went into samadhi. Narendra felt the penetration of a subtle force and lost all outer consciousness. Regaining presently the normal mood, he found the Master weeping.

Sri Ramakrishna said to him: "Today I have given you my all and I am now only a poor fakir, possessing nothing. By this power you will do immense good in the world, and not until it is accomplished will you return."

Henceforth the Master lived in the disciple.

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## Guru Vandana

He mere Gurudev karuna sindhu karuna keejiye.  
Hun adham aadhin asharaan , ab sharaan me leejiye.

O my Gurudev, Ocean of Compassion, please cast your grace on me.  
I am unworthy, dependent, and without shelter. Now please grant me refuge.

Kha raha gote hun mai bhav sindhu ke mazdhar me.  
Dusara hai aasara koi na es sansar me.  
He mere Gurudev karuna sindhu karuna keejiye.

I am drowning in the middle of this ocean of mundane existence.  
I have no one else in this world to help me but you.

Muz me nahi jap tap va sadhan, our nahi kuch gyan hai.  
Nirlajjyata hai ek baki, our bus abhiman hai.  
He mere Gurudev karuna sindhu karuna keejiye.

I am wanting in sadhana-no japa<sup>1</sup> no tapa<sup>2</sup> - and I have no knowledge.  
What is left in me is only shamelessness and pride.

Pap boze se ladi, naiyya bhanwar me ja rahee.  
Nath dodo ab bachawo, shighra doobee ja rahee.  
He mere Gurudev karuna sindhu karuna keejiye.

This boat, laden with sins, is fast approaching the eddy.  
O my Master, come running to save me. It is sinking quickly.

Aap bhi yadi chod thenge, fir kanha jawunga mai.  
Janma dukh se nav kaise, par kar pawunga mai.  
He mere Gurudev karuna sindhu karuna keejiye.

If you desert me, I have nowhere to go.  
How shall I ferry this boat across the sorrows of rebirth ?

Sab jagah manjul bhatak kar lee sharaan ab aapkee.  
Par karana ya na karana, dono marji aapkee.

Having wandered everywhere in vain, I now take refuge in you.  
Whether you take me across or not is your sweet will.

He mere Gurudev karuna sindhu karuna keejiye.  
Hun adham aadhin asharaan , ab sharaan me leejiye.

O my Gurudev, Ocean of Compassion, please show me your grace.  
I am unworthy, dependent, and without shelter. Please grant me refuge.

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## Guru Stavan

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Akhandmandalakaram Vyaptam Yen Characharam  
Tatpadam Darshitam Yen Tasmayy Shree Guruve Namah

That which permeates the whole cosmos- the moving and the unmoving;  
That through the grace of whose feet I witness all this, To that honored Guru are my  
salutations!

Gurorbrahmah GurorVishnuh GurorDevah Maheshwarah  
Guruh Sakshat Param Brahman Tasmayy Shree Guruve Namah

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Divine Shiva Himself; Guru indeed is that  
Supreme God;  
To that honored Guru are my salutations!

Agyan Timir Ahdhasaya Gyananjana Shalakaya  
Chakshurun Militam Yen Tasmayi Shree Guruve Namah

One who guides out of the blinding darkness of ignorance With the stick of knowledge;  
One through whose grace The spiritual eye is found again; To that honored Guru are my  
salutations!

Mannath Shreejagannathah Madguru ShreeJagadguruh  
Mamatma Sarv bhootatma Tasmayi Shree Guruve Namah

My Lord is the Lord of whole world; My Guru is the Guru of whole world;  
My soul is the soul of whole world; To that honored Guru are my salutations!

Dhyan Moolam Guormurtim Pooja Moolam Gurorpadam  
Mantra Moolam Gurorvakyam Mokshamoolam Gurorkripah

The source of concentration is (concentration on) Guru's form; The source of worship is  
(worship of) Guru's feet; The source of mantra is (meditation on) Guru's word; The source  
of liberation is Guru's grace!

