

# HINDUISM - SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

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THOU ART THAT



*As the rivers flowing east and west merge in the sea and become one with it, forgetting they were ever separate streams, so do all creatures lose their separateness when they merge at last into pure Being.*

-Chandogya Upanishad

## TIMELINE

## BEFORE COMMON ERA

PREHISTORY

3000

2500

2000

1500

1000

Indus Valley Civilization  
(c.3500-1500)Development of the Vedas  
(1500-800)Aryan invasion & collapse of Indus  
Valley civilization  
(c.1500)

1850

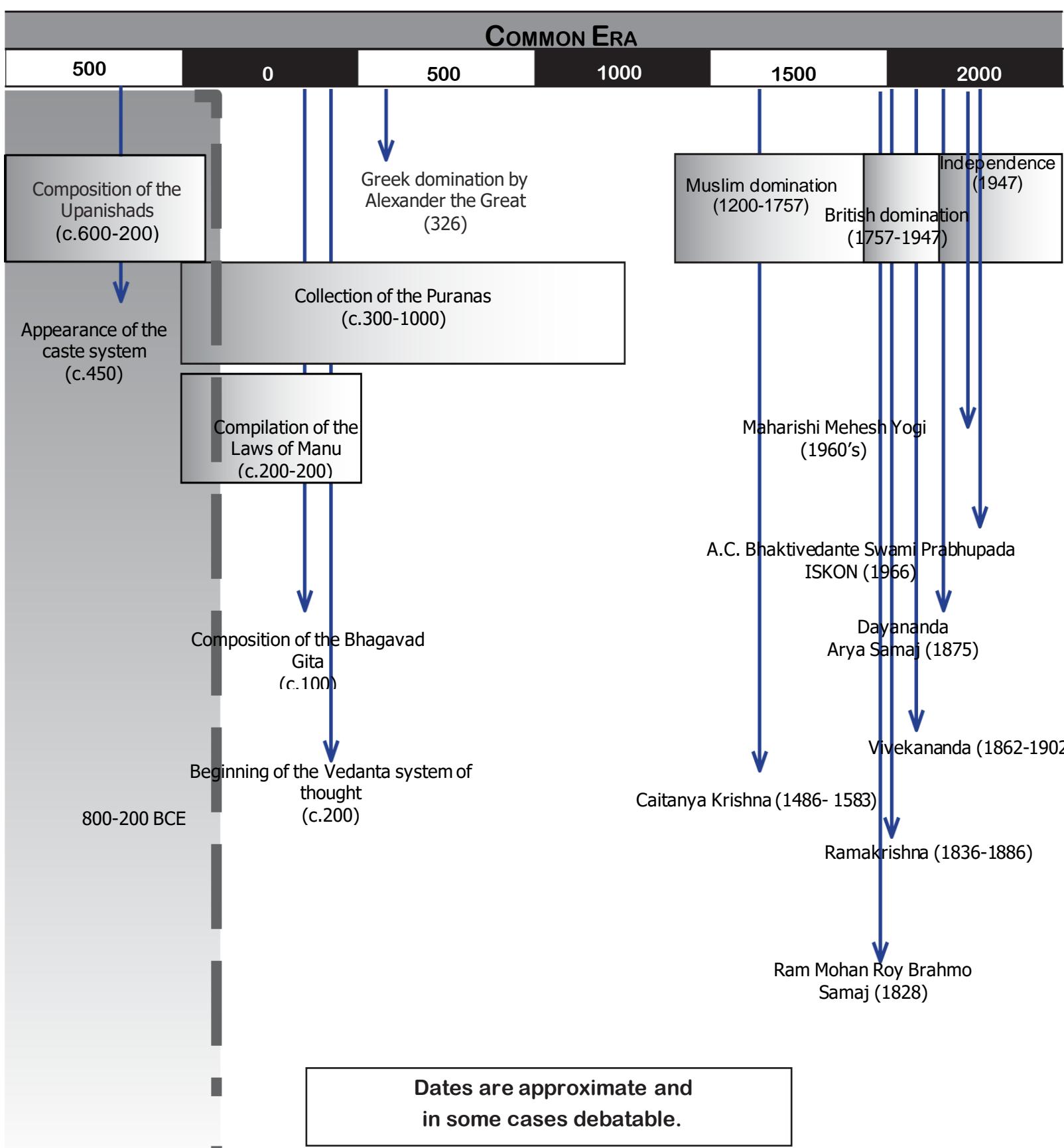
1900

1950

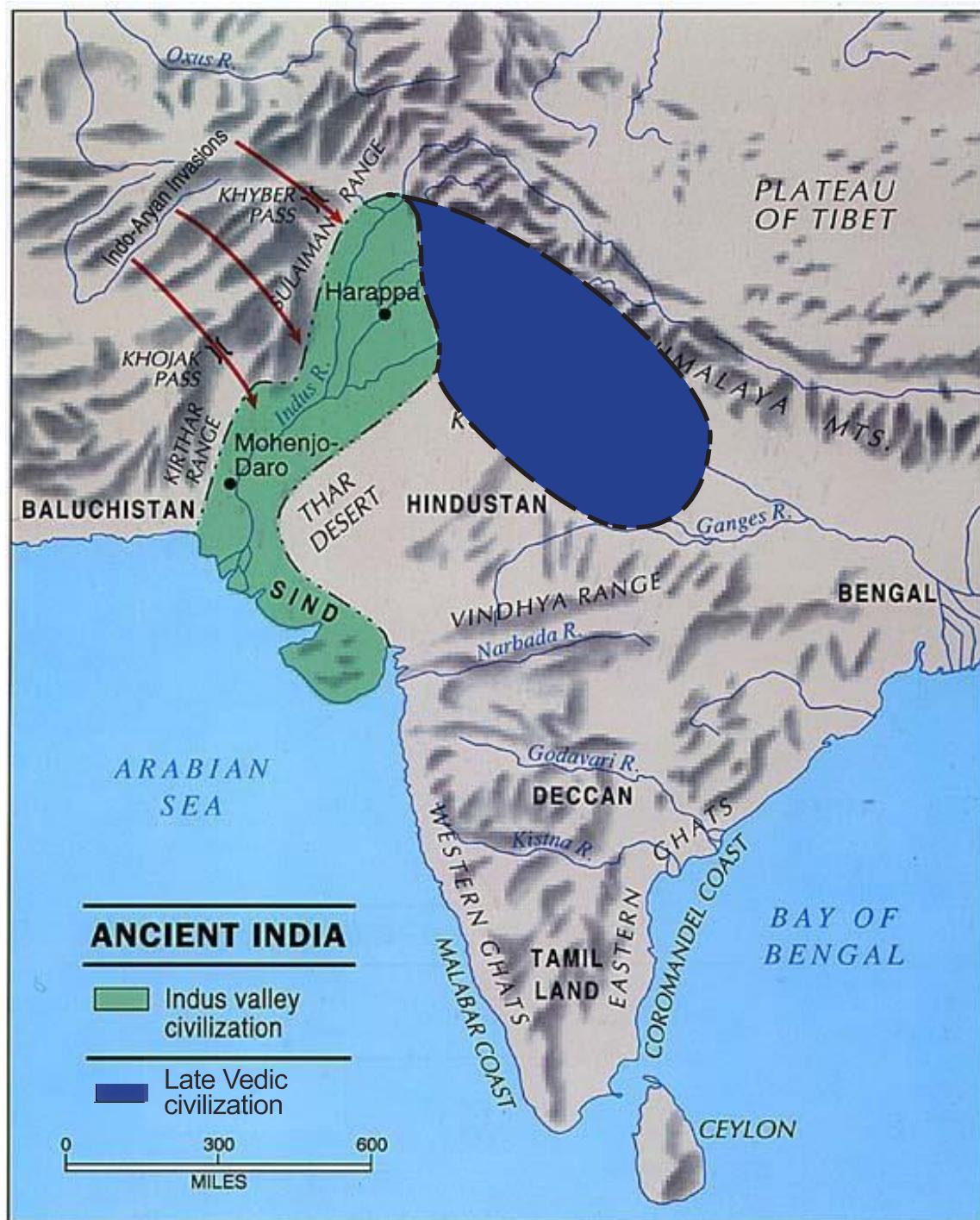
2000

Sati outlawed  
(1829)Legalization of widow  
marriage  
(1857)Vivekananda at World's  
Parliament of ReligionsRoopa Kanwar  
burned alive  
(1987)Krishnamurti  
(1969)Sri Satya  
Sai Baba  
(1998)Hindu Militants destroy  
Muslim Masjid at Ayodhya  
(1992)Mohandas Gandhi Assassinated  
(1948)Axial  
Period

## TIMELINE



## PLACES



# PEOPLE

## FOUR WANTS

Unlike Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the Hindu "four wants" teaching suggests that humanity is not bound by needs but by wants. Whereas needs suggest little responsibility on the individual, wants place responsibility solely on the individual. The four wants says people choose their focus and path in life. Put differently, one is not simply created by karma; one creates one's own karma.

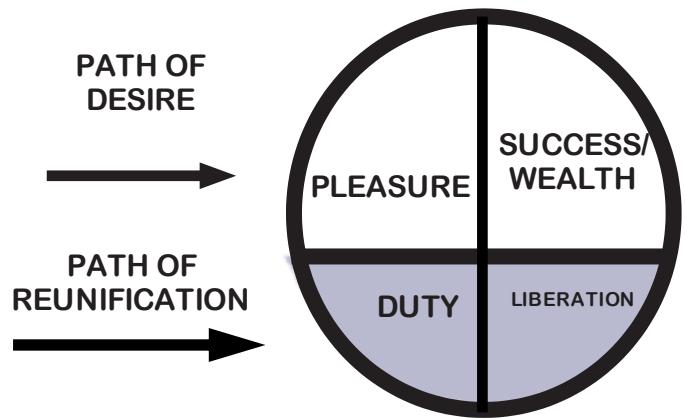
There are two paths we can choose: The path of desire or the path of renunciation. Because of our ignorance most of us find ourselves on the path of desire, and stuck wanting only pleasure. As we begin to remove the blinders of ignorance we begin to want the more noble path.

