



राष्ट्रीयसंस्कृतविश्वविद्यालयः

National Sanskrit University :: Tirupati
(Central University)

A Central University established under an Act of Parliament

Online Certificate Programme in
Temple Culture and Temple Administration

Topic

M 13 - Temple Sculpture and Agamas - Brief Introduction to Vedic Literature

By

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National Sanskrit University :: Tirupati
(Central University)

Temple Culture and Temple Administration

Introduction

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Prasthanana Trayam

- What is meant by '*prasthanana*'?
- *Prasthanana* means journey, or progress.
- What treatises together are called '*prasthanana trayam*'?
- Upanishads
- Brahmasutras
- Bhagavadgita

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Prasthanana Trayam

- These three together are known as *prasthanana traya*. They form the foundation to *advaita*, *visistadvaita* and *dvaita* systems of philosophy in the main.
- What is called '*Vedanta*'?
- With some exceptions, Upanishads are generally at the end (*anta*) of Vedas. So they are called Vedanta.



Prasthanana Trayam

- What is meant by **Upanishads**?
- The mass of scriptural literature, which if studied and lived, will lead to liberation from the cycle of birth and death - *moksha*, is called *Upanishads*. This imparts spiritual knowledge of unrivalled authority.
- It has more meanings than one. In one sense it is the knowledge of the Self.
- In etymological terms it means sitting down near a guru and to learn from him the secret doctrine of *brahma-vidya*, knowledge of the *Brahman*. *upa* (near) *ni* (down) and *sad* (to sit).

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Prasthanana Trayam

- What are the other varied senses in which the term '*upanishad*' is understood?
- The one that destroys the seed called *avidya*-ignorance, responsible for *samsara*.
- That which leads those who desire *moksha*, to the Supreme Reality.
- That which destroys the miseries like birth and death, old age and dilapidation, meaning thereby that which confers *amritatva*, eternal bliss.
- For some, it is merely a treatise to be studied. For some others it is the spiritual knowledge that it confers.

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Prasthan Trayam

- Some others regard it as a mystery, a secret- *rahasyam*, revealed only to the tested few - *guhya adesah* (Chandogya Upanishad III) - and many more.
- **Etymology:** '*saderdhatoh visarana gati ayavasaadana arthasya upanipoorvasya kvippratayantasya rupam upanishaditi*'- Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada.
- **What are those Mahavakyas (great statements or great utterances) occurring in each of the four Vedas; and in which of the Upanishads they are found?**

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Prasthan Trayam

- **Rigveda**
"prajnanam brahma"
(consciousness is Brahman)
Aitareya Upanishad(5.3)
- **Yajurveda**
"aham Brahmasmi" ('I am Brahman') Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1.4.10)
- **Samaveda**
"tat tvam asi" ('you are that')
Chandogya Upanishad (6.8.7)

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Prasthanas Trayam

- **Atharvanaveda**
"ayamatma Brahma"
(‘this Atman is Brahman’)
Mandukya Upanishad (2)
- **What is meant by Brahmasutras?**
- Brahmasutras are the aphorisms which codify, reconcile and present the concepts and contents of Upanishads in a systematized manner. They also give useful tips to the correct understanding and interpretation of the expressions used in the Upanishads.

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Prasthanana Trayam

- What is the underlying idea in repeating 'Om Shantih Shantih Shantih' ?
- Every human being is prone to sorrow or sufferings or obstacles from three sources. They are :
- Adhyatmika (pertaining to the self like physical illness); (2) adhibhautika (sorrows caused by panchamaha bhutas, or living beings like wild animals, - enemies) and (3) adhidaivika (sorrows caused by daiva or Gods which include elemental forces like cyclones and floods).

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Prasthanana Trayam

- Peace invocation is a prayer to God to protect the teacher and the student from these three sources of sorrows or obstacles, so that the learning process goes on undisturbed and uninterrupted. (Expository talk on *isavasyopanishad* by Sri Aripirala Venkata Somayajulu)

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- Describe some salient aspects of Siksha sastra briefly.
- Siksha sastra, science of pronunciation lays down the general rules on the proper pronunciation and accentuation of the vedic mantras and their meter. The taittiriya Upanishad (1.2) says that Siksha consists of:
 - *Varna* (letter of the alphabet),
 - *svara* (different accents or pitches, namely udatta (elevated), anudatta (unaccented), *swarita* (pitched), dirgha-swarita (long pitched)
 - *matra* (measure-the time required to pronounce),

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- *bala* (emphasis or the kind of effort required to pronounce)
- *saman* (delivery)
- *santana* (juxtaposition or combination)
- The above rules of pronunciation have acquired great significance as any wrong pronunciation is fought with serious consequence. Emphasizing on this, Panini says-
- “*vyaghri yatha hareth putran damstrabhyam na cha pidayet*

bhita patana bhedabhyam tadvadvarnan prayojayet”