Guormadhye Sthita Mata , Matri Madhya Sthitah Guru  
Guormata Namastestu, Matri Gurum Namamyaham

In the heart of Guru dwells the Mother; In the heart of Mother dwells the Guru.  
Salutations of mine to Guru in Mother! Salutations of mine to Mother in Guru!

Note: Guru Vandana is from Guru Gita (Song of Guru) which forms a section of Skanada Purana (Sacred Lore of Skanda). Skanda is Shiva's son, elder brother of Ganesha. Guru Gita is a dialogue between Lord Shiva and His consort Parvati. Before reciting the rest of Guru Gita. Lord Shiva declares:" Guru is Shiva and Shiva is Guru. One who sees difference knows neither." Guru Gita is a treatise on finding a true Guru and then surrendering to him with totality of one's being.



### **Brief description of the Puranas Smt Vimla Rao**

Firstly I wish to express my gratitude and reverence to honor all the spiritual masters past present and future.

May Your wisdom, compassion, and guidance illuminate the path of our spiritual journey, leading us towards the divine light of knowledge and self-realization.

With profound respect, I bow to you, the bearers of ancient wisdom, which nurturers our souls.

The Puranas are ancient Indian literature written by Maha Rishi Ved Vyas Ji.

There are total of 18 Maha Puranas.

They are a major source of Hindu culture, detailing the history of the universe from creation to destruction and lineage and history of gods and demigods, heroes, and sages. The Puranas serve as a comprehensive knowledge of ancient Indian wisdom, blending history, mythology, philosophy, and religious teachings.

The aim is to guide us to live moral lives and progress on our spiritual journey until we attain moksha.

The Puranas are classified based on the primary deity they glorify: Vaishnav, Shaiva, Shaktas These are also categorised according to the Trigunas – Satva, Rajas and Tamas.



The Sattva Puranas are considered to promote purity, knowledge, and righteousness. These six Puranas are Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Narada Purana, Garuda Purana, Padma Purana and Varaha Purana. These Puranas are generally associated with Vishnu or his avatars and are considered to embody the qualities of Sattva

The Puranas classified under the Rajas (passion) category are associated with the quality of passion and are often centered around deities like Brahma and sometimes Shiva. The Rajas Puranas are Brahma Purana, Brahmavaivarta Purana, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana and Brahmanda Purana. These six Puranas emphasize creation, maintenance, and various activities driven by passion and desire.

The Puranas classified under the Tamas (ignorance) category are associated with the quality of ignorance and often have themes related to destruction, transformation, and the worship of deities like Shiva and the Goddess. The Tamas Puranas are **Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana**. These six Puranas focus on aspects of destruction and transformation, reflecting the tamasic qualities.

### **Major Puranas (Mahapuranas) and the Gods each one glorify**

1. **Vishnu Purana:** Vishnu and his avatars
2. **Bhagavata Purana:** Devotion to Vishnu/Krishna
3. **Brahma Purana::** Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva
4. **Padma Purana :** Various aspects of Vishnu and Shiva worship
5. **Shiva Purana:** Shiva
6. **Linga Purana:** Shiva (as a linga)
7. **Garuda Purana:** Vishnu and the afterlife
8. **Narada Purana:** Devotion to Vishnu
9. **Markandeya Purana:** Various deities, with emphasis on Durga
10. **Agni Purana:** Vishnu, Shiva, various other topics
11. **Bhavishya Purana:** Prophecies
12. **Brahmanda Purana:** Cosmology and geography
13. **Brahmavaivarta Purana :** Krishna and Radha the divine play
14. **Vamana Purana:** Vamana avatar of Vishnu
15. **Kurma Purana:** Kurma avatar of Vishnu
16. **Matsya Purana:** Matsya avatar of Vishnu
17. **Skanda Purana:** Kartikeya (Skanda)
18. **Vayu Purana:** Vayu (wind god)

### **The 10 Upapuranas are as follows:**

1. Sanatkumara Purana
2. Naradiya Puran

3. Brihaddharma Purana
4. Shiva Rahasya Purana
5. Kalika Purana
6. Shamba Purana
7. Devi Bhagavata Purana
8. Durvasa PuranaK
9. Kapila Purana
10. Vishnudharma Purana

The knowledge and wisdom of the Poorans is timeless in other words it was applicable at the time it was written, and it is applicable today and age and shall continue to inspire those who seek knowledge and wisdom from these ancient Indian texts.