The transformation begins when we realize **PLEASURES** are too trivial and the self is too small for perpetual enthusiasm.

The transformation continues when **POSSESSIONS**, **SUCCESS** and **WEALTH** also become trivial. They are exclusive, insatiable, hedonistic and transient.

Few people make the next step to the path of renunciation where **DUTY** is to one's community, family, and universe, rather than one's self. The difficulty in following one's duty is not realizing its simplicity. Our duty may not always appear honourable or noble (like Bindamati the prostitute of Patalaputra). It is not a question of right or wrong, it is simply about doing.

Finding **LIBERATION** (moksha) requires us to follow the path that asks us to release the finitude that restricts us, thus allowing us to



become infinite being with infinite consciousness and experience infinite bliss with the divine, which we now recognize is ourself.

Any path that is worth following also has a method by which to follow. There are four paths or **YOGAS** (methods) that can be practiced along the path of renunciation. The one we choose depends on our preference.

### JNANA YOGA IS THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

- Not intellectual knowledge but intuitive discernment (to know it)
- Insightfulness
- For the "ideas" person

### KARMA YOGA IS THE PATH OF DUTY

- Fulfillment of rites, ceremonies, social obligations and strictly observing all social regulations and dietary laws
- An action oriented path with the goal of making all of one's actions into mindful acts of devotion.

## HINDUISM

- Selfless (disinterested) service
- "Duty for duty's sake"

### BHAKTI YOGA IS THE PATH OF DEVOTION

- Passionate devotion and absolute surrender to a particular moorthi
- Done not for fear of punishment or expectation of reward but for love alone
- Not dependent on race, caste or gender
- Most popular path