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- The letters have to be pronounced as carefully as a tiger carries its cubs from one place to another, clutching them between its teeth tightly, but at the same time, without hurting them in any manner by its sharp fangs.
- This science (of siksha) lays down the rules of pronouncing the vedic mantras in this careful manner.
- **Describe some salient aspects of vyakarana.**

Vakyakaram vararuchim bhashyakaram Patanjalinim I

Paninam sutrakaram cha Pranatosmi munitrayamII

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- Salutations to sage Panini, the author of the rules of grammar (Ashtadhyayi), also to sage Vararuchi, the author of *vartika* (explanatory notes) thereon, and to sage Patanjali, the author of the great commentary.
- The above three sages laid the foundation to Sanskrit grammar which is unrivalled in world literature.
- All Indian languages grew under its influence. All poets praised Hanuman, who is called the high priest of Nava Vyakarana, in whose conversation not a single tainted word intrudes.

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- Our sages realized that every word is born out of a '*dhatu*' verbal root. In his '*dhatupathavali*' Panini lists 2162 verbal roots and their meanings. Lakhs of Sanskrit words are formed out of these primary verbal roots.
- **Example:** '*dharitri*' means the earth. This word is born out the root '*dhru*'. This root has several meanings like 'to bear', 'to hold' etc. The word '*dharitri*' which is born out of this word means the one which holds everything. So the word '*dharitri*' is used to mean the earth.
- The additional letters used to generate a multiplicity of words with different meanings are called '*upasargas*'.

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- **Example:** '*pra*', '*isam*', '*vi*', '*a*' etc. To the word '*haramu*', if these upasargas (prepositions) are added at the beginning the words '*praharamu*', '*viharamu*' and '*aharamu*' form respectively. These upasargas give different meanings to the main word to which they are prefixed.
- There is cartloads of literature on Sanskrit grammar. But these days the widely used book on Sanskrit grammar is Siddhanta Kaumudi by Bhattoji Dikshita (AD 1600-1650).

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- **Describe some salient aspects of ‘Chandas’?**
- The word ‘*chandas*’ is born out of the verbal root “*chandah ahlade*’ - that which gives joy merely on hearing. The arrangement of ganas in vedic mantras is such that when chanted in the charming rhythm of meters, it enthralls the listeners. For some types of *chandas*, the number of letters in each pada is an important rule. Hundreds of metrical forms are used in vedas. Among them the important and often used ones are as follows:
 - **Ushnik** 7
 - **Anustup** 8



About the Sastras-Briefly

- Brihati 9
- Pankti 10
- Tristup 11
- Jagati 12

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- Pingala is the earliest known author on Chandas.
- **Describe some salient aspects of Nirukta.**
- There was a very old list of Sanskrit words called 'nighantu' to which one great ancient Sanskrit scholar Yaska (800 BC) wrote a gloss, or commentary.

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- This work is called '**nirukta**' meaning etymology of each word. Literally the word 'nirukta' means (nir=not ukta =explained) 'not explained in any other sastra'.
- This means the meanings of words not explained in other sciences are explained and standardized in this treatise.
- In this sastra, the etymology of words, linguistic subtleties and plain meanings are explained.
- There are 14 chapters in this work. Now it is known that *Uvata* and Sayanacharya made significant contribution to this sastra.

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- As stated earlier, *Nirukta* is a gloss on the earlier '*nighantu*' a list of Sanskrit words in 5 chapters.
- In this the first 3 chapters are known as *naighantu kanda*. The 1st chapter lists out words relating to nature and things seen in nature.
- In the second chapter it deals with *dhatu*s (verbal roots) and *ekakshara padas* (mono-lettered words).
- In the *daiivata kanda*, the particulars of Gods, their abodes are described. *Nirukta* is extremely useful or even indispensable for a correct and scientific understanding of the words used in Vedas.

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- Describe some salient aspects of *Jyotisha*.
- Jyotisha (astronomy) is a vedanga. Vedanga *Jyotisha* mainly deals with auspicious days for the performance of vedic rites.
- That apart, the 27 stars and 9 planets have profound influence on the human beings.
- On the basis of the time of birth, the life span of the child and his/her future is determined by Jyotisha. This branch of Jyotisha is called “*phala jyotisha*’ (astrology).

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- The science of Jyotisha is divided into three parts:
- Siddanta part
- Jataka part
- Samhita part
- The siddanta part deals with the calculation of the movements of planets and stars and the occurrence of eclipses.
- The Jataka part deals with the influence of planets on the living beings and *gochara phalas* (effect of the movement of the planets) etc.