Therefore, these ancient books of knowledge and wisdom continue to encourage individuals to lead lives of righteousness, devotion, and responsibility.

The diversity within the Puranas allows for a wide range of spiritual expressions and paths within Hinduism.

However, this diversity usually creates confusion in the readers mind. several times I have heard people saying Puranas are contradictory -

One may Question Which Puran should I follow? Who do I devout to?

In my view Puranas are complementary rather than contradictory. Each Purana has its unique contribution to Hindu philosophy and practice. And the **diversity** within these ancient scriptures serves people different belief systems – such as shavism, vaishnavas and those shakatas.

Together, they provide a rich and diverse understanding of the divine and the spiritual path.

For personal spiritual practice, individuals often choose the Puranas that resonate most with their own beliefs and devotional focus.

My learning through many of these puranas that I have studied, which I strive to understand and embrace is

The transformative power of Bhakti (devotion)

Bhakti is a path which emphasizes unconditional love for the Ultimate (Parmatma) and is for everyone, regardless of caste, creed, gender, or social status. It is emphasizing that anyone can attain God's grace through sincere devotion.

For those of us who neither have the knowledge to understand, nor time to study the 4 Vedas and the 18 puranas let's look at Ram Charitra manas which is claimed to be the gist of the Vedas Puranas and the Upanishads.

Goswami Tulsi Das Ji writes:

इहि महँ रघुपति नाम उदारा। अति पावन पुरान श्रुति सारा॥ page 77 Ram Chritra Manas by Jwala Prasad Mishra Ji

"In this world, the name of Lord Rama is supremely generous and exceedingly pure. It is the **essence of all the Puranas and the Vedas (Shruti).**"

मंगल भवन अमंगल हारी। उमा सहित जेहि जपत त्रिपुरारी॥

"He is the abode of auspiciousness and the remover of inauspiciousness, Him whom Tripurari (Shiva), along with Uma (Parvati), chants.

"बिनु पद चलइ सुनइ बिनु काना। कर बिनु करम करइ विधि नाना॥

आनन रहित सकल रस भोगी। बिनु बानी बकता बड जोगी॥

बिनु कर कमल बिस्व कर राया। बिनु नयन देखइ सब भाया॥

अस प्रभु बिस्व रूप भगवाना। बिनु पद चलइ सुनइ बिनु काना॥

"Without feet, He moves; without ears, He hears. Without hands, He performs all actions in many ways. Without a mouth, He enjoys all tastes. Without speech, He is a great orator. Without lotus-like hands, He is the creator of the world. Without eyes, He sees everything dear. Such is the Lord, the universal form of God, Who moves without feet and hears without ears."

The simplest devotion for this day and age and is chanting RAM RAM RAM RAM I which has been stated in the Rmayan as:

कलियुग केवल नाम अधारा। सुमिरि सुमिरि नर उतरहि पारा॥

"In Kali Yuga, the name of the Lord is the only support. By remembering it repeatedly, people can cross over the ocean of worldly existence.

## **Poetry of Puranas**

In ancient scrolls, the tales unfold,  
Of gods and worlds, of myths retold,

Eighteen Puranas, wisdom's light,  
In verses pure, they shine so bright.  
From Vishnu's deeds, to Shiva's might,  
And Devi's grace, so fierce, so bright,  
Each story weaves a sacred lore,  
A cosmic dance, forevermore.  
In Kurma's shell, the mountain rests,  
While oceans churn, in divine quests,  
From ages past, their whispers call,  
To hearts that seek, to one and all.  
Oh, timeless texts, you guide our way,  
In devotion's path, we humbly stay,  
With reverence deep, we bow to thee,  
Puranas' light, eternally free.