### RAJA YOGA IS THE PATH OF DISCIPLINE

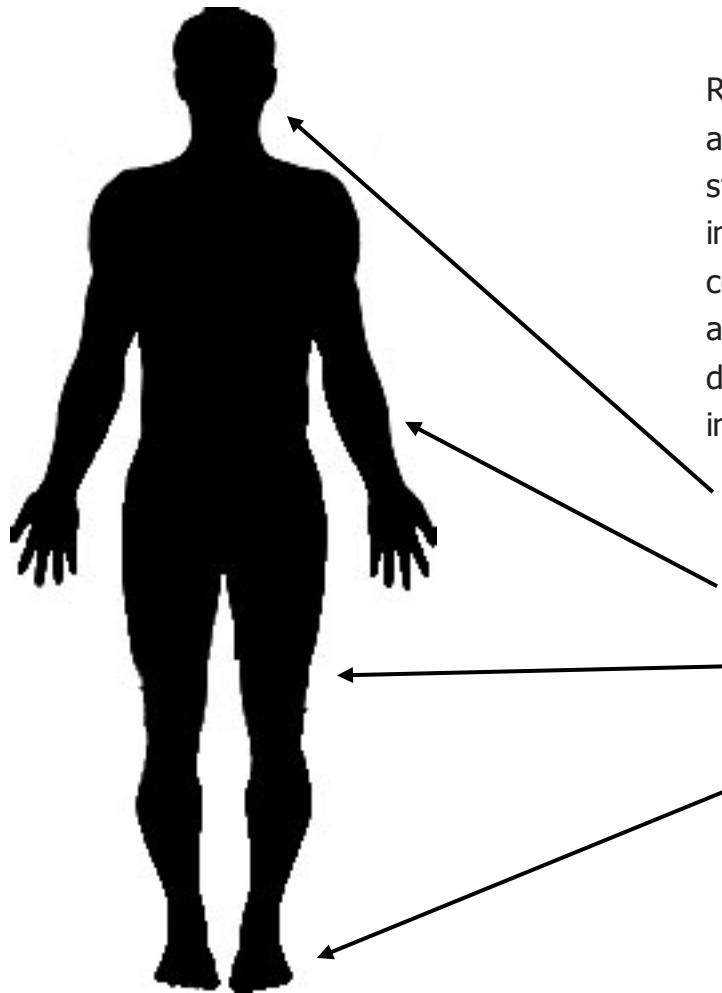
- Requires control of the senses and mental processes and concentration
- One becomes a physical disciple

## THE HINDU CASTE SYSTEM

The Hindu caste system is rooted in the traditions of the Aryan people. Using the human body as metaphor, four distinct classes or castes are described. The first three castes are sometimes called "twice-born" because the males of these caste undergo a type of re-birth ceremony around 12 years old.

"Then, so that the worlds and people would prosper and increase, from God's mouth were created the priest (brahmins), from God's arms the ruler (kshatriyas), from God's thighs the commoner (vaishyas), and from God's feet the servant (shudra)."

Laws of Manu 1.31



Rank in the caste system is linked to dharma and karma. By performing duties honestly, one strives to be born into a higher caste in the next incarnation. But the opposite is also true. The constitution of India does not recognize the ancient caste system and prohibits social distinctions. Yet the system still exists, especially in small, rural villages.

- Brahmin (mouth) – Priestly Class
- Kshatriya (arms) – Ruling/Warrior Class
- Vaisya (thighs) – Merchant/Craftsman Class
- Sudra (feet) – Servant Class
- Pariah – Outcast (Untouchable)

Note: Because of inter-caste marriages, there are many subdivisions of castes called jati.

# PRACTICES

## CHANTS AND PRAYERS

### THE GAYATRI MANTRA

A mantra is a repeated phrase designed to create a transformation of consciousness. This well-known mantra, sung in the ancient sacred language of Sanskrit, is an appeal to God as the destroyer of our illusion and ignorance that stands in the way of perfect union with the Divine. It is performed as a call and response, a traditional formula in Indian kirtan (devotional chant). The chanting at the beginning and end is from an ancient prayer to Shiva recorded at the temple of Jageshwar in the foothills of the Himalayas.

*Om,*

*Bhur bhuwa swaha*

*Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi  
diyo yo nah pracodayat.*

*Om*

Translation

*I meditate on the brilliant light of the One  
worthy of worship,*

*Source of all worlds; may that One illuminate  
our minds.*

### THE ASATO MAA

*Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya*

*Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya*

*Mrityor Maa Amrtam Gamaya*

*Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.*

*Om*

Translation

*O Lord, Lead us from the unreal to the real.  
Lead us from darkness to light.*

*Lead us from death to life.*

*Peace, Peace, Perfect Peace.*

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

### PRAYER TO SHIVA

*Lord, because You love the burning ground, I  
make of my heart a burning ground  
That You, O Dark One, Hunter of the burning  
ground, May dance Your eternal dance.  
Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.*

### OM NAMAH SHIVAYA

*Omnamah Shivaya*

*Shivaya namaha, Shivaya namah om*

*Shambhu Shankara namah Shivaya.*

*Girija Shankara namah Shivaya.*

*Arunachala Shiva namah Shivaya.*

#### Explanation

- *Om:* The sound said to be the primal creative force containing all other sounds.
- *Namah / Namaha:* To bow or to honour the name of.
- *Shivaya:* Lord Shiva is the divine power that dissolves or brings to a close the creative cycle.
- *Shambhu:* Causing great happiness; description of Shiva's beneficent aspect in the reintegration of new life.
- *Shankara:* Auspicious; a word often used in reference to Shiva in his role as creator.

- *Girija*: Literally means “mountain born.” Refers to Shiva’s wife, Parvati, who is the daughter of Himavat, the personification of the Himalayas. Together Shiva and Parvati represent the union of divine potential and divine energy.
- *Arunachala*: A large hill in South India and common pilgrimage site as sacred to Shiva.

### TAGORE'S PRAYER

*Here is your footstool and here rest your feet,  
among the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost.  
When I try to bow to you, I cannot bow low  
enough to reach where rest your feet,  
Among the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost*

### GANESHA SHARANAM

*Ganesha Sharana, Sharana Ganesha,  
Ganesha Sharana, Sharana Ganesha,  
Ganesha Sharana, Sharana Ganesha,  
Ganesha Sharana, Sharana Ganesha.*

*Vaageesha Sharana, Sharana Vaageesha,  
Vaageesha Sharana, Sharana Vaageesha,  
Vaageesha Sharana, Sharana Vaageesha,  
Vaageesha Sharana, Sharana Vaageesha.*

### Translation

*Ganesha, we invoke your name,  
We invoke your name Ganesha,  
Ganesha, we invoke your name,  
We invoke your name Ganesha,  
Ganesha, we invoke your name,  
We invoke your name Ganesha,  
Ganesha, we invoke your name,*

*We invoke your name Ganesha.*

*Lord of Wisdom, we invoke your name,  
We invoke your name Lord of Wisdom,  
Lord of Wisdom, we invoke your name,  
We invoke your name Lord of Wisdom,  
Lord of Wisdom, we invoke your name,  
We invoke your name Lord of Wisdom,  
Lord of Wisdom, we invoke your name,  
We invoke your name Lord of Wisdom.*



## PHILOSOPHIES

### SHIVA NATARAJ

Shiva (sometimes spelled Siva or known as Mahadeva or Mahesh – “Great Lord”) is one of the world’s oldest continuously worshipped deities. He creates, dissolves and embodies all aspects of the dynamism of nature and universal energy which carries things forward from birth to death. The many diverse and sometimes contradictory attributes ascribed to Shiva are meant to force the mind to go beyond limited human perspective and perceive the inherent mystery of the ultimate.