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- The Samhita part deals with reading the future without reference to planetary movement and many other aspects.
- What the omens and dreams portend as also Samudrika sastra (the sastra which determines the nature of man on the basis of his physical features) are also included in Samhita.
- Surya, Pitaamaha, Vyasa, Atri, Garga, Narada, Parasara etc., who spread this sastra, are held in highest regard and remembered.
- It enunciates the relationship of the nature to the life of human beings and its effects in the days to come and enable them to take such precautions as are necessary.

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About the Sastras-Briefly

- It is also useful in predicting the quantum of rainfall, earthquakes, floods, cyclones etc in advance.
- **Describe some salient aspects of Kalpa.**
- This science explains the procedural aspects ordained by the Vedas in the performance of vedic sacrifices. It mainly consists of four parts:
 - Srauta sutras
 - Dharma sutras
 - Grihya sutras
 - Sulba sutras

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- **Into how many categories vedic knowledge is basically divided?**
- It has been divided into two categories, namely,-
- Aparavidya - meaning lower knowledge in which are included the Samhitas, Brahmanas and Vedangas.
- Paravidya - meaning higher knowledge contained in the Upanishads as also the knowledge of the Self gained through meditation (*tadakharam adhigamyate*).

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- **How many sources of knowledge are there?**
- There are 14 sources of knowledge and they are,-
- Vedas - 4
- Vedangas - 6
- Puranas (18) - 1
- Nyaya sastra - 1
- Mimamsa sastra- 1

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- Dharma sastra - 1
- **Total - 14**
- **What are the names of 18 puranas.**
- Vishnu Purana
- Padma Purana
- Varaha Purana
- Brahma Purana

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- Brahmanda Purana
- Bhavishya Purana
- Siva Purana
- Skanda Purana
- Matsya Purana
- Narada Purana
- Garuda Purana

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- Srimad Bhagavata Purana
- Brahma Vaivarta Purana
- Markandeya Purana
- Vamana Purana
- Linga Purana
- Agni Purana
- Koorma Purana

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- To easily remember the names of 18 puranas, the following sloka will be helpful:
 - *madvayam bhadwayam chaiva bratravam vachatushtayam.*
Anapalingakooskani puranani prithak prithak.
- **What is meant by 'anukramanikas' and who prepared them?**
- It became extremely difficult to memorize the mass of vedic literature. To make the task easy, sages like Saunaka, Katyayana etc., prepared tables of contents of the Vedas and also index of hymns and these works are called 'anukramanikas'.

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- Their details are – Rigveda-Sage Saunaka and Sage Katyayana
- Sukla Yajurveda - Sage Yaska
- Krishna Yajurveda - Sage Yaska
- Atharvanaveda - Sage Aswalayana
- **With what the *vedangas* are compared?**
- Each *vedanga* is described as one limb each of *Vedapurusha*, as follows:-
- Chandas - Feet

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- Jyotisha - Eyes
- Nirukta - Ears
- Kalpa - Shoulders
- Siksha - Nose
- Vyakarana - Mouth

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- **Who wrote authoritative and reputed commentaries to Vedas?**
- Sayanacharya (1315-1357 AD) wrote commentaries to all the 4 vedas; they are now famously known as 'Vidyaranya Bhashya'.
- Now to understand the meaning and purport of Vedas, these Bhashyas form the only dependable books.
- **With whose suggestion and inspiration Sayana embarked upon writing these Bhashyas?**
- The Vijayanagar empire was established with the blessings of His Holiness Vidyaranya Swami (His pre-monastic name was Madhavacharya).

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- With the strategic and intrepid efforts of the two brothers Harihararayulu and Bukkarayalu the empire was established under the guidance of Swami Vidyaranya.
- After the empire became firm and strong Bukkarayalu requested Swami Vidyaranya to write commentaries on the four vedas which form the foundation to Hindu culture.
- But the Swami suggested that this task should be entrusted to Sayanacharya who was his brother before he became a rununciate. Then Sayanacharya wrote the commentaries on vedas.

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- **Who wrote commentaries to more than one sakha?**
- Sayanacharya
- Dhanuska Yajva
- Ravana
- Anantacharya

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- **Name all those who wrote commentaries on the Rigveda.**

- Skandacharya Narayanacharya

- Hastamalaka Venkata Madhava

- Ananda Tirtha Atmananda Tirtha

- Devaswami Chaturveda Swami

- Udgithacharya Mudgalacharya

- Lakshmanacharya Sayanacharya

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- **Name all those who wrote commentaries on Yajurveda.**
- Bhattaswami Mahidhara
- Uvata Sayanacharya
- Guhadeva Durgacharya
- Bhatta Bhaskara Bhavaswami
- **Name all those who wrote commentaries on Samaveda.**
- Madhava, Bharataswami, Gunavishnu and Sayanacharya.