Surrendering myself to all Gurus I very humbly pray for a shower of blessings of knowledge and wisdom that continue to inspire us to walk the path of righteousness, devotion and finally to Liberation.

Most loving Ram Ram to all



## BRIEF INFORMATION TO VEDAS

By Pt Sukhendra Shandil

The foremost sacred book of Hinduism is known as Vedas. It constitutes the most ancient and original body of work in existence on mother earth. Vedas are most trusted and venerated books that teaches us the highest truth that can lead to us to GOD. The word



Ved is a Sanskrit word which means knowledge. Vedas are series of four books known as Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda and Atharvaveda.

Lord Brahma revealed the four Vedas, Rigveda to Rishi Agni, Yajurveda to Rishi Vayu, Samveda to Rishi Aaditya and Atharvaveda to Rishi Angira. Among all the four Rishis's Agni, Vayu, Aaditya and Angira were the most advance Yogis purest in thought, speech, action and capable of understanding the absolute knowledge and mastered Shruthi (listening to hymns) and brought in their experience and revelation that was taught by the greatest of all teachers – Lord Brahma. After the Rishis became enlightened from the knowledge they shared the teachings among the men.

In order to safeguard and preserve the Vedas, Rishi Ved Vyasa finally compiled them into one large oral text and further organised them into four books. Vedas are written down in Sanskrit and many scholarly families were assigned to memorise the Vedas and the society took care of their personal and financial need in ensuring that the valuable knowledge was passed on from one generation to the other. Even to this day there are families where father recites Veda all day when his children are listening to him and memorising it.

The Vedas are considered as the root source of all kinds of knowledge whether it is worldly or spiritual. The three main categories are Knowledge, actions based on that knowledge (Karma) and Self-Realization through spiritual science of Yoga. Other subjects like agriculture, organisation of society, duties of members of a community, root knowledge of mathematics, physical and biological science are also described.

Today, the four Vedas have been translated into many different languages and just about anyone who wants to read them, can. However, reading them and understanding them are two different projects. Vedic knowledge remains an oral, initiatory tradition. Without a Guru to lead you through the complex symbolism and hidden mystical meaning, many of the hymns will not make a lot of sense.

The Vedas are the primary text of the spiritual and religious records of the ancient culture and teachings of India. Their teachings are based upon the recognition sacred nature of all life and self-realisation as the true goal of human life. Hindus call Vedas by several names, such as Apaurusheya ( meaning not authored by human) Anadi (without beginning in terms of time) and Nishvasitam ( the breath of Ishvara , GOD).

As a culture and way of life, Vedas represent a tradition that accepts all valid approaches to truth and embodies the principles of universality and diversity. The Vedas prescribe rituals and meditation for attaining harmony in life. The rituals are intended to keep our daily actions in harmony with Divine Will, and meditation are prescribed for realising our true identity. The

ritualistic part of the Veda is called *Karma Kanda* and the meditation portion of the Vedas is called *Jnana Kanda*.

**Rig Veda:** Rig means 'Praise'. There are 1028 Vedic hymns of prayer and worship are addressed to Vedic deities such as Agni, Indra, Soma, Ashvins, Varuna, Maruts, Mitra, Ushas, Vayu, Savitr, Pushan, Apris, Brishapati, Rudra, Dadhika, Yama, Sarasvati, Parjanya, Vastospati and Vishvakarman. Most doctrines of Hindu religion have been in one way or another, derived from Rig Veda. One of the most profound and significant doctrines of Rig Veda is "Truth is one, the wise call it by various names". The Vedic hymns reflect a devotee's relationship to the deities as a friend, as a child to his parents or as a servant to his master.

**Yajur Veda:** Yajur means 'Worship'. It contains 3,988 verses, is a compilation of mantras and methods for use by the priest in performing Vedic rituals and sacrifices.

**Sama Veda:** Saama means 'Song'. It has 1,540 verse was set to music by the Vedic people for chanting during rituals. The use of music in the recital of the hymns eventually gave the rise to modern Indian classic music. Music associated with devotional songs to deities (Bhajans) is based upon the seven sound – Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni. Mathematical permutation and combination of these seven sounds are used to create tunes known as Ragas.