In Shiva all opposites are reconciled and transcended — life and death, time and eternity, spiritual and temporal, masculine and feminine, etc. As Nataraj, the Lord of the Dance (“nata” means dance, “raj” means lord), Shiva represents the totality of process, an omniscient cosmic power ever creating and dissolving. He is one of three main deities (trimurti) in Hinduism: Brahma (creator), Vishnu (sustainer), Shiva (destroyer or dissolver). The upper right hand of the dancing god holds a little hourglass-shaped drum (damaru) the rhythm of which is the world-creating beat of time (the first principle of creation) which draws a veil across

eternity, projecting temporality. The extended left hand holds the purifying flame of spiritual light that burns away the veil of time, revealing eternity.



The second right hand raised in blessing is in the “fear-dispelling” posture (abhaya mudra). By this he displays the symbol of peace inscribed in the palm of his hand. The second left hand, lifted across the chest, is in the position of the elephant mudra (representing the elephant’s trunk) signifying teaching or divine guidance; for where an elephant has walked through jungles, the way has been prepared, and all others can easily and safely follow...and where a teacher (master or yogi) leads, disciples may follow the way.

The left foot to which the teaching hand points is lifted to symbolize freedom and release or moksha (salvation, deliverance, enlightenment). The right foot stamps on the back of ignorance in the form of a small person (because ignorance diminishes potential and attainment). Ignorance is gazing in fascination at the world-serpent under Shiva’s right arm, representing man’s psychological attraction to the realm of his

bondage, unaware of the swirl of spirituality around him.

Shiva's head is poised, serene and still in the midst of all the movement of creation and destruction represented in the rhythm of the rocking arms and stamping right heel, signifying that at the centre all is the still-point of the turning world. Shiva's facial expression is neither sorrowful nor joyful but is the face of the Unmoved Mover — beyond, yet present within the world's bliss and pain. His right earring is a man's; his left earring is a woman's, including and transcending pairs of opposites. His bracelets, arm bands, ankle rings, and brahminical thread are living serpents, symbols of his power over death, regeneration and renewal. Shiva's beauty is the "Serpent Power" or mysterious Creative Energy which is the formal cause of his own self-manifestation "in" and "as" the universe with all its forms.

The brahminical thread just mentioned is worn over his left shoulder, under his right arm and across the chest and back. Such threads are worn by the initiated of the Brahman caste called the "twice-born" who dwell at once in both time and eternity. The thread consists of either three or seven strands symbolic of the interconnectedness of all things. Each strand of the thread represents a different virtue or quality: power of speech, memory, intelligence, prosperity, good reputation, forgiveness and faithfulness. Shiva's streaming, matted hair (dreadlocks) in the style of a yogi (one who "yokes" to the transcendent) is flying out as he spins round and round in the dance of life and death, creation and destruction. The dance is called ananda tada or the dance of violent bliss. Tucked among the strands of his hair is a skull (death), a crescent moon (birth and increase), a symbol of the goddess Ganges

bringing salvation-bestowing waters, and a datura flower from which a type of sacramental drink is prepared. Other items are there too numerous to mention. The matted yogi hair is associated with men's hair; the coiffed and decorated hair is associated with woman's hair.

All these things are on Shiva's head because it was he who receives on his head the first impact of the heavenly stream of creation from the goddess Ganga (after which the Ganges is named) as it fell to earth. The halo of flames (prabharamandala, meaning literally flaming circle) surrounding Shiva represents the cycle of creation and destruction and comes from the mouths of the double-headed mythological water monster Makara, at the base of the statue behind the personification of ignorance. The dance posture of Shiva's arms and legs is a stylized "OM" or "AUM", the primordial



sound and verbal equivalent of the four states of consciousness (metaphor of spirituality) and their fields of experience: "A" waking consciousness, "U" dream consciousness, "M" dreamless sleep. The fourth sound is unheard because it is the paradox of voiced silence out

of which all things come and into which all things go. Such a figure as this illustrates the function and value of iconic imagery and shows why sermons are unnecessary in their presence. The devotees simply bask in the meaning of the divine symbol in meditative silence and in their own time as they consider how best to live in harmony with the auspicious and beautiful dance that is all around them.

~ ~ ~

*"However people approach Me, even so do I welcome them. For the path they take from every side is Mine."*

Bhagavad Gita 4.11

## AUM

The symbol "OM" represents the primordial sound and is the most sacred sound, the most sacred word, the most sacred syllable, the most sacred symbol, the most sacred prayer in the Hindu religion. The past, present and future are all contained in the sound. It appears in other religions of Indian origin as well (Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc.), but is most significant in Hinduism.

Chanting OM is said to enable an individual to undergo a transformation of consciousness that allows a returning to one's centre, a freeing from internal discord, a moving toward primal and cosmic harmony, and an attuning to the oneness of all.

OM is sometimes called the four syllable sound. Each syllable is metaphorical of one of the four states of spiritual consciousness and its field of experience.

- "A" waking consciousness
- "U" dream consciousness
- "M" dreamless sleep

A period of silence often follows the sounding of OM. This fourth syllable is unheard because it is the paradox of voiced silence out of which all things come and into which all things go. It is undifferentiated consciousness.

The comprehensive meaning of OM cannot be over emphasized. In a word, OM represents everything or the wholeness and completeness of all things: The first sound of creation from which life emerged. Its chanting generates creative and divine energy in all forms of existence and states of mind. The seed of all mantras containing all sounds, all origination and all dissolution. The infinite, the perfect, the eternal.

## BRAHMAN - ATMAN

A key concept in Hinduism is the idea of Atman-Brahman.



**BRAHMAN**

- Absolute Reality, that transcends time, space, and causality; all that is objective and subjective. Also referred to as Parmatma

**ATMAN**

- The innermost self of a human, an animal, a rock, a plant, a river, etc.