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

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- The Vijayanagar empire was established with the blessings of His Holiness Vidyanaraya Swami (His pre-monastic name was Madhavacharya).
- With the strategic and intrepid efforts of the two brothers Harihararayulu and Bukkarayalu the empire was established under the guidance of Swami Vidyanaraya.

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- After the empire became firm and strong Bukkarayalu requested Swami Vidyaranya to write commentaries on the four vedas which form the foundation to Hindu culture.
- But the Swami suggested that this task should be entrusted to Sayanacharya who was his brother before he became a rununciate. Then Sayanacharya wrote the commentaries on vedas.
- **Who wrote commenaries to more than one sakha?**
- Sayanacharya

- **Dhanuska Yajva** **Topic**
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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- Ravana
- Anantacharya
- **Name all those who wrote commentaries on the Rigveda.**
- Skandacharya Narayanacharya
- Hastamalaka Venkata Madhava
- Ananda Tirtha Atmananda Tirtha
- Devaswami Chaturveda Swami

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- Udgithacharya Mudgalacharya
- Lakshmanacharya Sayanacharya
- **Name all those who wrote commentaries on Yajurveda.**
- Bhattaswami Mahidhara
- Uvata Sayanacharya
- Guhadeva Durgacharya
- Bhatta Bhaskara Bhavaswami

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Ancient Knowledge Systems

- **Name all those who wrote commentaries on Samaveda.**
- **Madhava, Bharataswami, Gunavishnu and Sayanacharya.**

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Vedic Sciences and Modern Scientific Knowledge

- What subjects relating to modern scientific knowledge are found in vedic sciences?
- Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Nuclear Physics, Medical Science, Astronomy etc.
- What is the mantra where the word '*amoeba*' is found?
- It is found in the first *anuvaka* of the first *panna* of Krishna Yajurveda.
- **Example:** '*ishetva..anamivah*' (*na+amivah= anamivah*)



Vedic Sciences and Modern Scientific Knowledge

- **It is believed that the word 'steam' belongs to Sanskrit language. What is the authority for this?**
- *'steama ardrikarane'* is a vyakarana sutra (aphorism in grammar) which means that the word *'steama'* has to be used where contextually the reference is to water vapour.
- **Identify one mathematical formula in Veda.**
- *'urdhva tiryagbhyam'* is one of the important formulae in Vedic mathematics. This mathematical formula owes its origin to the sentence *'tiryagurdhvamathassayi'* which occur in mantrapushpam.

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Vedic Sciences and Modern Scientific Knowledge

- **What is that vedic passage in which there is a reference to atom and sub-atom?**
- *'anoraniyan mahato mahiyan'* (Taittiriya upanishad) which means 'smaller than the atom and bigger than the biggest'.
- **What is that mantra which speaks of the measure of counting numbers, which relate to the branch of mathematics?**
- *Eka cha dasa satam cha sahasram chayutam cha1, 10, 100, 1000 upto one lakh crores (12 zeros after 1). This mantra is chanted in Rudrabhisheka.*

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Vedic Sciences and Modern Scientific Knowledge

- In the second panna of the 7th Kanda of Krishna Yajurveda the measure of counting numbers upto one lakh crores (19 zeros after 1) has been explained.
- In the Yuddha Kanda of Valmiki Ramayana, numbers upto '*mahaugha*' (62 zeros after 1) have been explained.
- **What is the meaning of the word 'amavasya'?**
- It signifies the day in which the Sun and the moon are together (in the same rasi or zodiac).

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Vedic Sciences and Modern Scientific Knowledge

- **Etymology:** *ama saha vasatah asyam suryachandramasavityamavasya I*
- **Can we predict the occurrence of earthquakes in advance?**
- In the 32nd chapter of his treatise 'Brihatsamhita' on Jyotisha Sastra, Varahamihira explained about earthquakes in detail. What he had stated can be taken as the basis for further research.

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Vedic Sciences and Modern Scientific Knowledge

- **What did 'syringe' has been alluded to in ancient Indian literature.**
- While describing medical equipment in Atharvanaveda, it is stated that treatment can be made by means of a needle.
- **What is that mantra which alludes to isotopes relating to hydrogen?**
- *ekataya svaha I dvitaya svaha I*
- *tritaya svaha I* (Krishna Yajurveda).

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Vedic Sciences and Modern Scientific Knowledge

- In which sastra computer knowledge is found?
- A topic on computer languages is found in almost all sastras. Mainly it is available in Purva Mimamsa sastra (in a treatise named *mimamsa nyaya prakasa*).