**Atharva Veda:** Atharva means 'Stable Mind'. It contains 5,977 verses used to satisfy the daily needs of the people. This included verses deemed necessary for success in agriculture, trade, health and general welfare.

### **Format of the Vedas**

Each Veda is divided into four main sections – Samhita or mantras, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads.

**Samhitas:** The basic texts containing hymns of prayers and worship, put together to address deities.

**Brahmanas:** Emphasize and discuss the rituals and correct techniques for their performance. These include explanatory treatise for using mantras in rituals. They are called Brahmanas because they discuss the duties of Brahmins (priest) pertaining to rituals.

**Aranyakas:** Forest provides mystical interpretation of the mantras and rituals, put together in the seclusion of forests, which ultimately gave rise to asceticism.

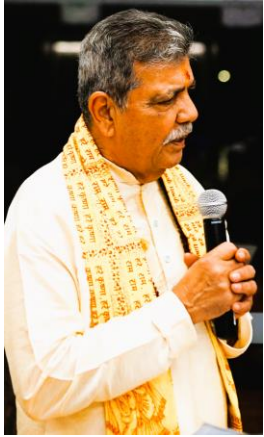
**Upanishads:** are the divine revelations received by ancient saint. They represent the essence of the Vedas the greatest truth known to mankind. The basic teaching of the Upanishad is that the essence of all things and beings from a blade of grass to the perfect human being is divine spirit called Brahman.

*For everybody who cares for himself, his ancestors, for his history, for his intellectual development a study of Vedic literature is indispensable.*

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## *Introduction to the Rigveda*

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by : Pt Shailendra Maharaj

The Rigveda, one of the oldest sacred texts in the world, is a foundational scripture of Hinduism. Composed in ancient Sanskrit, it dates back to approximately 1500–1200 BCE and is considered the oldest of the four Vedas, the others being the Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda. The Rigveda consists of 1,028 hymns (suktas) organized into ten books (mandalas). These hymns are dedicated to various deities, reflecting the religious and cultural practices of the early Vedic civilization.

The Rigveda is not only a collection of hymns but also a treasure trove of philosophical, spiritual, and cosmological knowledge. It addresses the nature of the universe, the origin of the gods, and the principles of dharma (righteousness). The hymns were composed by different sages (rishis) over several centuries and were passed down orally through generations before being written down.

The significance of the Rigveda lies in its comprehensive portrayal of the Vedic way of life, its rituals, and its worldview. It provides insights into the early Indo-Aryan society, their values, and their relationship with nature and the divine. The Rigveda's influence extends beyond religious practices, impacting Indian culture, literature, and philosophy.

In summary, the Rigveda is a profound and ancient scripture that continues to inspire and guide Hindu religious and cultural traditions. Its hymns offer a glimpse into the spiritual and intellectual heritage of early Vedic civilization, making it a timeless and invaluable text.

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## *Introduction to the Yajurveda*

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The Yajurveda, one of the four Vedas, is a central text in the Hindu tradition. It is primarily a compilation of ritual formulas and instructions for performing sacred ceremonies and sacrifices. The term "Yajurveda" is derived from the Sanskrit words "yajus," meaning "sacrifice," and "Veda," meaning "knowledge," signifying its role as the Veda of sacrificial rites.

The Yajurveda is divided into two major parts: the Shukla (White) Yajurveda and the Krishna (Black) Yajurveda. The distinction between the two lies in the organization and presentation of the

hymns and prose sections. The Shukla Yajurveda, also known as the Vajasaneyi Samhita, presents its content in a clear and systematic manner, while the Krishna Yajurveda, also known as the Taittiriya Samhita, intermingles its verses with explanatory prose.