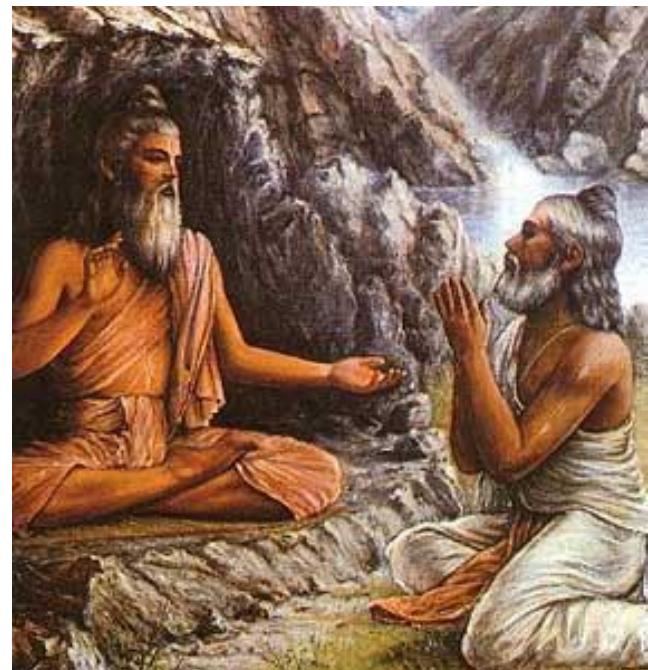
The key realization is that Atman is Parmatma. The true self and the Absolute, Universal Self are one and are identical. Hindu literature explains this concept by analogy and illustration. These explanations are found in the Upanishads and take the form of conversations between a student and a master:

*"Bring hither a fruit of that banyan tree."*  
*"Here it is, Venerable Sir."* "*Break it.*" "*It is broken, Sir.*" "*What do you see there?*"  
*"These extremely fine seeds, Venerable Sir."* "*Of these, please break one.*" "*It is broken, Venerable Sir.*" "*What do you see there?*" "*Nothing at all, Venerable Sir.*"  
*Then he said to him, "My dear, that subtle essence which you do not perceive, verily, my dear, from that very essence this great banyan tree exists. Believe me, my dear. That which is the subtle essence, this whole world has for its self. That is the true. That is the self. Tat tvam asi. (Thou art That)."*

*"These rivers, my dear, flow—the eastern towards the east, and the western towards the west. They arise from the sea and flow into the sea. Just as these rivers, while they are in the sea, do not know: I*

*am this river' or 'I am that river', even so, my dear, all these creatures even though they have come from Pure Being, do not know that they have come from Pure Being... Now, that which is subtle essence — in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. Tat tvam asi. (Thou art That)."*

*"Place this salt in water and come to me tomorrow morning." Svetaketu did as he was commanded, and in the morning his father said to him: "Bring me the salt you put into the water last night." Svetaketu looked into the water, but could not find it, for it had dissolved. His father then said: "Taste the water from this side. How is it?" "It is salt." "Taste it from the middle. How is it?" "It is salt." "Taste it from that side. How is it?" "It is salt." "Look for the salt again and come again to me." The son did so, saying: "I cannot see the salt. I only see water." His father then said: "In the same way, O my son, you cannot see the Spirit. But in truth it*



*is here. An invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality. That is Truth. Tattvam asi. (Thou art That)."*

## SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE UPANISHADS

### ISHA

*Who sees all beings in one's own self and one's own self in all beings, loses all fear.*

### KENA

*What cannot be spoken with words, but that whereby words are spoken:*

*Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore.*

*What cannot be thought with the mind, but that whereby the mind can think:*

*Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore.*

*What cannot be seen with the eye, but that whereby the eye can see:*

*Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore.*

*What cannot be heard with the ear, but that whereby the ear can hear:*

*Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore.*

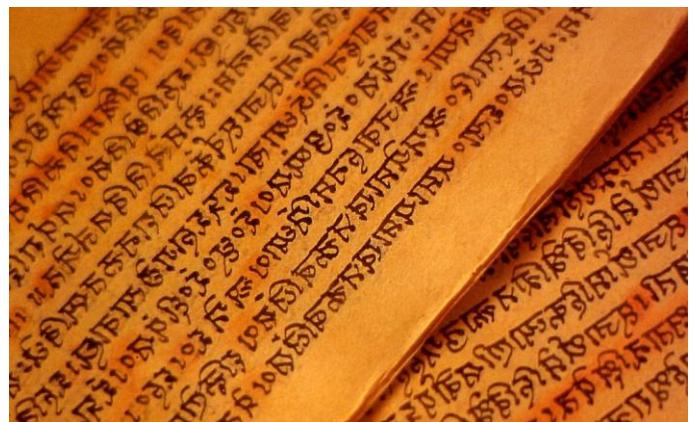
*What cannot be in drawn with the breath, but that whereby breath is in drawn:*

*Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore.*

*Brahman, the Spirit, is unknown to the learned and known to the simple.*

### KATHA

*Concealed in the heart of all beings is the Atman, the Spirit, the Self; smaller than*



*the smallest atom, greater than the vast spaces. The one who surrenders human will leaves sorrows behind, and beholds the glory of the Atman by the grace of the Creator. Awake, arise! Strive for the Highest, and be in the Light! Sages say the path is narrow and difficult to tread, narrow as the edge of a razor. Even by the mind this truth is to be learned: there are not many but only One. Who sees the many and not the one, wanders on from death to death. When the ties that bind the Spirit to the body are unloosed and the Spirit is set free, what remains then?*

### MUNDAKA

*Even as a spider sends forth and draws in its thread, even as plants arise from*

*the earth and hairs from the body, even so the whole creation arises from the Eternal. As from a fire aflame thousands of sparks come forth, even so from the Creator an infinity of beings have life and to him return again. As rivers flowing into the ocean find their final peace and their name and form disappear, even so the wise become free from name and form and enter into the radiance of the Supreme Spirit who is greater than all greatness. In truth who knows God becomes God.*

### **TAITTIRIYA**

*May the light of sacred knowledge illumine us, and may we attain the glory of wisdom. O Lord, let me come unto You and come You unto me, O Lord. In Your waters, O my Lord, may I wash my sins away. Who denies God, denies oneself. Who affirms God, affirms oneself.*

### **MAITRI**

*Since this body is like a chariot without consciousness, who is the Spirit who has the power to make it conscious? Who is the driver of the chariot? This Spirit is consciousness and give consciousness to the body: it is the driver of the chariot. Even as water becomes one with water, fire with fire, and air with air, so the mind becomes one with the Infinite Mind and thus attains final freedom. Mind is indeed the source of bondage and also the source of liberation. To be bound to things of this world: this is bondage. To be free from them: this is liberation.*