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Svaras and Pathas

- **What are the svaras (notes) used while chanting Yajurveda?**
- Udatta (raised)
- Anudatta (not raised)
- Svarita (pitched)
- Dirgha-svarita (long pitched)

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Svaras and Pathas

- **What are the modes of chanting the Yajurveda Samhita?**
- Samhitapatha or mulam (core part).
- Padapatha
- Kramapatha
- Jatapatha
- Ghanapatha

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Svaras and Pathas

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- Ghanapatha

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Svaras and Pathas

- **What are the various modes adopted while chanting Rigveda?**
- Samhitapatha (mulam - core part)
- Padapatha
- Kramapatha
- Jatapatha
- Mala
- Sikha

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Svaras and Pathas

- Rekha
- Dhvaja
- Danda
- Ratha
- Ghana

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About Upanishads

- Ten principal Upanishads were commented upon by Shri Adi Shankaracharya, and the Swetaswataropanishad also was explained in a manner understandable to the uninitiated common man, who has no special knowledge of Vedanta Philosophy.
- The Muktikopanishad referred to 108 Upanishads and among them it identified Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads as principal Upanishads, the reason being that they expound the spiritual wisdom – *adhyatma-vidya* comprehensively.

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About Upanishads

- Four among these Upanishads contain what are popularly referred to as *Maha Vakyas* – great statements whose direct and stimulating philosophical message is for all people and all times.
- Their universal and eternal appeal inspired every thinker's mind and even today they survived the scientific advancement and the so called rational thinking and enjoy unparalleled sway in philosophical thought.
- These *Mahavakyas* and several other sayings in Upanishads are frequently quoted by the Pandits who lecture on Puranas and spiritual topics.
- As all these ultimately form part of Vedas only, they teach eternal values – *Sanatana Dharma*.

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About Upanishads

- They disseminate the eternal values contained in the Upanishads, so that these ideas flash in the minds of those who need them at the crucial moments in their life and guide them along the path of righteousness.

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Isavasyopanishad

- **To which Veda does Isavasyopanishad belong?**
- It belongs to Sukla Yajurveda.
- **From where did it derive the name 'Isavasyopanishad' ?**
- It derived its name from the opening word of the Upanishad "Isavasyam".
- **How many mantras does it contain?**
- It has 18 *mantras*.

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Isavasyopanishad

- **What is the significant message it conveys?**
- It teaches that this phenomenal world of objects is entirely enveloped by God.
- So one should shed the idea of 'I' and 'mine' and live with a sense of detachment.
- One should be satisfied with what one gets without greed and without coveting others' wealth and lead a life of rectitude. The Upanishad begins with this inspiring message.

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Isavasyopanishad

- What is that mantra which proclaims that God is all pervasive?
- *Isavasyam idam sarvam yat kimcha Jagatyam Jagat.*
- This saying is in the beginning of the Upanishad. It declares that this phenomenal world is covered by God – meaning that God is all pervasive.
- Note: This idea occurs at various places in the Vedas. In the popular Narayana Sukta it is stated thus: *yacha kimchit jagat sarvam drisyate sruyate piva antarbhahicha tatsarvam vyapya Narayanaha stitah.*
- Narayana or Brahman is both immanent and transcendent in whatever is seen and heard in this world.



Isavasyopanishad

- So the message is that one should understand that this phenomenal world of name and form is nothing but Brahman and one should concentrate his mind on Him.
- **What is that mantra that advocates a sense of renunciation and not to covet other's wealth?**
- The mantra that says that greed is detestable is this :

tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma gridhah kasyasviddhanam.

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Isavasyopanishad

- This is the second part of the first mantra. When this moving and unmoving world is nothing but the manifestation of God, or Brahman, it is foolish to think that this thing is "mine" or that "I earned it".
- You enjoy whatever enjoyable things are with you with a spirit of detachment and disinterestedness and not with an arrogant view that you secured them with your effort but that they were granted to you by God.
- Don't covet other's wealth. This is the message conveyed by the second part of the first verse.

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Kenopanishad

- **To which Veda does the Kenopanishad belongs and where is it found in that Veda?**
- Kenopanishad is an integral part of Talavakara Brahmana of Samaveda. For that reason it is also called Talavakara Upanishad.
- **How did it acquire the name 'Kenopanishad'? How many mantras does it comprise of?**
- It begins with the word '*kena*' meaning 'by whom?' and therefore it is named after the first word '*kena*'. The Upanishad comprises of 35 mantras divided into four parts.

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Kenopanishad

- **With what peace chant the Upanishad begins?**
- It begins with the prayer "*apyayantu mamangani*" "O God the Almighty! May my organs of perception and organs of action be healthy and strong."
- **The Vedanta Philosophy holds that soul exists not only in human beings but also in the moving beings like animals and unmoving life forms like trees.**

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Kenopanishad

- That being the case, why is it that human being alone is capable of attaining liberation or *moksha*?
- The answer is rather simple! Human beings alone are endowed with a mind, intellect and ego, that is awareness of one's own potentialities.
- To illumine these three entities a strong body is essential and therefore this prayer.
- Vedanta philosophy does not advocate indifference to physical body.
- What all it says is that one should not think that body alone is all that matters (as expressed by the materialists).