### Contents and Structure

The Yajurveda primarily contains:

1. **Mantras:** These are the sacred chants and hymns used in rituals. They are recited by the priests during various ceremonies.
2. **Brahmanas:** These prose passages provide detailed instructions on the performance of rituals, including the materials needed, the sequence of actions, and the invocations of deities.
3. **Aranyakas:** These texts, sometimes included as part of the Yajurveda, serve as a bridge between the ritualistic Brahmanas and the philosophical Upanishads. They are intended for meditative and contemplative practices, often conducted in the forest (aranya).
4. **Upanishads:** Some of the earliest Upanishads, like the Isha and the Taittiriya, are associated with the Yajurveda. These texts delve into metaphysical and philosophical discussions, exploring concepts like the nature of reality, the self (Atman), and the ultimate reality (Brahman).

### Significance:

The Yajurveda holds immense significance in the Vedic tradition due to its role in ritual practice. It serves as a manual for priests, guiding them in the precise execution of yajnas (sacrificial ceremonies) which are considered essential for maintaining cosmic order and societal well-being. The rituals described in the Yajurveda are intricate and elaborate, emphasizing the importance of accuracy and devotion in Vedic worship.

### Influence and Legacy

The Yajurveda's influence extends beyond religious rituals. It has shaped various aspects of Indian culture, including art, literature, and social practices. The philosophical insights found in its associated Upanishads have contributed to the development of major Hindu philosophical schools and continue to inspire spiritual seekers.

In summary, the Yajurveda is a foundational text that encapsulates the ritualistic and philosophical dimensions of the Vedic tradition. Its comprehensive guide to sacrificial rites and its profound spiritual teachings make it a vital component of Hindu sacred literature.

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## *Introduction to the Samaveda*

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The Samaveda, also known as the Veda of Melodies or Chants, is one of the four sacred texts of Hinduism, collectively known as the Vedas. These ancient scriptures are among the oldest in the world, with origins dating back thousands of years. The Samaveda, often referred



to as the third Veda, is closely linked to the religious rituals and practices of the Vedic period in ancient India.

The term "Samaveda" is derived from two Sanskrit words: "Sama," meaning "melody" or "song," and "Veda," meaning "knowledge" or "sacred text." This Veda is a compilation of verses and hymns intended to be chanted or sung during religious ceremonies and rituals. It emphasizes the musical aspect of Vedic rituals, providing guidance on the correct intonation, pronunciation, and meter of the chants.

The Samaveda draws a selection of verses and hymns from the Rigveda, the oldest of the four Vedas. These verses are rearranged into poetic and melodic tunes for musical recitation. The verses are compiled into various collections known as "Ganas," which are further divided into individual hymns called "Samans."

In ancient Vedic rituals, the Samaveda played a crucial role, particularly in the Soma rituals. These rituals involved the ceremonial consumption of a sacred hallucinogenic drink known as Soma. The melodies and chants from the Samaveda were performed by a group of priests called the Udgatri. These priests sang the hymns in a specific manner to invoke the deities and ensure the success of the rituals.

While the primary focus of the Samaveda is music and chants, it also contains philosophical and spiritual teachings, much like the other Vedas. It explores themes such as the nature of reality, the relationship between humans and the divine, the importance of ethical conduct, and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

The Samaveda holds a significant place in Hindu religious traditions, serving as a valuable source of knowledge about ancient Indian culture, music, and spirituality. Its verses and melodies have been preserved and passed down through generations, contributing to the rich heritage of Hindu religious and musical traditions.

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## *Introduction to the Atharva Veda*

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The Atharva Veda is an ancient Hindu scripture and one of the four Vedas, often referred to as the fourth Veda. It is sometimes called the Veda of Magical Formulas and Modern Science, though this name is not universally accepted by scholars. The Atharva Veda comprises 730 hymns and about 6,000 mantras, organized into 20 books (kandas). Each kanda is further divided into hymns (suktas), and these suktas are composed of individual mantras.

This Veda is known by several other names, including Atharvangi, Rasa, Angirasa, and Kshattra. It is also named after its great author, Rishi Atharvan, the son of Maharishi Vasistha. Rishi Atharvan is believed to be an ancient sage who brought fire from heaven and introduced sacrificial fire rituals, known as Agnihotra in Sanskrit.