### **MANDUKYA**

*OM. This eternal Word is all: what was, what is and what shall be, and what is beyond is in eternity. All is om. The first condition is the waking life of outward-moving consciousness... The second condition is the dreaming life of inner-moving consciousness... The third condition is the sleeping life of silent consciousness when a person has no desire and beholds no dreams... The fourth condition is Atman in his own pure state: the awakened life of supreme consciousness. This Atman is the eternal Word, om. Its three sounds <sub>a</sub>, <sub>u</sub>, and <sub>m</sub>, are the first three states of consciousness... The first sound <sub>a</sub> is the first state of waking consciousness... The second sound <sub>u</sub> is the second state of dreaming consciousness... The third sound <sub>m</sub> is the third state of sleeping consciousness... Who knows this measures all with his mind and attains the final end. The word om as one sound is the fourth state of supreme consciousness. It is beyond the senses and is the end of evolution. It is non-duality and love. He goes with his Self to the supreme Self who knows this.*

### **SVETASVATARA**

*The chariot of the mind is drawn by wild horses, and those wild horses have to be tamed. Even as the radiance of the sun shines everywhere in space, so does the glory of God rule over all creation. The quality of the soul determines its future body; earthly or airy, heavy or light. Its thoughts and its actions can lead it to freedom, or lead it to bondage,*

*in life after life. God ended his work and he rested, and he made a bond of love between God's soul and the soul of all things. And the One became one with the one, and the two, and the three and the eight, and with time and with the subtle mystery of the human soul.*

### CHANDOGYA

*Even as all leaves come from a stem, all words come from the sound OM. OM is the whole universe. OM is in truth the whole universe. There is a Light that shines beyond all things on earth, beyond us all, beyond the heavens, beyond the highest, the very highest heavens. This is the Light that shines in our heart. This is the Spirit that is in my heart, smaller than a grain of rice, or a grain of barley, or a grain of mustard-seed, or a grain of canary-seed, or the kernel of a grain of canary-seed. This is the Spirit that is in my heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven itself, greater than all these worlds... This is the Spirit that is in my heart, this is Brahman. The Spirit that is in the body does not grow old and does not die, and no one can ever kill the Spirit who is everlasting.*

### BRIHADARANYAKA

*As when a lump of salt is thrown into water and therein being dissolved it cannot be grasped again, but wherever the water is taken it is found salt, in the same way the Supreme Spirit is an ocean of pure consciousness boundless and infinite. Arising out of the elements,*

*into them it returns again: there is no consciousness after death. The One who, dwelling in the earth, in the waters, in the fire, the atmosphere, the wind, the sky, the sun, the quarters of heaven, the moon and stars, space, darkness, light. The One who, dwelling in all things, yet is other than all things, whom all things do not know, whose body all things are, who controls all things from within— The One is your soul, the inner Controller, the Immortal.... The One who, dwelling in breath, in speech, the eye, the ear, the mind, the skin, the understanding, yet is other than the understanding, That One is the unseen Seer, the unheard Hearer, the un-thought Thinker, the un-understood Understanter. Other than That One there is no seer. Other than That One there is no hearer, no thinker, no understander. That One is your soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.*

### THE SUPREME TEACHING

*Even as a great fish swims along the two banks of a river, first along the eastern bank and then the western bank, in the same way the Spirit of a person moves along beside its two dwellings: this waking world and the land of sleep and dreams. Even as a falcon or an eagle, after soaring in the sky, folds its wings for it is weary, and flies down to its nest, even so the Spirit of a person hastens to that place of rest where the soul has no desires and the Spirit sees no dreams. Even as a mango fruit is loosened from its stem, so the Spirit of a person is loosened from the human body and returns by the same*

*way to Life, wherefrom it came. Even as a caterpillar, when coming to the end of a blade of grass, reaches out to another blade of grass and draws itself over to it, in the same way the Soul, leaving the body and un-wisdom behind, reaches out to another body and draws itself over to it. As the slough of a snake lies dead upon an ant hill, even so the mortal body; but the incorporeal immortal Spirit is life and light and Eternity.*

### ISHA

*That is full; this is full. This fullness has been projected from that fullness. When this fullness merges in that fullness, all that remains is fullness.*

Note: The above passages have been edited to reflect inclusive language

*Set your heart upon your work, but never on its reward. Work not for a reward, but never cease to do your work. How poor those who work for a reward! In*



*this wisdom a person goes beyond what is well done and what is not well done. Go therefore to wisdom. Seers in union with wisdom forsake the rewards of their work.* 2.47-51

*Action is greater than inaction. Perform, therefore, your task in life.* 3.8

*Even as the unwise work selfishly in the bondage of selfish work, let the wise work unselfishly for the good of all the world.* 3.25

*And do your duty, even if it be humble, rather than another's even if it be great. To die in one's duty is life. To live in another's is death.* 3.35

*However people approach me, even so do I welcome them, for the path they take from every side is mine.* 4.11

*Truth shall make you free.* 4.16

*The one who sees God abides in God:*

*reason is steady, gone is delusion. When pleasure comes that one is not shaken, and when pain comes that one trembles not.* 5.20

*Arise therefore! And with the help of your spirit lift up your soul. Allow not your soul to fall. For your soul can be your friend, and your soul can be your enemy. Your soul is your friend when by the spirit you have conquered your soul, but when you are not lord of your soul, then this becomes your own enemy.* 6.5,6

*When the mind is in harmony and finds rest in the spirit within, all restless desires gone, then you are one in God. Then your soul is a lamp whose light is steady, for it burns in a shelter where no winds come.* 6.18, 19

*All beings are born in delusion, the delusion of division which comes from desire and hate.* 7.27

*One who offers to me with devotion only a leaf or a flower or a fruit or even a little water, this I accept from that yearning soul, because with a pure heart it was offered with love.* 9.26

*Whatever you do or eat or give or offer in adoration, let it be an offering to me, and whatever you suffer, suffer it for me.* 9.27

*For even if the greatest sinners worship me with all their soul, they must be considered righteous, because of their righteous will. For this is my word of promise, that they who love me shall not perish. For all who come to me for shelter, however weak or humble or sinful they may be... they all reach the Path supreme.* 9.29-32

*Know that whatever is beautiful and good, whatever has glory and power is only a portion of my own radiance.* 10.41