Kathopanishad

- **To which Veda Kathopanishad belongs?**
- Krishna Yajurveda.
- **How did it acquire that name?**
- One of the sakhas or branches of Krishna Yajurveda is kathasakha. This upanishad is found in the Brahmana belonging to this shakha and so it is called Kathopanishad.
- **How are the mantras in Kathopanishad divided?**
- They are divided into two chapters, each chapter consisting of three parts.



Kathopanishad

- **Who are the important characters in this Upanishad?**
- Nachiketa and Yamadharmaraja are the two important characters of whom the former is the disciple and latter the Guru or Master.
- What is the core question in this Upanishad? And what precisely is the message handed down in answer to that question?
- Nachiketa said to Yama: ‘some say that nothing remains when a man dies and some others say that death is only to the body and that Atman which is immortal survives the death of the body. I am puzzled! Please tell me which of these statements is correct’.
- This question prompted Yama to brilliantly expound the nature of the Atman and the way to attain it.

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Prasnopanishad

- **To which Veda Prasnopanishad belongs?**
- It belongs to the Atharva Veda.
- **Why is it called Prasnopanishad?**
- Sukesha, Satyakama, Sauryayani, Kausalya, Bhargava and Kabandhi were all rishis.
- They approached Maharshi Pippalada and asked him three questions on the process of creation and other mundane matters and three questions on the eternal and Supreme Self.

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Prasnopanishad

- The answers given by Sage Pippalada to these six questions constitute the essence of this Upanishad. So this Upanishad is aptly called Prasnopanishad.
- **In what manner the mantras in this Upanishad are arranged?**
- Each question and the mantras answering that question are together taken as a unit and the sequence of arrangement is so logical that there is continuity of thought, eventually solving the mystery of creation and the nature of man's psycho-physical functions.

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Prasnopanishad

- **Who are the main characters in this Upanishad?**
- Sage Pippalada and the six rishis who approached him to get their doubts clarified – Sukesha, Satyakama, Sauryayani, Kausalya, Bhargava, Kabandhi are the main characters in this Upanishad.
- **What does this Upanishad tell us through the answer to the question asked by Kabandhi?**
- ‘Venerable Sir, from where did all these beings born?’ questioned Kabandhi in the first instance, which in substance means ‘how did this creation take place?’.

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Prasnopanishad

- In response Pippalada said that Prajapathi (creator) did penance with a view to start creation.
- Initially he created '*rayi*' and '*prana*'. The former means food and Moon (matter). The latter means Sun and Agni (life force).
- In these two the *prana* is the *bhokta*, the one that eats, and *rayi* is the eatable, explained Pippalada. Food is gross, life force is subtle. A combination of these two is creation.
- This is the substance. Needless to say that space was created along with Sun and Moon for these two to stay in.

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Mundakopanishad

- **To which Veda Mundakopanishad belong?**
- Mundakopanishad belongs to Atharvana Veda.
- **Why is it called Mundakopanishad?**
- *Mundanam* means tonsuring the head, an act which is suggestive of shredding all desires as a first step to try to attain liberation and eventually moving forward in the direction of accepting *sannyasa*, that is, becoming a renunciate.

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Mundakopanishad

- As the central theme of this Upanishad is to show the way forward to those who have an ardent desire to attain liberation, it is called Mundakopanishad.
- **How many mantras are there in this Upanishad and into how many Chapters it is divided?**
- This Upanishad contains 64 mantras divided into three Chapters.

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Mundakopanishad

- **What question did Sounaka ask sage Angirasa?**
- Saunaka approached sage Angirasa in the customary way and asked him "*kasmin nu bhagavo vijnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati iti (1.1.3)*; Venerable Sir! what is that knowledge by knowing which everything else in this world is known? Pray instruct me in that knowledge".
- **What is the response of Sage Angirasa for the above question?**
- "He who knows the Brahman by experiencing the Self within, knows everything", said the sage.

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Mundakopanishad

- From where was the national motto appearing in the Official seal of the Government of India 'Satyameva Jayate' – Truth alone triumphs - taken? Give full details.
- *Satyameva Jayate na anrutam* proclaims the sixth mantra of this Part. Truth is held in highest esteem in Indian tradition.
- In the beginning days of independent India our illustrious leaders who knew this unique tradition of ours inscribed as motto, the exhortation in this Upanishad 'Satyameva Jayate' – 'Truth alone triumphs' on the official seal of Sovereign Bharat. Long live their commitment to Truth!