The Atharva Veda stands apart from the other three Vedas, especially the Rig Veda, which is the oldest of the four. The Atharva Veda contains a wealth of knowledge on various subjects,

including medical science, health, types of diseases, cures, earnings, investments, longevity, and worldly progress. Some of the main suktas (hymns) in the Atharva Veda are:

1. **Bhaisajya Suktas:** These hymns pertain to medicine and explain the types of diseases and their treatments, addressing illnesses caused by food and past karma. Diseases caused by food are treated with medicine, while those caused by karma are addressed through mantras.
2. **Ayusya Suktas:** These hymns contain prayers for attaining long life.
3. **Paustika Suktas:** These mantras are for the well-being of livestock, farmers, and merchants, ensuring good crops, harvests, and investments. They include prayers for adequate rainfall to grow healthy crops.
4. **Abhicara Suktas:** These hymns seek protection from negative forces and include mantras to eradicate evil spirits.
5. **Prayascitta Suktas:** These mantras are used to nullify mistakes made during religious rites.
6. **Raj Karam Suktas:** These hymns are for the coronation of kings, the election of leaders, defense, protection from enemies, and other worldly affairs.
7. **Brahmanya Suktas:** These hymns focus on prayers and sacrifices.

The Atharva Veda is a unique and comprehensive Vedic text that offers insights into various aspects of life, combining spiritual, medical, and practical knowledge.



Members of the Hindu Heritage Society

*Our next public function is DEVI JAGARAN*



**Hindu Heritage Society Inc.**

**Presents**

**ANNUAL DURGA MAHA**

**POOJA 2024**

**(CHALO MATA KE DHAM)**



**You are cordially invited with your family and friends to celebrate**

**Annual Durga pooja and Devi Jagran**

**Conducted by**

**Shri Rajesh Batra ji**

**Accompanied by**

**Sydney's famous musicians**

**Venue: Lurnea Community Hub, 66 Hill Road, Lurnea NSW**

Map reference - <https://maps.app.goo.gl/XFnzrhpxibAVvMkM9>

**Date & Time : Saturday, 12 October 2024, From 5:00PM AEDT**

**Program**

- **Pujan from 5.30 – 6:00 pm by main yajmans**
- **Kanya puja & Havan 6.00-6:30 pm**
- **Devi Chauki from 6.30 pm**
- **Arati 9.30 pm**
- **Followed by Maha Prasad**

**For more information, please contact:**

**[www.hinduheritage.com.au](http://www.hinduheritage.com.au)**

- **Mrs Radhika Bhatt on 0406511132**
- **Kavish Maharaj on 0403020470**
  - **ALL WELCOME**





**HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
Education, Art & Heritage

## 27th Annual Vasant Utsav

### Invitation



The Hindu Heritage Society is excited to invite you to attend our 27th Annual Vasant Utsav Celebration.

Date:- Sunday 2nd Feb 2025 , from 10.00 am till 1:00 PM

Venue:- TBA

#### Program Highlights

- ◆ Students participate in prayers
- ◆ Arts and Educational Activities
- ◆ Visiting Speakers discussion topics of interest
- ◆ Multicultural Discussions
- ◆ Traditional Indian Dance
- ◆ Food and beverage

*The Hindu Heritage Society continues its tradition of marking the start of the new school year with a Saraswati Pooja on the auspicious occasion of Vasant Panchami. Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge, art, music, and culture, is honored on this day. Sharadama, a manifestation of Goddess Saraswati, makes this event particularly significant for our community's younger members and anyone pursuing further studies. On this day, students, especially those advancing to senior years, place their books at the feet of Ma Saraswati to seek her blessings. This tradition is also shared by individuals engaged in fine arts, music, and dance.*

Open to All

For more details, and participations, Please Contact Pt Sukhendra Shandil on **0401575361** or via email on [pt.shandil@gmail.com](mailto:pt.shandil@gmail.com).

Further information can be found on the Hindu Heritage Society Website.

<https://hinduheritage.com.au/upcoming-hhs-events>