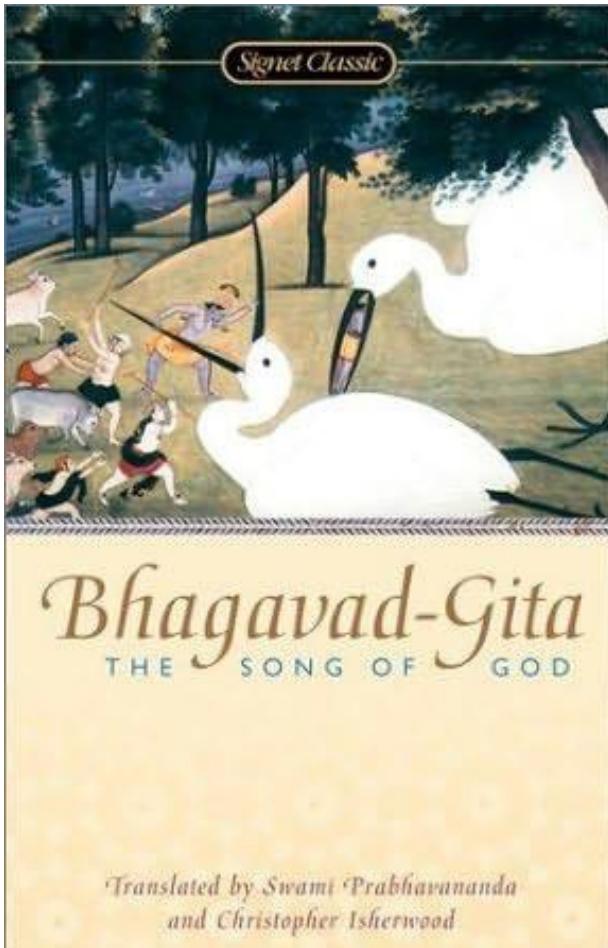
*By hundreds and then by thousands behold my manifold celestial forms of innumerable shapes and colours. See now the whole universe with all things that move and move not, and whatever your soul may yearn to see. See it all as*

*One in me.* 11.5, 11

*Only by love can you see me and know me and come unto me.* 11.54

*When a person sees that the infinity of various beings is abiding in the One and is an evolution from the One, then that person becomes one with God.* 13.30

*A gift is pure when it is given from the heart to the right person at the right time and at the right place and when we expect nothing in return. But when it is given expecting something in*



*return or for the sake of a future reward or when it is given unwillingly, the gift is impure. A gift which comes not from the heart and is given with proud contempt is a gift of darkness.* 17.20-22

*Work done without faith is nothing. Sacrifice, gifts, or self-harmony done without faith are nothing, both in this world and in the world to come.* 17.28

*When one sees Eternity in things that pass away and Infinity in finite things, then one has pure knowledge. But if one merely sees the diversity of things with their divisions and limitations, then one has impure knowledge.* 18.20, 21

*There is a wisdom which knows when to go and when to return, what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is fear and what is courage, what is bondage and what is liberation — this is pure wisdom.* 18.30

*If your soul finds rest in me, you shall overcome all dangers by my grace, but if your thoughts are on yourself and you will not listen, you shall perish.* 18.58

*Leave all things behind and come to me for your salvation. I will make you free from the bondage of sins. Fear no more.* 18.66

Note: The above passages have been edited to reflect inclusive language.

#### "I AM" PASSAGES FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

*I am hidden by my veil of mystery; and in its delusion the world knows me not, who*

*was never born and forever I am... I am from everlasting the seed of eternal life...*

*I am the power of those who are strong, when this power is free from passions and selfish desire...*

*I am desire when this is pure, when this desire is not against righteousness...*

*I am the source of all beings...*

*I am the sacrifice and the offering, the sacred gift and the sacred plant...*

*I am the holy words, the holy food, the holy fire, and the offering that is made in the fire...*

*I am the Father of this universe, and even the Source of the Father...*

*I am the Mother of this universe, and the Creator of all...*

*I am the Highest to be known, the Path of Purification...*

*I am the Way and Master who watches in silence; thy friend and thy shelter and thy abode of peace...*

*I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all things...*

*I am life immortal and death...*

*I am what is and I am what is not...*

*I am the same to all beings, and my love is ever the same; but those who worship me with devotion, they are in me and I am in them...*

*I am beginningless, unborn, the Lord of all the worlds...*

*I am the One source of all: evolution of all comes from me...*

*I am the soul, prince victorious, which dwells in the heart of all things...*

*I am the lord of the winds and storms and of lights in the night...*

*I am the mind...*

*I am the light of consciousness...*

*I am the vast ocean*

*I am the prayer of silence...*

*I am the tree of life*

*I am the creator of love...*

*I am time...*

*I am knowledge of the Soul...*

*I am the one that leads to Truth...*

*I am the first sound...*

*I am OM...*

*I am the taste of living waters and the light of the sun and the moon...*

*I am coordination...*

*I am the Creator who sees all...*

*I am death that carries off all things...*

*I am the source of things to come...*

*I am the beauty of the beautiful...*

*I am the intelligence of the intelligent...*

*I am goodness of those who are good...*

*I am the knowledge of those who know...*

*I am the knower and the knowledge...*

*I am victory and the struggle for victory...*

*I am the wise policy of those who seek victory...*

*I am the silence of hidden mysteries...*

*I am the seed of all things that are...*

*I am beyond the perishable, and even beyond the imperishable...*

*Know that with one single fraction of my Being I pervade and support the Universe, and know that... **IAm**.*

## THE STORY OF THE THREE DA'S

Introductory Note: The three cardinal virtues of Hinduism are sometimes referred to as the three Das: Damyata (restrain or self-control), Datta (giving), and Dayadhvam (compassion). These, according to this text, were spoken and enacted at the very beginning of time. They are the foundation of all Hindu ethical thought and reflection. When we hear the thunder it is the divine voice saying "Da" and admonishing us to practice these three virtues.

*The threefold offspring of Prajapati, gods, humans, and demons, dwelt with their father Prajapati as students of sacred knowledge. Having lived the life*

of a student of sacred knowledge, the gods said: "Speak to us, sir." To them then he spoke this syllable, "DA. Did you understand?" he asked. "We did understand," they said. "You said to us, 'DAMYATA – restrain yourselves.' " "Yes!" he said. "You did understand." So then the humans said to him: "Speak to us, sir." To them then he spoke this syllable, "DA. Did you understand?" he asked. "We did understand," they said. "You said to us, 'DATTA – give.' " "Yes!" he said. "You did understand." So then the demons said to him: "Speak to us, sir." To them then he spoke this syllable, "DA. Did you understand?" he asked. "We did understand," they said. "You said to us, 'DAYADHVAM – be compassionate.' " "Yes!" he said. "You did understand." This same thing does the divine voice here, thunder, repeat: "DA! DA! DA!" That is, restrain yourselves, give, be compassionate. One should practice this same triad: self-restraint, giving, compassion.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

without dimensions. The void still held unformed what was potential until the power of warmth produced the sole One. Then, in that One, desire stirred into being, desire that was the earliest seed of Spirit. The sages probing in their hearts with wisdom discovered being's kinship in non-being. Stretching their line across the void, they pondered. Was aught above it or was aught below it? Bestowers of the seed were there, and powers. Free energy below. Above, swift action. Who truly knows, and who can here declare it? Whence It was born and how this world was fashioned? The gods came later than the earth's creation. Who knows then out of what the world has issued? Whether the world was made or whether self-made. He knows with full assurance. He alone, Who in the highest heaven guards and watches. He knows indeed...but then, perhaps, He knows not!