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Mundakopanishad

- The full text of that inspiring mantra is given below:
- *“Satyameva jayate na anrutam
Satyena pantha, vitato devayanah
Yenakramanti rishayo hi aptakam
Yatra tat satyasya paramam nidhanam” || (3.1.6)*
- Truth alone conquers, not untruth. By Truth is laid out the path leading to the Gods by which the sages who have their desires fulfilled travel to where is that supreme abode of Truth. (Translation: Dr Radhakrishnan)

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- **Early Life and Education**
- Adi Shankaracharya is an eternally shining star in the firmament of Indian Philosophy.
- He was an incredible personality, who with his abounding genius, debating skills and missionary zeal redefined and redeemed Hinduism from the non-deific hedonistic forces and restored it to its past glory when it showed signs of decay and decline.

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- He was the first to comment upon the Upanishads, Brahmasutras and the Bhagavadgita and the one who systematised and disseminated the *advaita* school of philosophy, which received an unprecedented acceptance and indeed acted as a catalyst for the rise of later schools of thought.
- Some might have adored him, some might have vigorously rejected him; but there was no question of ignoring him.
- Such was and is his strength of philosophy and serene and inspiring personality in the long history of Indian philosophical thought.

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- In the state of Kerala, in a village of called Kaladi on the banks of river Purna, Shankara was born in a Nambudri Brahmin family in the year 788 A.D on the fifth day of Vaisakha. His birth star was Punarvasu.
- When exactly he was born, when and how he left his mortal body are all matters of dispute.
- However a large majority of scholars maintain that his lifetime was 788 – 820 A.D. We can leave it at that.
- The only biographical work on Shankara which is generally relied upon is “Shankara Digvijaya” by Madhava–Vidyaranya (AD 1296 – 1386), the reason being that it is the earliest work.

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- This biography gives us a glimpse of the life, work and personality of Shankara.
- There are several other biographies also, but they being later works do not enjoy the same patronage as Madhava – Vidyaranya's biography.
- He was born as the son of Sivaguru and Aryamba. His father was an acknowledged scholar.
- The couple were ardent devotees of Lord Shiva and tradition has it that as a reward to their devotion Sharkara was born to them.

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- Some even regard him as the incarnation of Lord Shiva himself. So Sivaguru named him as Shankara.
- Shankara was a child prodigy endowed with a fantastic intellect and memory power.
- His father passed away when he was just three years old. His mother took care of him, performed the sacred thread ceremony when he was seven years old and sent him to a guru.
- In the *gurukula* he mastered the Vedas, Vedangas (subsidiaries of Vedas) other *sastras*, *kavyas* and *puranas* in a very short span of time.

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- During his studies as a *Brahmachari*, as custom would have it, he went out for *biksha* (alms) and stood at the door step of a poor Brahmin lady. She was so poor that she did not have anything to give.
- On searching the house she found a gooseberry. Ashamed as she was for her inability to give even a modest alm she gave the gooseberry, as a *brahmachary* cannot be turned away without giving anything.
- On seeing her poverty Shankara's heart melted and '*Kanakadhara Stotra*' in praise of Goddess Lakshmi poured out of his lips extempore.
- Lakshmi being the goddess of wealth rained golden gooseberries in that lady's house, relieving her of her poverty. This was his first miracle.

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- On another occasion when his mother became too weak to go to the river Poorna for her daily bath, he prayed the river goddess.
- The story goes that next day from out of the river a small branch broke out and started flowing in front of Shankara's house! This was his second miracle.
- Due to his scholarly accomplishments his fame spread in the kingdom of Kerala.
- With a view to honor him, the King sent his minister to bring Shankara on an elephant to his court.

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Sri Adi Shankaracharya

- But Shankara thought that it was inappropriate for a *brahmachari* to accept such honours and politely excused himself.
- This incident bears testimony to his attitude of detachment *vairagya* even at that young age.

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Bhagavad Ramanujacharya

- Sri Ramanuja was not merely the exponent of Visistadvaita school of philosophy; he taught that for the deliverance of humanity the path of bhakti (devotion) alone excels others, easy to follow and thereby he diverted the spiritual practices from meditation on a formless, attributeless Brahman to unflinching devotion coupled with love on Lord Srimannarayana with his magnificent form and divine attributes.
- He was born with a mission and the multitude of his devotees wake up remembering him with reverence.

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Bhagavad Ramanujacharya

- Without causing any affront to the established traditions, he was credited with promoting reformatory ideas and thinking, keeping at the back of his mind eternal values for which Hinduism stands for.
- Temple administration and the form of worship received special attention from him; he settled and firmed up certain rules and practices in this regard which even today are followed strictly in all Vaishnava Temples of repute.

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Sri Madhvacharya

- **Boyhood and Education**
- Our ancient sages handed down to the future generations the Vedas and the Upanishads which formed part of the former and which were revealed to them, only with a view to redeem the humanity of their ignorance and to lead an enlightened life of spiritual excellence.
- This they achieved through their inspired, committed disciples and their successors, who carried on this mission of dissemination of spiritual knowledge with unmatched ability.