Rig Veda 10.129

## A CREATION STORY

Then there was neither being nor non-being. There was no air, nor firmament beyond it. Was there a stirring? Where? Beneath what cover? Was there a great abyss of unplumbed water? There was no death nor anything immortal nor any sign dividing day from night. That One Thing, given no breath, was yet self-breathing. No second thing existed whatsoever. Darkness was hidden in a deeper darkness. This All was a sea

## GLOSSARY

**AGNI** - lord of fire

**AHIMSA** - non-violence / respect for life

**ARYANS** - noble, invaders into northern India in about 1500 BCE

**ASHRAM** — spiritual retreat centre

**ATMAN** - divine energy in every living creature, true Self identical with Brahman

**AUM OR OM** - sacred syllable containing the sound of all reality

**AVATAR** - incarnation of god

**BHAGAVAD GITA** - most popular of Hindu scripture

**BHAKTI** - devotion to a god or avatar

**BRAHMACHARYA** - first stage of life, student stage

**BRAHMA** - one of the Trimurti — the Creator

**BRAHMAN** - Supreme Reality

**BRAHMIN** - priestly class of the first social division called varna

**CASTE** - occupational group within the larger varna divisions

**CHAKRA** - centres of psychic and spiritual energy

**DARSHANA** - seeing and being seen by the deity or holy teacher in the temple, beholding the faith

**DEVA** - Sanskrit for god

**DEVI** - Sanskrit for goddess

**DHARMA** - religious or moral duty based on age, education, occupation and social position

**DIWALI (DIVALI)** - festival of lights marking the return of Rama from exile and his reunion with Sita

**DRAVIDIANS** - Indian population prior to Aryan invasion

**DURGA** - goddess, inaccessible consort of Shiva

**GANESHA** - elephant-headed god, son of Shiva and Parvati

**GARBHA GRIHA** - innermost, holiest room in a Hindu temple where the image of a deity is installed

**GRIHASTHA** - second, householder stage of life

**GURU** - spiritual guide or teacher, literally a dispeller of darkness and bringer of light

**ISHTADEVATA OR ISHWARA** - personal deity; literally, beloved lord

**HANUMAN** - monkey god, avatar of Shiva; embodiment of selfless service in the story of Ram

**HOLI** - spring festival celebrating Krishna's love for Radha

**JAPA** - devotional exercise of reciting prayers

**JNANA** - knowledge of god

**KARMA** - action as well as the total effect of one's actions

**KRISHNA** - avatar of Vishnu

**KSHATRIYA** - royal/warrior class of the second group in the varna division

**KUM-KUM** - red power used in puja or as a tilak on the forehead

**LAXMI** - goddess of light and wealth, wife of Vishnu

**LINGAM AND YONI** - symbolic representation of the creative power of ultimate reality

**MAHA** - Sanskrit for “great”

**MAHABHARATA** - epic poem of India of which the Bhagavad Gita is one section

**MAHARISHI** - great sage

**MAHATMA** - great soul

**MANDALA** - religious diagram used in puja or meditation

**MANTRA** - sacred formula, always in Sanskrit chanted to focus concentration in devotion

**MARGA** - “path”, particularly a spiritual path

**MOKSHA** - liberation of the soul from successive births and deaths

**MUDRA** - standardized sacred hand gesture to evoke a spiritual attitude

**PADMASANA** - “lotus position,” the most well-known meditational posture

**PARVATI** - wife of Shiva; mother of Ganesh

**PRANA** - life-energy (particularly through breathing) that activates mind and body

**PRASAD** - blessed food offering redistributed among the worshippers at the end of a puja

**PUJA** - prescribed actions Hindu worship of a deity by offering food, flowers, music, lights, etc.

**RIG VEDA** - first of four ancient holy books

**RISHI** - sage or seer

**SACRED THREAD** - loop of three or seven strands of strong cotton thread used in the initiation ceremony known as upanayana

**SADHU** - holy man



**MURTI** - image of a deity in a temple

**NAMASTE** - Indian greeting

**OM OR AUM** - sacred syllable containing the sound of all reality

**SAMSARA** - cycle of successive births, deaths and rebirths

**SANATANA DHARMA** - used as a term for the Hindu religion, means “eternal way of life”

**SANNYASIN** - person who gives up name, family ties and possessions, and devotes life to meditation in order to attain moksha, fourth stage of ashram

**SATI** - self-sacrificing of a widow who throws herself onto her husband's cremation fire; now out-lawed

**SHAKTI** - active, creative, feminine aspect of cosmic power

**SHIVA** - one of the Trimurti — the dissolver

**SHRUTI** - holy book believed to have been "revealed" by god and "heard" by wise authors

**SHUDRA** - servant class the forth and lowest varna division

**SMRITI** - holy book composed by "remembered" traditions

**TAD EKAM** - "That One," the First Principle indescribable and uncharacterizable

**TAT TVAM ASI** - "That art Thou," refers to human and the universe as part of the Tad Ekam

**TILOKA** - dot or mark on the forehead

**TRIMURTI** - three forms of Supreme Reality — Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Preserver), Shiva (Dissolver)

**UPANISHAD** - Hindu philosophical scripture of the Veda

**VAISHYA** - merchant/agricultural class of the third varna division

**VANAPRASTHA** - third stage of ashrama, hermit stage

**VARNA** - Sanskrit word for caste (see Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra)

**VEDAS** - shruti scripture, 1500 BCE

**VEDANTA** - system of philosophy composed at the end of the Vedic period

**VIMANA** - inner sanctuary of a Hindu temple

**VISHNU** - one of the Trimurti—the Preserver

**YAMA** - spirit of death

**YATRA** - pilgrimage or procession

**YOGA** - yoking or harnessing, meditational techniques, concentrations and exercises

**YONI** - see lingam and yoni