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Sri Madhvacharya

- To such glorious tradition belong the three Acharyas who commented on the Upanishads, Brahmasutras and the Bhagavadgita from different angles, formulated certain doctrines and handed them down to the succeeding generations.
- These illustrious teachers have done all this singularly for our elevation to a higher plane of life without any desire for personal reputation.
- So they did not care to tell us when they were born or the details of their parentage and life. So nobody was able to fix their date with certainty.

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Sri Madhvacharya

- To know something about the date and work of Sri Madhvacharya, the only dependable work is 'Madhva Vijaya' authored by his junior contemporary, Sri Narayana Panditacharya (1287-1350).
- But even this work deals mainly with several miracles performed by Sri Madhva and his tours throughout the length and breadth of India but does not say anything about his date of birth.
- But on the basis of some clues found in the available literature, the scholars fixed the lifetime of Sri Madhva as 1238-1317 A.D. But this is still not free from doubt.

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Sri Madhvacharya

- On the Western coast of India, Malabar and South Canara areas with their hills and slopes and luscious greenery are famous for their natural beauty.
- This area is known as Parashurama Kshetra. Udupi is in this lovely area.
- Near about Udupi Sri Madhva was born in a village called Pajakakshetra to Madhyageha Bhatta and Vedavati in the year 1238.
- Sri Madhva was not merely a brilliant philosopher who heroically took on the juggernaut of Advaita and the growing Visistadvaita influence by propounding an entirely new, realistic and highly acceptable philosophical doctrine, 'Tattvavada', which was popularly known as 'the Dvaita'.

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Sri Madhvacharya

- He was also a great realist who knew what kind of philosophical thought fosters *bhakti* and spiritualism and also at the same time unites the people of India to take the contemporaneous challenges.
- Marauding hordes of invaders were vandalizing the temples and *ashrams* and looting their treasures, committing brutal murders, particularly of scholars, converting the people to their faith by the sword and raping and kidnapping Hindu women.

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Sri Madhvacharya

- While the situation was like that across the country, the Hindu Kings were warring among themselves on petty issues instead of unitedly resisting the enemy, Sri Madhva rightly thought that at that juncture Advaita with its accent on inward meditative practices and the doctrine of *maya* was not capable of evoking a united response of the people to vigorously resist the invading vandals.
- He thought that a philosophy which emotionally binds the people was the need of the hour, at the same time laying emphasis on the performance of one's duty and having absolute and unflinching devotion to God. Dvaita school of thought did exactly that.

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Sri Chandi Saptasati

- The supreme goddess is known with several names like Chandi and Durga.
- The powers of Chandi are described in a lucid form in Markandeya Purana. This part is also known as “Devi Mahatmyam”.
- It has 700 sentences and hence the name Saptasati. The stories related to very powerful demons like Madhu and Kaitabha, Mahishasura, and Sumbha and Nisumbha are described in 13 chapters.

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Sri Chandi Saptasati

- It is the faith of all the followers that chanting of the text and performance of havan using Saptasati drives away all the evils and bestows the grace of almighty.

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Sahasra Lingarchana

- There are several methods of worship of Lord Shiva. Sahasra Lingarchana is one among such methods.
- This is very popular one performed by several thousands of Devotees throughout the world.
- The worship includes chanting of mantras related to Mahanyasa, Namakam, Chamakam, Purusha Suktam etc., followed by the pooja of 1128 sivalingas arranged in 16 layers.

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Shyamala Dandakam

- Kalidasa, one of the greatest poets of Sanskrit literature started his first composition, viz., Shyamala Dandakam, on goddess Saraswathi when he was blessed by Her. This is in a prose form but with rhythmic arrangement of words.
- This is in praise of Goddess Lalita which also is a prose form but with rhythmic arrangement of words.

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Lalita Dandakam

- This is in praise of Goddess Lalita which also is a prose form but with rhythmic arrangement of words.

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Upanayana and Vivaha Samskarams

- The Sanatana Dharma lists out several samskaras or rituals for purification of the body, mind and speech.
- The Upanayana Samskaram is essential for any boy to be introduced for the study of Vedas. The process involves several activities spread over four days.

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Upanayana and Vivaha Samskarams

- The Vivaha samskara is a one that has several intricate procedures like Muhurtham and Saptapadi which grant legal recognition for the newly wedded couple, while invoking the blessings of the Gods and the elder persons.

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Astrology in Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhaghavata

- The great epic Ramayana has more than 500 verses related to astrology.
- Knowledge of astrology helped Srirama, Sita and Laxmana to come out of several dangers encountered by them. During their stay in the forests for about 14 years.
- Similar such references are found in Mahabharata and Bhaghavata also.

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